



# **Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday, 5 July 2013

#### **NEW ERA OF HEALTH CARE BEGINS AT TAMWORTH HOSPITAL**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner and Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson today turned the first sod to mark the start of construction on the new \$220 million Tamworth Hospital.

Mrs Skinner said the five-storey redevelopment of the hospital will transform the delivery of health care to the people of Tamworth and surrounding communities.

"It's with great pleasure that I can join Kevin here today to mark this milestone occasion," Mrs Skinner said.

"Just two years since we stood at the steps of the original hospital to announce funding commitments, we're now turning the soil to see this redevelopment become a reality.

"I know the community joins me in my excitement to see this much-needed project getting off the ground.

"The NSW Government is committed to ensuring rural and regional communities receive best quality health care and our investment in the redevelopment of Tamworth Hospital exemplifies this commitment."

Mr Anderson said today's sod turn marked the beginning of a new era of health care for Tamworth.

"Today is significant in many ways. Regional NSW deserves the very best in health services and Tamworth will be at the forefront for providing those services for our communities.

"The new hospital will also be the drawcard for attracting and retaining health professionals to our region and will provide a work environment they are proud of.

"Abigroup, in partnership with Richard Crookes Constructions, the same company that built the new Narrabri Hospital and North West Cancer Centre, will work together on the construction phase," Mr Anderson said.

NSW Deputy Premier and Nationals Leader Andrew Stoner said today's sod turn marked a leap forward for communities across the New England region.

"We have fought for years to ensure the communities of Tamworth and surrounding areas have access to a state-of-the-art, quality hospital. This is an achievement for them and all the hard-working staff at Tamworth Hospital," Mr Stoner said.

This year alone contractors have demolished three old buildings, gently relocated two large palm trees and dug out 29,000 cubic metres (63,800 tonnes) of soil to create a 13,088m<sup>2</sup>

Mrs Skinner said the refurbished building will co-locate all ambulatory care services including outpatient clinics in one place.

“Care at this hospital will be completely patient-focused to provide all integrated services under one roof. This will be of particular benefit to patients with complex needs,” Mrs Skinner said.

The historic 1883 building will also be partly refurbished in keeping with heritage requirements.

The Tamworth Hospital redevelopment will be complete in 2016 and the new acute services building will provide new facilities for vital services including:

- Emergency department;
- Operating theatres, day surgery and recovery;
- Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit (ICU/HDU);
- Coronary Care Unit (CCU);
- Maternity unit, birthing suite and special care nursery;
- Paediatric unit (children’s ward);
- Pharmacy;
- Medical, surgical and palliative care units.

The redevelopment of Tamworth Hospital is supported by funding of \$100 million from the NSW Government and \$120 million from the Australian Government’s Health and Hospitals Fund.

While at Tamworth, Mrs Skinner and Mr Anderson also visited the hospital’s first pain clinic – a result of the NSW Government’s *Pain Management Plan 2012-2016*.

Mrs Skinner said an outcome of the plan has been the establishment of new pain clinics across the state.

“The NSW Government made a pre-election commitment to develop a pain management plan to ease the burden of chronic pain, improve the quality of life for people living with pain and assist them to return to the workforce,” Mrs Skinner said.

“We have committed \$450,000 to the Tamworth pain clinic to help those patients living with this debilitating condition.

“It’s wonderful to see firsthand here at Tamworth how this investment is changing the lives of patients and their families. I thank the hard-working staff for their dedication to this service.”

For more information about the redevelopment visit the website at [www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/thsr](http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/thsr)