



Government Media Statement

15 April 2009

**Lara Giddings
Minister for Health**

**Sid Sidebottom MP
Federal Member for Braddon**

State of the Art Endoscopy Suite for Mersey Community Hospital

Health Minister Lara Giddings and Federal Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom today opened a \$500,000 state-of-the-art Endoscopy Suite at the Mersey Community Hospital.

Ms Giddings said the suite would use cutting-edge technology to provide top level care for North West residents needing endoscopic procedures such as colonoscopies or gastroscopies.

“We are seeing a projected increase in demand of 38% for these procedures across the region this financial year, which is in part due to the Australian Government’s National Bowel Screening Program,” Ms Giddings said.

“Mersey Community Hospital will be able to meet this demand by opening the new Endoscopy Suite, together with the appointment of a new Gastroenterologist, and by centralising all endoscopic procedures.

“Relocating endoscopies to Mersey will also free up theatre space at the North West Regional Hospital for additional major surgery, helping to reduce waiting lists in other areas.

“This is great news for the North West community and I congratulate CEO Jane Holden and her team for their hard work and innovation,” Ms Giddings said.

The new Gastroenterologist, Dr Jarrad Wilson, will take a leading role in setting up a direct referral system for GPs to streamline the patient pathway through the system.

Federal Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom MP said the additional services being provided at the Mersey are a direct result of the significant Commonwealth investment in the Mersey Hospital. The Commonwealth is providing \$180 million over three years.

“The new system is excellent news for the community as in most cases patients would no longer need multiple appointments at the hospital before having the procedure and results will be fast tracked back to their doctor, eliminating a potentially anxious wait for people,” Mr Sidebottom said.

North West Area Health Service CEO Jane Holden said the new suite and direct referral system demonstrated a commitment to putting the patient first.

“Opening a state-of-the-art Endoscopy Suite is just one of many services we are committed to improving, and streamlining, so the community can get the best level of care without having to leave the North West.

“At the Mersey alone we have boosted Oncology services by 50%, increased eye surgery by 50% and have opened a new medical Sub-Acute Care Unit.

“We have also committed to involving the community in decision making by establishing a North West Area Health Service Network Advisory Group,” Ms Holden said.

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