

HOSPITAL ON TRACK

Ryan confirms 2012 start

ACTING Premier Peter Ryan has declared bureaucratic delays won't set back construction of the new \$630 million Bendigo hospital.

"There is a process to be gone through with this and we are not going to rush it. We will do it appropriately," he said.

"But the basic thing I want to assure people about is that we will start construction... by the end of this year and that we will finish this project in the timelines promised and it will bring a degree of benefit to this region the likes we have not seen anywhere else in the regional parts of Victoria.

"It is by far the biggest project in regional Victoria at \$630 million plus. We promised

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it would be done and it will be done."

Mr Ryan's comments came days after the government revealed it had delayed announcing a shortlist of bidders to build the hospital.

Consortia applied for a private public partnership in September and the government had said it would announce a shortlist last November.

The government has since said it expected to announce a shortlist "early in 2012".

Mr Ryan said he was confident construction of the hospital would start on schedule in December.

"It is our intention to

commence construction by December this year," he said.

"We intend to finish this great project within the timelines that we have already announced.

"It is progressing well. We have various forms of benchmarks that these projects need to meet and that is appropriate.

"The last thing we want is to have the financial disaster for which Labor became famous. That is not going to happen under our government."

The shortlist delay comes after an appeal to the planning tribunal held up construction of a new Uley Street ambulance station.

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ALL ABOARD: Acting Premier Peter Ryan tried his hand at tram driving yesterday at the official opening of the redeveloped Bendigo Tramways. For more on Mr Ryan's Bendigo visit, see Page 7. Picture: MATT KIMPTON

Hospital 'progressing well'

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Demolishing the existing ambulance station is among the enabling work contractors are completing ahead of the December start date for construction.

Labor MP Jacinta Allan this week ridiculed the government for the delay.

She said she feared early delay would result in a construction blowout.

"I can assure the Bendigo community... we will build this hospital as we promised we would," Mr Ryan said.

"It will be done on time and it will provide the magnificence of the facilities which we have promised it will bring."



REVAMP: Bendigo Trust chairman Lloyd Cameron takes Mr Ryan on a tour of the redeveloped Bendigo Tramways.