



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Medical Research

Michael Gallacher MLC

Minister for Police & Emergency Services
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MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDING BOOST TO BENEFIT HUNTER BABIES

The NSW Government today announced funding for the refurbishment and expansion of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the John Hunter Children's Hospital through the Hunter Infrastructure & Investment Fund (HIIF).

Minister for Health Jillian Skinner said the NSW Government accepted the funding recommendation of the HIIF Advisory Board for \$7 million for stage one of the refurbishment of John Hunter Children's Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

"This is an important investment which will enhance the high-quality, specialised care provided to newborns and babies from the Hunter, New England and north coast areas of NSW," Mrs Skinner said.

"John Hunter Children's Hospital is the primary referral facility for more than 20 per cent of the state's children and young people. This funding boost will enrich the services and care available to the community."

Mrs Skinner said today's announcement complemented the NSW Government's recent commitment to a new paediatric intensive care unit at John Hunter Children's Hospital.

"Hunter New England Health nominated these projects as high priorities that would be of benefit to the region and it is wonderful the NSW Government is able to enhance these vital services."

Minister for the Hunter Michael Gallacher said stage one of the refurbishment of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit involves the expansion and refurbishment of the existing neonatal facility at the John Hunter Children's Hospital.

"The original unit was established in 1991 with 28 cots in 775 square metres of space and since then it has expanded to 42 cots within the same physical space.

"This project will provide the much needed expansion in space, taking advantage of the 1700 square metres of space adjacent to the unit recently vacated by the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

"It will also provide a more appropriate configuration of rooms which encourage the contemporary, family-centred model of care, in which parents play an important role in the care of their baby," Mr Gallacher said.

“It’s with great pride that I can be in the Hunter to make this announcement today, which I know will be of life-changing benefit to local residents and their babies.”

Member for Newcastle Tim Owen welcomed the funding boost, saying that both projects were high priorities for families in Newcastle and the wider region.

“Families in the Hunter will be reassured that their babies and children will have access to the highest standards of intensive care closer to home,” Mr Owen said.

Member for Charlestown Andrew Cornwell said additional funding for critical care neonatal and newborn services will benefit communities across the Hunter.

“As a new father, I know just how valued this enhanced service will be. Not only will it provide superior care for newborns, it will go a long way to assisting families at what can be a challenging time in their lives,” Mr Cornwell said.

Member for Swansea Garry Edwards said it is rewarding to see the hard work of the Children’s Hospital’s staff being recognised.

“This funding is a real boost for the hospital’s hard working doctors, nurses and paediatric staff – I know they join me in my excitement to see this application succeed,” Mr Edwards said.