No hospital support for GetUp petition

West Gippsland Healthcare Group will not endorse a “save our hospital” campaign initiated by community advocacy group GetUp.

A petition, initiated through social media by GetUp, has called on Member for McMillan Russell Broadbent to fight to restore federal government funding to the public health system.

But WGHG chief executive Dan Weeks said the petition was not something the healthcare group board supported or endorsed.

Mr Weeks said the board did not support the claims being made by GetUp.

“There’s nothing on our horizon that suggests jobs are at risk or services will be cut.

“There is always state and federal argy bargy over funding.

“Our budget has continued to grow from the state government every year and I don’t have any fear that we are about to get hit with budget cuts.

“Our board will continue to be in negotiations with the state and the state and federal government will continue to vigorously debate funding levels,” Mr Weeks said.

The GetUp social media campaign is addressed to Mr Broadbent and calls on the federal government to “make a critical investment in our public health system, by fully reversing the full $57 billion in Coalition cuts to public hospitals and essential health services.”

Following investigations and financial projections by GetUp, the group claims West Gippsland Hospital could lose up to $120.3 million in federal funding over the next decade. This is roughly the equivalent of 72 hospital beds, or 141 nurses, or 64 doctors.

“These cuts are the outcome of changes to federal-state funding arrangements made in the 2014 budget, which saw $57 billion ripped from local hospitals over the next decade.

“The Turnbull government’s recent budget restored just $2.9 billion, locking in $54 billion of these cuts. Meanwhile the Coalition is trying to argue that they have increased health funding.

“But there’s hope. In this critical pre-election period, polling shows that protecting our universal healthcare system is the number one vote-changing issue for Australians.

“The Coalition’s attack on public health is clearly ringing alarm bells for voters, and we have a plan to turn the volume up,” Get-Up said.

The organisation has urged people to sign a petition to federal MPs via the campaign.