



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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HEALTH OVERHAUL TO DELIVER MORE LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AND BETTER PATIENT CARE

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, today announced a major restructure of the health system which will ensure genuine local responsibility, local decision-making and accountability by Local Health Districts, their boards and clinicians.

“I promised this when we released the NSW Liberals & Nationals policy *Making It Work* in March 2009, and as promised, it is about getting more administrators and managers onto the frontline to support our health workforce and deliver better patient care,” Mrs Skinner said.

“We are removing a middle layer of management which will allow resources to be deployed to support frontline health care.

“The new structure will provide greater transparency and accountability, duplication of tasks will be stopped and there will be greater clarity of roles and responsibilities,” Mrs Skinner said.

In the most significant change to health care delivery since the late 1980s, the key changes include:

- The abolition of about 200 middle layer management positions in what was formerly known as the ‘clusters’ (three groups – Northern, Western, and Southern – which controlled the smaller local health districts). The clusters were established in 2010 by the former Labor Government);
- Devolving most of the resources remaining in the clusters to the Local Health Districts;
- Deleting about 100 positions from the head office in North Sydney.
- Shifting of several functions from head office to the ‘four pillars’ - the Agency for Clinical Innovation, the Clinical Excellence Commission, the Health Education and Training Institute and the Bureau of Health Information - all established following the Garling inquiry into hospital services.

“The Department of Health will become the Ministry of Health, reduced in size and with a flatter structure as the local health networks have greater control,” Mrs Skinner said.

The new Ministry of Health will focus on policy, funding and performance of the more devolved system.

“The restructure will see a strengthening of the role and resources of the four pillars which will provide greater support to the Local Health Districts. This will include:

- an enhanced role for the Agency of Clinical Innovation, which will have the primary role of engaging clinical service networks and designing new models of care;
- the creation of the Health Education and Training Institute to support the skills, development and training of clinicians and health administrators across NSW;
- the Clinical Excellence Commission will take responsibility for the safety and quality functions previously handled by NSW Health; and
- there will be enhanced capacity for the Bureau of Health Information to report on health services across the state.

“In addition we will create a new agency to be called eHealth NSW, to drive innovation, improve implementation of vital electronic health initiatives and provide support to the districts and their facilities,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Implementation of the changes will start immediately and are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

“The restructure is expected to free up more than \$80 million for frontline services.

“The changes announced today represent a new era in co-operation, collaboration and support between all parts of the NSW health system and are aimed at delivering greater local control for health professionals and better services for patients.

“Many people have been consulted in considering these changes and I believe we will have a structure which will be better focussed on patients and have a stronger role for clinicians in the delivery of frontline services,” Mrs Skinner said.