



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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LOCAL HOSPITALS TO BENEFIT FROM \$3.3 MILLION BOOST FOR NEW ELECTRIC BEDS

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today visited John Hunter Hospital to announce Hunter New England Local Health District hospitals will receive 859 new electric beds as part of a bed replacement program.

Hospitals including Moree, Gloucester, Armidale and Cessnock will receive the new beds, which cost between \$1,500 and \$27,000 each and will modernise care across the District.

Mrs Skinner said the Local Health District and its Chief Executive, Michael DiRienzo, are to be congratulated on the \$3.3 million program, which will see every manual bed in the District replaced with an electric bed.

“One of my biggest priorities as the state’s Health Minister has been ensuring local hospital staff and management have the ability to make local decisions about the way they deliver care to the community,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This \$3.3 million investment is a fantastic example of the ways in which Local Health Districts are managing their budgets and making decisions in the best interests of their patients.

“Hunter New England Local Health District will deliver 859 new electric beds, including bariatric and maternity beds, to hospitals across the region, including almost 300 at John Hunter.

“I applaud the District for its strong focus on improving the experience of patients receiving care in its hospitals, as well as the safety of its staff.

“Under this Government, local decision making is encouraged, not stifled, and I’m pleased to see this benefitting patients and staff.

“Benefits are also flowing on to local staff, who can now deliver the first-class care they are renowned for alongside first-class equipment.”

Member for Charlestown Andrew Cornwell welcomed Mrs Skinner to John Hunter Hospital and said the new electric beds would be greatly appreciated by local staff and patients.

“John Hunter will receive 293 new beds worth close to \$4,000 each. The first of these rolled off the dock this morning with more to come over the month,” Dr Cornwell said.

Swansea MP Garry Edwards said: “It is wonderful to see Hunter New England Local Health District investing in modern equipment. Belmont District Hospital will receive eight new beds.”

Maitland MP Robyn Parker said: “The NSW Government is getting on with the job of transforming the Hunter’s health system after almost two decades of Labor’s mismanagement. Five new beds will go to Maitland Hospital.”

Port Stephens MP Craig Baumann said: “Investments like this are enhancing patient experiences in hospitals across the Hunter, including in my own area of Port Stephens, where six new beds have arrived at Tomaree Hospital.”

Chief Executive Michael DiRienzo said the bed replacement program is an exciting investment in modern equipment.

“The beds have user-friendly hand controls for patients and can be lowered almost to ground level, which is particularly beneficial for our aged population.

“These electric beds will make patients more comfortable, improving their experience in our hospitals. They will also provide improved safety for our staff,” Mr DiRienzo said.

John Hunter Hospital General Medicine Nurse Jess Jung said the beds would enhance the way staff care for their patients.

“We’re looking forward to the arrival of the electric beds across the hospital because they will make our job safer and easier. The new beds can be lowered closer to the ground than the manual beds, reducing the risk of patients having a fall and of nurses being injured when moving patients in and out of beds,” she said.

“The beds also make it easier to position the patients for meals and comfort and allow them the independence to reposition themselves,” Ms Jung said.

While at the hospital, Mrs Skinner visited the John Hunter Children’s Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and the site of the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) following last week’s budget announcement of \$9.3 million to commence upgrades of the facilities.

“Hunter New England Health nominated these projects as high priorities that would be of benefit to the region and we are getting on with the job of upgrading these services.

“This investment will result in life-changing benefits for local residents and their babies.”