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KERRY SHINE MP

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Builders on schedule for \$9.55 million cancer care project at Toowoomba Hospital

Improved cancer services for locals are on the horizon with the Toowoomba Hospital's \$9.55 million Regional Cancer Care Centre on schedule for practical completion in March 2012.

Member for Toowoomba North Kerry Shine inspected the work site today along with Darling Downs Health Service District Acting Chief Executive Officer Dr Peter Bristow and other health staff.

Mr Shine said the expansion of cancer care services for the Darling Downs region was part of the Bligh Government plan to deliver more services, sooner and closer to home for local residents," he said.

"It's unfortunate that the incidence of cancer is expected to grow by 4.2% per annum in the 10 years between 2006 to 2016.

"This means that during 2006, 407 Queenslanders were diagnosed each week with cancer but by 2016, it's projected that every week 580 Queenslanders will be diagnosed with cancer.

"The new cancer care centre includes a state-of-the-art 24-bed ward providing 12 cancer and haematology service beds and 12 palliative care beds and will help ensure the Darling Downs is well positioned to meet increasing demand into the future."

The cancer care centre will be located at the western end of the main ward block at the hospital, above the oncology outpatient area within the existing surgical block.

The funding from the Commonwealth Government also included the addition of four chemotherapy chair services at the existing Toowoomba Hospital Oncology Day Unit.

"Most families on the Downs have had experience with cancer either in a family member or friend and Queensland Health is committed to expanding services to cater for this increasing demand," Mr Shine said.

"Last year the Queensland Government committed \$3 million to assist the Cancer Council to purchase and renovate the Olive McMahon Lodge which provides cancer patients and their families with accommodation during outpatient treatment at Toowoomba Hospital.

"This construction of the cancer centre at Toowoomba Hospital is part of a series of co-ordinated improvements to improve access to cancer services for people from Toowoomba, the Downs and the South-West.

"Toowoomba Hospital has a committed group of health professionals treating cancer patients and we look forward to working with them in bringing a high standard care to the people of the Darling Downs," he said.

Mr Shine said Toowoomba Hospital cancer care staff members had worked with architects Bickerton Masters Architecture, a Brisbane-based architectural practice specialising in health care, education, aged care and community buildings, to create a functional unit and maximise the use of space.

"It is expected that practical completion of the project will be by March 2012," he said.

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