

**Submission
No 65**

**THE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED BY NORTHERN
BEACHES HOSPITAL**

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I am not writing about my own personal experiences but about the experiences of my clients when I worked as a nurse at the Northern Beaches community mental health service. This is not about the mental health services provided at the hospital.

On many occasions clients of the service required hospital services for general care. One such person was a man who needed assistance with sleep apnoea. After being seen as a 'public patient' in the hospital he was referred for follow up with physicians in their private rooms. The client was upset as he could not afford these appointments but felt that he had to attend. He was told that he should have a sleep study which would cost him at least \$500. He could only do so by borrowing money from a friend. No-one suggested an alternative, or told him about the public clinic available at RNSH.

I found out that this was common practice among clients who were on disability pensions and could not afford to pay out-of-pocket fees for doctors appointments. Yet they were always referred to doctors private rooms for follow up after having been an inpatient as a public patient. I could not find any public clinics through Northern Beaches Hospital. I ended up referring most of my clients to RNSH hospital to get the services they needed.

These people were lucky enough to have someone to advocate on their behalf. But not having public clinics or facilities for follow up for public clients is not satisfactory for a hospital that is supposed to offer both public and private services. Additionally, the cost of extra travel to attend RNSH is too expensive for many of those living on disability pensions. Public clinics need to be available at Northern Beaches Hospital. If these services are not going to be offered, then patients need to be made aware of the alternatives and where they are available.