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MEDIA RELEASE

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\$1 MILLION RAYMOND TERRACE UPGRADE COMPLETE

The largest upgrade of the historic Raymond Terrace Courthouse in more than a decade is now complete making accessing justice faster and easier for the community, NSW Attorney General Gabrielle Upton and Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter and Central Coast Scot MacDonald MLC announced today.

Ms Upton said improving court infrastructure and services was a key priority for the NSW Government.

“People deserve to have easy access to a fast, fair and efficient justice system,” Ms Upton said.

“Making regional courthouses fully accessible is an important step in achieving that goal.

“The upgrade makes accessing and using the Raymond Terrace Courthouse easier for everyone who uses the court including people with a disability, mothers with prams and the legal profession.

“Importantly, the new safe room will provide a sanctuary for vulnerable witnesses including victims of domestic violence, greatly reducing the stress and trauma of the court process.”

The building is now fully accessible to people with a disability, with a new entrance to the courtroom, new railings and a split-level registry counter.

The public foyer and courtroom waiting room have also been given a facelift with new paint, carpet and seats.

Mr MacDonald said the \$1 million project delivered major improvements to disability access, a safe room for vulnerable witnesses and new interview rooms for legal practitioners.

“The renovations will improve services and provide an environment that is accessible, comfortable and secure for all court users in Raymond Terrace,” Mr MacDonald said.

“The room will also be used for Community Justice Centre meditations when it is not being used for victims.

“The number of interview rooms at the courthouse has increased from two to three rooms ensuring lawyers can speak to their clients privately before their matter is heard.

“The upgrade employed more than 30 Hunter locals, as well as being completed on time and on budget. I visited the site earlier in the week and the project is clearly moving quickly towards completion.”

Court matters were transferred to East Maitland Courthouse during construction, but sittings will resume at Raymond Terrace on 10 August.

The Raymond Terrace project follows on from the \$1.1 million upgrade at Maitland Courthouse carried out in 2013/14.