



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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19 March, 2015

## Nurses call on Liberal-Nationals to consult *before* hitting "go" at Metford

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has expressed disappointment at the Liberal-Nationals Coalition, after it failed to outline the full details of its proposal for the new Maitland Hospital at Metford during a visit to the region today.

As recently as last week, Health Minister, Jillian Skinner, confirmed to local media that Maitland and Lower Hunter residents would know more specifics about the Liberal-Nationals plan for the new Maitland Hospital before heading to the polls on election day.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said the Minister had missed a significant opportunity to be upfront with the people of Maitland and surrounding areas by not genuinely detailing the plans.

"If the Liberal-Nationals are planning to build, operate and maintain the new hospital at Metford under a Public-Private Partnership with a for-profit organisation, like the detail it signed for the new Northern Beaches Hospital, why don't they be honest about it and tell people?" Mr Holmes said.

"It is disingenuous for the Health Minister to announce \$25 million towards a new hospital, worth upwards of \$400 million, and not be transparent about the planning process or the different models being considered.

"In the space of the past 12 months, only two community consultation meetings have been held with Maitland residents while planning has progressed behind the scenes – this is despite repeated calls from community groups, business owners and other concerned locals for the Liberal-Nationals to come clean on the details.

"Our members are right to be concerned about what impact a Public-Private Partnership would have on public health service delivery and accessibility for those seeking medical treatment at the proposed new hospital."

Mr Holmes said the people of Maitland and the surrounding areas also had a right to know what the Liberal-Nationals Coalition had in the pipeline for the existing Maitland Hospital and the health services that would be available.

The NSWNMA has vowed to continue raising awareness in the local community about the impacts of health privatisation.

"Lower Hunter residents deserve to know if their new hospital will be run for the public or for the benefit of private shareholders," said Mr Holmes.

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