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## NSW Chief Justice a powerful voice for better court infrastructure

**A call by the Chief Justice of NSW for ‘new and additional court and tribunal facilities’ is a welcome intervention that if heeded, will help make this state a legal services leader in the Asia-Pacific region.**

President of the Law Society of NSW Ronan MacSweeney said the remarks by the Hon. Andrew Bell AC in his traditional Opening of Law Term address this evening, represent powerful advocacy for world class justice infrastructure across the state.

“Chief Justice Bell’s remarks are consistent with long years of advocacy by the Law Society of NSW for funding decisions around courts and tribunal infrastructure to be made in the same way as those that result in new roads, schools, and hospitals,” Mr MacSweeney said.

“Indeed, his Honour’s identification of a ‘pressing need for the State’ to make such investments, reflects my 2026 President’s Priority: “Improving access to justice for all court users, through advocating for increased investment in both physical and digital court infrastructure’.”

Mr MacSweeney said in his remarks to the same event, that rural, regional and remote areas are in dire need of justice infrastructure investment.

“Targeted investment in modern buildings and systems will ease the burden for all court and tribunal users and benefit not only our membership, but the wider public. I am acutely aware that inadequate investment in our justice infrastructure disproportionately impacts people with disabilities. This also raises wider access to justice issues which threaten to undermine the rule of law,” Mr MacSweeney said.

Chief Justice Bell warned against NSW following the same path as the United Kingdom, where funding is in such crisis that ‘fundamental elements of the justice system’ like jury trials, are at risk of being compromised for economic reasons.

“A properly functioning, independent and impartial justice system is essential to maintaining the stability of our democratic society. Suitable investments in courts and tribunal infrastructure will help NSW to protect and enhance its globally recognised reputation for its adherence to the rule of law,” Mr MacSweeney said.

“If the adoption of the ‘blue sky thinking’ that has resulted in transformational changes to NSW’s transport infrastructure can be applied to our courts and tribunals, this state could have best-in-class facilities that would help reinforce public confidence in our system of justice.”

Mr MacSweeney says he recognises that such investment must compete with many other priorities, but said he looks forward to working with the Attorney General, the Department of Communities and Justice, Heads of Jurisdiction, and other important justice stakeholders on this vital issue.

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