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FIRST LOOK AT HUNTER'S HEALTH INNOVATION LIVING LAB

The early design for the *Health Innovation Living Lab* has been unveiled, providing the community with their first look at the Hunter's new \$2.3 million innovation ecosystem.

Forming part of the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct, the Lab is a partnership between Hunter New England Local Health District and the University of Newcastle, and is being delivered in parallel with the NSW Government's \$835 million investment into the John Hunter Hospital campus.

Professor Christopher Levi, Director of the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct, Hunter New England Local Health District, said the Lab is a purpose-built facility that will provide a dedicated space for clinicians, researchers, students and industry partners to collaborate and drive healthcare innovations that result in real-world outcomes for rural and regional communities.

"The Health Innovation Living Lab is designed to unite government, business and academia to turn healthcare challenges into research projects that drive evidence-based solutions," Professor Levi said.

"The Health Innovation Living Lab is the latest addition to the John Hunter Hospital campus upgrade and the next chapter in the Hunter's proud history of innovation. It provides the opportunity for clinicians to be entrepreneurial about their clinical problem solving, and researchers the chance to innovate where they intend to implement."

Renders showcase various co-working space, project team offices, data visualisation, interaction and seminar areas and a digital library – all purpose-built for university students or commercial scientists to work alongside clinicians on clinical challenges.

The innovation activities of the Lab will reflect the research and clinical strengths of the District, along with the distinctive rural and regional operating environment.

"We want to build something that addresses real-world healthcare challenges and drives solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of people in regional and rural communities," Professor Levi said.

"Our initial focus will be geared toward four key areas where we know we can make the most impact for regional people. These include digital health, sustainability in healthcare, medical technology, as well as operations and logistics."

The Health Innovation Living Lab will allow for seamless physical and operational integration between the hospital and University, positioning the wider precinct at the forefront of regional health research and education.

University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO said the partnership was an extension of the university's commitment to collaboration.

"We are delighted to partner with Hunter New England Local Health District on this project," Professor Zelinsky said.

"Our University has a longstanding history of collaborating with industry and businesses on projects that benefit our region and help us to be a region that stands tall on the national stage.

"The Health Innovation Living Lab will bring together leading researchers, industry experts, teachers and some of the most talented students in the country to solve real issues that will benefit both industry and community."

The Health Innovation Living Lab is expected to open in early 2023.

The \$835 million John Hunter Hospital redevelopment is part of the NSW Government's record \$11.9 billion investment in health infrastructure to 2025-26, with nearly a third of the capital allocation in this financial year going towards regional and rural health facilities.

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