



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 25 August 2014

WESTMEAD HOSPITAL TO OFFER PUBLICLY-FUNDED ADULT COCHLEAR IMPLANTS FOR FIRST TIME

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced publicly-funded cochlear implants for adults will be offered at Westmead Hospital for the first time.

The 2014/15 NSW Budget included \$800,000 for 22 cochlear implants in response to demand.

Today - as part of Hearing Awareness Week - Mrs Skinner announced 12 of the implants would be undertaken at Westmead Hospital, with the other 10 performed through the Sydney Children's Hospital Network.

"As Health Minister, I have been blessed to see a cochlear implant switched on and to witness the joy felt by a mother when a child hears her voice for the first time," Mrs Skinner said.

"Cochlear implants enable the profoundly deaf and those with severe hearing problems to experience life in ways that most of us take for granted.

"I was very pleased to provide funding in the Budget to meet current demand for cochlear implants.

"Today I am able to announce that, for the first time, publicly-funded cochlear implants will be performed in Western Sydney, at one of our finest and most iconic hospitals, Westmead.

"This will allow deaf and hearing impaired adults to receive an implant closer to home, without having to travel to facilities elsewhere in Sydney, as has been the case in the past."

Mrs Skinner made the announcement at an historic function at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) in North Rocks. The RIDBC will officially merge with the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre (SCIC) to create Australia's largest and most comprehensive cochlear implant program for people of all ages.

Member for Parramatta Geoff Lee and Member for Baulkham Hills David Elliott, who attended the function with Mrs Skinner, welcomed the cochlear implants announcement as more good health news for the people of Western Sydney.