



**Jillian Skinner**  
Minister for Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **WESTERN NSW TELEHEALTH STRATEGY LAUNCHED**

NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant and Health Minister Jillian Skinner today launched a strategy that will bring healthcare closer to home in Western NSW.

Telehealth features a range of health services and activities delivered by technology and secure high-speed internet. Often mistaken for telemedicine - which focuses on consultation and treatment by technology - Telehealth includes staff training, mentoring and improving professional connectivity and research.

Mr Grant and Mrs Skinner received a demonstration in Dubbo on how Telehealth is rolling out across the Western NSW Local Health District and improving access to care, especially in remote areas. They witnessed a renal dialysis patient in Walgett being examined by a specialist in Dubbo via a wireless and portable video monitor device at the patient's bedside.

"Telehealth will benefit Western NSW because of the vast distances between towns and villages and the costs associated with travelling between facilities for appointments," Mrs Skinner said.

"Due to the remoteness of locations throughout the region, clinicians can suffer professional isolation and have higher demands than in more populated areas. Telehealth provides a professional support network, allowing better exchanges through consultation, education and research."

Telehealth will enable the Western NSW LHD to improve equity and access to health, fill the gaps in the care available and deliver care in a more culturally appropriate way.

"It can mean the difference between an improvement and an adverse outcome for patients presenting at rural hospitals with increasingly urgent symptoms. A staff specialist in a major rural or tertiary hospital can access Telehealth to speak to the patient and their clinicians to determine the best course of action," Mr Grant said.

The Western NSW LHD has been working on Telehealth for the last two years, setting up systems and procedures and acquiring equipment and infrastructure. A number of disciplines are in trial operation, including a pain clinic, obstetrics and gynaecology, renal care, acute care, orthopaedics, mental health and midwifery.