

Submission

No 83

INQUIRY INTO THE ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Name: Mr Neville Boyce

The Director,
Joint Select Committee on Royal North Shore Hospital,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY. NSW 2000.

I refer to the request for a "Call for Submissions" by Rev. Hon. Fred Nile MLC in the Central Coast Express Advocate on 2nd November, 2007. My submission will refer firstly to the crisis faced by the Medical Staff Council and to strategies and measures that will benefit the New South Wales Public Hospital System and if accepted, will return Royal North Shore Hospital to the prestigious status that it deserves.

I am making this Submission with enclosures in disgust after reading headlines this week and recently in local papers:

- "Hospital Death Queues" - Daily Telegraph 2/11/07
- "Ailing Health Service is \$7.4m in red- Central Coast Express Advocate 31/10/07
- "Embattled Meagher - I had to replace Christley" - Central Coast Express Advocate 12/10/07
- "Ailing System" - Central Coast Express Advocate 5/10/07.
Report from Central Coast Medical Staff Council
- "Plan May Cure" C.C. Express Advocate 5/10/07
- "Emergency! Medical Services Crisis" - C.C. Express Advocate 8/8/07
- "Sick & Sorry" - C.C. Express Advocate 20/7/07
- "Health Carers Sick of Waiting" - Daily Telegraph 13/7/07
- "Someone Will Die" - 14/2/07 - C.C. Express Advocate

The above are only a few copies of local reporting since the Central Coast Area Health Service became attached to North Sydney Area Health Service. I don't believe anyone at Government level is listening to the Local Medical Staff Council, who are desperate for beds to cope with the increasing and ageing population in our area.

I am sure you are aware that Gosford Hospital piloted the Area Health Service concept in New South Wales in the late seventies, when some 80 Public Service Health Workers came under the management of the Hospital Board and was co-ordinated by the C.E.O. as well as having one Board of Directors for all hospitals on the Central Coast - a truly integrated service. The new name of the service became the Central Coast Area Health Service.

Legislation was introduced in New South Wales in 1983 and later adopted throughout most states in Australia, to follow the Gosford model.

2.

How do we fix the ailing Health Services in New South Wales following enquiries into the quality of care for patients at Royal North Shore as outlined in the term of reference.

My submission refers to the Term of Reference 2 "..... which may also benefit New South Wales public hospitals"

1. The concept of Area Health Service was to have one voluntary Board of Directors and one C.E.O. to provide health services planning to an identified community such as the Central Coast rather than have individual Boards at every hospital.
2. The Central Coast has a population of 300,000, 800 beds and 4 hospitals – an ideal size for an Area Health Service to be managed by one C.E.O.
3. It is impossible for one C.E.O. to manage a Health Service from Lake Macquarie to all areas of North Sydney with a population of 1½ million plus.
4. The Health Services in New South Wales is fast approaching the old Fifth Schedule System when these services were managed by the Public Service – all agreed this system was hopeless.
5. The downhill slide of the Health Services began when the C.E.O. was placed within the Senior Executive Service – answerable to the Government and not the local Board – he or she lost local initiative and had to become a “yes” person and do what the Government required or lose his/her position, as the appointment was a five year contract and he/she could be sacked at the Minister’s wish.
6. The next move to shut out the local voice was when Boards of Directors were remunerated.
7. Once Boards were sacked, the local voice of the Community disappeared completely.
8. I have not read one word in the local press about what the Advisory Committee is doing for the Health Service.
9. What I have read in the local press is desperate appeals from the Medical Staff Council for more beds and services to cope with our increasing population.
10. The officers that should “be replaced” are those responsible for policy and funding of the Health System at Departmental level – they do not appear to listen to information that our population is increasing and ageing. They are not listening to the medical profession
11. If other areas are getting the same adverse publicity as on the Central Coast, then a complete investigation should be conducted before the health system in New South Wales fails completely.
12. Talk Back Radio and the Sydney Press see this investigation as a “Whitewash”
13. I urge your Select Committee to fix the problems at Royal North Shore and give directions to the Department of Health to properly fund the Health System of N.S.W.
14. We need a Health System that we can be proud of – the staff are working under extreme pressure and the closing of beds will only create more pressure and more resignations.
15. The need for Senior Medical Staff at Royal North Shore and other major hospitals to go public to advise the community of the failure of the Health System never happened when Boards of Directors were appointed. Boards listened to the

medical profession and all worked as a team to provide the required health service. I can assure you that Boards are not another level of bureaucracy. The C.E.O. was always left to manage the Health Services.

16. The first recommendation should be to return to the original size of Areas. No one person can be C.E.O. to manage services hundreds of miles away.

If my submission is within the Guidelines I would be happy to supply more information if needed. When the Select Committee has completed its Enquiry I would appreciate return of press cuttings.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neville Boyce".

Neville Boyce O.A.M.