

5 September, 2013

## Sutherland Hospital gets a healthy boost from 'Let's Get Fresh' volunteers

Sutherland Shire residents can breathe easier with the official opening of a Respiratory Lung Function Laboratory at Sutherland Hospital on Friday 13 September, 2013 – thanks to the support of the Hospital's 'Let's Get Fresh' volunteers.

More than \$70,000 was donated towards the set-up of the Respiratory Lung Function Laboratory through the sale of healthy food items at the 'Let's Get Fresh' food outlet located in the Hospital Atrium.

Cath Whitehurst, Director of Operations, St George and Sutherland Hospitals said Hospital volunteers and fundraising groups are to be commended for their tremendous efforts in raising funds for the purchase of items and equipment for the improved care and comfort of patients at Sutherland Hospital.

"Twenty-five hard working volunteers currently work at the 'Let's Get Fresh' food outlet, which has raised more than \$800,000 for the purchase of medical equipment since its opening in 1998," Ms Whitehurst said.

"Volunteers working at the Hospital's Kiosk, Gift and Book Shops also raise funds for the purchase of medical equipment and the improvement of patient amenities at the Hospital," she said.

Dr Con Archis, Head of the Respiratory Unit at Sutherland Hospital said the Respiratory Lung Function Laboratory is now operating five days per week and is the only publicly-funded lung function laboratory currently operating in the Sutherland Shire.

"The service treats around 20 patients each week who undergo breathing tests that provide information on how their lungs are working," Dr Archis said.

"This assists in the investigation and management of a wide range of lung conditions, including asthma, smoking-related diseases and other complaints of breathlessness.

"It also gives the treating doctor a record of how severe the patient's lung function is and allows for the patient's symptoms to be monitored following treatment of their lung condition," he said.

Referrals to the laboratory may be from a respiratory specialist or a general practitioner. Patients receive the results at the end of the test to take with them for their next doctor's appointment. All tests are covered by Medicare.

Ms Whitehurst said Sutherland Hospital is fortunate to receive ongoing support from its volunteers, fundraising groups and the community it serves.

"Generous contributions such as this show just how much people value their local hospitals and how important they consider the work of our healthcare staff in caring for those in need of medical attention," she said.