



Gabrielle Upton
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

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STRENGTHENING COURT SECURITY

Security at key courthouses across NSW will be further strengthened with the appointment of 40 new Sheriff's Officers as part of the NSW Government's counter-terrorism response, Attorney General Gabrielle Upton today announced.

Ms Upton said the NSW Government is investing nearly \$5.2 million to appoint more Sheriff's Officers in 2015/16, with new recruits to start training today.

"The safety of those who work at or attend our courts is critical," Ms Upton said.

"This surge in Sheriff's Officers will further strengthen security at key courthouses during a period when the National Terrorism Public Alert is at high."

Sheriff's Officers are responsible for court security, administering the jury system and serving and enforcing a range of court orders. They conduct routine scans of people entering court facilities and have the power to confiscate weapons and other dangerous items to ensure a safe environment. During trials, Sheriff's Officers provide support for jurors.

There was strong competition for the new positions, with the Sheriff's Office receiving more than 400 applications. The successful candidates range in age from 25 to 57 and include a former police officer, security officers, a truck driver, an electrician and court officers.

The additional Sheriff's Officers will work in Sydney and in regional areas from Wagga Wagga to Wollongong and Tamworth to Taree.

The recruits will undergo a rigorous five weeks of training, with the first classes to begin today. The physical component of training will include the use of batons and other appointments, hand-to-hand tactics and escorting people from courts. The recruits will also be trained in resolving conflict without force.

The Office of the NSW Sheriff has existed for more than 190 years. The role of the State's first Sheriff's Officers included carrying out the death sentence in criminal cases, running prisons and discharging the duties of the coroner.

While the modern Sheriff's Officer no longer performs any of those functions (NSW abolished death sentences for murder in 1955), they continue to play a critical role in court security and the administration of the NSW justice system.