



Dudley pooling its resources

By CLARE COLLEY

A HYDROTHERAPY pool, two new theatres and 16 recovery beds could be up and running at Dudley Private Hospital by mid-next year if a \$5 million expansion is given the green light.

The hospital's chief executive officer Trevor Matheson said the project had been made possible thanks to \$1.445 million received from the federal government's Health and Hospitals Fund (HHF) 2012 budget as part of an initiative to improve healthcare services for rural, regional and remote areas.

The hospital's operators, Ramsay Health Care, will pay for the rest, with the building work expected to cost \$3.17 million and the furniture and fitout bringing the project's total costs up to \$5 million.

The pool will predominately be used by the hospital's patients, but Mr Matheson said community groups will also have the option to use it for a small fee.

"We don't offer hydrother-

apy as much as we could," Mr Matheson said.

"It will now be a one-stop service. We've already got our rehabilitation program running strong."

Mr Matheson said hydrotherapy benefits patients who have undergone orthopaedic surgery, helps reconditioning, improves fitness prior to surgery and is also used for pain relief.

He hopes preliminary work will start on the indoor pool backing on to Wolsley Street and two theatres by the end of this year after the development is approved by Orange City Council.

"They're usually pretty proactive when it comes to health services' development applications, but it will depend on the comments

from the neighbours," he said.

With the hospital's three operating theatres currently at full capacity, the two new theatres will cater for extra specialists in orthopaedics and neurology wanting to work from Dudley.

"It's one of the things you pay your private health insurance for," Mr Matheson said.

An extension to the western side of the hospital's northern wing will make way for 13 recovery beds and the existing theatres will also be upgraded.

Fugen Constructions has been appointed as the builders and will employ local contractors, Mr Matheson said.

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GRAND PLANS: Dudley Private Hospital chief executive officer Trevor Matheson and rehabilitation director Dr Fran Gearon are looking forward to the hospital's new hydrotherapy pool and expansion. Photo: LUKE SCHUYLER 09241sdudley2



IN THE PIPELINE: An artist's impression of the proposed hydrotherapy pool building.