

MEDIA RELEASE

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Chisholm Cottage – Renovated, Refurbished and Ready for Regional NSW Families in Need

Chisholm Cottage – Sisters of Charity Outreach’s low-cost, shared accommodation service for regional NSW families needing to stay in Sydney for medical services and hospital stays – was officially re-opened today by The Honourable Rick Colless, MLC.

Often referred to as “a home away from home” by regional families, Chisholm Cottage is one of a very limited number of affordable accommodation offerings located near the busy Westmead Hospital campus in western Sydney. The cottage is one of several no- and low-cost core services operated by Sisters of Charity Outreach, a not-for-profit, community service organisation which has been actively addressing unmet social need in the community since 1990.

Opened in 1996, Chisholm Cottage was temporarily closed on October 3 last year to allow for a major upgrade - including roof replacement, renovation and refurbishment. Now complete, it is again ready to serve community needs, providing up-to-date, functional and contemporary accommodation facilities.

“Chisholm Cottage has been a ‘home away from home’ for regional NSW families and individuals coming to Sydney for medical services since 1996,” said The Hon. Rick Colless, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources and Western NSW.

“It’s vitally important that kids and families from the bush have the same access to quality health care and medical services as those living in our city centres. Chisholm Cottage enables this access by providing much-needed, affordable accommodation for those times when they have to come to the city for medical treatment.”

Sisters of Charity Outreach General Manager, Gary Sillett is proud that Chisholm Cottage now offers an even more comfortable haven for those families seeking affordable accommodation in the Westmead area - especially during what can be a traumatic time away from the comforts of their own home, family, friends and community.

“Coming to Sydney for a medical procedure or appointment for your child or family member is already a significantly stressful and costly experience. This can become even more difficult when families need to find affordable, comfortable, friendly and flexible accommodation that’s right near where they need to be, sometimes day and night,” Mr Sillett said.

“We know from those who’ve stayed here from all over regional NSW during the past 21 years, that affordable accommodation is incredibly hard to access and in limited supply near the Westmead Hospital campus. Sisters of Charity Outreach is committed to easing that burden on them - which is why we’ve been determined to ensure that the new-look, even more comfortable and modern Chisholm Cottage is once again ready to be their ‘home away from home’.

“Additionally, Chisholm Cottage today re-joins Country Care Link, Sisters of Charity Outreach’s no-cost transport service for those travelling to medical appointments within Sydney, as our second core service for regional NSW families in need.”

Founded in 1996 by the Catholic Women's League, Parramatta (CWL), Chisholm Cottage has been managed by Sisters of Charity Outreach, on CWL's behalf, since March 1, 2011. Through CWL's generous and benevolent support, Sisters of Charity Outreach acquired the cottage on December 22 last year.

"The members of the Catholic Women's League are delighted to see that all their dedication and hard work since 1996 will continue. We look forward to Sisters of Charity Outreach building upon our legacy of Chisholm Cottage – by continuing to provide affordable accommodation to those regional families in need in a homely and safe environment," Colleen Fuller, President, Catholic Women's League, Parramatta said.

In the 27 months (July 2014 – Sept 2016) prior to closing for its upgrade, Chisholm Cottage hosted 742 adults and 352 children from various areas of regional NSW, amounting to a total 1,885 booking nights and saving guests over \$72,000 total p.a. in accommodation costs in Sydney. Those guests came from dozens of regional NSW towns and cities, including Tamworth, Dubbo, Grafton Woolgoolga, Griffith, Coonamble, Maitland, Yamba, Innisfail, Cobar, Wollongong, Armidale, Orange, Taree, Cowra, Coonabarabran, Bowraville, Yass, Coffs Harbour and Wagga Wagga. Demand has been strong since bookings re-opened three weeks ago (in mid-June).

The refurbished Chisholm Cottage now offers four, separate, secure bedrooms – a double room, a twin room (two single beds), and two, family rooms (for three people). Guests share two, easy-access bathrooms and a fully-functional communal kitchen and relaxing TV lounge, where they can prepare their own meals (food self-supplied), enjoy the company of other guests and staff, and access free Wi-Fi. The property has been re-furnished, thanks to leading Australian online furniture and homewares retailer Temple & Webster– www.templeandwebster.com.au - who provided all-new, contemporary lounges, beds, bedding and accessories.

"Catholic Women's League, Parramatta, Temple & Webster and our other business and trade supporters' incredible generosity has meant Sisters of Charity Outreach has been able to create and provide an even more comfortable haven for rural families needing to find decent, value-for-money accommodation while they access health care in Sydney," said Sisters of Charity Outreach's Gary Sillett.

Mark Coulter, CEO of Temple & Webster added: "We feel very privileged to be able to work with Outreach to make the experience of those families they support that little bit more comfortable and positive. At Temple & Webster we pride ourselves on bringing beautiful solutions to our customers. So, it's wonderful to have the opportunity to bring more beautiful and welcoming spaces to life for the people and families at Chisholm Cottage."

Chisholm Cottage is managed by a live-in accommodation manager and staffed by a dedicated team of friendly, fully-trained volunteers, all of whom have passed Police and Working with Children checks. Room rates are: \$60 per night for each of the double rooms or the twin room (max 2 guests each); and \$80 per night for the triple room (max 3 guests/2 adults)

For all Chisholm Cottage Bookings Call (02) 9633 4228 or email chisholmcottage@outreach.net.au

Sisters of Charity Outreach General Manager, Gary Sillett is now available for interviews.

Hi-res photography of the new-look Chisholm Cottage is available for media to download

direct from: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nwzjoe2ef1aj1t/AAAWWI7jgM22COE0J4iUIIata?dl=0>

For all media enquiries: Stephen Cook on (02) 9410 2313 or 0414 683 689.

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