



25 June 2009

***Caring Together* for Shellharbour**

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, announced today nurses at Shellharbour Hospital will be free to focus on patient care and safety - not paperwork - with the appointment of six Clinical Support Officers (CSO) this year.

“Advertisements for the positions will be published in major daily newspapers on Saturday,” the Minister said.

“This is part of the \$117 million 2009-10 state budget roll out of the first stage of the government’s *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW*.

“Ward-based Clinical Support Officers will assist local nurses with administration and paperwork relating to recruitment, rostering, stock and supply orders and reports, to ensure they can spend more time caring for patients.

“The introduction of the CSO will allow for a changing in the role of the senior nurse who’ll become the *Nurse in Charge* or *Midwife in Charge*.

“The burden of paperwork will be removed enabling them to focus on coordinating services and care around the needs of each patient,” the Minister said.

That includes:

- Responding immediately to any deterioration in a patient's condition;
- Supervising the work of junior staff;
- Ensuring patients and their families understand what is happening with their care;
- Making sure patients’ meals are served appropriately; and
- Making sure ward areas are clean and hygiene standards are maintained.

Member for Shellharbour, Lylea McMahon, welcomed the announcement.

“The six Clinical Support Officers will enable Shellharbour Hospital to continue to provide first class services to local residents in the Illawarra,” Ms McMahon said.

“This comes on top of the 2009-10 state budget funding to double the number of renal dialysis chairs at Shellharbour Hospital to 12 to provide lifesaving dialysis to up to 48 patients per week and \$1.7 million towards the child and adolescent mental health inpatient services at Shellharbour,” she added.

Mr Della Bosca said NSW has one of the better public health care systems in the developed world but the challenges of increasing health costs and an ageing population need to be met.

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“The *Caring Together* action plan is the result of extensive consultation across the State and from working closely with doctors, nurses and other health staff,” the Minister said.

“While the NSW Government is getting on with the job of improving health services, the State Opposition wants to double the number of area health services from eight to 20, ripping \$300 million out of frontline services, the cost equivalent of 3,500 nurses,” he added.