

## **BEREAVEMENT BAGS COMFORTING FAMILIES AT ROYAL NORTH SHORE**

Losing a loved one is a devastating time in anyone's life – but volunteers at Royal North Shore Hospital are trying to support grieving families with a simple initiative.

Hand-sewn bereavement bags, used for the handing over of possessions, have been introduced replacing traditionally used plastic bags.

Northern Sydney Local Health District's clinical director of palliative care Dr Katherine Clark said the bags were a compassionate measure for people at a difficult time.

"The possessions of a person who has died in hospital may become tangible memories of great sentimental importance so they should be handled with appropriate care and respect," Dr Clark said.

"Being able to hand someone's possessions back in a handmade cloth bag rather than something more impersonal like plastic seems like a really small thing, but we've been told by people it can be quite comforting."

Currently three volunteers, including Dr Clark's mum Margaret, have stitched around 40 bags.

Margaret said sewing the bags had been a rewarding experience.

"We enjoy making the bags, but main pleasure comes from the fact that we might be helping families at a time of great sadness," she said.

"We are a small number of ladies, but we hope we are making a difference."

If you would like to sew or contribute to the production of bereavement bags, please contact Rachel Holbrook on 9463 1214 or [rachel.holbrook@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rachel.holbrook@health.nsw.gov.au)