



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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EOI OPEN TO FIND NEW HUNTER VALLEY HOSPITAL SITE

The Expression of Interest (EOI) process to find a suitable site for a new hospital in the Maitland region has commenced.

Health Minister Jillian Skinner welcomed Hunter New England Local Health District's announcement saying it demonstrated the NSW Government commitment to the health needs of Maitland and nearby communities.

"The NSW Government made a pre-election \$20 million commitment toward planning for improved health services for the people of Maitland and the Hunter Valley and to acquire land for the proposed new hospital.

"The commencement of the expression of interest process highlights that we are getting on with the job to ensure plans are in place to support the health needs of this region well into the future.

"The NSW Government made a long-term commitment to this project and now the plans are being put in place in our first term of government."

Member for Maitland, Robyn Parker, welcomed the commencement of the EOI period.

"It's wonderful to see work is well and truly underway on the biggest public health planning exercise in the Hunter Valley in nearly 20 years.

"My constituents can rest assured that the future health needs of Maitland and our neighbouring communities is firmly on the NSW Government agenda.

Hunter New England Health Chief Executive Michael DiRienzo said a site for a new hospital in the Maitland region was only one part of the overall Hunter Valley Health Services Planning Project, formed to deliver on the Government's commitment.

The project is also planning for the future health care needs of the communities of Maitland, Cessnock and the Coalfields, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook and the Upper Hunter.

Mr DiRienzo said expressions of interest are sought from land owners who wish to nominate land that may be suitable for the proposed new hospital within a preferred zone around Maitland.

"We need a sizeable parcel of land that will enable us to plan not just for today but for future opportunities and expansion to meet the needs of our ever-increasing population," Mr DiRienzo said.

“Ideally, the land needs to be between 10 and 20 hectares and not prone to flooding.

“The preferred zone was determined through consideration of key factors in delivering health care: accessibility to communities, transport links, proximity to other health services and the availability of a specialist workforce.

“The public EOI process provides every owner with the same opportunity to offer their land for consideration and possible acquisition.”

As well as the public EOI, the project team is also investigating available government and council-owned land that may be suitable.

“Selecting a site for the proposed new hospital is a major undertaking and we will be going through a rigorous process to identify, review and analyse the identified properties to find the most suitable site available,” Mr DiRienzo said.

The Hunter Valley Health Services Planning Project will also deliver a clinical services plan for all health services in the Hunter Valley area, and an assessment of existing facilities and their capacity to meet growing demand.

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. Site acquisition is expected to be completed around the same time.

Hunter New England Local Health District, the NSW Ministry of Health and Health Infrastructure are collaborating on the project.

Advertisements providing details and contact information are being placed in local and regional media and expressions of interest close in late January 2013.

For further information and updates on the project go to www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au and follow the links to “Hunter Valley Health Services”.