

Monday, 18 September 2023

## Wollongong Hospital new-look Children's Ward officially opens

The \$4.3million revamp of Wollongong Hospital Children's Ward has been officially opened today, thanks to a five-year partnership with i98FM Illawarra Convoy and the Illawarra Community Foundation.

The event was marked with a special celebration, including a live broadcast of the i98FM breakfast show with Marty, Christian and Bella. It was an opportunity for patients, families and staff to pay tribute to Convoy, and our incredibly generous community, for enabling the transformation of the Children's Ward.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Chief Executive, Margot Mains, sincerely thanks Convoy and the Illawarra Community Foundation for their generous support, which will benefit thousands of local children and their families for many years to come.

"The four-stage redevelopment of the Children's Ward has allowed the hospital to go above and beyond for our community, ensuring that the facilities we provide not only meet the clinical needs of our young patients, but also enhance the things that can make all the difference; convenience, accessibility, quality and comfort for both the children and their loved ones," said Ms Mains.

"This has been made possible thanks to the generosity of our amazing community and is testament to the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers who make Convoy an incredible event year on year. This project is truly a Convoy legacy."

Started in 2018, the Children's Ward upgrade project has included the refurbishment of all patient rooms, the relocation of the Hospital School, a new Family Room and Ward Playroom, new procedure room and clinical skills area, a new Medical Day Unit and the creation of two close observation rooms.

The final stage of the redevelopment was the much-anticipated Paediatric Assessment area and outpatient rooms, which will provide significant benefits to patients, families and staff.

Head of Paediatrics, Dr Simone Trist, said the outpatient rooms will enable the hospital to double its capacity to deliver multi-disciplinary clinics in the one location.

"That means a child who may need to see a few specialists will be able to see them in the one place, at the one time, reducing the need for multiple appointments and visits. In addition, our new assessment rooms will enable us to better support children with more complex care needs. A child with cancer or other serious conditions won't need to travel as often, as the new unit will provide services that they ordinarily would need to go to Sydney to receive, including chemotherapy and specialised infusions," said Dr Trist.

"My thanks also to the families and the amazing team of nurses, doctors, administrative and support staff who've been very tolerant with ongoing construction whilst also maintaining the smooth operations of a working hospital ward," she said.