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St George Hospital Cancer Care Centre celebrates 21 years of caring

This week marks 21 years since the official opening of the Cancer Care Centre at St George Hospital. Since opening more than 850,000 services have been provided to cancer patients – an increase from 32,000 in the first year to 54,000 in 2014.

Prior to 1994 St George and Sutherland community patients needed to travel out of area to access the full spectrum of specialised cancer services and access to new research and treatments.

Since its inception, the Cancer Care Centre has offered a one-stop shop and whole of person care for people requiring treatment for cancer as well as a variety of non-cancer conditions, such as non-malignant blood conditions and benign tumours.

Associate Professor Peter Graham, Acting Director of Radiation Oncology, said the centre has brought together in a single location Medical Oncology, Haematology, Radiation Oncology and full support services.

“This includes allied health team members such as specialty support nurses, speech pathology, cancer specific dental care, physiotherapy, social workers, psychology support and integration with palliative care services,” Associate Professor Graham said.

“The Cancer Care Centre has become a leader in clinical and basic scientific research and co-ordinates a variety of national and International projects. It provides advanced teaching to both medical specialists in training and current specialists wishing to adopt techniques applied at St George Hospital.”

Sustained community engagement with fundraising of millions of dollars has been key to the ongoing development of facilities, including the Bezzina Lodge and the Prostate Cancer Institute.

“Landmarks including the Bezzina Lodge which provides on-site accommodation for patients and families who require access to specialist treatments from distant locations; a dedicated CT scanning radiotherapy planning suite, a brachytherapy operating suite and associated facilities and expansion of the Clinical Trials Unit make up the Cancer Care Centre as we know it today,” Professor Graham said.

“The Prostate Cancer Institute, located within the Cancer Care Centre offers the most comprehensive and sophisticated range of treatment options available in Australia to men for the management of prostate cancer.

“We are fortunate to have the ongoing support of local businesses and community groups including the Cancer Care Centre Foundation and the former Prostate Cancer Institute Fundraising Committee, to provide support for further imminent major redevelopments of the physical facilities of the Cancer Care Centre. This includes the expansion of consulting areas and the refurbishment and expansion of chemotherapy treatment areas.

“This week our staff join patients and the community to celebrate more than two decades of caring and we look forward to the delivery of even more effective treatments and support for our patients over the coming decades.”

Photo opportunity: To celebrate 21 years of caring a cake cutting event will be held in the Cancer Care Centre on Wednesday 11 February at 12 midday.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

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