

Tenders to benefit region

BRETT WORTHINGTON

THE man driving Bendigo's new hospital says the region will benefit from global giants building the \$630 million project.

The *Bendigo Advertiser* this week revealed health officials had shortlisted two consortia to tender for the hospital.

Intecare, comprising John Laing, Theiss, Royal Bank of Scotland and Theiss Services, and Exemplar, comprising Capella, Lend Lease, Siemens and Spotless Services, are on the shortlist.

New Bendigo Hospital executive

director David Walker said each consortia had experience building multi-billion dollar projects across the globe.

"We are thrilled the announcement has come out," Mr Walker said.

"It is a significant milestone in the project and we are thrilled it has happened."

The expressions of interest to design, build and manage the hospital under a public private partnership (PPP) closed in September last year.

The government had said it would announce a shortlist of bidders in November last year

but the announcement came this week.

Mr Walker said it was a coup for Bendigo to have global consortia wanting to build the hospital.

"We will release the tender documents that include the specifications and they will come back with their plans and designs," he said.

"We will then pick a winner.

"It is very exciting we have got two very big players in the field here.

"They have got lots of experience building large hospital projects and PPP."

Mr Walker said works to prepare

the site were on track and that it would be ready for construction in December this year.

Health Minister David Davis has said the project would create almost 750 construction industry jobs.

Mr Walker said the hospital would also be employing more people to staff its expanded new site.

"We have got to employ new people... it is a long-term expansion of jobs for Bendigo and central Victoria," he said.

"There will be a maintenance contract for 20 to 25 years, depending on what's in the

contract, and that means there will be jobs for people."

Bendigo West MP Maree Edwards said she supported the hospital redevelopment but had concerns about the project.

"Labor committed to a 10 per cent apprenticeship component in the building works at the new hospital but the Liberal National state government has not even once mentioned apprenticeships for the project or local jobs," she said.

"This project is too important for Bendigo for it to be delayed and it is even more important as the biggest infrastructure project ever in regional Victoria that local people are given jobs on the project."