



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Locals left in the dark on new Maitland Hospital plans

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association members and delegates will tonight call on the O'Farrell Government for answers surrounding plans for the new Maitland Hospital at Metford.

Since announcing the proposed 40-hectare Crown land site last August, the O'Farrell Government has been tight-lipped on how it plans to fund and operate the new facility.

As recently as last week the Member for Maitland, Robyn Parker MLC, also appeared unclear about the government's intentions. According to local media reports, Ms Parker confirmed the facility would be publicly – not privately – funded. Within 24 hours, a spokesperson for NSW Health Minister Jillian Skinner clarified that the funding model had not been decided.

General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Brett Holmes, said the lack of information about the new hospital had led to concerns amongst nurses, midwives and the broader community.

"We need the O'Farrell Government to come clean about its plans for the new Maitland Hospital at Metford," Mr Holmes said.

"This vital infrastructure will help to meet current and future demands of the growing population and as taxpayers, local residents deserve to know what options are being explored by the government.

"We have a right to know if the government intends to continue shirking its responsibility to provide public health services, favouring profits over patients and a universal health system."

History shows an alarming rate of failed public-private hospital partnerships across the country including, Port Macquarie Base Hospital, Victoria's La Trobe Regional Hospital, Modbury Hospital in South Australia, and Queensland's Robina Hospital.

Last December, the Queensland Government reversed a decision to privatise the new Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital, citing: "the private sector can't match the public service on cost."

Meanwhile in Western Australia, the newly privatised Fiona Stanley Hospital is already suffering from a postponed opening date and staff shortages across a number of specialists.

Hunter New England Local Health District and Health Infrastructure will host a community forum about the new Maitland Hospital development this evening, commencing 6:30pm at Maitland Golf Club (East's Leisure and Golf), Tenambit Street, East Maitland.

"Interestingly, this event required pre-registration which is now closed," Mr Holmes said.



"However, nurses and midwives will be attending from 6pm a silent vigil, to send a message to participants about keeping the new Maitland Hospital a publically run and staffed facility that will offer equitable access to everyone in the community."

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