



## Sid Sidebottom MP ... for a fair go in Braddon

**Media Release**

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### **Health and Infrastructure do very well out of Rudd Government**

MORE than \$70m worth of health initiatives had already been delivered to the North-West Coast since the Rudd Government was elected in late 2007, Federal Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom said today.

“We have already delivered two GP Super Clinics to the North-West Coast at a cost of \$7.5m,” Mr Sidebottom said.

“The Rudd Government has committed to providing \$60m per year in funding to the Mersey Community Hospital – no other hospital in Australia receives Federal Government funding of this calibre.”

“We should remember that the previous Howard Government only ever committed \$45m towards the operation of this hospital.

“This week’s budget announced a further \$3.6m in funding towards three significant health projects, specifically for the North-West region.

“This includes \$1.2m to develop an electronic clinical information and communications system to link health care providers, \$1.4m to improve cancer services in the North-West Coast and \$1m to provide additional patient accommodation services for North-West cancer patients who must travel to the Launceston General Hospital for radiation oncology treatment.”

Mr Sidebottom said ignoring medical and specialist advice on cancer services for the North-West would be dangerous and irresponsible.

Mr Sidebottom said today’s response by *The Advocate Newspaper* to a decision on oncology services for northern Tasmania was expected, but he had been left in a no-win situation.

“I fought hard for oncology services in the North-West, but ultimately the specialists in this field said it would not be possible, and could not be staffed,” Mr Sidebottom said.

“The Tasmanian Health Department, cancer specialists, and the Cancer Council of Tasmania, and the North West Area Health Service all advised that this unit was best placed at the Launceston General Hospital, thereby providing the most comprehensive oncology services available.

“It would be entirely irresponsible of the Federal Government to ignore this advice.”

In relation to the North-West Coast’s MRI licence, Mr Sidebottom reiterated that an exhaustive application process had been unable to find a suitable operator of an MRI business on the Coast.

“The tender on this licence had been open for more than a year – no MRI businesses applied to take it up,” he said.

“I cannot force health providers to tender for this licence, so surely it is better to re-direct these funds to areas we know have a great need.”

Mr Sidebottom also rejected Opposition and media claims that Braddon has missed out from the Rudd Government.

Mr Sidebottom said the North-West of Tasmania had also received a massive \$66,689,000 in funds which would be paid out across the coming 12 months for a variety of programs and projects.

“This includes \$30.38 million in infrastructure projects, from walking paths to major sporting complexes,” Mr Sidebottom said.

“On top of that we will receive \$23.8 million in what is just the first round of the Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, with more to come in future rounds.

Mr Sidebottom said people should not forget that the region will also benefit greatly from the \$500 million for superfast broadband being rolled out across Tasmania, and millions of dollars that are going to be spent on providing Affordable Housing in Braddon.

“As a region Braddon has done remarkably well from the Rudd Government,” Mr Sidebottom said.

“We are the envy of many other electorates in Australia who have not received anything close to the commitments Braddon has received of this Government,” he said.

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