



Monday 29 November 2021

RENOVATIONS GIVE FAMILIES OF SERIOUSLY ILL KIDS A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Families of seriously ill kids from across the Hunter and Northern NSW will be able to stay at Newcastle's Ronald McDonald House in a little more comfort thanks to a \$124,000 grant from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation.

The renovations to three of its units, located on the John Hunter Children's Hospital campus, are complete. Each unit has a new kitchen, bathroom, laundry, flooring, window coverings and a fresh lick of paint.

Ronald McDonald House Newcastle CEO Ross Bingham said the units reduce the impact of illness because family members can live close by while their child gets treatment. Children can also receive treatment at the hospital but stay with family at the House.

"A study of 200 supported families confirmed that staying close to the hospital brings benefits for the family experience, for their psychological wellbeing and for their perceptions of child recovery," Mr Bingham said.

"The funding from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation was so important because the units hadn't been upgraded since they were built 14 years ago," he said.

"They had wear and tear and were becoming hard to clean – which can be very important if a child has a compromised immune system."

"We rely on the generosity of the community and grant funding, like Newcastle Permanent's, to deliver all of our services for families across the northern NSW region."

The renovation project started in 2020 and because of high demand for the units, was completed on a rolling basis. There are six units in total at the Newcastle House which are home to more than 600 families each year.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Chair Jennifer Leslie visited Ronald McDonald House this week to take a look at the finished product.

Ms Leslie said Ronald McDonald House staff and volunteers play such a vital role in the care of really sick kids by giving them and their families a home away from home. "As a parent, I can appreciate how important it is to be able to stay close to your seriously ill child, particularly if you live hundreds of kilometres away and your child is in hospital for weeks or months at a time," Ms Leslie said.

MEDIA RELEASE



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“The other beautiful thing about the House is the sense of community. Families have independence and privacy, but communal facilities help families going through similar experiences to connect with and gain support from each other.”

Ronald McDonald House Newcastle has received a total of \$225,000 from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation over the past eight years. Its outdoor play space was renovated in 2013 and its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Family Room Volunteer Project received a funding grant in 2017.

To find out more about Ronald McDonald House Newcastle’s services or to volunteer or support its work visit rmhc.org.au or call 4921 4733. There is also a Ronald McDonald Family Room at Gosford Hospital (Central Coast) and a five bedroom home at Tamworth Hospital (New England).

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