

Office of the Mayor



30 November 2018

Dear Members of the NSW Parliament,

Tweed Shire Council is deeply appreciative of the funding announced by the State Government for better hospital services in our Shire, but we respectfully call on all Parliamentarians for an inquiry into this matter as we have grave concerns about the site selected for the hospital and the governance processes involved to date.

The announcement by the government in April this year of their intention to relocate the hospital from Tweed Heads down the coast to classified State Significant Farmland in Kingscliff has been met with ongoing protests by the community.

The established plan for increased hospital services was always for the existing hospital in Tweed Heads to be expanded as clearly identified in the 2013 Tweed Heads Hospital Masterplan.

Even the NSW Northern Region Plan 2036, released just last year, has no mention of any need to relocate the hospital.

This proposed variation to the hospital planning regime for our Shire brings with it significant implications.

The State Significant Farmland is greatly valued by our community and the community has rejected numerous attempts to rezone this area over the years.

The North Coast Farmland report identifies that the State Significant Farmland area of the Cudgen Plateau is the only contiguous farmland area of this classification in the Shire.

At 534 hectares in size this area only just meets the 500 hectare size required to make a viable farming precinct, so the loss of 16 hectares for the hospital puts this whole farming precinct at great risk, particularly as much of this farmland is also being land banked by developers.

The social impacts of this relocation will greatly affect the aged population who have traditionally moved to Tweed Heads in their most senior years to be close to the hospital. This problem is exacerbated with very limited public transport.

The Northern Region Plan 2036 identifies Tweed Heads as a Regional City and the hospital as the main economic driver for this city. Removing this hospital will have undoubted economic impacts to the town that have hardly been acknowledged.

The impacts on the small coastal town of Kingscliff are also significant with the imposition of this eight storey hospital in a three to four storey area and with the changing character and congestion the hospital will bring.

The lack of transparency in the decision making process has been particularly concerning. Minister Hazard made the original announcement with no consultation whatsoever.

There are obviously costings and documents on the expanded Tweed Heads option but the Minister has refused to make these public.

Contrary to the requirements of the planning regime the Minister has issued an application for a SEPP for the site and simultaneously issued the State Significant Development Application instead of issuing these applications consecutively. The Minister is also utilising exempt and complying development provisions which appears may also be contrary to legal requirements for a wholistic assessment.

It is feared that there may be other agendas at play here and Council calls on all Members of Parliament to look into this as a matter of urgency due to the urgency and haste of this process.

Please find the resolution of Tweed Shire Council of the 1st December 2018 seeking your assistance.

TITLE: [NOM-CR K MILNE] TWEED VALLEY HOSPITAL

NOTICE OF MOTION:

Cr K Milne
Cr R Cooper

RESOLVED that Council:

1. Confirms its opposition to the site selected for the relocation of the Tweed Heads Hospital;
2. Brings forward urgent legal advice on whether the Preliminary works proposed for the hospital relocation constitute exempt and complying development, and options for urgent compliance action if appropriate;

3. Requests the State Government re-exhibit the stage 1 application due to the inability to access relevant documents through the pathways provided in the public exhibition notices and the incorrect submission address originally listed, and extend the period for community consultation of the stage 1 application due to the inadequate time to assess the implications of significant impacts on our residents, business and farming communities from so many changes to the Shires' fundamental planning strategies;
4. Calls on the State Government to release as a matter of urgency and good faith all documents on the shortlisted hospital sites, and the option of redeveloping on the existing site or into the civic precinct adjacent, including but not limited, to diagrams of the potential footprints and estimated costs;
5. Undertake desktop research sufficient to identify federally scheduled species utilising the proposed hospital site or its immediate environs and to submit a formal referral of the Tweed Valley Hospital DA to the Commonwealth for assessment under the Environment Biodiversity Conservation Act;
6. Calls on all NSW Parliamentarians for an urgent Parliamentary Inquiry into the proposed Tweed Valley Hospital, or for this matter to be considered by the Parliamentary Public Works Committee. This Inquiry should investigate the governance and planning processes, including but not limited to:
 - a) The process and timeframes of the 2016 Northern NSW Local Health District board dismissals and appointments;
 - b) The process of deciding on the site selection criteria;
 - c) The use of exempt and complying and staging provisions to circumvent a proper 'whole of project' assessment;
 - d) The impact of such significant changes to Tweed Shire's existing Local, Regional and State planning strategies, including:
 - i) The impacts on Tweed's only Contiguous State Significant Farmland precinct;
 - ii) The impacts on the Kingscliff and Tweed Heads communities and economies from the relocation of this major economic driver and social infrastructure.
 - e) The haste and limited consultation provided for such a major project;
 - f) The lack of transparency particularly in regards to details, footprint diagrams and estimated costs of the alternative shortlisted sites and the option of redeveloping the Tweed Heads site including into the adjacent civic precinct; and
 - g) The lack of adequate assessment and information in the Stage 1 application.

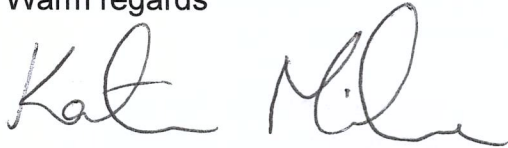
The Motion was **Carried**

FOR VOTE - Cr C Milne, Cr C Cherry, Cr R Cooper, Cr R Byrnes

AGAINST VOTE - Cr W Polglase, Cr P Allsop

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr J Owen

Warm regards



Cr Katie Milne
Mayor of Tweed