



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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LOCALS WIN CONTRACT TO BUILD \$15M ARMIDALE COURT

An Armidale firm has won the contract to build the city's \$15 million courthouse, NSW Attorney General Greg Smith SC announced today.

Mr Smith said National Buildplan Group – an organisation that began in Armidale and has grown into an Australia-wide operation – will begin work on the three-storey courthouse later this month.

“This is a win-win for Armidale. The project will create jobs locally and deliver a secure courthouse that will be large enough to meet the city's needs for decades to come,” Mr Smith said.

The 1750m² building on Moore Street will include a trial court capable of accommodating up to 15 jurors and a local court with a fully glazed secure dock for prisoners. A multi-purpose room will be available for use as a callover court or jury assembly room.

For the first time, people with a disability will be able to serve on jury trials in Armidale.

“The jury box and two deliberation rooms will feature accessible facilities for people with limited mobility, including people using a wheelchair,” Mr Smith said.

“During breaks and deliberations, jurors will also have access to a kitchenette and a private courtyard.”

Mr Smith said the new courthouse would provide comfortable facilities for victims of crime.

“Victims of domestic violence will be able to wait in a safe room that has direct access to the Local Court, rather than in a public area where they would be at risk of crossing paths with defendants,” Mr Smith said.

“Sexual assault victims will also be able to avoid contact with their alleged attacker, by giving ‘in camera’ evidence from a remote witness room.”

Other features of the new courthouse include:

- a state-of-the-art registry, featuring a computer kiosk to enable court users to access legal resources on the internet;
- ten interview rooms for the legal profession, including three non-contact rooms for discussions with potentially dangerous prisoners;
- a video conferencing room for the legal profession and other agencies;

- facilities for the Aboriginal Community Justice Group and Circle Sentencing program;
- four offices for various agencies involved in court processes; and
- a secure car park for judicial officers and departmental vehicles.

The new courthouse will be located next to Armidale Police Station on Moore Street. Mr Smith said prisoners would be transferred between the buildings via a secure passageway, reducing the risk of escapes.

“From a security perspective, the new location is far superior to the site of the existing courthouse which is situated in a mall,” Mr Smith said.

The project should be completed by early 2013.