



# **The Hon Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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April 18, 2012

#### **UPGRADED ACUTE DIALYSIS UNIT AT JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL**

The NSW Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, today visited John Hunter Hospital to view the results of the NSW Government's \$1 million investment in acute dialysis services for the Hunter region.

The visit coincides with the refurbishment and relocation of the renal dialysis unit that will bring benefits to patients and clinical staff with room for future expansion.

The NSW Government has provided \$1 million in capital funding for the project as well as \$980,000 annual recurrent funding.

Local Members Tim Owen (Newcastle), Andrew Cornwell (Charlestown), Garry Edwards (Swansea) and Craig Baumann (Port Stephens) accompanied the Minister on today's hospital visit.

Mrs Skinner said she was pleased to see the expanded dialysis unit in operation.

"The refurbishment has created a comprehensive nephrology unit in the one location with expert medical, nursing and allied health staff in close proximity to provide care to inpatients and outpatients requiring specialised renal care," Mrs Skinner said.

"The unit provides dialysis services for up to 30 patients a day with 15 dialysis chairs running over two shifts each day, seven days a week," she said.

"The service is meeting current demand but extra capacity has been built-in to cater for expected future demand."

Mr Owen said patients would benefit from a more spacious and modern facility.

"It is a much more comfortable and pleasant environment for patients who often have to spend up to five hours at a time, several times a week on the dialysis machines," Mr Owen said.

Mr Cornwell said the unit merged dialysis services that were previously located in different parts of John Hunter Hospital and Royal Newcastle Centre.

"It also locates dialysis services adjacent to the hospital's renal unit to enable better patient care, continuity of services and communication among clinicians," Mr Cornwell said.

Mr Edwards said the facility was also able to offer care for more complex conditions.

“It provides dialysis for outpatients from those regional areas who have more complex conditions requiring specialised care and treatment that cannot be provided at their local hospital,” Mr Edwards said.

Mr Baumann said the refurbished facility will also benefit people living in the Port Stephens area.

“People from the Port Stephens community also use John Hunter Hospital for their dialysis treatment so it’s great to see they too will benefit from this upgraded facility.”

The acute unit complements community dialysis units established at the Wansey Centre in Newcastle and at Maitland, Singleton and Muswellbrook hospitals.

### **FAST FACTS:**

According to [Kidney Health Australia](#):

- An estimated 1 in 9 Australians over the age of 25, or 1.7 million Australians, suffers from chronic kidney disease.
- More than 50 Australians die each day with kidney-related disease.
- A total of 10,590 people were receiving dialysis treatment at the end of 2010.
- Kidney disease contributes to approximately 15% of all hospitalisations in Australia.
- Diabetes is the leading causes of end-stage kidney disease in Australia.