



# **Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday, 30 August 2013

#### **A NEW ERA OF HEALTH CARE: NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SITE FOR NEW MAITLAND HOSPITAL**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner and Member for Maitland Robyn Parker today announced the preferred site for a new hospital in the Maitland region.

The 40 hectare Crown land site at Metford is on the eastern side of Metford Road and forms part of the old brickworks site.

Mrs Skinner said today marked a momentous occasion for the people of Maitland and the Hunter.

“This is an historic day for the people of Maitland and the lower Hunter. Today’s announcement marks the early beginnings of a new age of health care for the region,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Prior to the election, Robyn Parker and I committed \$20 million toward planning for improved health services, including site selection, for Maitland and the lower Hunter region.

“I have no doubt the community joins us in our excitement to see this commitment delivered.

“After decades of Labor neglect, I’m proud we are delivering a blueprint for the future of health care in this region, which will have a profound impact on generations to come.”

Ms Parker said the preferred site is ideal for a new hospital and will meet the future needs of the rapidly growing Maitland community.

“We identified the need for a new hospital, we made a commitment to the community and today we’re demonstrating our dedication to making this happen,” Ms Parker said.

“This is the biggest health planning exercise our region has seen in more than 20 years.

“Maitland has the highest projected growth and population densities in the Hunter Valley and this site will be easy to access for patients and medical workforce who will work at the new hospital

“The site is more than six times larger than the current hospital site, is not subject to flooding and is close to existing infrastructure, the New England Highway and other major link roads, public transport and an existing train station.

“The difference between our Government and former state Labor Government is that we are planning for the future infrastructure needs of our community and I’m pleased that we can now announce the Metford site as the future home for our new hospital.

“It is a large site that offers plenty of room for future growth as well as space for other health services.”

The Metford site has space to accommodate an ambulance station and a helipad with a buffer zone for local residents, as well as ample on-site parking and space for other health care providers and future education facilities.

Mrs Skinner said the Metford site was chosen after initial consideration of more than 35 sites identified through an advertised Expression of Interest process.

“Each site was evaluated against an extensive list of criteria, followed by further extensive investigation and analysis of a shortlist of six potential sites,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Now that we know where the home of the future new Maitland region hospital is, we can move forward with the next important steps in planning for a major new referral hospital.

“The next phases of planning will involve developing a business case for the new hospital. Planning will consider, among many things, the clinical and capital works requirements for the new hospital.

“What we currently know is the new hospital would offer higher level services than the current Maitland Hospital and provide more complex care and services. This will allow Maitland and Hunter residents to receive more of their acute care closer to home without travelling to Newcastle or out of the area.

“Additional services anticipated for the new hospital include an intensive care unit, an emergency short-stay unit (for patients requiring observation and monitoring less than 24 hours) and cancer services.

“The new facility would have greater capacity than the existing Maitland Hospital. The exact bed numbers and treatment spaces required will be determined in the next stages of planning.

“Hunter families will remember today as the important first step on the journey towards a world-class hospital which will serve their community for generations to come,” Mrs Skinner said.