

THE ANAM CARA CENTRE



L-R: Past President Marg Adams, Treasurer Deanne Herreen, President Mary Atkins and CEO Michael Krieg.

St John of God Ballarat Hospital celebrated the official opening of the hospital's new day oncology facility – *The Anam Cara Centre*. The Anam Cara Centre is an 11 chair \$1.7m new oncology centre and is located on level one of the hospital's medical services building. The funds to complete the building were all sourced from community donations.

The facility includes new windows to improve the outlook for patients and a well-being area is located away from the treatment area where patients and families can access educational material whilst enjoying tea and coffee in a peaceful environment.

St John of God Ballarat Hospital's Chief Executive Officer Michael Krieg said the day oncology service has been operating out of the inpatient ward but with significant increase in patient numbers over the last couple of years a dedicated centre was required. "The design of the facility included input from caregivers and for the first time consumer representatives joined the design meetings," Michael said.

Oncologist Craig Carden said the previous facility housed four chairs with the possibility for it be expanded to six as required. "I think the availability of chemotherapy chairs has increased with the increasing population," he said. "People spend hours waiting to have chemotherapy, waiting to have preparation medication to prevent nausea and then having the actual treatment."

One of the patients who will use the new facility Jodie Downey has been attending St John of God for chemotherapy treatment since August. "I think the key thing for me is that, I had three treatments in the previous place, this is specifically for day oncology, so you don't feel like you are part of the hospital," she said. "You do feel like you are part of it but more as a visitor, (the old facility) was part of the ward whereas here it seems quite different. It is lovely and there is a lot of natural light. Aesthetics are important anywhere but particularly when you are going through something because you want to be somewhere nice because it will make you feel better." Ms Downey was diagnosed with breast cancer in June this year.



"It (the new facility) is an uplifting place to be," she said. "For me this place is symbolised by the care that is given, I have experienced the best care through the nurses, the oncologist and the people here. The treatment has been fabulous and it does make you feel better. Your healing happens when you are treated like that, you are treated well and treated like a person and people respond to you. It is huge."

The space formerly used to provide day chemotherapy services on ward 1 West will be used for an additional four inpatient beds. Local building contractor H. Troon Pty Ltd completed the construction works within four months.