



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

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WORLD-CLASS FORENSIC MEDICINE & CORONERS COURT COMPLEX COMPLETE

The largest coroner's court and forensic medicine facility in Australia is complete, with NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman and Secretary NSW Health Elizabeth Koff today officially opening the \$91.5 million building at Lidcombe.

Mr Speakman said the Forensic Medicine & Coroners Court Complex represents a significant leap forward for coronial investigations in NSW.

"The extensive high-tech facilities will enable more comprehensive and timely investigations of sudden and unexplained deaths – including complex cases and disasters involving mass casualties," Mr Speakman said.

"With four state-of-the-art courtrooms, the complex will be able to host high-profile inquests on the scale of the Lindt Café siege investigation."

Secretary of NSW Health Elizabeth Koff said the building delivers more sensitive and modern facilities for people dealing with the unexpected loss of relatives and friends.

"When we talk about our coronial services, we sometimes overlook the fact that every case is linked to human tragedy with bereaved families in need of support, care and answers," Ms Koff said.

"The building is filled with natural light and features – such as tranquil courtyards and artwork – to create a calm environment for families during a time of great stress.

"Examination and viewing facilities have been designed to provide even greater dignity and respect for the deceased patients and their families. It will also foster seamless collaboration between forensic medicine, coronial staff and police.

"Our teams of highly specialised experts face an incredibly challenging task of finding answers to complex coronial investigations where the cause of death is unknown. They're looking forward to the new technologies, ways of working and much-needed additional capacity this building will provide," Ms Koff said.

More than 6,000 deaths are reported to the State Coroner every year, with around half from the Sydney region. The three-storey building is designed to meet the needs of the state's growing and diverse population for decades to come.

As well as the additional courtrooms for the NSW Coroners Court, it provides modern and expanded clinical facilities for NSW Health Pathology's forensic medicine service.

Other features of the facility include:

- advanced additional clinical equipment to help provide answers about the cause of death in the least invasive manner;
- private viewing and counselling rooms with dedicated facilities to support large family groups with dignity, including a multi-faith room;
- advanced teaching suites;
- multi-purpose rooms with giant high-definition monitors capable of screening inquests for the media and general public if a courtroom is full; and
- audio visual technology to enable witnesses to give evidence from remote locations.

The new Lidcombe complex replaces the existing facility at Glebe, which has been home to coronial and forensic medicine services for more than 40 years and is no longer fit for current or future needs.

Staff will move in as the new building is commissioned over the next two months. The first coronial inquest at Lidcombe will be held in early February 2019.

The joint NSW Health and Department of Justice project delivers on the NSW Government's election commitment to build a new state headquarters for coronial and forensic medicine and provide new employment opportunities to Western Sydney.

MEDIA: Damien Smith | 0417 788 947