

Thursday 23 November 2017

\$3.4m Nowra Dental Clinic officially opens

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) will join Member for South Coast, Shelley Hancock and Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Gareth Ward to officially open the Nowra Dental Clinic this Friday, 24 November.

ISLHD Director Oral Health, Dr Mark O'Connor said the new \$3.4 million dental clinic provides the local community with increased access to primary prevention services and oral health education programs.

“Good oral health is an important component of general health, and access to care, together with education, are the first steps in reducing gaps in the oral health status of our community,” said Dr O'Connor.

“The clinic provides child and adult dentistry, dental hygiene services, denture services and specialist services such as oral surgery to eligible clients in the Shoalhaven region,” he said.

The purpose-built facility includes eight dental surgeries, which is double that provided in the original clinic, as well as enhanced diagnostic tools such as panoramic x-ray facilities and new accessibility equipment to enable the treatment of bariatric patients and users of wheelchairs.

The facility has also been designed to cater for future increases demand, with space and scope to expand specialty dental services over the next 10 years, if required.

Works commenced in April 2016 and were completed in the second half of 2017, with a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony recently held on site before staff transitioned into the new clinic and patient services commenced.

Opening of the new Nowra Dental Centre aligns with Oral Health 2020: A Strategic Framework for Dental Health in NSW, which supports NSW Health and Local Health Districts to plan and deliver priority programs tailored to the oral health needs of the community.

“The new facility follows other significant innovations that the Oral Health Service has rolled out this year,” Dr O'Connor said.

“At the end of July, our Service went live with Titanium, a state-of-the-art electronic clinical record and booking system,” he said.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

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The Titanium software replaces paper records with a completely electronic system – encompassing patient files, clinical notes and X-rays as well as a more efficient way to manage appointments and waiting lists and an increased reporting capacity. Online records also means that clinical information is accessible across the District, which assists with consultation and review by specialists.

“We were thrilled to be the pilot site for the state rollout of this software, which delivers a streamlined, more efficient and user-friendly way of working and is a major advancement for our Oral Health Service,” Dr O’Connor said.

The Nowra Dental Clinic is located at 9 Lawrence Avenue, Nowra adjacent to the Nowra Integrated Primary and Community Health Centre.

The clinic will be open 5 days a week. Access to dental services is via the Oral Health Central Intake Centre – Phone: 1300 369 651.

Information about accessing dental services

Dental services are provided free of charge to community members that reside within the District’s boundaries and meet the eligibility criteria:

- Child clients must be eligible for Medicare
- Adult clients (18 years and older) must be eligible for Medicare and hold (or are listed as a dependent on) one of the following valid Australian Government concession cards: Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

Media Note: Members of the media are invited to attend the official opening and a tour of the facility at **1.30pm, Friday 24 November** at the **Nowra Dental Clinic - 9 Lawrence Avenue, Nowra.**