



Southern Inland Health Initiative

Community information – Shire of York March 2013

York is among the communities that will benefit from the planned capital works and health workforce improvements as part of the \$565million Southern Inland Health Initiative.

2013 will see lots of activity, as we continue to plan a raft of improvements to health care across the southern inland catchment area.

What does this mean for the community of York?

New health care networks

New health care networks are being developed under the initiative. York is part of the Northam district network. Northam hospital will undergo a significant infrastructure upgrade as part of the \$147.4million District Hospital and Health Services Program.

As at March 2013, 18 new doctors have commenced practise in the southern inland catchment – with one of these doctors working in the Northam network.

By signing on to the Southern Inland Health Initiative, doctors are offered attractive incentive packages, as well as a number of benefits such as an improved work/life balance and greater peer support and professional development opportunities.

In addition, there is provision to support Primary and Aboriginal health care services to York as part of the Northam network.

Active campaigning to attract more doctors to southern inland towns is ongoing.

Infrastructure upgrades

Getting the right mix of health services to fit community need is key to the Southern Inland Health Initiative. Extensive planning was carried out over 2011/2012 to make sure all money invested in infrastructure upgrades and refurbishment accurately reflects the health needs and priorities of individual communities – both now and in the future.

York Hospital was one of 36 sites to undergo a Building Condition Audit. These audits have identified enabling works that will be carried out in 2013 and will provide essential facility upgrades to improve access to health services and will go towards creating a safer environment for patients and staff.

In addition, services planning workshops have been held across sites to map out community demographics and information on the current and future health needs of the community.

York Hospital is one of a cluster of hospitals and health centres that will share over an estimated \$2.8million of capital funds for these early enabling works.

This is part of an overall investment equalling more than \$20.3million which has been invested over 2012/2013 for site specific enabling works, planning and other capital infrastructure such as Telehealth equipment across the 36 sites.



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It is important to note that these essential enabling or early works are the first part of an extensive infrastructure process across the southern inland catchment. Planning for the next stage of capital works across the southern inland catchment area is now underway.

Innovative Telehealth technology

The use of Telehealth technology is the way of the future for many regional communities. New ambulatory care Telehealth equipment has been installed in York, which means people can access a range of health services from metropolitan Perth via videoconferencing.

A new Emergency Telehealth Service (ETS) is providing patients and staff in smaller and country hospital sites with state of the art access to high quality emergency medical care. The ETS currently services 19 country hospitals in the southern inland catchment and is available from 8am to 11pm Monday to Sunday at York Hospital.

This service – which is also available at Northam Hospital – provides doctors and nurses at these hospitals with access to specialist emergency physician advice and to high quality videoconferencing technology, supporting emergency care to rural patients.

This important technology will link small hospitals to emergency physicians to give accurate diagnoses, prompt advice and guide local nursing staff through treatment options.

The ETS is not intended to replace or reduce the need for locally based General Practitioners in the provision of emergency medicine – rather it is designed to enhance the services and expertise already provided by GPs to their patients in regional communities.

Primary health care

Primary health care services are being strengthened under the initiative through the development of partnerships and links between health providers from government, private, not for profit and volunteer sectors.

Primary Care Integration Coordinator, Karen Beardsmore, is working with local community members and health service providers to help develop partnerships and links between services across these sectors. This will help build the primary health care services to meet the needs of the community – including vulnerable groups such as the elderly, Aboriginal people, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and mental health support.

A partnership with Silver Chain will help improve care for those with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease. Primary Health Nurse Practitioner Keith O'Brien – who will work across the Western Wheatbelt – will work closely with General Practitioners, nursing posts, hospitals and community health centres to help people with chronic health conditions.

Find out more: visit health.wa.gov.au/southerninland for news and updates