Planning for the delivery of a Palmerston hospital has moved a step closer with the Government’s $5 million commitment to a scoping study and master plan development.

“The Country Liberals first announced plans to construct a stand-alone Palmerston Hospital during the 2008 Territory election campaign,” Mrs Lambley said.

“We are committed to getting this project right the first time and want a hospital that will service Palmerston and the Rural Area into perpetuity.

“To facilitate this, the Government will spend $5 million on a scoping study and master plan for Greater Darwin and Palmerston.

“Funding for the Palmerston hospital remains in the Budget and I welcome Federal Health Minister Tanya Plibersek’s re-commitment that the Commonwealth’s $70 million is still on the table.

“The scoping study is important because Labor didn’t properly plan for the facility.

“It failed to properly consider the right location, potential for a mix of public and private involvement and the long term needs of Palmerston, the Rural Area and the Greater Darwin region.

“Federal Labor conjured up a dollar figure, gave the former Government a day's notice and then announced a $110 million facility.

“At the outset Labor planned around a funding envelope rather than for the future health needs of the community.

“There was precious little community consultation and the interests of the ever expanding Rural Area were shoved to the background.

“The current site does not properly cater for long term growth and it will significantly add to existing traffic congestion for Palmerston residents trying to access Stuart Highway from Temple Terrace.

“While Labor members like to bang on about the hospital, in the 16 months following Canberra’s announcement they got as far as erecting a fence ... and a sign.

“Today work will begin removing the fence around Labor’s proposed site as planning around the scoping study continues.

“Our preferred site will be identified in the master plan and scoping study and will be finished later this year.

“Construction work on the hospital will begin during this term of Government.”

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