



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 30 January 2018

HISTORIC SYDNEY CHILDREN'S COURT REBOOTED

The \$38 million transformation of one of NSW's oldest children's courts is complete, with the official opening today of the state-of-the-art Surry Hills Children's Court by Attorney General Mark Speakman.

"The 107-year-old building, which hasn't operated as a court for almost 35 years, has been brought back to life in a stunning redevelopment that will improve how justice is delivered for young people. The project is a fine example of the NSW Government's commitment to enhancing justice infrastructure across the state," Mr Speakman said.

Behind the heritage façade on Albion Street is a high-tech and secure complex with four courtrooms and facilities for alternative dispute resolution.

The building has a bright and comfortable atmosphere – with natural light streaming through a glass roof and into the foyer.

"Attending court can be daunting, particularly for victims of crime and young people involved in care and protection proceedings, so it's important we do all we can to make the court environment as stress-free as possible," Mr Speakman said.

Other features include:

- audio visual link facilities for children appearing in court from juvenile justice centres and witnesses testifying from remote locations;
- a private area for vulnerable witnesses to give evidence via closed circuit cameras;
- interview rooms for the legal profession, offices for key stakeholders and rooms for support agencies; and
- a holding cells complex.

The original cells have been preserved and will be used as a storeroom. An old 'Sunday best' children's boot found during construction is on display in the foyer, along with other artefacts unearthed during excavation.

"Builders of the 1911 complex superstitiously hid the boot behind a fireplace to ward off evil. The centuries-old tradition continues with a modern workman's boot containing time capsule information now secreted in the building," Mr Speakman said.