



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health

## Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### **NEW \$5 MILLION FORENSIC LABS SOLVING CRIMES FASTER THAN EVER**

Police and Emergency Services Minister Stuart Ayres and Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced the launch of three new forensic laboratories, which will assist in the solving of crimes and keep NSW communities safer.

The three laboratories are located at NSW Health Pathology's Forensic and Analytical Science Service (FASS) at Lidcombe and include a new chemical criminalistics unit, a new DNA research laboratory and a refurbished automated DNA laboratory.

- The refurbished **automated DNA laboratory** is the most advanced forensic DNA processing facility in Australasia. Designed by FASS scientists, it is the only one of its kind in Australia (and only the second in the world) to use end to end robotic analysis, which improves the efficiency and quality of results and reduces the risk of contamination. One of the lab's key features is its mitochondrial DNA testing, which is used to identify the deceased when traditional DNA testing is not possible. With more than 100 unidentified bones within FASS awaiting forensic testing, the mitochondrial technology means those bones no longer have to go interstate or overseas for analysis.
- The new **chemical criminalistics laboratory** provides a full suite of technology for scientists to analyse a range of evidence, including arson, gunshot residue, explosives, and riot and chemical warfare agents. Having a dedicated laboratory means FASS scientists can perform the necessary tests under one roof and provide analysis to police at a faster rate. Analysis from this laboratory can be used to investigate drive-by shootings and other incidents such as the recent shop fire at Rozelle that claimed three lives.
- The new **DNA research laboratory** will help fast-track the implementation of the latest technologies to support criminal investigations and ensure NSW Police are at the forefront of crime solving. The lab is currently investigating the use of rapid DNA technology using an instrument that has the capability to generate a DNA profile in just 90 minutes (the current process can take up to 24 hours).

Mr Ayres said some of the state-of-the-art services delivered by the new \$5 million laboratories represent a first for Australia.

"The establishment of these new laboratories is a fantastic example of the justice and health systems working together to achieve the best outcomes for people right across the state," Mr Ayres said.

“What we’re seeing is an Australian-first in some of these labs – the forensic work being undertaken is incredible and will go a long way to assisting police to get on with the job of making our streets safer.

“Working with experts like the scientists here at the Forensic and Analytical Science Service helps ensure NSW Police has access to world-class technologies, faster results and the intelligence we need to solve crimes.

“The NSW Government is committed to giving our police the tools and support to undertake their life-saving work and this \$5 million investment is a great example of this commitment in action.”

Mrs Skinner said the labs are now fully operational and already assisting NSW Police with their investigations.

“NSW Health’s Forensic and Analytical Science Service provides independent, objective analysis to our health and justice systems and with these new facilities our forensic scientists can use cutting-edge technology to help NSW Police identify suspects quicker, solve crimes faster and close more cold cases,” Mrs Skinner said.

“These services will also be of great benefit to victims of crime and their loved ones, with forensic results being processed quicker and telling us more about a particular incident of crime.

“Our scientists are among the best in the world and I’m pleased the NSW Government is providing them with first-class facilities they deserve to deliver this vital service.”