



Barbara Perry MP
Minister for Local Government
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health
(Mental Health)

Patients set to move to new 100-bed mental health centre

June 24, 2009

Staff at James Fletcher Hospital are gearing up for next week's move of inpatients to a new 100-bed purpose-built mental health facility at the Mater Campus at Waratah.

Minister Assisting on Health (Mental Health) Barbara Perry, said inpatients will move to the new unit next Tuesday.

"Up to 80 patients will be relocated to the new purpose-built Mental Health Centre at the redeveloped Mater Campus," Ms Perry said.

"The new facility will provide inpatient care and treatment for people who are acutely mentally ill, and will include 10 additional beds and four new Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre beds."

Hunter New England Mental Health services are to be co-located with Calvary Mater Newcastle providing two hospitals in the one location, Ms Perry said.

"That means our patients will have access to the general and specialist medical services Calvary Mater Newcastle provides, to its emergency department and to its complimentary services such as drug and alcohol and toxicology services."

Specific units will include Mental Health and Substance Use Units, Mental Health Unit for Older People, Newcastle Mental Health Unit, Lake Macquarie Mental Health Unit, Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit, and Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre.

Hunter New England Health's Area General Manager for Mental Health Operations Jude Constable said it was hoped the move of inpatients could be completed in one day.

"We won't know exactly how many patients will move until closer to the actual move as it will depend on how many people we have in hospital at the time," Ms Constable said. "It could be up to 80 patients."

"The move will be done one unit at a time which will give us some time to begin settling patients into their new surrounds while the next unit is in transit."

A small fleet of patient transport vehicles, several buses and cars will be used to transport patients between sites - under the supervision and care of mental health staff.

The move is one of the final stages of a relocation of inpatient and outpatient mental health services from James Fletcher Hospital to the redeveloped Mater Campus at Waratah.

Outpatient services and executive and administrative units have progressively relocated to the Mater Campus over the past month.

Mental Health outpatient services will operate from the McAuley Centre.

“It is important to note that from Tuesday, 30 June 2009, there will no longer be acute or emergency mental health services at James Fletcher Hospital,” Ms Constable said.

“Anyone in the community who needs to access acute mental health services or facilities must go to the Mater instead,” Ms Constable said.

“There, they will need to present to the Calvary Mater Newcastle Emergency Department where they will be triaged first and then assessed in the new Mental Health Centre.”

The new switchboard number for the new Mental Health Centre and other Hunter New England Mental Health services at the Mater Campus is **02 4033 5000**.

Minister Perry said the historic James Fletcher Hospital site will remain in public hands and continue to be used for health purposes.

“Mental health services have been provided at the James Fletcher site for almost 140 years and it will remain so,” Ms Perry said.

“A number of services are remaining on site including The Hunter Institute of Mental Health, The Centre for Psychotherapy and the Mental Health Court Liaison Service.

“A new 20-bed non-acute unit is being built on the site and construction is expected to start later this year,” Ms Perry said.

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