



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACCELERATING MORE CANCER SERVICES AT ORANGE

The Central West Cancer Centre's second linear accelerator is undergoing the final stages of commissioning, Health Minister Jillian Skinner and Member for Orange Andrew Gee announced today.

"The installation of this second linear accelerator is a clear demonstration of the NSW Government's commitment to the provision of cancer services for regional and rural patients," Mrs Skinner said.

"The existing machine reached full capacity shortly after its commissioning in May 2011 and we recognised the need for an additional machine which will allow treatment for another 30 to 35 patients per day," Mrs Skinner said.

"Patients from in and around Orange, Wellington, Mudgee, Bathurst, Forbes, Parkes, Cowra, Lithgow, Dubbo and even right out to Nyngan, Bourke, Walgett, Coonamble and Cobar have the opportunity to access this treatment and the addition of the second linear accelerator means more services, closer to home."

The second accelerator is housed in a recently refurbished concrete bunker at the Central West Cancer Service and has been carefully assembled piece-by-piece within the three metre thick concrete walls.

Mr Gee said Orange's first linear accelerator was the first of its kind for a public hospital this side of the Blue Mountains.

"It was wonderful to see the first linear accelerator up and running and now we have two of these fantastic machines providing many benefits for the patients of Orange and neighbouring communities," Mr Gee said.

"The Central West Cancer Service has treated more than 570 patients from Western NSW who would have otherwise had to make the long journey to Sydney for their treatment.

"With the second accelerator coming on line in 2013, that figure will continue to rise. The service here is treating a wide range of cancers, including prostate, breast, lung, oesophagus, rectum, cervix, lymphoma and melanoma.

"The linear accelerators have done a lot to attract highly specialised staff to come and work at the service," Mr Gee said.

Western NSW Local Health District Director of Cancer Services and Innovation Ruth Jones said the District has been successful with an extensive recruitment campaign to attract the additional specialist staff to run the expanded service, including radiation therapists and a medical physics specialist.

“Our next focus will be recruiting a second Radiation Oncologist and additional nursing staff.

“It’s been an involved process getting the machine here and installed and now the commissioning of the machine is underway so we will be able to deliver this vital service to people from our communities,” Ms Jones said.

“In addition to the cancer services recruitment, we are very pleased to have secured the services of two medical oncologists and are also finalising recruitment of a haematologist. These specialist oncologists will provide services to Bathurst and Orange Hospitals.”

The second accelerator is expected to be operational in April 2013.