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Caring Together: New health support staff for Dubbo

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, announced today that nurses at Dubbo Base Hospital would be freed up to focus on patient care - not paperwork- with the recruitment of seven clinical support officers under way.

Mr Della Bosca said the more than \$616,000 investment was part of the NSW Government's *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW*.

"The ward-based clinical support officers would assist local nurses with administration and paperwork on recruitment, rostering, stock and supply orders, and reports to ensure they can spend more time with patients," the Minister said.

The burden of paperwork will be removed enabling senior nurses to focus on coordinating services and care around the needs of each patient including:

- Responding immediately to any deterioration in a patient's condition;
- Supervising the work of junior staff;
- Ensuring patients and their families understand what is happening with their care;
- Making sure patients' meals are served appropriately; and
- Making sure ward areas are clean and hygiene standards are maintained.

"In the 2009 -10 State Budget \$117 million is being provided to roll out the *Caring Together* action plan across NSW," Mr Della Bosca said.

"As the Garling Report points out, NSW has one of the better public health care systems in the developed world but we need to meet the challenges of increasing health costs and an ageing population.

"The *Caring Together* action plan is the result of extensive consultation across the State and from working closely with doctors, nurses and other health staff.

"These initiatives are only the beginning of important changes to continue to deliver the best possible health care and to ensure on-going patient care and safety.

"While the NSW Government is getting on with the job of improving health services, Barry O'Farrell and the Opposition Health Spokeswoman have a plan to wreck the public health system.

"They want to double the number of area health services from eight to 20, drowning patients in red tape and ripping \$300 million out of frontline services. Their reckless plan will put patient care and safety in jeopardy," the Minister said.

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“Doubling the number of area health services is an investment in bureaucracy that will cost the equivalent of 3,500 frontline nursing staff and not deliver one extra service to patients,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“It is a prime example of the Opposition’s ineptitude when it comes to policy development. They have no practical plan and no vision,” he added.