

■ New day respite centre opens its doors as part of Calvary redevelopment

Dementia care boost

By Deborah Field

THE state's newest dementia day respite centre, at Calvary Health Care Sydney, Kogarah, officially opened Monday.

Mary Potter House is expected to provide respite to about 400 St George and Sutherland Shire residents in its first year alone.

It now provides diversional activities, nursing and allied health services, outings and overnight stays for about 200 people with dementia and their carers.

The unit was the cornerstone of Calvary's \$7 million redevelopment, which included the community-based aged care rehabilitation service Calvary Community Health.

The new services are housed under one roof along with the St George aged care assessment team, a geriatric rehabilitation service, an adult brain injury respite program and mobility service teams.

Mary Potter House was named after the Venerable Mary Potter, who founded the Little Company of Mary in England in 1877, under which auspices the Calvary group operates.

Calvary chief executive Karen Edwards said the opening of Mary Potter House and Calvary Community Health was the most significant event in the hospital's history.

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Dementia is the single greatest cause of disability in people aged over 65, affecting about 73,000 NSW residents.

It is forecast to become the third-greatest source of health and residential aged care spending within the next 20 years.

Figures from the 2011 census showed 11.4 per cent of Kogarah and Hurstville residents provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability in the fortnight leading up to the count.

This compared with 10.9 per cent in Rockdale and 12 per cent in the shire.



A fresh start: Bishop Terence Brady, Jim Longley, John Ajaka, John Watkins, Mark Doran, Sister Bernadette Fitzgerald, Bill D'Apice, Deanna Schreiber, Karen Edwards, Martin Kennedy and Susan Uhlmann were among dignitaries who celebrated the opening.

Picture: Jane Dyson