



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Friday 29 November 2013

### **\$34.8 MILLION SHOALHAVEN CANCER CARE CENTRE OFFICIALLY OPEN**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner was joined by South Coast MP Shelley Hancock and Kiama MP Gareth Ward today to officially open the \$34.8 million Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre (SCCC) at Nowra.

Mrs Skinner said today marked a momentous occasion in the delivery of cancer care services for the South Coast community.

“This cancer care centre has been a labour of love for all involved and it is with great pleasure that I can join the community here today to celebrate its official opening,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The NSW Government is committed to ensuring patients, particularly those with cancer, are able to access care and treatments closer to home. The Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre will deliver this and much more.

“Patients and their loved ones will now have access to this specialist care in the comfort of their community, when they need it most.”

Mrs Skinner was also joined at the opening members of the local community who have contributed to fundraising efforts over many years.

“Thanks to generous fundraising by the Shoalhaven Linear Accelerator Appeal Committee, patients and their carers will also have access to accommodation on-site.” Mrs Hancock said the purpose-built centre will improve access to essential cancer services through every stage of the patient journey.

“From the state-of-the-art bricks and mortar to the cancer support and services delivered inside, this is a first-class facility and one that will be valued for years to come by local patients and their families,” Mrs Hancock said.

“This \$34.8 million facility will change the way cancer care is delivered to our community and it is with great pride that I can be here today to share this with residents of the Shoalhaven.

“In a first for the Shoalhaven, the centre will also house integrated multidisciplinary cancer care services with bunkers, a linear accelerator and associated equipment to deliver radiotherapy treatment.”

Mr Ward said the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre will work closely with the Illawarra Cancer Care Centre to ensure locals are receiving best, modern health care.

“The Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre will also enhance haematology, medical oncology and radiotherapy services, while also improving access and waiting times for both chemotherapy and radiotherapy services,” Mr Ward said.

“This opening is great news for locals and will relieve pressure on the Illawarra Cancer Centre. I’m proud to be part of a government delivering better services for the community.”

Mrs Skinner said the centre will also provide ambulatory care services with multidisciplinary clinics, allowing patients to have their treatment program planned in one visit with increased access to cancer treatment and support services.

“I understand the building also has teaching and research facilities and scope for further service expansion, with capacity for a second linear accelerator and the potential for additional chemotherapy chairs in the future if needed,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The first patients to be treated by the new radiation therapy service are scheduled for care in early December.”

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District is planning a community open day in early 2014 to share the centre’s capabilities with local residents.

The Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre is a joint-funded project, with the NSW Government providing \$10 million and the Federal Government providing \$23.8 million under the Regional Cancer Centres Health and Hospitals Fund Program. The NSW Government will fund the recurrent running costs of the unit.

The Shoalhaven Linear Accelerator Appeal Committee also raised \$1 million toward the patient accommodation lodge, which is part of the new centre.