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CT scanner to boost patient care in Armidale

Armidale Hospital patients now have improved access to diagnosis and treatment for serious conditions following the roll out of a new CT (Computed Tomography) scanner.

NSW Minister for Health John Della Bosca was in Armidale today (24 August) to inspect the CT scanner, which came online last week, with the Member for the Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay.

“This means medical staff can more quickly diagnose and treat serious illnesses – such as stroke, cardiovascular disease or trauma,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“Previously, if a patient needed a CT scan, they were transported by doctors and nurses using patient transport vehicles or the NSW Ambulance Service to a private firm.

“This was time consuming and costly in comparison to having a CT scanner available on-site.

“In addition to the CT scanner, new digital imaging software called Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS) has also been installed.

“This new system allows medical staff to view digital images of the patient on a computer, rather than waiting for hard-copy film to be processed. This means the diagnosis can be reached faster than relying on the old film-based system.

“The scanned images are also archived on a central computer database, which means specialists in multiple locations can view and assess images immediately by computer.

“This is a big development in diagnostic imaging, considering not long ago a patient’s treating doctor would need to have the films physically carried to another location if they wanted further advice on a patient’s diagnosis,” Mr Della Bosca said.

Armidale now has four radiographers trained to use the new CT scanner and the state-of-the-art digital PACS imaging system, since radiographer Peter Traise was introduced to the service in February 2009.

“The installation of the CT scanner reaffirms the role of the facility as a specialist hospital and supports its role as a teaching facility for medical students. It will also aid in the learning and development of medical students at the hospital,” the Minister said.

“The NSW Government is investing \$1.27 billion to deliver better services and improve health infrastructure across the Hunter New England Area Health Service this financial year - a \$90.4 million increase on the previous year and part of an overall \$15.1 billion State health budget,” he added.