

The Dubbo Hospital Stroke Unit is getting two purpose-built double rooms on the Coronary Care Floor of the new hospital building, and the doors are set to open to patients in early 2021.

We sat down with Stroke Care Coordinator, Deb Sloane to find out what the new unit will mean for staff and patients.

### *What is the Stroke Unit and what's your role?*

I've been working as a Stroke Care Coordinator since 2012. Dubbo Hospital has a regional referral and thrombolysis centre for stroke patients, including early aspects of rehabilitation.

As the Nurse Care Coordinator, I oversee the patient's journey, from the moment they present to the Emergency Department with stroke symptoms, through to the Imaging Unit, into the ward, and on to rehabilitation (at Lourdes) or discharge.



Left to right: Lisa White, Nurse Unit Manager for General Ward, Deb Sloane, Stroke Care Coordinator, and Rima Chaurasia, Acting Bed Manager.

### *Where is the current Stroke Unit?*

Our Stroke Unit beds are currently situated in General Ward but our Stroke patients can be spread across different wards such as the High Dependency Unit when patients have had thrombolysis.

While our nurses are multi-disciplined in terms of patient care, it's much more effective and efficient if all the stroke patients are located in one place. Patients who suffer stroke also seem to benefit from seeing other stroke patients doing rehabilitation exercises.

### *What will be some of the other key benefits of the new Stroke Unit?*

In the new unit, we'll have two double rooms to offer better patient privacy. There will be more space for visitors, and nurses will have access to ceiling hoists to move patients from the bed to the bathroom when required. The unit is also close to Allied Health where we can initiate early rehabilitation to get patients moving sooner and aid recovery.

We designed the unit to meet the best practice National Stroke Guidelines, which focuses on the right person, providing the right care, in the right place at the right time.

Having a dedicated Stroke Unit will also relieve some of the pressure in the Emergency Department, with the improved ability to admit stroke patients directly to the unit.

### ***Did you participate in the planning and the design of the new unit?***

Yes. I'd never even built a house before so it was initially a daunting task, but the redevelopment team were very supportive and helped to guide us through the process.

During the planning and design process we visited several other Stroke Units across the state and used some of their insights to design our own service.

The Intensive Care team also assisted us greatly in the design due to our close service relationship. Being co-located with the Coronary Care and Intensive Care Units and on the same floor in the new building will be very beneficial for us.

### ***Will the Stroke Unit have access to new technology?***

Yes. Patients who present to us with a stroke need to be sent to the Medical Imaging Unit first to diagnose the type of stroke they've had so they can receive the right treatment.

Our Stroke Unit will benefit greatly from a new MRI machine, which Dubbo Hospital hasn't had before. The Medical Imaging Unit is also getting a second CT Scanner. These key new pieces of imaging equipment will make us more efficient and mean that patients can access all the necessary diagnostic and treatment services in one place.



Aerial photo of the new three-storey clinical tower  
Sept 2019

### ***What are you most looking forward to?***

I am really happy with the final design of the new unit and all the staff are very excited about moving in.

Many staff have indicated an interest in joining the new Stroke Unit team when its up and running.

I'm looking forward to seeing the first stroke patient successfully complete their journey through our new unit. We are working on streamlining all our processes now so we are ready when the doors open.

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