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ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL TENDERERS SHORTLISTED

Construction of the new Royal Children's Hospital is a step closer after tenderers for the **\$850 million** project were short-listed to two, Health Minister Bronwyn Pike said today.

Minister Pike said the Children's Health Partnership consortium (comprising Babcock & Brown, Bovis Lend Lease and Spotless) and Plenary Health consortium (comprising Plenary Group, Grocon and Honeywell) had been selected to advance to the next stage.

Ms Pike said a project brief – which detailed the design, technical, commercial and service requirements – was issued to three short-listed consortia in October 2006.

An evaluation team of experts, comprising representatives from the State Government, Royal Children's Hospital and other professionals, have appraised the bids since they were submitted in mid-March.

“Both Children's Health Partnership and Plenary Health have been invited to participate in a structured negotiation phase, aimed at addressing key issues associated with their proposals and to provide the bidders with an opportunity to refine their designs,” Ms Pike said.

Ms Pike said the Bracks Government had made a major commitment to build one of the world's most advanced children's hospitals with a capacity to treat an extra 35,000 patients a year.

She said the Government would announce the successful bidder later this year. Until that time, the tender process will continue to be monitored by the State appointed probity auditor.

Set to open in 2011, the \$850 million project is being delivered under the State's *Partnerships Victoria* policy. The new hospital will be built in Parkville immediately to the west of the current hospital with parkland on three sides, creating a unique and natural setting for the treatment and recovery of Victoria's sick children.

“By remaining in Parkville the Children's will stay within Victoria's major medical research and technology precinct and will ensure that our children continue to have access to the best treatment available anywhere in Australia,” Ms Pike said.

The new site was chosen following extensive community consultation and investigation of a number of different locations.

Ms Pike said once the new hospital opens, much of the existing site will be demolished and the site restored as parkland, providing a new gateway to Royal Park. In order to ensure there will be no net loss in parkland, the final site for the new hospital will not exceed 4.1 hectares.

The Government will legislate to permanently reserve the existing hospital land for the park.