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## HUNTER NEW ENGLAND HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICE WIN MAJOR HEALTH AWARD

Deputy Premier and Minister for Health Carmel Tebbutt today congratulated the Hunter New England Area Health Service (HNE Health) and NSW Ambulance Service for winning a major health award out of a field of more than 175 entries.

The NSW Health Baxter Awards celebrate and acknowledge excellence in health and innovation across the NSW health system.

Ms Tebbutt said the NSW Ambulance Service and HNE Health received the Minister's Excellence Award for bringing 'pre-hospital thrombolysis' into regional communities, which sees paramedics administer life-saving medication to cardiac patients.

"The medication can dissolve a blood clot – allowing paramedics to stop permanent muscle damage and providing the precious minutes and seconds needed to restore blood supply to the heart muscle before the patient gets to hospital," Ms Tebbutt said.

"To date, 53 remote/rural patients have benefitted from this process which has potential for state-wide application," said Ms Tebbutt.

"The theme for this year's NSW Health Awards was the "life cycle", showcasing sustainable healthcare for all stages of life and the theme was reflected by the range of finalist projects affecting all stages of life.

HNE Health had five projects as finalists across a number of categories.

NSW Ambulance and HNE Health took out the *Creating Better Patient Journeys – Improving Access to Services* category, as well as the Minister's Excellence Award.

HNE Health was also recognised as the state's leading Area Health Service, taking out the coveted 2010 Best Overall Performance by an Area Health Service.

That Award was accepted on behalf of staff by HNE Health Chief Executive Dr Nigel Lyons and the top Award was shared between HNE Health and Sydney South West Area Health Service.

"Once again, our dedicated workforce has been recognised for the excellent work they are doing to improve the quality and safety of healthcare.

"These Awards are significant for both our staff and patients and reaffirms our belief that HNE Health staff are committed to improving the health and well-being of our metropolitan and rural communities," Dr Lyons said.