

Cairns Post



Cairns Private Hospital is set to grow to 140 beds next year, following a decision by Ramsay Health Care this week to commence a major expansion of the hospital. The \$16 million development will see a further 56 private patient rooms added in a new tower block to be built on Abbott Street which will include all new modern and spacious private rooms with ensuites

Cairns Private Hospital set for \$16m expansion

DANIEL BATEMAN, The Cairns Post
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HEALTH services in the Far North will receive a much-needed injection with a \$16 million expansion of Cairns Private Hospital.

Hospital owner Ramsay Health Care is about to commence the biggest upgrade of the facility in its 63-year history, which kicks off with a refurbishment of the oldest units in the hospital, including the maternity ward.

The first major stage of the expansion will involve adding 56 private patient rooms in a new tower block to be built along Abbott St in Cairns North.

Each of the modern and spacious private rooms, all with ensuites, will be purpose-built to accommodate patients recovering from general and orthopedic surgery.

This will bring the total number of beds offered at Cairns Private to 140.

The next stage of the expansion, a refurbishment of the hospital itself, will include a new operating theatre, providing a total seven theatres.



NEW START: Maree Millar-Brooks with baby Griffin Millar-Brooks and midwife Jem Olsen. Picture: Brendan Radke.

There will also be an upgrade of rehabilitation services, with plans for a 25-bed inpatient ward as well as rooms for day patient programs and a gymnasium.

A new dedicated cardiac ward is also planned for the hospital.

The expansion, which is set to commence in February, will see the addition of 75 new health workers to the local private sector across several disciplines, including nursing, allied health, catering, cleaning and administration.

It is the largest upgrade of the hospital to occur at the Upward St site since it was founded by the Little Company of Mary in 1951.

Ramsay Health Care has committed to employing local construction crews.

Development plans are to be submitted to the Cairns Regional Council for final approval early next year, with the project expected to be completed by February 2016.

Cairns Private Hospital chief executive Shane Mitchell said the hospital expansion was driven by patient demand.

“We’ve basically reached capacity here for our private patients,” he said.

“So we are giving back to our local region with a significant improvement in our services.”

He said the project would also attract new specialists and other specialist clinical staff to the region.

The new theatre will allow the hospital to enhance its surgical services, allowing laser procedures for general surgery and urology, which are not currently offered in the Far North. The major new development will follow a series of service upgrades, including the opening within the next two weeks of the hospital’s new 21-chair renal unit.

Renovations to the hospital foyer, maternity and day chemotherapy units will also commence shortly.

The Queensland Government announced earlier this week that from February 1, patients will be referred to alternative public or private hospitals if their local health service is unable to operate on time.

Mr Mitchell said the private hospital expansion, once completed, would help alleviate patient demand within the public health system.

“So we obviously see that demand with our renal and ophthalmology contracts at the moment at our Cairns clinic,” he said. “We’re assisting with beds at the moment.

“Our focus is our private patients, but we will obviously assist the public on demand.”

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