



# **The Hon Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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19 March, 2012

#### **DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENT: NEW LIFE FOR BLUE MOUNTAINS HOSPITAL**

The NSW Government has delivered on its election commitment to help Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital recruit specialist medical staff by allowing it to declare "area of need positions", the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, announced today.

Under the new system, the hospital will be able to offer incentives to recruit specialists to roles which have traditionally been difficult to fill - primarily in anaesthesia, obstetrics, radiology and psychiatry.

Mrs Skinner said that in recent years, residents had to travel to Nepean Hospital for treatment at short notice when some clinical services were unavailable due to a lack of clinical staff, particularly in the areas of diagnostic radiology and obstetrics.

"The people of the Blue Mountains have always been passionate about their hospital and have been understandably concerned that, due to staff shortages, it has not always been able to meet their needs," Mrs Skinner said.

"Long before the election, I fully supported their calls for action on this issue because, being situated some distance from the next nearest major hospital, Blue Mountains residents deserve to be able to access services and specialists here," she said.

"I'm very happy today to say that we promised we would fix this and we have. This change will give the administrators of this hospital the opportunity to apply to have certain roles designated as area of need positions, ensuring this hospital can attract the staff it needs to offer a full and safe service."

The Member for the Blue Mountains, Roza Sage, said she was thrilled with the announcement.

"I'd like to thank the Minister for keeping her promise to the people of the Blue Mountains," Mrs Sage said.

"Under this change, the hospital will be able to ensure it has sufficient medical staff and our community can feel assured that this government cares about its health needs."