



St Vincent's Health Australia Ltd

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Wednesday 14 June 2023

The Hon Ryan Park MP  
Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

**Re: Decommissioning of St Joseph's Hospital Auburn**

I am writing to advise that, after careful consideration and consultation – and with the agreement of the NSW Ministry of Health – St Vincent's has taken the difficult decision to seek your approval to decommission St Joseph's Hospital, currently a small (39 bed), sub-acute public hospital in Auburn operated by St Vincent's Health Network Sydney.

While St Joseph's Hospital has a proud history of public health service provision to our community, the viability and sustainability of the campus has been under question for many years due to a lack of scale and ageing infrastructure.

Over the past eight years, St Vincent's has worked with the NSW Ministry of Health to identify a viable strategic option for St Joseph's Hospital within the future healthcare system. There were multiple options explored – related to both Westmead and Auburn – to enhance scale and amenity. Despite significant efforts to explore these options, the NSW Government has prioritised investment in other facilities across the region. This supports our vision to enhance our contribution to the system through our Darlinghurst campus.

Considering this, the St Vincent's Board has made the difficult decision to decommission the St Joseph's Hospital Auburn site and transfer key services to the St Vincent's Hospital Sydney campus in Darlinghurst and other nearby public health providers.

The decommissioning is proposed to take effect from 18 September 2023.

As always, our people and patients are our central priority. We are working very closely with the NSW Ministry of Health and our community and other partners to ensure that the decommissioning process, and the transition of health services to St Vincent's Darlinghurst and other providers, is smooth and that our staff, patients, and their families are well supported.

I want to underline that there will be no loss of health services to the NSW public as a result of this decision. In fact, with the transfer of activity to St Vincent's Hospital Sydney's Darlinghurst campus, we will expand several services to be available statewide, enhancing health care access for people across NSW. This includes in the areas of mental health, rehabilitation, palliative care, and heart lung transplants.

Plans are currently being formulated to transfer St Joseph's Huntington's Unit and Motor Neurone Disease Clinic to the Western Sydney Local Health District.

St Joseph's staff will be offered redeployment opportunities across St Vincent's and the broader NSW health system or will follow their transitioned health service to a new employer (eg: the Huntington's Unit to Western Sydney Local Health District). A small number of staff may need to be offered voluntary redundancy and we will work closely with the Ministry in managing this process under the relevant guidelines.

As noted above, the transfer of St Joseph's services to St Vincent's Sydney in Darlinghurst – augmented by the campus' bold home-based care and virtual health strategy, particularly in the area of mental health – allows us to continue to serve the people of NSW in advance of the delivery of the Cahill-Cater Redevelopment, which is currently under active consideration by the NSW Government.

As you may be aware, the Cahill-Cater Redevelopment underwent a Gateway Review through Infrastructure NSW in November 2022, which noted the critical service need for expanded capacity at St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst.

St Joseph's Hospital has a long and proud legacy for both the community and St Vincent's. St Vincent's will ensure that this legacy is acknowledged and continued through the ongoing work of St Vincent's Health Network Sydney and the broader St Vincent's organisation.

St Vincent's looks forward to working together to proceed with this plan.

Yours sincerely



Sandra McPhee  
Chair Delegate  
St Vincent's Health Australia