

18 November, 2010

\$9 MILLION BOOST FOR HEALTH SERVICES IN THE HUNTER

Hunter residents will benefit from almost \$9 million for new medical equipment and improvements at John Hunter Hospital, the Royal Newcastle Centre and Calvary Mater Newcastle following the historic health and hospital reforms between the State and Federal governments.

NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Health Carmel Tebbutt today visited John Hunter Hospital with Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery to formally announce the new resources.

The historic health reform agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW Government earlier this year provides an additional \$1.2 billion for State health services over the next four years.

As a result, John Hunter Hospital will receive \$4.69 million for new medical equipment and improvements, Calvary Mater Newcastle will receive \$3.75 million and the Royal Newcastle Centre will receive \$560,000.

At **John Hunter Hospital** the funding will deliver new resources for the hospital's emergency department, imaging services and surgical services.

"The imaging equipment includes \$1.85 million for a new angiography unit that will allow the hospital's medical imaging service to provide more efficient and accurate results when studying a patient's blood vessels," Ms Tebbutt said.

"This equipment provides higher quality images, which show finer detail for more complex procedures improving treatment and diagnostics for patients."

Up to \$1.2 million in funding will be used to purchase a new SPECT/CT gamma camera for the hospital's nuclear medicine service. This combined imaging modality, linking the latest in gamma camera technology directly with CT scanning in the one unit, improves diagnostic capability, enabling clinicians to localise disease with greater accuracy.

New emergency department equipment includes a new drug dispensing system, bariatric patient equipment, an ECG machine defibrillator, and cardiac monitoring equipment.

The emergency department will also undergo a refurbishment that will improve the emergency department's ambulance bay and clinical initiatives nurse (CIN) areas.

"Improvements in the ambulance bay will mean it can accommodate additional staff to care for patients waiting in that area for treatment," Ms Hornery said.

New surgical equipment includes two image intensifiers to allow patients to have x-rays while still in operating theatre, and four new patient monitors to assist in the care of patients undergoing colonoscopies and gastroscopies.



The hospital will also receive general surgical equipment including specialised equipment for trauma and neurosurgery.

The Royal Newcastle Centre will also benefit from new surgical equipment as well as equipment to be used in outpatient clinics.

This includes specialised orthopaedic equipment that will increase the hospital's capacity to perform hand and shoulder surgery, an area of high demand. It also includes a nasendoscope and a paediatric Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) scope to be used in the centre's ENT Clinic, and equipment for urology clinics.

Federal Member for Charlton Greg Combet said: "These new resources for John Hunter Hospital and The Royal Newcastle Centre made possible by the COAG health reform agreement will mean more high quality healthcare resources can be provided locally.

"This is a practical example of the benefit to local residents that comes from Commonwealth and State Governments working together."

Calvary Mater Newcastle has also received \$3.6 million to establish a 12 bed Emergency Short Stay Unit that will improve access to emergency department beds.

"The unit became operational on November 8 and is a new model of care in which patients will be admitted under the care of the Emergency Department staff specialist," Ms Tebbutt said.

The unit will operate as an extension of the emergency department, and means emergency department staff can admit patients who require a period of short observation or admission before being safely discharged. This can be particularly beneficial for older patients.

Patients awaiting transfer to another hospital or a sub-specialty review out of hours will also be treated in the new Unit.

"The Calvary Mater Newcastle will also receive a new operating theatre table and some highly specialised equipment that will assist clinicians and nurses to enhance the care and improve comfort for bariatric patients requiring surgical treatment," Ms Hornery said.

The hospital will also receive a new ECG machine to monitor patients with chest pain, respiratory and cardiac patients.

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson said the new resources would help Hunter hospitals meet growing demand for healthcare services.

"In the past year, the emergency departments at John Hunter Hospital and the Calvary Mater Newcastle treated more than 90,000 patients annually," Ms Grierson said.

"The Commonwealth Government recognises the growing demand for health services in the Hunter, and this funding is a welcome boost in meeting that demand," Ms Grierson said.

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