



# **Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **NEW COCHLEAR IMPLANT CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today joined NSW Governor Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO to open a new Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre at Penrith.

The SCIC is the coordination service for the three largest providers of publicly-funded cochlear implants in NSW - Sydney Children's Hospital Network (Westmead), Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and John Hunter Children's Hospital.

Mrs Skinner said the new centre provides Western Sydney with a modern hub for cochlear implantation which will see clinicians and local services working together to ensure continuity of care for patients and their families.

"I have seen firsthand the life-changing benefits that cochlear implants have for the profoundly deaf and it is my mission as Health Minister to ensure that every child who needs a cochlear implant is able to receive as early in his or her life as possible," Mrs Skinner said.

"I was pleased to provide \$1.33 million in 2011 to enable 38 children waiting for cochlear implants to be able to have the surgery.

"We committed another \$500,000 in 2012 to see children in the Hunter have their surgery in the public hospital system locally at John Hunter Hospital.

"And in the 2012/13 budget the NSW Government allocated a further \$1 million to provide an extra 24 paediatric cochlear implants, as well as four extra adult cochlear implants," Mrs Skinner said.

"In 2012/13 it is expected that NSW will perform a total of 81 cochlear implants for children and 63 cochlear implants for adults in the public sector.

"Centres such as this one at Penrith are giving deaf members of the community the opportunity to connect with their family, friends and the wider world in ways most of us take for granted."

Mrs Skinner was joined by Penrith MP Stuart Ayres at the opening of the facility.

"I wish the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre well in its new location and I look forward to learning more about the team's accomplishments and the profound benefits they are delivering for local and visiting patients," Mr Ayres said.

The Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre CEO, Robert McLeod, welcomed the Minister's commitment to cochlear implantation.

"The Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre greatly values the relationship it has with Minister Skinner and NSW Health and we appreciate their ongoing support to enrich the lives of those who are deaf," Mr McLeod said.