

Wednesday, 22 January 2020

WORK STARTS ON WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL BIRTHING UNIT

A major transformation of Wollongong Hospital's Birthing Unit is underway, with work starting today on the \$2.2 million redevelopment that will provide a more modern birthing space for local women and families.

Maternity Operations Manager, Barb Atkins said the redeveloped birthing unit had been designed to best support birthing women during this special time.

"More than 40,000 babies have been born in the two decades since the Birthing Unit was last refurbished, so we're thrilled that work is starting on the ward that will benefit local mums and babies for years to come," Ms Atkins said.

"The design of the unit is focused on providing local women with access to safe and modern birthing practices in a fit for purpose space. The refurbishment also gives us the opportunity to provide a more welcoming atmosphere and less clinical feel to our birthing suites."

The redeveloped Birthing Unit will include fully remodelled assessment areas and bathrooms, custom made birthing baths, enhanced waiting areas to facilitate better flow through the unit and a colour scheme inspired by nature to provide a more calming setting.

The Hospital has worked closely with mothers, midwives and consumer advocacy groups, Better Births Illawarra, Illawarra Child and Infant Loss support group and the Aboriginal community to ensure local women have had input into the new design.

While construction is underway, birthing mums will be accommodated on the same level as the existing birthing suites in a ward that has been fully refurbished with the safety of women and babies as our highest priority.

"Feedback from women and support people during tours has been positive, and we're pleased we have been able to make changes where possible to ensure mums are comfortable in the temporary space. Some of those changes include additional privacy screens, increased signage and adding a more homely feel to the space," said Ms Atkins.

The 2019-20 budget for Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is \$998 million. This is an increase of \$40 million on the previous year's annualised budget.

ISLHD will also benefit from the NSW Government's \$2.8 billion commitment to recruit a record 8,300 frontline health staff over the next term, including 5,000 additional nurses and midwives.

Building works are expected to be completed by mid 2020. Information has been sent to women expected to give birth in the temporary space, and further information is available [here](#).

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

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