



# Jillian Skinner MP

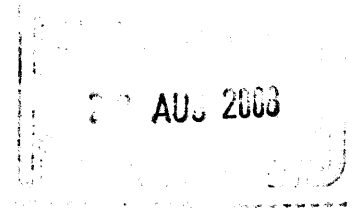


MEMBER FOR NORTH SHORE  
DEPUTY NSW LIBERAL LEADER  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR HEALTH  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MEDICAL RESEARCH  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ARTS

3/40 Yeo Street, Neutral Bay 2089 **tel** 9909 2594 **fax** 9909 2654

Parliament House Macquarie Street Sydney 2000 **tel** 9230 3080 **fax** 9230 3406  
**email** Jillian.Skinner@parliament.nsw.gov.au **website** www.jillianskinner.com

19 August 2008



Mr Peter Draper  
Member for Tamworth  
PO Box 1740  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Dear Mr Draper

Thank you for your letter of 8 August regarding Tamworth and Armidale Hospitals.

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition is committed to providing residents in rural and regional NSW with the highest standards of health care. We believe residents deserve equitable access to quality health care regardless of financial status, background or place of residence.

Unfortunately under the 'Sydney centric' NSW Labor Government, a geographical divide has emerged between rural NSW and metropolitan NSW, with many residents in country communities not having equitable access to the health services they need and deserve.

Similarly the current State Government has failed to provide enough training positions for graduating doctors, creating a medical workforce crisis. This workforce issue is particularly acute in rural and regional NSW, which is disappointing given the good work of the previous Federal Government in increasing university places for medical students and establishing the rural medicine course at the University of New England.

To combat the divide between the provision of health services in rural and metropolitan areas the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition has formed a Rural Health Taskforce. As you would be aware, the taskforce visited Tamworth in February 2008 to discuss the community's needs with local residents and clinicians. Whilst you were unable to attend, the taskforce was able to meet with representatives from the University of New England to discuss the shortage of training places and possible solutions.

The health needs of the residents living in the electorates of Tamworth and Northern Tablelands will form an important part of the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition rural health policy. We are fully committed to delivering the long-promised Tamworth Hospital and to this end have committed making it a priority for Coalition Government. We are concerned that the progress on the redevelopment of Tamworth Hospital is slow and as such are currently pressuring Morris Iemma and Reba Meagher to have a more transparent construction process.

To date I have not received correspondence from the Member for Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay MP, in relation to plans to redevelop Armidale Hospital. I would be interested in reviewing any such proposals though and would appreciate you sending me any information you are aware of, such as capital infrastructure plans and budgets. In the interim I will also discuss future plans for Armidale Hospital with my hardworking Parliamentary Coalition colleagues, the Hon Catherine Cusack MLC, the Hon Rick Colless MLC and the Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC, who all have a particular interest in health policy in the Northern Tablelands.

Thank you again for your letter and please be assured the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition is committed to ensuring equitable access to quality health care regardless of financial status, background or place of residence.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jillian Skinner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jillian Skinner MP