

Monday, 26 June 2017

## Shoalhaven Hospital Intensive Care courtyard makeover

Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital will proudly unveil a revamped Intensive Care courtyard on Monday, 26 June – following a special project to beautify and enhance the area.

A team of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) staff – led by Clinical Nurse Educator, Christine Trost and Clinical Nurse Specialist, Kathy Schofield came together to raise money for the project, with the aim of creating a therapeutic environment for critically ill patients, their families and carers and staff.

Clinical Nurse Educator, Christine Trost said the project was made possible through the generosity and support of community members, local business and assistance of funding from the Veolia Mulwaree Trust.

“Our idea to refurbish the courtyard was about building on the invaluable work that takes place within the Intensive Care Unit. We wanted to enable more patients to access the outdoors as part of their recovery as well as help prevent sleep disturbance issues for long-term patients,” Christine said.

Evidence shows that sleep disturbance and stress whilst intubated in ICU can potentially delay a patient’s healing, increase sensitivity to pain and may even increase length of stay on the unit.

“One of the main focuses of the courtyard project was to be able to help recreate normal day and night routines by taking some patients outside to enjoy the sunshine, fresh air and a change in surroundings,” she explained.

The courtyard refurbishment included:

- A new roof that provides shade over the courtyard
- Access point for medical oxygen, air and suction
- New double-width access doors
- New plants and freshly painted garden beds
- Outdoor seating area for families
- Installations

“We’re really proud that the project delivers a range of enhancements – from practical changes like installing the double-width doors, which means that hospital beds can easily be wheeled outside, through to some of the more personal creative touches such as the installations,” Christine said.

A sign featuring the words of former ICU patient, Tim O’Brien has been erected on a metal board in the courtyard: *“To feel the sun on my face, was like water to a thirsty man.”*

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“Tim’s words really stuck in our minds as we worked on the enhancements and became a sort of motto for the project. We decided to include the quote in the courtyard as a way to really exemplify why this project was so important,” Kathy said.

“It’s about the difference some of life’s simple pleasures can have, whether it’s a patient being able to feel the warmth of the sun or breathing in fresh air or having a quiet, calming space where patient’s loved ones and even staff can go for a break from the highly stressful and emotional environment of the ICU.

“We’d like to thank the patients and families, community members and local businesses who have rallied in support of our idea and the many fundraising events we’ve held over the last few years to make this project a reality,” she said.

**Media Alert: Members of the media are invited to attend the official opening of the Intensive Care Courtyard enhancement project at 2pm on Monday, 26 June 2017 at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital.**