



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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WORK STARTS ON NEW PATIENT CARE UNIT AT BELMONT

Construction has started on a \$4.6 million patient care unit at Belmont Hospital, the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, and the Member for Swansea, Garry Edwards, has announced.

The unit will provide care and treatment for patients who need extra support before they can safely return home.

Newcastle company R T Parker Pty Ltd. has been awarded the tender for the 16-bed facility.

The third floor of Belmont Hospital's south block will be fully refurbished to house the permanent new unit.

Minister Skinner said the beds would help take the pressure off existing acute hospital services in the Newcastle area.

"The unit will provide much needed additional beds which will be used by patients who are no longer acutely unwell but who need extra care before they can go home," Mrs Skinner said.

"These are patients who need extra support before being discharged – such as elderly patients who may be settling into new medication regimes.

"The NSW Government is rolling out additional sub-acute beds across the state to help meet patient needs and help take the pressure off our existing acute hospital services," she said.

The Hunter is getting 16 beds at Belmont Hospital and 14 at Kurri Kurri Hospital, with construction of both units expected to cost \$11 million.

Mr Edwards said the unit would be of significant benefit to patients.

"I am advised that the hospital has already opened 14 of the beds in another area of Belmont Hospital and eight at Kurri Kurri Hospital as an interim measure until the new permanent units are completed," Mr Edwards said.

"It is important that we support those patients, including the elderly, who may take longer to recover after a fall or illness and require a lower level of care for longer periods of time during their recovery," he said.

The new Belmont unit is scheduled to open in February next year.