

Public Notice

Update from Save Healesville Hospital Action Group

The Save Healesville Hospital Action Group thanks the residents of the Yarra Valley for saving Healesville Hospital. Your voice has been successful but there is misinformation circulating. Following Eastern Health's (EH) disastrous public meetings in Oct and Dec 2012, the Save Healesville Hospital Action Group was formed. Our purpose was to represent the community's views and ensure the best options for health services were achieved. We met with the Eastern Health Board on two occasions, but there were **No** concessions. We responded with an information forum with politicians in March 2013. There the voice of community was loud and unambiguous. "People power" and 3000 postcards to the Premier opened a dialogue with the Minister of Health David Davis, who has constructively met with us 4 times. Only this public and political pressure made the Eastern Health Board amend their clinical services plan to retain surgery. We exposed EH misinformation, citing "new or increased services" when there are less surgical services now than 2009

The "**good news**" is the return of limited gynecology procedures and the following 'promises': to retain surgical services , more operating lists, 6 renal dialysis chairs, consulting specialists,, no loss of community health facilities and services and an extra \$4.6 million for hospital redevelopment. The "**bad news**" is no plan to return birthing services or an antenatal mother/baby facility , no change to the main geriatric and rehabilitation style of inpatient care, no consultation with local doctors to increase GP access and no new surgical specialties that are much needed i.e. orthopaedics. We lost access to maternity services - cut back slowly over 18 months until portrayed as 'no longer viable'. If you reduce access, you reduce beds and the result is that you reduce financial viability and risk closure.

We have been offered no meaningful input to the hospital redevelopment, contrary to what the Pulse Newsletter says. We were asked to provide input solely on 'parking, grounds, waiting rooms and signage at the hospital'. We wanted to ensure the redesign gives us the facilities to deliver the services the community needs. We met with the CEO and their public relations consultant. Neither of these meeting brought any optimism or comfort, in fact the opposite. It appears that the new theatre is not going to happen and that the old theatre is being refurbished. All surgery will stop during this process. Will it start again with skilled staff available?

The Action Group has commissioned a business study to examine the options, including viability as an independent Small Rural Health Service. The study is funded by community donations and a Federal Government grant obtained by the member for Casey, Mr. Tony Smith. Your donations are invited and most welcome. Every little bit helps. Our account Save Healesville Hospital Action Group is at the Bendigo Bank No 633-000 151332996 .Share your views on these developments on the 'savehealesvillehospital' Facebook page. You can make the difference. There is a State Government election in November and we need to use this opportunity to get the health services we need.

REVIVE, MAINTAIN, EXPAND