



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY CELEBRATES OFFICIAL OPENING OF CONCORD CENTRE FOR PALLIATIVE CARE

Health Minister Jillian Skinner, Member for Drummoyne John Sidoti and Member for Strathfield Charles Casuscelli today joined palliative care doctors, nurses and community members at Concord Hospital to celebrate the opening of its new 20-bed palliative care facility.

The \$9 million Concord Centre for Palliative Care features 16 single rooms and two double rooms, some with spectacular views over Yaralla Bay.

The new centre will provide patients with physical, spiritual and emotional support, symptom management and education during the final stages of illness, as well as support for families in their bereavement.

Construction was funded by the Australian Government through the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services. The NSW Government will provide the ongoing funding to operate the facility.

“Late last year, as part of the *NSW Government Plan to Increase Access to Palliative Care 2012-2016*, I announced \$35 million for community-based palliative care funding, which will allow many more terminally-ill people to stay at home longer or to die at home if they wish,” Mrs Skinner said.

“But while we understand that community-based palliative care is essential, we know that there will always be people who should and will die in hospital.

“Our goal is to make the experience of hospital-based palliative care as close to the experience of dying at home as possible.”

The palliative care centre is located behind the main campus of Concord Hospital, distancing it physically and emotionally from areas of acute care and high clinical activity. There is a focus on natural light and good access to communal and therapeutic spaces.

Rooms were designed through consultation with patients to ensure a patient-centred approach and each has individual access to an external garden area.

There are meeting rooms, a shared dining area and courtyards to allow loved ones the space to be together.

“The final moments of life are incredibly important to the patient and their loved ones,” Mrs Skinner said.

“It is satisfying to know this centre will provide comfort and tranquillity at the end of life.”

Mr Sidoti said: “The importance of this centre cannot be understated - it will deliver enormous comfort to members of our community as they embark on life’s final journey.”

Mr Casuscelli said: “While increasing access to community-based palliative care is a priority for our Government, hospital-based care is also vital to ensuring members of our community receive the kind of care that is appropriate to them in the last days of life.”

Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said the opening of the Concord Centre for Palliative Care will allow Canterbury Hospital’s Telopea Ward - which has been used for palliative care patients - to be used by other speciality services.

Palliative care staff from Telopea Ward have been given the opportunity to move to the Concord centre to continue to practise their specialist skills.

Community-based palliative care services will continue to be available in Sydney Local Health District.