



NO MORE BANDAID SOLUTIONS INC.

P.O. Box 491, Tumut NSW 2720

e-mail: [fixitnow@tpg.com.au](mailto:fixitnow@tpg.com.au)

Web site: [www.nomorebandaids.homestead.com](http://www.nomorebandaids.homestead.com)

16th February, 2009

The Editor  
Tumut and Adelong Times Ltd  
Wynyard St  
TUMUT NSW 2720

Dear Sir,

On behalf of our local community organization No More Bandaid Solutions Incorporated (NMBS Inc.), we wish to respond to some statements contained in your paper "*Concerns Over Health Care Clinic 'Unfounded'*" (*T & A Times Fri 12.2.09*).

The article reported that the CEO of Riverina Division of General Practice & Primary Health Ltd. (Div of GPs) rejects the notion that there has been inadequate public consultation about the proposal to sell off part of the Tumut Crown Land Hospital Reserve.

In the case of the current Div of GPs application for federal funding, there has been **no public consultation at all**. It was not the Div of GPs who broke the news about their proposal to divide up the hospital – NMBS Inc. did.

The first time the Div of GPs spoke to the public was at 6pm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2010 - almost two weeks after their proposal was submitted to the Federal Government.

One month earlier NMBS Inc wrote to the Div of GPs and GSAHS asking questions about the proposed carve up of the hospital. These 21 questions remain unanswered, and in the case of the Div of GPs, unacknowledged.

Any claim that the application has received adequate public consultation is false. In truth, the current attempt to privatize Crown Land was, and still is, shrouded in secrecy.

In April last year, an earlier application for Federal funding was hastily prepared by the Div of GPs at the request of two local doctors, (Dr Tony Wilson and Dr Gamal Mark). The deadline for this application was Fri 17<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

No More Bandaid Solutions Inc. had been critical of the way in which that application for government funding was being slung together at the last minute. In response to these protests about the lack of community consultation, Dr Mark made arrangements for a meeting with NMBS Inc.

Two days prior to the deadline, two meetings took place at Tumut Hospital.

At 8.30am, Wed 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2009, four members of NMBS Inc. met with the CEO of the Div of GPs (Ms Piercy), Dr. Mark, Mrs. Wilson, and their assistants at Tumut Hospital.

An hour later, Ms Piercy and the other members of the private enterprise consortium met with the Tumut Health Service Advisory Committee. Mrs Pat Webb's request to attend the 9.30am Health Advisory Committee meeting as an observer was denied by the Tumut Health Service Manager. No reports of the proceedings of the Advisory Committee meeting were made available.

Despite the claims of the CEO of the Div GPs, there was no meeting between the Tumut Shire Council's New Hospital for Tumut Committee and the Div of GPs or the two doctors on this matter or any other topic.

NMBS Inc. had agreed to go to the 8.30 am meeting on one condition.

It was made very clear both before and during the meeting, that the attendance of NMBS Inc. members: "must not be used to tick the community consultation box. To call meetings with community groups at the very last minute cannot be viewed in the usual way since, with only hours to the deadline, there is no time for any views or ideas to be genuinely considered." *Ref. e-mail - S Swann to G. Mark 13.4.09, 9.32pm.*

What the public must realize is that there was no firm proposal on the table from the Div of GPs.

There were lots of ideas and suggestions from the CEO of the Div of GPs but nothing definite.

The impression was that this whole idea was a work in progress.

A number of sites had been considered, but none chosen. They did not know how much it would cost. There was no formal agreement with any developer (who would own the building) or investors. They did not know what would be included in the clinic. There were no site plans, nor approval from Greater Southern Area health Service to subdivide the Crown Land Reserve or demolish existing buildings, even though this was said to be under consideration. There were no agreements with universities or accredited training units. There was even a plan to move Community Health Services off site from the hospital, relocating services into the new private clinic (at tax payers' expense).

Some other relevant details: No bulk billing. No appointments required as patients would simply see the next available doctor. Patients' records would be shared by all doctors, visiting medical people and allied health services who worked in or visited the clinic.

One thing became clear. There was Federal Government money on offer and they wanted it, one way or another.

The Div of GPs CEO said that the idea of a clinic only came up because there was a small amount (\$250,000) available for fit out from the government. Ms Piercy said their application was "opportunistic" i.e. an opportunity to get some Federal money, so why not have a go at getting it.

The whole thing reeked of something drawn up on the back of an envelope.

Following this meeting, NMBS Inc prepared a report and distributed it to its members.

In line with our pledge to continue to fight for a new hospital and keep the public informed, some of the alarming information gleaned in the meeting was verbally relayed by NMBS Inc. to the TSC New Hospital for Tumut Committee as a "heads up" of a possible competing claim for the Hospital Reserve land.

Needless to say, this vague application for Federal funding was eventually rejected. Apparently though, the idea was secretly revamped late last year by the Div of GPs. This time, however, there is a definite bid for a large parcel of publicly owned land which happens to be the land most suited for a new Tumut Hospital.

GSAHS has given written approval (in principle). There is a memorandum of understanding with a developer (identity undisclosed), a site plan of the proposed parcel of Crown Reserve Land to be sold to the developer, but alas, still no building plans. It seems the as yet unidentified tenants will design the building - yet somehow they know how much it will cost.

Except for a brief phone call to the Chair of THS Advisory Committee, the Div of GPs did not inform the public of their new plans. The details of “negotiations continuing with GSAHS for the acquisition of a suitable parcel of land on the Tumut Hospital site” are behind closed doors.

This is where NMBS Inc. comes in. On behalf of our members and many supporters, we object to secret half baked plans that will use up the best public land suitable for the construction of a new hospital.

Let’s be clear. The campaign for a new hospital has never been about opportunism, or a bid for shiny new buildings to attract doctors. It has been about getting recognition that our now dysfunctional hospital infrastructure, which has served this community for over a century, needs to be replaced with a new, purpose designed, publicly owned facility.

If you want a private clinic, build it somewhere else and test the market.

Signed by members,  
No More Bandaid Solutions Inc.,  
Ph: 69 472084