

**Submission
No 5**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE No. 2
RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE DELIVERY OF SPECIFIC HEALTH
SERVICES AND SPECIALIST CARE IN REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW**

Organisation: Southern Highlands Cancer Centre

Date Received: 10 April 2024

Southern Highlands Cancer Centre –
Regional Health Service Submission

10 April 2024

- Aging population in the Highlands with >50% of the population over 55 yrs.
- Currently cancer patients are being seen and treated at the Ramsay Private hospital under a private/public partnership agreement or at Campbelltown and Liverpool Hospitals.
- The public/private agreement is now in negotiation and the NSW Health is paying large amounts of money for Ramsay Healthcare to offer their rooms and treatment centre. I am not able to get a figure on this amount but understand the Health Minister should have those figures available.
- Approximately 50% of people living in the Highlands do not have private insurance.

Number of cancer patients in 2023 in the Southern Highlands that were initially seen by an Oncologist in the Southern Highlands. These numbers are referenced to Bankstown which has a fully staffed cancer centre –

	Bowral	Bankstown
New med oncology patients	320	350
New rad oncology patients	116	168
New haematology patients	121	470
Chemo treatments	4153	6060

Wait list at Bowral is 2-3 weeks for medical oncologist and radiation oncologist.

Wait list is 4 weeks for haematology

177 Highlands patients went to Campbelltown for a new consult

177 Highlands patients went to Liverpool for a new consult

- A considerable limitation of private oncology, is that no patient is included in the public hospital MDT – a significant failing of the private system and of cancer patients.
- All Radiation Oncology patients travel on a daily basis to either Liverpool (>1 Hour away) or Campbelltown (>45minutes drive) to receive their treatment.
- GP's in the area are still sending haematology patients to Wollongong – historic relationship with previous Haematologist which incurs a 90 minute drive to receive treatment or attend a consultation. This haematologist is planning to retire in the not too distant future.
- Cancer patients treated at Campbelltown can take Community Transport to the hospital but will need to wait until all commuting patients treatments have been completed before returning to the Highlands. This could take up to 6 hours not

including the >45 minutes travel time in each direction. If a patient has a 30 minute immunotherapy infusion they will wait at the cancer centre until all patients are finished with their infusions which could be a 5hour wait.

- The Cancer Centre was to be part of Stage 2 of the Bowral Hospital build with just 6 chairs now bumped back to an unfunded Stage 3 of indeterminable completion.
- Although Radiation Oncology does not have high numbers of patients in future patients from Goulburn would find it easier to come to Bowral rather than travel to Canberra.

Shoalhaven Cancer Centre is a stand-alone unit completed in 2013 with a value of \$32m.

This included –

- A linear accelerator
- Two radiation bunkers
- Range of associated specialist medical equipment
- 14 chemotherapy treatment spaces
- Patient consultation areas
- Waiting and reception spaces
- Clinical trial facilities
- Patient information and support services
- 10 bedroom patient cancer and accommodation facility
- Visitor parking for seven cars and dedicated parking with boom gate access for 55 cars (inc accessible) for patients, carers and staff
- Additional car parking spaces

This is probably far more than what we would need in the Highlands but gives an idea of costing.

In the Highlands it is estimated we would need space for ten to twelve chairs, radiation bunkers, consultation rooms and parking or at least a drop off area.

There is no need for accommodation, clinical trials, multiple reception areas and 55 car spaces.

- Cancer treatment in the Southern Highlands is lagging far behind the population growth in the area with further development taking place at Wilton and Menangle Park.
- Cancer is not a condition that is going to be cured any time soon and right now we are seeing younger patients being diagnosed – Cancer services are desperately needed in the Southern Highlands.
- From a staffing perspective at the moment the Highlands has one full time consultant. With the volume of patients another two full time oncology consultants will be needed as well as one full time haematology consultant.