



*For immediate use*

## **Local Club comes to aid of Braeside Hospital Donation for electric 'tilt-in-space' wheelchair**

The Leo McCarthy Memorial Smithfield RSL Club has donated \$10,000 to Braeside Hospital to go towards a specialised electric 'tilt-in-space' wheelchair. President Brian Marsh and Senior Vice President Mick Lightowler presented their cheque to Hope Healthcare Chief Executive Officer, Bill McLaren at Braeside Hospital on 16 August 2004. The wheelchair supplier made available a wheelchair for a photo-opportunity with Mr Marsh.

What makes this wheelchair special is a fully adjustable headrest and backrest enabling tailoring to the patient and pressure cushion, for those significantly disabled. The wheelchair would be available from the equipment loan pool, allowing patients to use the wheelchair at home whilst awaiting supply of an appropriate wheelchair funded from government programs. The project will assist a range of patients of the rehabilitation ward at Braeside Hospital who may be dealing with stroke, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis or other neurological problems. Braeside's Occupational Therapy department will assess which patients require the wheelchair.

The benefits of the wheelchair are numerous. The availability of a suitable wheelchair for patients to use when being discharged from hospital will allow some patients to go home, when previously, due to a lack of appropriate seating, they may have had to go to a nursing home, thereby decreasing costs to the community. It will also decrease costs to patients and their families by reducing or eliminating the need to pay a large weekly fee to hire a suitable chair, whilst awaiting approval for supply of a wheelchair through government programs.

Bill McLaren, Chief Executive Officer, Hope Healthcare, expressed his gratitude to the club. "The Smithfield RSL have been major supporters of our work at Braeside Hospital since we opened in 1996. They have come to our aid again, now helping us provide better rehabilitation outcomes for patients dealing with a range of disabling illnesses or injuries. We are very grateful for their help."

*Sydney 17 August 2004*

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