



Health Care Consumers' Association Inc
100 Maitland Street HACKETT ACT 2602
Phone: 02 6230 7800 Fax: 02 6230 7833
Email: adminofficer@hcca.org.au
ABN: 59 698 548 902

24 February 2012

HospitalPlan@act.gov.au
Site Selection Consultation

HCCA response to the Selection of the Site of the New Northside Hospital

Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) was formed over 30 years ago to provide a voice for consumers on local health issues and now provides opportunities for health care consumers in the ACT to participate in all levels of health service planning, policy development and decision making.

HCCA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the ACT Government regarding the location of the new Northside hospital. We have had extensive consultation with our members on the future provision of health services in Canberra in recent years and we have drawn on input following those consultations in preparing our submission.

The Health Care Consumers Association has considered the report - *North Canberra Hospital Final Site Selection, January 2012* - and is supportive of the identification of the University of Canberra as the preferred site for the construction of the new Northside Hospital.

The ACT Government has indicated that there is a need to enhance public hospital facilities in Canberra to accommodate the growing health needs of our population over the next 20 years. The ACT Government Health Infrastructure Program provides the blueprint for the redevelopment of the ACT public health system. A discussion paper on options for Northside hospital services was issued in February 2011. As a result of that process, the Government decided to building a stand-alone sub-acute facility in North Canberra. HCCA has been advocating for the establishment of a specialised sub-acute care facility for some time; this is reflected in our submission of November 2010 to the Government Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services Inquiry into Public Hospital Options as well as our response to the Government consultation on this matter in 2011. The HCCA Submission is available on our website www.hcca.org.au (160kb Pdf)

The HCCA has been very supportive of the decision to build a sub acute hospital and support the concept of having a range of integrated and networked health services and facilities that meet the needs of our community (role delineation). We have advocated that a sub acute facility or community hospital, supported by primary health care services and Community Health Centres across the ACT, would better meet the needs of the Canberra community than building another acute hospital. A sub acute hospital with sub acute and non acute services will supplement the new enhanced Community Health Centres. Planning for these centres is well developed with the new Health Centre in Gungahlin to open later this year and construction of the Belconnen Health Centre underway.

The new Northside Hospital could be designed, built and staffed to provide rehabilitation services for people recovering after an operation (e.g. a hip replacement), an illness (e.g. a heart attack) or an injury (e.g. a fall or car accident). This would improve the potential for recovery as less time would be spent in an acute hospital (ie, Calvary or TCH). It could also include geriatric evaluation and management services, transition care and other step-up or step-down programs. Our members are also supportive of the inclusion of a second secular hospice for the ACT and we are currently participating in consultations with the Government for the review of the Palliative Care Strategy in which we have raised this.

The selection of the site is very important; it needs to be accessible, which means close to major transport routes. One of the failings of the Village Creek Rehabilitation Centre was the site selection. Once you are inside the building, the services are excellent but being tucked away in a suburban setting has caused difficulty for some consumers and carers when accessing the Centre. The University of Canberra is located on arterial roads and public transport, has sufficient area for dedicated parking, is close to the Belconnen Town Centre and is within easy travelling distance for people living in Gungahlin and the future Molonglo Valley development.

In addition it would create valuable connections with the Faculty of Health Science and provide clinical placements for students in areas including, but not limited to, nursing and midwifery, pharmacy, physiotherapy and psychology. We agree with the Government that the relationship should assist with staff recruiting and training, and should assist the university in undertaking health research.

The community wants assurance that decisions regarding the planning and design of our health system are taken on sound advice, based on identified clinical need and community needs and sound economic judgement. We are satisfied with the range of issues the Government has considered in identifying the most appropriate site for the new hospital.

While we are sympathetic to the calls for the location of this facility in Gungahlin we are not supportive of this location. Health services must be planned according to the needs of the Canberra community and our neighbours in NSW who also access the services. The needs on one region cannot override the needs of the whole community. A sub acute facility on the University of Canberra grounds is vital to meet the needs of the whole community.

We are very happy to discuss our submission further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Darlene Cox', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darlene Cox
Executive Director