

Media Release

From: Jill Stringer, Communications Advisor

Date: 5 May 2004

Subject: DHB presents 'Greenfield' hospital option DRAFT
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In December 2003, the Minister of Health approved \$27.2 million to upgrade and partially rebuild Masterton Hospital.

"After approval was given, our next step was to challenge the original concept plans, to make sure we were choosing the best possible option to suit our local needs" says CEO David Meates. "The feedback from staff and planners, and the results of soil stability and density tests in March have prompted us to go back to the Ministry of Health with a revised plan."

The original proposal used the present three storey Ward Block and proposed a new clinical services building be built alongside. The Project Team recommended that parts of the facility should be designed to even higher specifications than originally planned. This would add significantly to the structural costs in the original proposal.

"As a consequence an alternative option has emerged that is based on building a new single storey, stand alone Hospital complex," says Mr Meates. "This would include all the services in the approved Business Case, but be provided but in a smaller, more compact facility with no long corridors."

The proposed location of the new single storey building would be the hockey field at the front of the existing Hospital. The entire facility would be built to level 4 specification meaning it could be designated as an emergency medical facility post disaster such as a major earthquake. This option, however would require an additional \$2.3m of capital.

At a Special Board Meeting last week, the Board resolved to submit a revised business case justifying the new single storey facility to the National Capital Committee.

The Wairarapa District Health Board members were very clear that whatever the final outcome, the already approved funding of \$27.2 million would not be jeopardised.

Following advice from the Ministry of Health, a summarised Business Case containing the latest findings will be produced for a Special Board Meeting on 18 May, before being sent to the National Capital Committee in late June. They will make their final decision in July.

"If approval is received for the single storey facility, construction could start as early as November 2004, and take just over a year to complete," says Mr Meates. "Another advantage of this option is that it would create the least disruption to patients, and the operation of the existing hospital. It's important to note that the Ministry of Health have confirmed that the health care planning, service model and overall affordability of the project contained in the original business case are not under question."

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