MEDIA STATEMENT

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Wide Bay cancer care and oral health get $35m boost

Construction has begun on state-of-the-art oral and cancer care facilities to be co-located in new premises in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay.

What amounts to an effective doubling of Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service cancer care and dental capacity in those cities has been jointly funded to the tune of $35m by the Queensland and Federal Governments.

More cancer patients will now have access to chemotherapy closer to home and extra dental chairs will provide the capacity to reduce the maximum wait for treatment to 12 months.

This expansion in oral health and cancer care services will also create nursing and medical jobs in the public health sector when the services become operative in 2015.

“The start of construction marks the most significant event in the two year history of the Wide Bay Hospital Health Service and Board,” Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board Chair Dominic Devine said.

“Full credit must go to the Queensland and Federal Governments for funding these buildings.

“These facilities will establish the Wide Bay as a significant regional cancer care hub and provide enough new dental chairs to make a real impact on our waiting lists.”

The $18m Bundaberg facility will have 12 chemotherapy chairs with two additional isolation bays which more than doubles existing capacity to administer chemotherapy.

The suite will also have cancer care specialist consultation suites and a production pharmacy.
The dental floor will include 13 dental chairs as well as a lab and a central sterilising department and will provide a general and specialist oral health service. At present there are only six dental chairs operating in Bundaberg.

The $17m Hervey Bay facility will have 14 chemotherapy chairs with two additional isolation bays along with cancer care specialist consultation suites and a production pharmacy.

Hervey Bay Hospital currently has 10 chemotherapy chairs that will be moved into the purpose built facility.

The dental floor of the Hervey Bay facility will have 16 chairs, a lab and a general and specialist oral health service. This doubles the number of dental chairs in Hervey Bay and adds to the 15 dental chairs in operation at Maryborough Hospital.

WBHHS chief executive Adrian Pennington said the development of quality medical infrastructure meant it would be easier to attract specialists to work in the region.

“Two medical oncologists have already been recruited in anticipation of these new cancer care facilities coming online,” Mr Pennington said.

“We already have in place a public-private partnership to deliver radiation oncology services to the people of the Wide Bay and these new chemotherapy chairs will take our delivery of cancer care services to a whole new level.

“On the dental front, our success in bringing down waiting lists already makes us attractive employers to dental specialists and having purpose built facilities will add to this.

“There are seven new dental teams already using the new dental chairs in Maryborough and with extra dental chairs coming to Hervey Bay and Bundaberg, we will have the infrastructure to sustain higher volumes of dental work.”

Onsite inductions for local contractors and a cultural heritage induction have taken place at the Hervey Bay and Bundaberg construction sites and fences were erected last week.