DELIVERING DIALYSIS CLOSER TO HOME FOR THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN SYDNEY

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND WESTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT BLACKTOWN AND MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITALS EXPANSION PROJECT COMMUNITY DIALYSIS CENTRE, MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITAL
INTRODUCTION

Communities in NSW face a number of health challenges due to growing, ageing and moving populations. In Western Sydney, diabetes has emerged as one of the biggest short and long term issues with the latest hospital data showing that over 12,000 people in the area are affected by the disease. The number of people requiring renal dialysis is rising by 4 per cent each year. The risk is considerably higher in the region’s large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This proposal presents the recently completed MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITAL COMMUNITY DIALYSIS CENTRE: a critical piece of infrastructure that will make it easier for patients to access life-saving treatment closer to home. The $3.5 million centre – opened in March 2018 - is a significant investment in the health of the local community and the wider Western Sydney catchment.

Alongside delivering critical care, the centre has provided important opportunities for local employment and the creation of a space that is connected to the community, its environment and culture through an Aboriginal arts and cultural program.

The project team included staff, patients, carers and the community in our planning and design – a unique approach to engagement that has meant this is truly a facility for the community.

The new facilities also provide contemporary working environments for staff and more opportunities for training, education and research.

Health Infrastructure is proud to submit this project for consideration in the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue’s Project of the Year Awards and welcomes further questions from the selection committee to support this application.

DELIVERING CRITICAL CARE TO THE COMMUNITY

In 2015, the NSW Government announced the next stage of the $700 million expansion at Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals, to continue the transformation of these facilities into contemporary, well-equipped metropolitan hospitals. As part of the Stage 2 scope, the need for expanded dialysis services was identified as critical.

While Western Sydney Local Health District and its partners have a comprehensive plan to manage diabetes risk and prevent diabetes, a number of patients will inevitably require dialysis, resulting in intensive, lifelong, regular treatment which has a significant impact on employment, family and lifestyle.

There are nearly 800 patients receiving dialysis across western Sydney. Where at-home care is not possible, patients will require centre-based dialysis up to six hours at a time, three times a week.

Stage 2 of the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals Expansion Project delivered a refurbished and expanded Regional Dialysis centre and a new in-patient haemodialysis unit at Blacktown Hospital.

However, there was still a pressing need for a new service at Mount Druitt Hospital to care for patients in the community who were travelling up to 18 hours a week for treatment at Blacktown or Nepean Hospitals.

Objectives

- To deliver a contemporary, patient-centred facility for the Mount Druitt community
- To deliver best practice, contemporary models of care to meet the specific health challenges faced by dialysis patients
- To support an effective multidisciplinary approach, with medical nursing, allied health and support services contributing collaboratively to the patient’s care and well-being
- To implement a collaborative approach to design, involving meaningful consultations with stakeholders
- To provide a more contemporary working environment for staff and more opportunities for training, education and research
- To create a welcoming, non-institutional facility

“It’s really good. It’s closer for me – a lot handier. It’s good to have another facility to go to.

Rodney Bonnano, patient.
Benefits

Patient experience and access

The new centre has significantly improved the hospital experience for dialysis patients in the Mount Druitt area. With these critical services now located closer to home, patient care is more convenient and accessible.

The finished centre includes:

• 12 spacious treatment bays with room for a carer to stay with the patient
• Direct access to dedicated car parking with room for a community bus, which is essential for patients and carers attendance
• Easy access to main entry, public transport and food services
• Ready access to pathology, imaging and outpatient pharmacy services
• Consultation and interview room
• Kitchenette and multi-purpose room for activities or meetings

The Community Dialysis Centre currently provides 36 sessions per week and has the capacity to provide up to 144 session per week to meet future demand and ensure patients can continue to receive their care close to home. Due to the extensive amount of time spent in dialysis, patients, carers and staff felt it was critical for the centre to avoid the look and feel of an acute hospital treatment area. A calm colour palette, natural light, adjacent garden and patient amenities contribute to a supportive environment which emphasises comfort and well-being.

When we found out we were building a dialysis centre at Mount Druitt, there was a great degree of excitement. It’s quite a burden for haemodialysis patients. It’s five-and-a-half to six hours, three times per week for them so to be able to dialyse closer to home significantly reduces that burden. Staff and patients frequently comment on the ambience and feeling of calmness in the new centre.

