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Member for Ginninderra
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“Babies in Beanies”

Last Sunday I attended a very happy event at the Canberra Hospital on behalf of the Chief Minister. I participated in the award ceremony for the Canberra *Babies in Beanies* competition.

This competition was organised by Leonie Keogh of Snowgum Studios to raise funds for the Neonatal Intensive Care Foundation.

This year the judging was tough with 139 babies entering the competition. The entry fee was \$30 and parents sought sponsors for their children. Two parents raised \$800 each. A total of \$9900 was raised for the Foundation by this event.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Foundation provides valuable equipment for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit that is useful for the continuing improvement of the service but that is not available through normal government channels.

Of course the Government remains the primary source of funding for the NICU but community involvement through fundraising highlights the fact that Canberra is a community and allows people to show they care. Fundraising is an effective way of bringing a community together, especially when it has an entertaining result such as this.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Mr Peter Cursley, chair of the Neonatal Intensive Care Foundation, and his Board.

The foundation also does great work in supporting research and education activities so that the Unit can contribute to our knowledge of problems of the newborn.

I also acknowledge Associate Professor Zsuzsoka Kecskes, Clinical Director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and her staff.

I understand that the unit admits approximately 650 babies each year, and that more than 150 of these babies need assisted ventilation using sophisticated equipment not available elsewhere.

Staff in the unit recognise the essential role of parents as part of the care team. Parents are not considered visitors and are welcome 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This unit has also been the first Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Australia to implement a webcam service.

The NICUCAM was launched in January 2010. Parents can view their children over the internet when they are unable to be with them in the hospital and this can be a great comfort to them.

You may be aware that the ACT Government has funded a new Women's and Children's Hospital. The new hospital is being built at the northern end of the Canberra Hospital campus around the existing Maternity building, which will be renovated and incorporated in the finished facility.

It will be a state-of-the-art, three-storey facility on the Canberra Hospital campus. Paediatrics, maternity services, the neonatal intensive care unit, gynaecology and foetal medicine and specialised outpatient services will be collocated in one place.

Construction began in July 2010; with stage one of the construction involving an expansive extension being built beside the existing Maternity building. This is expected to be operational in the first half of 2012.

Stage two will involve a major refurbishment of the existing Maternity building and will be completed in the following year.

The Women's and Children's Hospital will provide 146 beds. It will also provide an increased number of ambulatory care (outpatient) consulting rooms; clinical office space; education and training facilities; and family accommodation. There will be a play ground and landscaped spaces.

The Women's and Children's Hospital at Canberra Hospital will set the benchmark for women's, paediatric and new born care within Australia.

I congratulate the Minister for Health for this additional funding.

In conclusion, I was very pleased to be part of the awards ceremony for the *Babies in Beanies* photo competition. The work carried out by the Neonatal Intensive Care Foundation contributes to our wonderful hospital and is greatly appreciated.