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Minister welcomes new doctors to Blue Mountains Hospital

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, said Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital had further improved its capacity to deliver high quality health care for the mountains community.

“A new anaesthetist commences at Blue Mountains Hospital this month,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“There are now nine doctors providing anaesthetic services 24 hours, seven days per week at the hospital.

“Like most regional hospitals, Blue Mountains has had its share of difficulties attracting expert medical staff.

“This latest recruitment is the result of extensive advertising and indicates our strong commitment to maintaining and improving services in the mountains.

“The new anaesthetist follows the recruitment of a highly experienced obstetrician, who commenced at Blue Mountains in January this year,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“In the interests of patient safety, transfers to Nepean may still occur from time to time, but the increased obstetric and anaesthetic cover will substantially strengthen the reliability of local maternity and surgical services.

A further four doctors have commenced specialised training at Nepean Hospital with a view to start working at Blue Mountains Hospital by early next year. Three of these doctors are completing training in obstetrics and one is training in the field of anaesthetics.

“I welcome the new doctors and I’m sure they will enjoy the professional experience and the lifestyle benefits of working in the Blue Mountains.

“The recent appointments are part of a number of workforce strategies implemented to improve the quality of the region’s hospital services,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“Local midwives have undertaken additional midwifery training and will have further training to implement the *three sisters* midwifery model of care at BMDAMH.

“In addition to the recruitment efforts, there has been substantial capital investment at BMDAMH during the last ten years.

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“It began with the Emergency Department upgrade, which included an additional procedure room, three new clinic rooms and a doubling of Emergency Department bed numbers,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“The hospital’s hydrotherapy pool service opened in 2003, providing about 3,000 pool therapy sessions for local patients each year,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“The \$12.5 million Blue Mountains Hospital Redevelopment Project delivered brand new services as well as much needed upgrades to hospital facilities.

“Stage one of the redevelopment commenced in 2003, with a new health unit for women and children, dental clinic, hospital kitchen, loading dock and a state-of-the-art helipad.

“The helipad was specially designed to maximise direct access to the hospital. Previously, helicopters had to land on a local playing field, adding 30 minutes to patient transfer times.

“In the four years since the helipad became operational, 144 critically ill or injured patients have been transferred by air to or from Blue Mountains Hospital,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“In addition, the introduction of the emergency triage acute myocardial infarction protocol has ensured that patients suffering a heart attack are transferred from BMDAMH to Westmead Hospital’s Cardiac Catheter Lab and operated on within less than two hours.

“The second stage of the redevelopment, which opened in February 2007 incorporated a new mental health unit, swing ward (for medical/surgical and/or paediatric patients) and upgrades to the medical/surgical ward in the hospital’s east wing.

“The recent staff recruitment, together with the capital and service investments over the last ten years are testimony to the government’s commitment to providing safe, high quality health services to the region.

“It’s disappointing that politicians will sometimes attempt to run down a hospital’s reputation to advance their own ambitions, but Blue Mountains is much more resilient than its critics.

“Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital is an excellent facility, with a great future delivering high quality services to its community,” Mr Della Bosca said.