



IT'S all systems go for the official opening of stage one of the extensions to Gosford District Hospital on February 23.

Builders are now putting the finishing touches to the \$8.3 million building which will eventually house 120 beds.

State Minister for Health Mr Stewart will officially unveil a plaque to open the hospital.

The additions will provide work for more than 400 people with an estimated 243 to be employed on the nursing staff, 20 on medical staff, 25 on para-medical duties, 17 in administration and 97 in maintenance, engineering and catering.

Hospital information officer, Mr Peter Bailey, said staff were wading through thousands of applications for the available jobs.

There are now 228 beds at the hospital, although some of these will be phased out when the 120 bed stage one opens.

It is the first section of what Health Commission authorities hope will be a modern 400 bed complex.

Mr Bailey said the 120 beds would fill a desperate gap in hospital care on the Central Coast.

An underground tunnel now links the new hospital with the old building.

In addition to the extra 120 beds, the new hospital will provide:

- An operating theatre suite with six theatres, five for major operations.
- Accident and emergency department.
- Temporary intensive care and coronary units.
- Extensive kitchen and catering facilities.
- Courier and communication areas.
- Admission and discharge area.
- Patient transfer areas.
- Plant room.

The hospital wards will be serviced by a series of "hospital streets" with small electric cars which will carry linen and other cleaning facilities.

New hospital building set for opening

Each of the 30 bed sections consists of six four bed and six single bed wards.

All wards have observation windows for easier supervision.

Internal features include the carpeting of all ward wings through corridors, lounges and ward areas.

Mr Bailey said it was hoped to have the hospital fully operational by June.

The opening comes nearly five years after preliminary planning began in March 1975. Construction began in September 1977.

State Minister for Health, Mr Stewart laid the foundation stone in February, 1978.

Completion of the project is only six months behind the original projected finishing date.

Mr Bailey said planning for stage two had already commenced and a development brief had been prepared and was in the hands of Health Commission officials now.

Stage two of the project will integrate with stage one.

Chief executive officer, Mr Neville Boyce, said stage one was only the beginning of hospital expansion on the Central Coast.

"Population is always increasing and we must plan for it," he said.

"We are presently pressing the State Government to get the second stage underway but at the moment it's a waiting game."

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