



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW RENAL DIALYSIS UNIT FOR COWRA

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today joined Member for Burrinjuck Katrina Hodgkinson at Cowra to announce \$500,000 in funding for the establishment of a satellite dialysis service at Cowra Hospital.

Construction of the Cowra renal unit will begin mid-next year and will open initially with six chairs operating over three shifts per week, providing treatment for six people.

“I am very pleased to be able to visit Cowra today to announce funding for a vital service for the people of this region,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is committed to ensuring rural communities have access to quality health services closer to home and this funding is a wonderful example of this commitment in action.

“The new satellite service in Cowra will be supported by Orange Hospital’s renal dialysis unit and will provide access to dialysis for people who would otherwise have to travel to Forbes or Orange.”

Ms Hodgkinson said there are currently six people travelling to Forbes and Orange from the Cowra region for hospital-based haemodialysis treatment.

“At the moment we have four patients travelling to Forbes three days per week and two patients going to Orange three days per week. The establishment of a local service will clearly be life-changing for these people,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The new renal unit at Cowra will have an immensely positive impact on quality of life for these patients as it will reduce their travelling time to access essential treatment by more than six hours.

“The unit will also be future-proofed to have the capacity for eight chairs should patient need increase.

“The announcement of the new renal unit comes as a new oncology nurse has begun caring for patients at Cowra. She is a wonderful addition to the hard-working team at the hospital.”

An area on the second floor of the Cowra Hospital has been identified as a suitable location of this service.

While in Cowra, Mrs Skinner took the opportunity to meet with the Cowra Integrated Care team at the Kendal Street Medical Centre.

The Western NSW Integrated Care Strategy is being led by the Western NSW Local Health District and Western and Far West Medicare Locals. Cowra is one of five communities in the region chosen to develop and test new models of integrated care.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is committed to improving health outcomes for patients in regional NSW through a more collaborative approach between our hospitals and health facilities and community health facilities, such as GPs, pharmacists and mental health workers,” Mrs Skinner said.

“It is about providing patients with the right care in the right place at the right time.”

Ms Hodgkinson said she is proud Cowra has been selected as a site to pioneer new models of care tailored to the community.

“Through greater collaboration between these vital health services we are reducing preventable hospital admissions and achieving better outcomes for local patients,” she said.

The NSW Government is providing funding for tools and support services to help deliver integrated care for patients. For Cowra, this includes the appointment of a dedicated care navigator to manage patient care plans and the installation of new software to share patient care plans amongst the relevant health providers.

During the visit to the Kendal Street Medical Centre, Mrs Skinner launched the Western NSW Integrated Care website to provide more information about integrated care and how it will improve the long-term health of regional communities: www.wnswintegratedcare.com.au.

Integrated care approaches are also being implemented in Molong, Cobar, Dubbo and Wellington and will be rolled out to other communities across the Western NSW Local Health District in 2015.