

## Interview with Lyn Smith

**In mid-2021, construction on the new \$35 million Western Cancer Centre at Dubbo Hospital will be complete. The NSW Government is delivering this important community project with a \$25 million contribution from the Federal Government.**

**Dubbo local, Lyn Smith who has been a keen community advocate for the new centre, spoke to us about her involvement.**

### **How did you become involved in the Western Cancer Centre?**

In 2015 Dubbo Hospital Oncologist, Florian Honeyball spoke to our Dubbo West Rotary club members about the need for a PET Scanner in Western NSW, and we wanted to help. After further discussions with interested parties we set our sights on delivering an entirely new cancer centre for Western NSW. Community support was enthusiastic throughout Western NSW, and nearly 46,000 people signed a petition which helped Federal Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton secure funding as an election promise. Some additional funding from the NSW Government meant we had enough to be able to build the Western Cancer Centre Dubbo.

### **What is your experience with cancer?**

While my father died of oesophageal cancer and my husband survived bladder cancer, this is not what drove me to be involved. While working with teachers in western NSW schools, I saw the problems of inequitable access country people have to services. I don't think people living in rural areas should be disadvantaged. I have also heard of country



Lyn Smith

people diagnosed with cancer who have refused treatment rather than travel far from home, leaving their families and livelihood or unable to afford the cost of travel and accommodation for so long.

### **What has it been like to be involved in the Western Cancer Centre project?**

I remember hearing about the PET scanner at that first Rotary meeting and never dreamt it would lead to this marvellous outcome. It has been rewarding to be involved, from the campaign to participating in the design process. The reactions from people in the community have been so encouraging. It is been amazing to collaborate with all the different community groups to see so many points of view contributing to the cause.

## How will the new Western Cancer Centre benefit patients and family members?

For me, the most obvious benefit will be that people in Western NSW will no longer have to travel to Sydney for some cancer treatments and diagnosis. The cancer centre will attract the right doctors and nurses to Dubbo to treat patients. It is really exciting that ancillary services will be included to support patients and their families during and after their medical treatment. We are working in conjunction with Macquarie Homestay, which provides comfortable and affordable accommodation for patients and families who need to travel for treatment at Dubbo Hospital.

## How has the community been involved in the design of the new Centre?

We have had lots of consultation about all the

details of the project. From the detailed planning to the colour of the chairs and deciding on the views for patients being treated.

It has been a collaborative effort between the planners, the clinicians and the community.

I have been fortunate to be one person contributing to a real community achievement by people of Western NSW. I pay tribute to everyone who has come together to make this happen.

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**When complete, the new Western Cancer Centre Dubbo will include 16 chemotherapy spaces, a bunker for radiation treatment, a PET CT scanner for cancer diagnostics, clinic rooms and a wellness space to provide support services to patients and families.**



*Drone footage taken recently of the Western Cancer Centre taking shape.*