



Jenny Aitchison MP

Member for Maitland

Thursday, 15 September, 2016

HEALTH MINISTER FINALLY COMES CLEAN ON THE NEW HOSPITAL AT MAITLAND

The Minister for Health has finally let the cat out of the bag in relation to the privatisation of the new Lower Hunter Hospital at Maitland.

Over the past 5 years the Government has promised to build a new hospital at Maitland but has failed to outline any details.

The original plan was for a “John Hunterish sized” hospital, (around 650 beds), as an additional resource to the existing Maitland Hospital, which would have provided over 800 beds to the community. However, prior to the 2015 election, the Government said they would close the existing public hospital when the new hospital was opened and committed only \$400 million for the hospital in their election promises.

Despite numerous requests about the hospital project, the government has consistently refused to advise:

- Their preferred model
- Commencement date
- Expected completion date
- Bed numbers
- Services that would be offered at the hospital

Today the Government has finally revealed their plans to enter into a Public Private Partnership (PPP) on the new hospital.

The Government promised consultation with the community, however in the two years since November 2014, they have failed to hold any community consultations on the model. Since her election to the Parliament the Member for Maitland Ms Jenny Aitchison has fought tirelessly for the Maitland Hospital. From her Inaugural speech she demanded action from the Government to commence construction:
<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-59342/link/120>

Immediately after her speech, Ms Aitchison used her first opportunity to speak in Parliament to ask the Minister for Health when the first patients would be treated at the new Lower Hunter Hospital, however the response from the Minister was an arrogant “When it is built” while failing to give any timeframe:
<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-59352/link/120>

Ms Aitchison has written to the Minister on nearly a dozen occasions through letters and questions on notice as well as Questions in Question time. Ms Aitchison has also been ejected from the Chamber due to her interjections calling for action to commence construction. The Health Minister has refused to meet with Ms Aitchison even though she is the local elected representative of our community.

Quotes from the Member for Maitland Ms Jenny Aitchison

“Our community has a right to feel that the Government has not been transparent or honest with us.

“The Baird Grant Government has had five years to give us the details on the hospital, and today they have finally confirmed that the new hospital will be a PPP model, with no guarantees of patient safety.

“The community will be wondering what other surprises the Minister has in store for the community. The lack of consultation with the community has been disgraceful.”