



MEDIA RELEASE

Secretary: Dr Tom Karplus | President: Dr Tony Sara

15 October 2018

Northern Beaches Hospital may open without doctors on board

The Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation (ASMOF) is calling on the NSW Government and Healthscope, the private operator of the new Northern Beaches Hospital, to honour their commitment to doctors who will be working at the hospital.

ASMOF President, Dr Tony Sara, said that with just over two weeks to go until the hospital opens, medical staff have only just been given information about employment conditions which are inferior to the conditions previously promised by Healthscope and the NSW Government.

“The union and our members have constructively taken part in all aspects of the consultation process regarding the transition of services and staff to the new hospital, but by leaving our members in the dark until three weeks out from opening has left doctors angry, confused and disrespected,” said Dr Sara.

The new hospital will be run by Healthscope, and doctors transferred from Manly and Mona Vale hospitals will be Healthscope employees. Community expectations are high with the Health Minister Brad Hazzard recently referring to the hospital as Disneyland.

“It’s been almost four years since the government signed a contract with Healthscope to build and manage Sydney’s new Northern Beaches Hospital and we kept being reassured that existing terms and conditions would be honoured to ensure that the hospital attracts the best doctors. Now Healthscope is pressuring doctors to agree to unfair terms,” said Dr Sara.

“The contracts our doctors have been offered are a blatant attempt at cost cutting, and the way Healthscope have handled this has been spectacularly short sighted. You can’t have the hospital function without doctors. Not only are they critical to patient care but they also oversee all the work of our junior doctors. Without that training and supervision, the hospital will simply be unable to operate,” said Dr Sara.

ASMOF has advised members not to sign the contracts until Healthscope amends and reissues them. Without the support of local doctors, the hospital cannot finalise staff rosters, and ASMOF is concerned that some Departments are at risk of losing their accreditation as soon as the hospital opens if doctors are not on board.

“For the past four years ASMOF and other health unions have urged the Ministry of Health and Healthscope to give staff more information about work arrangements and employment conditions at the new hospital, but we have been repeatedly left in the dark. We know that public-private partnerships for hospitals are risky business and we don’t want another Port Macquarie,” said Dr Sara.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Dr Tony Sara, President, ASMOF, 0417498691

Andrew Holland, Executive Director, ASMOF, 0405276030