

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hazzard must come clean on Maitland Hospital details

NSW Minister for Health Brad Hazzard must come clean on the details of the operational model that is planned for the new Maitland Hospital, unions representing NSW health workers said today.

Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey said the commencement of construction work on the new hospital was a positive sign but the community deserved to know exactly how the new hospital would work under a not-for-profit operator.

“The Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, Scot MacDonald, says the hospital will have ‘public access’, but won’t say how much access the public will actually have.

“The community needs to know whether private patients will be given priority over public patients.

“Given the low-level of private health coverage in the Hunter region, what proportion of beds will be available for public patients?

“And is this joint model even sustainable, or will it fail like Port Macquarie?”

NSW Nurses and Midwives Association General Secretary Brett Holmes said the Maitland community has been waiting a long time for an upgraded hospital.

“We welcome the commencement of site preparation, however, a surplus-driven privatised model will not meet the needs of the local community. This Government must do the right thing by the community and get on with building a fully-funded public hospital.”

The Executive Director of the Doctor’s Union, Andrew Holland, said: “The recent announcement from Scot MacDonald MLC that the privatisation of Maitland Hospital is going ahead, prior to any statement from the NSW Minister for Health, the Hon Brad Hazzard, is extremely concerning.

“The Doctors’ Union categorically rejects the implementation of this high risk model that will obstruct the training received by our Junior Doctors and jeopardise the care the community of Maitland currently receives in the public system.

“This proposal has occurred without consultation with the clinicians, nurses and allied health staff in the District, and ignores the 24,000 signatures from the community who oppose this decision.

“We call on the Minister for Health to acknowledge the concerns of our doctors, and the patients in Maitland who rely on their care, and reject this flawed model that puts profits over patients.

“Keep our patients safe. Keep Maitland Hospital Public.”

Health Services Union (HSU) Secretary Gerard Hayes said other communities across NSW had rejected hospital privatisation.

“Local communities have the power to stand up and demand that governments keep their local hospitals in public hands.

“We’ve seen privatisation plans shelved in Bowral, in Goulburn, in Wyong and in Shellharbour.

“If people in those communities can have access to a fully-funded publicly-operated hospital, then people in Maitland and the Hunter region should have access to one as well.”

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