

The Minister for Health,
Jillian Skinner



No more fudged waiting lists

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, is delivering on her promise to increase transparency and stop hospitals fudging elective surgery waiting lists to artificially inflate performance figures. The change means the public will be told the truth about surgical waiting lists – for the first time in 16 years. Under Labor, many hospitals were instructed to refuse to accept thousands of elective surgery bookings each month to ensure politically-sensitive waiting lists appeared to be under control.

That practice will now stop. “I’ve ordered a change in policy to ensure that all those patients that Labor tried to hide away so they could make dishonest claims about performance will now be placed on official waiting lists,”

Mrs Skinner said. “It is shocking to me to think that Labor was attempting to run a health system without ever knowing how many people were needing treatment. Instead of fixing the system, they spent all their time dreaming up schemes to manipulate and obfuscate.”

Waiting lists were expected to grow, but the number of people waiting will not change, she said.

“These people were always waiting – it’s just that Labor refused to put them on official lists because they did not want the public to know the true state of the health system,” she said.

“This government is committed to transparency. You cannot run a health system when the real facts are hidden in a drawer somewhere.”

Castle Hill to host North West Rail Link community information centre

Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian today announced the North West Rail Link Community Information Centre would be established at Castle Hill.

Addressing a breakfast meeting of the Sydney Hills Business Chamber at Norwest Business Park, Ms Berejiklian said the centre would be adjacent to Castle Towers at 299 Old Northern Road. The centre would be open within weeks, she said.

“Castle Hill is an ideal central location for the community to have its say and find out more about the North West Rail Link over the lifetime of the project,” she said. “We want feedback about this project and everyone’s views are important. “We hope that the community will take the opportunity to visit the project team once the centre is open, and will keep coming back as the project develops and evolves.”

Ms Berejiklian also foreshadowed plans to take mobile displays to other locations along the route in order to consult with as many people as possible.

“Important centres such as



Minister for Transport
Gladys Berejiklian

Rouse Hill, Baulkham Hills, Norwest, Cherrybrook and Epping will be the focus of an energetic program of consultation which will include shopping centre displays,” she said. Ms Berejiklian said the information centre would be open from Monday to Saturday. It would also provide a venue for out-of-hours information sessions to cater for residents who work during the day.

She encouraged the constituents of her colleagues Greg Smith (Epping), Dominic Perrotet (Castle Hill), David Elliott (Baulkham Hills), Ray Williams (Hawkesbury), Kevin Conolly (Riverstone) and Bart Bassett (Londonderry) to make use of the information centre.

City funds new creative spaces for community groups

Three underused properties in the inner city are set to be transformed into new spaces for artists, employment training, asylum seekers and youth mentoring under a proposal approved by Council.

The City’s Accommodation Grants program supports non-profit, locally based organisations by giving them a new home in City-owned buildings at nil or below market rent. “We’re reactivating real estate in the heart of our city and giving community groups access to spaces they couldn’t otherwise afford,” said Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP.

“These buildings will soon become home to everything from a fringe arts collective to a training centre for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These are important non-profit organisations who work directly with local residents and businesses to make our city a more inclusive and innovative place.

“As part of our Sustainable Sydney 2030 program, we are committed to supporting our creative industries and community organisations, because we know they have rich social and economic benefits for our global city.”

The five community groups awarded accommodation grants to access City properties in Redfern, Woolloomooloo and Waterloo are:

- 107 Projects Inc, an artist’s cooperative run by a group of local, successful fringe art galleries who will use the space for low key film nights, poetry readings, creative working bees, artist studios and rehearsals and workshops;

- PLACE – Partners in Learning and Community Enterprise, a TAFE-sponsored program that runs employment and training programs for disadvantaged City residents looking to get involved in Sydney’s green and creative sectors;

- The Tribal Warrior Association’s Youth Mentoring Program, a group that promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and provides economic and social stability to local Indigenous communities through youth mentorship programs, employment skills, maritime programs and practical assistance;

- Rinse Out Inc, a local arts organisation committed to providing unique, creative and sustainable artistic opportunities for both artists and audiences in Sydney via festivals including the Underbelly Arts Festival and the City’s own Art & About; and

- The Asylum Seekers Centre of NSW, a Surry Hills based organisation that provides a practical support to asylum seekers living in the local community, to expand their client base and continue providing services including housing support, health care, employment assistance, education and training and financial advice.

The Accommodation Grants program, one of the City’s 18 grants and sponsorships programs, currently funds 65 organisations in 46 buildings and is worth over \$2.4 million in revenue foregone.

For more on grants and sponsorships in the City, visit:

www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/grants

TAFE Illawarra celebrates Cultural Diversity Day at Shellharbour Campus

TAFE Illawarra will host its ‘Bridging Cultures’ Diversity Day on Thursday 9 June at Shellharbour Campus.

This event is an opportunity to break down cultural myths, barriers and stereotypes on Campus and facilitate a sense of community.

The event will be a day of celebration that will feature stalls and cultural displays, multicultural food, entertainment from different cultural groups including the Cinnamon Twist belly dancers, Arabic drumming, a living library and a graffiti artist will be demonstrating art on a car body donated by Dapto Pick-A-Part. The ‘living library’ is a unique way of bringing people from all types of backgrounds, religions and culture together to share personal life experiences.

“The ‘living books’ have been selected from our diverse range of students on Campus who have an interesting story to tell,” said Joanne Pollard, Teacher



Community Services, Shellharbour Campus. These ‘books’ have been ‘donated’ by Shellharbour Campus and the wider community to showcase and celebrate diversity. “The diversity on Campus brings many cultural, social and work experiences into the classroom and adds to the quality of the Institute’s teaching and learning environment,” she said. The event is coordinated through a partnership between TAFE Illawarra’s Community Services teaching section, Illawarra Multicultural Services, Illawarra TAFE Student Association (ITSA), and the Community Services Section of Shellhar-

bour Council. “This project is designed to give students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their competency in working effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers,” said Joanne. “The main aim of the event is to develop a sense of belonging and inclusion for all those who are part of the TAFE community,” she added. “Not only are we showcasing the talents and skills of culturally diverse students past and present, we are highlighting the assets and skills of current Community Services students and celebrating the diversity of the broader Illawarra community in which we live,” she said.