

**Submission
No 77**

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

Name: Ms Julie Johnstone

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I have had private health insurance with Teachers Health for many years. I have found them to be an excellent fund and the one time I was admitted to the Northern Beaches hospital in 2019, the fund was exemplary. I received the best of accommodation and services. Waiting time in emergency was long and uncomfortable but the care and service I eventually received from the medical staff, was exceptional. All tests I required were available and I had a good level of communication with the attending doctors and specialists.

When earlier this year I received a letter from Teachers Health informing me that the agreement they had with Healthscope and Northern Beaches Hospital was about to be terminated I was not only upset, but angry. Imagine after decades of paying into a private health fund I would no longer be able to use it in the only hospital on the Northern Beaches.

It is not right that the only hospital in the area be a privately run institution that is not available to all. Since the closure of Mona Vale Hospital, this is the only available hospital and it is a 40 minute drive from my home. If I was not able to use my health fund there, I would be forced to go to North Shore, which is at least an hour's drive away and would add to the waiting times there.

The Northern Beaches Hospital is a nice, well equipped facility and it makes no sense that, when the public are encouraged to have private health insurance, they can't use it to attend the only hospital in the area because the private company running it can pick and choose which health funds they have an agreement with.

The hospital should be returned to public hands where it belongs.

The government has a responsibility to ensure this happens, regardless of cost.

The Northern Beaches had suffered greatly due to services being privatised and major projects axed.

Fortunately, in my case, an agreement was reached but we should not have to go through that.