



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Medical Research

Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

MEDIA RELEASE

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ST GEORGE HOSPITAL OLDER PERSONS' SUB-ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH UNIT OFFICIALLY OPENED

Minister for Health Jillian Skinner and Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries today officially opened an Older Persons' Sub-Acute Mental Health Unit at St George Hospital.

Mrs Skinner and Mr Humphries were joined at the opening by Member for Oatley Mark Coure and Member for Rockdale John Flowers.

The Federal Government funded the \$8 million project under the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services. The NSW Government will provide the ongoing funding to operate the facility.

"This very impressive Older Persons' Sub-Acute Mental Health Unit will provide assessment and recovery-based treatment for people aged 65 years who require sub-acute mental health care," Mrs Skinner said.

"It will provide a seamless transition from hospital-based services to the community for older people who have mental health conditions and it will complement existing mental health services throughout South Eastern Sydney Local Health District."

Mr Humphries said the purpose-built facility provides 16 inpatient beds (including one bariatric bed), an activity room, lounge and dining rooms. Ancillary accommodation includes consultation rooms, meeting rooms and staff offices.

"This specialised Older Persons' Sub-Acute Mental Health Unit has been built alongside the existing Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit. It shares reception and waiting room facilities to maximise space and efficiency," Mr Humphries said.

"The unit has been designed with two secure courtyards for outdoor therapy, including pathways for walking and designated dining and exercise areas. There is a quiet room for patients to spend time with their family and friends and areas that can be segregated from the rest of the unit."

Mr Coure welcomed the significant investment in the mental health care of older people living in the St George area.

"One of the major benefits of this specialised unit will be the reduced need to accommodate older people with the younger acute adult population who are located in the existing Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit," Mr Coure said.

Mr Flowers said: "Older people with a mental illness are some of the most vulnerable in our community. St George Hospital can now offer high quality services to patients, as well as carers and family members with loved ones who need specialised care."

Mrs Skinner said she is proud of the NSW Liberal & Nationals Government's ongoing investment in St George Hospital.

"Our Government has invested \$39 million in a new emergency department for St George Hospital redevelopment, which will open in 2014," Mrs Skinner said.

"And recently, we committed \$1.2 million in planning money for the further redevelopment of St George Hospital and Sutherland Hospital.

"Our Government is getting on with the business of delivering high quality health services for the people of NSW."