



Media Release
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Ground-breaking technology taking paediatric care to unprecedented levels

A revolutionary development in paediatric care, launched today, will vastly improve the diagnosis and treatment of the state's sick and injured babies and critically ill children.

Variety's Vision for Life will enable the expert opinion and clinical support of the state's best medical specialists to reach all corners of NSW, thanks to new state-of-the-art tele-medicine technology.

Funded by Variety – the Children's Charity with support from NSW Health, and facilitated by NETS (the Newborn and paediatric Emergency Transport Service), the \$7 million program involves the installation of high quality video and sound technology in local hospitals.

Each Vision for Life installation – which includes a camera with remotely-controlled pan, tilt and zoom functions as well as a monitor and built-in microphone – allows NETS specialists remote access to the consultation and retrieval process.

This enables the local doctor to connect – via sound and vision – to real-time diagnostic assistance regardless of the hospital's geographic location, distance or level of care.

Dr Andrew Berry, NETS Director, said until now most remote diagnosis and support of a premature baby or a sick or critically injured child has been by telephone without any ability to see the child who is being described.

“With *Variety's Vision for Life*, the clinical telephone conference call with NETS and other experts is enhanced by vision.

“This allows for a more accurate diagnosis and will help avoid unnecessary patient transfers.”

Equipping a nursery or children's ward with Vision for Life technology costs \$30,000 while transporting just one sick child to a specialist hospital can cost up to \$28,000.

Health Minister Jillian Skinner said the NSW Government is proud to partner with this program.

“Geography should not disadvantage those living in rural and remote areas and this program will help ensure the Government continues to provide first-class health care across the State, regardless of where you live.”

The program is being rolled out across the state following a pilot in Campbelltown and Liverpool.

The technology has already been installed in Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Grafton and Kempsey while a further 14 hospitals are set to receive the technology in the next few months.

These include Gosford, Wyong, Belmont, Cessnock, Kurri-Kurri, Singleton, Tamworth, Armidale, Bathurst, Mudgee, Taree and the John Hunter Children’s Hospital, thanks to a \$475,000 gift from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation.

Tam Johnston, Chief Executive Officer for Variety, said further corporate support would be a crucial step towards the ultimate goal of bringing the program to every neonatal nursery and children’s ward in NSW.

“Our aim is to introduce *Variety’s Vision for Life* to more than 200 hospitals across NSW,” Ms Johnston said.

ENDS



**For further information about Variety - the Children’s Charity visit www.variety.org.au
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About Variety – the Children’s Charity

*Variety-the Children’s Charity is a national not-for-profit organisation committed to empowering Australian children who are sick, disadvantaged or have special needs to live, laugh & learn. By giving practical equipment, programs & experiences, Variety helps children in need to overcome whatever obstacles they face & live life to the fullest. Simply put **Variety HELPS KIDS BE KIDS.***

EVERY MONTH, Variety Australia delivers more than \$1.2 million in individual and institutional equipment grants, filling the gaps often left by governments and other organisations. Variety is often a family’s last resort to secure equipment, vital to their children’s wellbeing.



For information about NETS, or to arrange an interview, contact:

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NETS is part of The Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network. It is a statewide service located at Westmead in Sydney. It serves hospitals across NSW, the ACT and beyond. Children are transported to the nearest appropriate hospital; often to a tertiary hospital in Sydney, Newcastle or Canberra.