

Friday, 8 May, 2009

\$700,000 STATE GOVERNMENT RADIOTHERAPY BOOST FOR BALLARAT

The Victorian Government will invest \$700,000 to boost Ballarat radiotherapy services, building on a \$20 million 2009 State Budget commitment to expand Ballarat Hospital services, the Premier John Brumby announced today.

In Ballarat today, Mr Brumby said the radiotherapy equipment funding would allow staff at the Ballarat Austin Radiation Oncology Centre to manage patient workload more effectively by enabling clinicians to assess patient positioning faster and with a higher degree of certainty.

It follows a \$20 million 2009 State Budget announcement this week to redevelop facilities to implement a Coronary Catheterisation Laboratory and six day beds at Ballarat Hospital.

“The Victorian Government is taking action on health to support families in regional Victoria in tough global times and for the future,” Mr Brumby said.

“Our Government is providing a social safety net for regional Victorian families through the Global Financial Crisis, to ensure they can access world-class public health care.

“As well as delivering funding for world-class hospitals, the State Budget will also provide a boost to regional economies and jobs through construction, with this budget alone securing up to 35,000 Victorian jobs.

“This \$700,000 in funding will upgrade the current patient information system and replace the ageing portal imaging panel on the linear accelerator equipment. It will ensure the Ballarat service is better aligned with the Austin Hospital in delivering the latest treatment techniques.”

Mr Brumby said the Victorian Government was working with the Ballarat Austin Radiation Oncology Centre to ensure it could meet the growth in demand for local radiotherapy, including the recent decision on extended operating hours.

“Expanding the service is a priority and the Government is currently assessing options to ensure that the best care can continue to be provided for cancer patients from the Ballarat region,” he said.

Health Minister Daniel Andrews said the \$20 million redevelopment at Ballarat Hospital would establish a coronary catheterisation laboratory, which will improve services and responses for people with heart disease. It will provide six day beds for their treatment.

“The funding will also expand the women’s health and children’s unit to meet increasing demand in the region,” he said.

“It will provide two extra Special Care Nursery cots, taking the number to 12, bringing together birthing, maternity and special care nursery facilities. The boost will also be used to refurbish an historic building which is part of the hospital site so it can be utilised as a central administration area.”

Member for Ballarat West Karen Overington welcomed the funding.

“These upgrades will also provide an incentive for the recruitment and retention of the highly specialised staff required to operate radiotherapy services at Ballarat.”

