



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

SHARON BIRD MP

Member for Cunningham

JENNIE GEORGE MP

Member for Throsby

MEDIA RELEASE

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**NEW EQUIPMENT TO HELP REDUCE ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING TIMES IN
THE ILLAWARRA**

Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, together with Member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird and Member for Throsby, Jennie George today visited Wollongong Hospital which has benefited from a \$402,754 contribution from the Rudd Government's Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan.

Minister Elliot said: "The funding has allowed Wollongong Hospital to purchase additional surgical equipment to help reduce the waiting times for elective surgery.

"By investing in more equipment, the Rudd Government is supporting hospitals to provide more elective surgeries within the clinically recommended times," Minister Elliot said.

Under the first stage of the elective surgery plan, \$150 million was provided to Australian hospitals to increase the number of elective surgeries being carried out. Under the first stage of the Plan New South Wales received \$43.3 million for 8,743 surgeries and carried out 12,153, exceeding the goal by 39 per cent.

Member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird said: "The Rudd Government is taking concrete steps to improve Australia's health and hospital system after twelve years of neglect by the previous Liberal Government."

Member for Throsby, Jennie George said: "These investments highlight the Government's strategy of targeting key pressure points in our health system, such as elective surgery."

A total of more than \$1.3 million will be provided to hospitals in the Illawarra as part of the second stage of the Rudd Government's Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan. Other hospitals to benefit include Shellharbour Hospital (\$461,151), Bulli Hospital (\$308,693) and Shoalhaven Hospital (\$153,904).

Minister Elliot was in the Illawarra visiting Wollongong and Kiama Hospitals to hear from front-line health professionals about the ways the Rudd Government can address the challenges in Australia's health system as part of the Government's national consultation

program following the release of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) report.

The NHHRC report made 123 recommendations for system-wide changes to Australian health care to improve Australia's health, hospital and aged care systems.

The Rudd Government has engaged in a consultation process to road-test the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission's proposed reforms.

All Australians are encouraged to contribute to the national debate on the future of our health, hospital and aged care systems via the Your Health website - www.yourhealth.gov.au or by sending their ideas to the Health Reform Taskforce, MDP 155, GPO Box 9848, Woden ACT 2601.