

New \$1 Million Specialist Mental Health Unit for Older People

Wednesday, 12 October 2005

The Premier of NSW, Morris Iemma today announced that the NSW Government would invest \$1 million in a unique partnership to provide improved mental health services for older people.

The NSW Government will provide \$1 million in recurrent funding for specialist mental health staff, while the Hammond Care Group will provide the capital works.

The facility, located at Hammondville, will provide:

- an 8-bed, purpose-built Special Care Unit; and
- an 8-place transitional care program.

Mr Iemma said there were an estimated 120,000 older people in NSW with a diagnosable mental illness.

“This new unit will support older people with severe behavioural problems associated with the onset of dementia or other long-term mental illnesses,” Mr Iemma said.

“It will also act as a bridge for older people who are ready to be released from an inpatient mental health unit into residential care.”

The transitional care program will assist in the smooth transfer of patients into other permanent Hammond aged care places following intensive care in the Unit.

Mr Iemma said that this initiative builds on the almost \$4 million in new funding allocated for older people’s community mental health services.

This new funding will provide for:

- The establishment of specialist community teams;
- Behavioural assessment and treatments; and
- The development of specialist residential care models.

“This is part of the NSW Government’s agenda to better integrate mental health services with overall health and community services,” Mr Iemma said.

“It builds on the innovative programs we already have in place to provide better mental health services to people of all ages.”