Sunday 15th February 2015

LABOR ANNOUNCES NEW $40 MILLION NURSE WALK-IN CENTRES IN ILLAWARRA/SHOALHaven TO EASE PRESSURE ON EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

Labor Candidate for Kiama, Glenn Komeitz, says he is delighted with the announcement that a NSW Labor Government will establish Nurse Walk-in Centres in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven, Western Sydney, and on the Central Coast to relieve the pressure on overstretched hospitals.

Labor has committed $40 million to employ up to an additional 45 nurses and establish four Centres –where local hospitals are struggling to cope with Abbott and Baird Government funding cutbacks.

- Experienced nurses will provide free medical advice between 7.30am and 10pm for patients aged two and older with minor injuries and illnesses who would otherwise clog emergency departments at local hospitals;
- The Centre will operate seven days a week on a walk-in basis;
- A Medicare card will be required for admission; however patients will not be charged;
- People will be referred to other healthcare services as required;
- The service will be housed within an existing community health centre, with the exact location determined in consultation with the Local Area Health District.

“This is a great announcement from Labor. It is an exciting new approach to healthcare in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven – and it will make a huge difference for families in the Kiama Electorate. Everyone in our local community knows how hard it is to access health services late at night or on the weekend,” said Mr Kolomeitz.

“The Nurse Walk-in Centre will be convenient and open seven days a week.

“Labor is determined to give families and senior citizens in the Kiama Electorate another option to obtain free treatment for minor illnesses and conditions, and I will work closely with my Labor colleagues in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven to make sure that the clinic meets the needs of everyone in the area.”

“This is a smart strategy to take the pressure off Shoalhaven Hospital and Shellharbour Hospital which are being battered by the Abbott and Baird Liberal funding cuts.

“Labor will deliver real improvements to health in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven without relying on privatising electricity, which seems to be the Baird/Abbott answer to everything.”

Nurse Walk-in Centres represent a new approach to health in NSW. They are based on similar models successfully introduced in the United Kingdom in 2000 and the ACT in 2010.

Labor has repeatedly noted that Shoalhaven Hospital and Shellharbour Hospital are among those being stretched to breaking point after $15 billion was cut by Tony Abbott and a further $3 billion by
the Baird Government.

Under national benchmarks, hospitals must treat 91 per cent of emergency patients within 4 hours – but local hospitals are way off the pace. As at September 2014, patients attending Shoalhaven Hospital Emergency Ward faced the third longest wait of any hospital in NSW.

QUICK FACTS
Nurse Walk-in Centres would treat patients with the following conditions
- Colds, sore throats and flu;
- Ear wax
- Cuts and abrasions;
- Bites and Stings;
- Skin conditions;
- Casts;
- Minor illness such as gastroenteritis; and
- Minor injuries

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