

Opening of 20 New Mental Health Beds - Cumberland Hospital

25 July 2005

Health Minister Morris Iemma today officially opened 20 additional acute overnight mental health beds at Cumberland Hospital as a part of the NSW Government's commitment to improve the community's access to mental health services in western Sydney.

"The additional beds at Cumberland Hospital will be a tremendous boost to the mental health service in meeting the needs of the community," Mr Iemma said.

37 additional staff have been employed to run the unit including 23 additional nurses.

"This year's budget includes recurrent funding of **\$854 million for mental health services** in 2005/06, an increase of \$71 million (9.1 per cent) over 2004/05.

The 2005/06 Budget includes \$22 million in new mental health funding, and \$48 million from the \$241 million package allocated over four years (2004-08).

The new unit 'Riverview' will provide specialised psychiatric care for those people who are experiencing their first episode of psychosis.

The new beds will provide clinical care for people suffering from mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorders.

"As with all types of hospital beds, opening the Riverview Unit has required the recruitment of additional mental health professionals, doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and occupational therapists.

The Riverview Unit provides an improved environment, which will assist in the high quality specialised care provided for people who require inpatient treatment.

Cumberland Hospital has 261 beds including:

- 86 acute adult mental health care beds;
- 16 psychiatric intensive care beds;
- 24 Forensic beds; and
- 135 Rehabilitation beds.

The capital cost of establishing the 20 additional beds in the Riverview Unit was \$585,000 the recurrent cost of operating the unit is \$3.5 million per year.

"Family and carer support groups, therapeutic activities, ready access to highly skilled staff and community follow-up will provide the basis for better outcomes for those people who suffer from a mental illness.

"This new service marks a departure from the traditional acute mental health service and will open up exciting new opportunities for research into better mental health care for people who suffer from a psychosis or a mood disorder," Mr Iemma said.

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