Chris Gibb, Nurse Manager, Western Renal Service

Meaningful community engagement

To ensure the services balanced clinical requirements and community’s needs, the Project Team implemented a unique community engagement and user group strategy, whereby the centre was co-designed by staff, patients and carers working directly with planners, architects and project managers. This ensured the final product reflects not only the specific needs of dialysis patients and their families, but also the cultural needs of the community.

The new centre includes spacious treatment bays with room for a carer to stay with the patient; easy parking and public transport; natural light and outdoor respite areas.

A patient-centric arts and culture program was also implemented, to provide further connections between the centre and the community. This an ongoing commitment of Health Infrastructure, as we seek to create more dynamic and less clinical spaces for patients, staff and visitors.

At the recommendation of the Health and Arts Research Centre photographer Silia Cluff - a dialysis patient at Blacktown Hospital - was commissioned to photograph and interview patients for a series of photo and video stories for the centre’s physical and online gallery.

The program includes: Imagine!, a mixed media project using photography, video and dialysis consumables; Bubbles Gallery, an internal feature using dialysis water; Aboriginal welcome painting; and Living Library. The project revealed seldom-heard stories of loss, hope and experience. Patients have reported an improved experience of care, higher rates of satisfaction with the facility and more meaningful engagement.
Recognising Aboriginal Culture

This project is a wonderful example of working with the Aboriginal community to create a more inclusive facility. Blacktown has the largest metropolitan population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Around 8% of patients receiving dialysis at Mount Druitt are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and reflecting local Aboriginal culture and values in the new centre was an important objective to create a more accessible, less intimidating space for patients and their families.

An Aboriginal Healing Garden was proposed by local Elders as a means through which to link the clinical, natural and cultural environments.

The garden – created by artist Danny Eastwood and the Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre - includes seats and paving surrounded by traditional Aboriginal bush tucker, weaving and healing plants. The paving is painted with Aboriginal motifs and includes a contemporary fire pit for smoking ceremonies and celebrations.

The garden is designed to be shared by the nearby Palliative Care Unit and the rest of the hospital, providing benefits to the wider hospital community and a broader recognition of Aboriginal culture and its contribution to healing.

**Employment, training and long-term economic impact**

The Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals Expansion Project is expected to create 7,000 direct and indirect jobs in health and construction.

Health Infrastructure requires all Principal Contractors to meet or exceed targets for training and apprenticeships, opportunities for women in construction, and programs designed to boost Aboriginal employment.

The overall Kane Constructions contract at Mount Druitt Hospital (including the Community Dialysis Centre and Drug Health Unit) achieved 5042 apprentice hours, 1240 Aboriginal participation hours and 6220 total project training hours. Aboriginal participation included roles in contract administration, surveying, labouring, boilermaking and rigging.

The delivery of the centre has also allowed the local health district to expand its Aboriginal engagement. The service is currently recruiting an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, to be based at the Community Dialysis Centre. This position will provide support across the Western Renal Service, improving access to services and education and providing opportunities to address issues which may prevent Aboriginal people getting the best possible care.

More broadly, the contemporary new facilities will enable the Western Sydney Local Health District to attract and retain experienced healthcare staff to the service.

Investment in health capital doesn’t just mean better services. In the short-run, capital and operating expenditure directly increases economic activity. In the long-run, the service improvements provided by the infrastructure impact upon productivity, the population and participation within the economy.

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**OWNERS, DEVELOPERS AND PARTNERS**

Developer: NSW Health Infrastructure  
Stakeholder: Western Sydney Local Health District  
Design: Jacobs  
Major contractor: Kane  

In collaboration with:  
- Health Arts Research Centre  
- Aboriginal artist Danny Eastwood  
- Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre (including Native Nursery)  
- Men’s Shed (garden maintenance)  
- Artist Henryk Topolnicki, Art Is An Option  
- Silia Cluff, photographer and renal dialysis patient

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**COST AND COMPLETION DATE**

Cost: $3.5 million, part of the $700 million Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals Expansion Project  
Project start: Mid November 2016  
Construction complete: Late 2017  
Services commenced: 5 February 2018

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**CONTACT**

Bruno Zinghini  
Executive Director, Western Region, Health Infrastructure  
02 9978 5406 • 0403 572 851  
bruno.zinghini@health.nsw.gov.au