

STAFF INSIGHTS

Nepean Hospital Operating Suite

Fifteen operating theatres are being delivered in the new 14-storey hospital tower as part of Stage 1 of the Nepean Redevelopment.

We spoke to Nurse Unit Manager of the Anaesthetic and Recovery Department, Terry Williams about his involvement in the planning and design process and what he is looking forward to in the new tower.

In addition to overseeing approximately 85 anaesthetic and recovery nurses, Terry Williams is heavily involved in the planning process for the new Operating Suite within the 14-storey tower. He has attended user group meetings for schematic design, detailed design and been involved in the selection process for major medical equipment, furniture, fixtures and smaller equipment.

It's not the first time Terry has been involved in a redevelopment at Nepean Hospital, having experience in the planning and design process of East Block almost a decade ago.

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“I’ve enjoyed being part of the process – collaborating with a project team and working with my staff to get the right workflows and functions in place before the move,” said Terry.



3D layout of an operating theatre room

The new Operating Suite will take up the entire floor on level three of the 14-storey tower, underneath the Sterilising Department, and will feature 15 operating theatres and 32 first stage recovery beds.

One of the biggest changes for the Operating Suite will be the bigger footprint and larger operating theatres.

“We’re going to have to change how we work and how we store and access things because of the increased size and change in floor layout,” said Terry.

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During the planning and design phase, staff representatives, including Terry, were invited to attend user group sessions with the lead design team to discuss the unique needs of their department, using the Australasia Health Facilities Guidelines as a starting point.

“While the health facility guidelines are a great place to start to design a unit, the final version may be very different [after user group discussions],” said Terry.

“For example, in the new Operating Suite recovery rooms, we wanted recessed lights in the ceiling instead of lights hanging from the ceiling for mini procedures to reduce cleaning times and improve the nurses’ ability to see across the whole room.



Artist impression of Nepean Hospital Tower

“The recovery rooms will also have 1500 cm nib walls between patient beds, giving patients more privacy while also providing a good line of sight between staff members and better communication. This is really important in recovery areas where things can change very quickly.

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More floor space within the operating theatres will also make the unit function much better.

“We will still suspend equipment from the ceiling like we do now, but the extra space will allow for better work flows,” said Terry.

“More floor area means we won’t need to worry about machines taking up too much space and it will be easier to get patients in and out of the operating theatre and to the recovery rooms.”

Terry thinks that being in the tower will also improve relationships with other units, especially being closer to the Emergency Department, which will be only a few floors down.

“Our goal is to reduce the surgery wait times and have emergency surgery processed as quickly as possible so people can get better and go home sooner,” said Terry.

Terry says he is looking forward to the new technology that will be available in the new tower.

“Better technology such as monitoring machines and electronic records in the future means we’ll spend less time transferring information and have more time to focus on the patient – the most important person in the room.”

Construction on the new tower is scheduled for completion in 2021.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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