



# Budget 2010-11

# Building for NSW's future

## ATTORNEY GENERAL

### New courthouses in record justice investment

**Release date: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

The Keneally Government will invest \$828 million in justice services across NSW and a further \$57.1 million in major court upgrades for Sydney and regional areas.

Attorney General John Hatzistergos said the record budget will enable major court upgrades for Sydney and regional areas, and new state-of-the-art courthouse complexes in Newcastle and Armidale.

"This Budget will ensure that the best performing courts in Australia continue to have the best facilities and will invest in programs aimed at reducing re-offending and building safer communities," he said.

"The Keneally Government's record investment includes \$29 million to fund the state-of-the-art refurbishment of the Supreme Court of NSW Law Courts Building.

"It also includes \$26.5 million for the major revamp of the Downing Centre courts and the civil courts and tribunals in the John Maddison Tower.

The five-year project, set to begin in early 2011, will include upgraded jury facilities and two large new courtrooms at the Downing Centre, each capable of hosting high- security criminal trials involving multiple defendants.

As part of the \$57.1 million in capital expenditure, the Keneally Government has allocated \$4.7 million to secure a site to build a new state-of-the-art courthouse in Newcastle.

"The Keneally Government will deliver the state's largest court complex outside Sydney for the Hunter," Mr Hatzistergos said.

Planning of the Newcastle Justice Precinct will be completed in 2011-12, with construction to begin the following year. The \$94 million complex is expected to open in 2014-15.

Mr Hatzistergos said the Keneally Government will also build a \$15 million justice courthouse for Armidale to be completed by early 2013.

On top of the record \$828 million investment in justice and legal services, the Keneally Government will invest record funding in prosecution services and access to justice, bringing the total record investment to \$1.1 billion. This investment includes:

- an additional \$5.5 million over 2 years for solicitors and other staff for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, bringing their total budget to more than \$102 million;
- \$154 million for the Legal Aid Commission - an additional \$8.4 million on the previous year.

Mr Hatzistergos said investment in court rehabilitation and diversion programs will increase by 13% as part of the Keneally Government's determination to keep crime rates low and tackle the causes of crime.

"In line with our commitment to reduce reoffending, the investment in innovative court diversionary programs will increase to \$26.7 million, up \$3.1 million," he said.

"The Keneally Government will invest \$5.5 million to fund the expansion of the innovative Forum Sentencing program which gives victims a say in sentencing, to an additional 25 locations over the next 12 months (currently it operates at 13 courts)."

The Keneally Government will also invest \$10.6 million to build a secure online information technology sharing platform for justice agencies, legal representatives and other parties.

"We are investing \$4.4 million in Joined Up Justice, an online service that will make it easier for justice agencies, such as Police, Corrective Services and Juvenile Justice, to securely share information with courts," Mr Hatzistergos said.



**Building for NSW's future**

[www.budget.nsw.gov.au](http://www.budget.nsw.gov.au)

“Almost \$6.2 million will go to legal eservices, which allow parties and legal representatives to file documents over the Internet, without visiting a court registry.”

The Keneally Government is also investing \$4.1 million in LifeLink, a new operating system for the Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages that better stores and secures data and will help prevent identity fraud.

The record Budget will also fund:

- \$2.85 million renovation of Sutherland Courthouse;
- \$2.1 million for the upgrade of the cells complex at Central Local Court;
- \$2 million for stage one of the \$5 million renovation of Taree Courthouse;
- \$1 million refurbishment of Lismore Courthouse;
- \$1 million renovation of Port Macquarie Courthouse;
- \$1 million for the design of a new courthouse in Armidale;
- \$1.5 million for the first stage of the renovation of Liverpool Courthouse;
- \$3.7 million will be invested in graffiti reduction strategies, including the annual Graffiti Action Day and environmental design of graffiti hotspots;
- \$2.9 million for additional Keep Them Safe Initiatives including the appointment of five specialist Children's Registrars.