



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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VIDEO LINK EXPANSION TO MAKE COURTS SAFER

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, today announced an expansion of the NSW justice system's video conferencing network as new figures show usage of the facilities has almost tripled in five years.

"Video conferencing is increasingly being used to hear prisoner bail applications, which reduces the need to transport inmates to court and improves the safety and efficiency of the justice system," Mr Smith said.

"More than 61,000 video-link sessions were conducted in NSW justice facilities in 2010-2011, saving taxpayers millions of dollars."

By the end of June, videoconferencing will be operating at 309 courts, correctional centres and other justice agency sites.

Courthouses receiving installations or upgrades of videoconferencing and remote witness technology include:

- Parramatta Local Court, Children's Court and Sydney West Trial Courts (\$721,000);
- Campbelltown Local Court and Children's Court (\$350,000);
- Burwood (\$116,000);
- Wentworth (\$11,000);
- Deniliquin (\$30,000); and
- Wellington (\$40,000).

A further 35 courthouses will receive minor audio-visual technology upgrades, at a total cost of \$150,000.

The Local Court conducts more videoconferencing sessions than any other jurisdiction, utilising the technology for matters involving defendants on remand and to hear evidence from witnesses unable to attend court.

"For nine consecutive years, the Local Court has led the nation in the timely finalisation of criminal matters and I have no doubt that the use of videoconferencing has contributed significantly to this outstanding result," Mr Smith said.