

23 August 2014

Development Assessment Systems and Approvals
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Director – Industry, Key Sites and Social Projects

Reference: Exhibition of State Significant Development Application
Byron Shire Central Hospital
Application No: SSD 6573

We write as members of the Byron Shire Health Services Community Action Group and also as members of Steering Committee appointed by N NSW LHD and Health Infrastructure for the above project.

We support the proposal for a new Byron Shire Central Hospital to replace both Mullumbimby and District War Memorial Hospital and Byron District Hospital for the following reasons:

- The Byron Shire Community made a unanimous decision in October 1999 ***“to secure health care services for both residents and tourist population of the shire for the future”*** following numerous rounds of community consultation involving a number of health consultants and area health personnel resulting in the recommendation this was the best option.
- Advice provided from consultants and the Area Health Service (now NNSW LHD) that ***“this provided the opportunity to secure and expand acute health services for residents and visitors into the future”***. A condition of the endorsement of the single hospital option was that the full range of services - ***“ED, surgical, medical, obstetrics, oncology, palliative care”*** were not negotiable and essential to the support of this concept.

We express concern however, that ***surgical service/ Day Surgery*** is not included in the list of services being offered in the development application.

During Steering Committee meetings and in recent correspondence with Health Infrastructure; N NSW LHD and Don Page MP we have been advised the best option was for a Public/Private Day Surgery to be included as part of the development and ***“Health Infrastructure is conducting a market sounding exercise to understand the level of interest from the private sector in providing day surgery for both public and private patients. At this stage we are making every effort to market the private day surgery component to give this as much chance as possible of success.”*** (Correspondence from Chris Crawford, Chief Executive, N NSW LHD 8 August 2014).

We are extremely concerned that the opportunity to promote this concept during this exhibition process when extensive media coverage was being undertaken has been overlooked. Please clarify for us the logic behind the decision to not include this in the proposal. It is hard to understand why Health Infrastructure and N NSW LHD have not taken the opportunity to promote the public/private day surgery proposal widely and ***“give this as much chance as possible of success”*** (Mr Crawford’s words!). Interested parties it would seem would be expecting Day Surgery to be included at the time of exhibition of the Development Application.

It is our belief that if Day Surgery was included in the current Development Application it would be far more conducive to a “**market sounding exercise**”. However, we acknowledge that should there not be private sector interest at this stage and it not be included in the current construction, planning approval would be in place for the future.

We write to express our qualified support for the new Byron Shire Central Hospital and seek clarification regarding our concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rae Cooper', is written over a faint, rectangular red stamp.

*Shirley Nelson (Ewingsdale), *Gill Lomath (Mullumbimby)

*Tony McCabe, *Mollie Strong, *Rae Cooper, Gavin Farrell (Byron Bay),

Byron Shire Health Services Community Action Group

***Members Byron Shire Central Hospital Steering Committee**