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MEDIA RELEASE

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ANOTHER STEP FORWARD FOR NEW MAITLAND REGION HOSPITAL

Positive progress is being made on the NSW Government's commitment to plan for a new hospital in the Maitland region, Health Minister Jillian Skinner and Member for Maitland, Robyn Parker announced today.

"The site selection process for the new hospital in the Maitland region is due to begin next week," Mrs Skinner said.

"This is great news for the local community and demonstrates that the NSW Government is getting on with the job of delivering on its commitments.

"I know the community is keen to see the planning work for future health services in this region progressing and it's great to see the Hunter Valley Health Services Planning Project discussing options with clinicians and the community.

"This project is about much more than a new hospital for the area, it's about planning for the future health of this region – something Labor forgot during their 16 years in Government.

"This is an exciting opportunity to plan for improved health services from traditional hospitals for the acutely unwell to rehabilitation facilities, day-only and outpatient services, and community health and primary care services.

"Community leaders, health organisation, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals are all being involved in the process to highlight the type and range of services required for any new hospital."

The NSW Government has committed \$20 million through the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund, toward planning for improved health services for the people of Maitland and the Hunter Valley and to acquire land for the proposed new hospital.

Ms Parker welcomed news of progress on site selection for the future hospital.

"I understand Hunter New England Health and Health Infrastructure are working together on suitable site options for the new hospital.

"This is a multi-layered process that involves assessing access, transport links, proximity to other health services and the availability of a specialist workforce.

“The site selection process will involve a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process inviting proposals from public and private landholders for an appropriate site for the new hospital.

“The EOI will be issued next week and the preferred site is to be identified by mid-next year.”

Initial consultation to inform the clinical services plan will be completed by the end of this year, with the final draft plan to be completed by mid-2013.

The Hunter Valley Health Services Planning Project is a collaboration between Hunter New England Health and the Local Health District Board, the NSW Ministry of Health and Health Infrastructure.

Further information and updates on the project are available on the HNE Health website. Go to www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au and follow the links to Hunter Valley Health Services.