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MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW BUDGET: NEW PRISONER BEDS, RECORD CORRECTIONS FUNDING

The upcoming NSW Budget will fund around 7,000 new beds as part of a record investment in the correctional system - delivering long-term capacity for the state's facilities.

Minister for Corrections David Elliott said the 2016-17 Budget includes \$3.8 billion over four years to fund a long-term infrastructure plan to cater for the rising prisoner population and better manage and rehabilitate inmates.

It will fund the development of business cases for expanded correctional precincts at existing sites across NSW, expected to boost capacity by about 4,200 beds in the longer term.

The Budget also includes funding for more than 2,800 additional beds at prisons across the system which will be delivered within the next three years, including 620 at Cessnock, 160 at South Coast, and 135 at the reopened Berrima and Wollongong correctional centres.

"These new beds will support our Better Prisons reform program to lift standards, strengthen accountability, and help meet the Government's commitment to reduce adult reoffending by 5 per cent," Mr Elliott said. "Dr Sean Sweeney, the former head of construction at Grocon, Australia's largest construction management company, has been appointed to oversee the delivery of the prison infrastructure program."

Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian said: "The NSW Government is committed to addressing the prisoner population challenge across the State and this Budget will provide the funding to tackle this issue."

Mr Elliott said the Government had received four high-quality Expressions of Interest in the New Grafton Correctional Centre, and invited three consortia to take part in the Request for Proposal stage. The new Grafton Correctional Centre will house 1,700 prisoners, up from 1,000 announced earlier this year, and feature state-of-the-art security and rehabilitation services.

Grafton will become a regional hub, similar to Cessnock, and will be supported by existing smaller specialist centres, allowing most prisoners to complete their sentence and reoffending programs in one region, saving on transport costs and delivering better value for money.