

Date: 23 June 2021

HUNTER NEW ENGLAND LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT IMPROVES PALLIATIVE CARE EXPERIENCE

Patients, families and carers will soon benefit from refurbishments to palliative care facilities at John Hunter Hospital, Belmont and Manning Hospital, thanks to a \$399,992 boost from the NSW Government.

Mr Michael DiRienzo, Chief Executive of Hunter New England Local Health District, said the funding will allow for the existing facilities to be improved through new furnishings and decorations, which will support more home-like environments and help bring comfort to people at the end of life, along with their families and carers.

A number of the facilities will also receive room upgrades and configuration changes, which aims to accommodate larger family groups in a more comfortable space.

Contributions for the upgrades at each facility includes:

- John Hunter Hospital (\$15,650)
- Belmont Hospital (\$25,335)
- Manning Base Hospital (\$41,355)

Denman MPS, Quirindi Hospital and Boggabri MPS will also receive a share from the funding boost, which will also go toward improving the palliative care rooms at those facilities.

“Providing end-of-life care for a loved one is an extremely difficult and emotional experience. The improvements to these facilities, thanks to this funding boost, will go a long way to making that time a little easier,” Mr DiRienzo said.

These facilities are among 34 palliative care facilities to be refurbished over the next two years, at a total of \$5.5 million across NSW.

“These projects that help create more home-like environments, bringing dignity and comfort to patients, families and carers,” Mr DiRienzo said.

“Ensuring that patients, their families and carers receive quality palliative care in a safe, comfortable and home-like environment is a priority for NSW Health,” he said.

Every year, the NSW Government spends more than \$220 million on palliative care services across the State. In addition to this funding, in 2020-21 a further \$16 million of enhancement funding was spent to improve services, including a boost of \$7.17 million for 35 allied health workers and 20 palliative care nurses across NSW.

The latest round of funding follows the success of \$4.5 million allocated for refurbishments in 2019-20 and 2020-21. Both funding rounds were a part of a \$45 million enhancement for palliative care announced in the 2019-20 NSW Budget.

This enhancement and a further \$56 million announced in late 2020 support an additional 5,000 End of Life home support packages available across NSW from 1 July 2021; the recruitment of 100 new palliative care nurses; more Aboriginal Health Workers; digital health to improve access to palliative care; enhanced bereavement services and education to ensure a strong, competent workforce. This is in addition to the \$100 million palliative care package announced in the 2017-18 Budget.

MEDIA: Hunter New England Health Communication Unit | 4985 5522.