

**Submission  
No 76**

**INQUIRY INTO OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
THE NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL**

**Name:** Mrs Dorothy Waterhouse

**Date Received:** 21 July 2019

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## **My concern**

- 1. Loss of Parkinson's Disease expertise from closure of Mona Vale Hospital.**
- 2. Lack of qualified and experienced medical support at Northern Beaches Hospital for the many People Living with Parkinson's Disease (PLWP) on the Northern Beaches.**
- 3. Very poor comparison with Royal North Shore Hospital.**

## **Background**

I am Dorothy Waterhouse, my husband has Parkinson's and I am the secretary for the Parkinson's NSW Pittwater/Warringah Support Group.

<https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/whats-on/parkinsons-nsw-pittwaterwarringah-support-group>

We have over 70 members. There is another large Parkinson's NSW support group in Manly.

Parkinson's is the second most common neurological disease in Australia after dementia. For comparison purposes the prevalence of Parkinson's is greater than prostate, bowel and many other forms of cancer and the total number of Parkinson's sufferers is 4 times the number of people suffering with MS. The disease affects an estimated 100,000 in Australia. 38 Aussies are diagnosed with the disease every day. The number of people with Parkinson's has increased by 17% in the last six years.

<https://shakeitup.org.au/understanding-parkinsons/>

You don't die from Parkinson's, but you do need local, ongoing specialised medical support to continue to live well with it.

### **1. Loss of Parkinson's Disease expertise from closure of Mona Vale Hospital.**

#### **Mona Vale Hospital before closure**

PLWP on the Northern beaches were supported at Mona Vale Hospital both by specific clinics and a general high level of staff expertise. When my husband attended Emergency there with a head injury in 2016, staff picked up on his Parkinson's symptoms even though he had not yet had a final diagnosis. Their expertise was evident and very important to his wellbeing while at the hospital. I have attached my husband's Parkinson's Alert information to give an idea of what can go wrong if staff are not very experienced with Parkinson's.

#### **No planning for PLWP**

Before the new Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH) opened, and Mona Vale Hospital closed, I tried repeatedly to get reliable information for our Parkinson's groups, as to what was planned for continuing and increasing the vital support for PLWP on the Northern Beaches. No one at either hospital could advise me.

Despite the advertised 'A major investment in new infrastructure was required to ensure the local community had access to high quality healthcare into the future.' there is no provision to support PLWP.

## Current web presence for Mona Vale Hospital

<https://www.nslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/Hospitals/MonaVale/Pages/default.aspx>

'The hospital remains in public ownership and is being transformed with new services and infrastructure, as part of the largest investment in healthcare on the Northern Beaches in decades.' However, there is no mention of the services previously provided by Mona Vale Hospital for PLWP.

There appears to still be some Parkinson's specific support at Mona Vale Hospital, but it is not easily found - word of mouth! And has not been increased to meet the growing demand from increasing numbers of local PLWP, resulting in huge waiting lists for any of these:

- Speech therapy and swallowing difficulties
- an exercise group
- a Falls Prevention Clinic

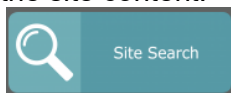
## 2. Lack of qualified and experienced medical support at Northern Beaches Hospital for the many People Living with Parkinson's Disease (PLWP) on the Northern Beaches.

Speaking recently to the Northern Beaches Hospital switch board on (02) 9105 5000, they were unable to provide me with any Parkinson's specific: information, staff, clinics, or support materials.

A search of the NBH website shows there is nothing specifically related to Parkinson's at the new hospital.

### NOTE

Searching was difficult as there is no Site map for the website.  
There is no way to search the site content.



There is a *Site Search* link  
but this goes to an irrelevant site:

<http://nbhassist.com.au/siteLocator.asp?u=HOS&pc=2086>

### Specific pages checked

- **Aged Care** - No mention of Parkinson's  
<http://www.northernbeacheshospital.com.au/nbh-departments/departments-aged-care>
- **Neurology** - No mention of Parkinson's  
<http://www.northernbeacheshospital.com.au/nbh-departments/neurology>
- **Doctors directory** - No mention of expertise in Parkinson's  
[http://www.northernbeacheshospital.com.au/application/files/1115/6133/3568/NB.H.DoctorsDirectory\\_20-6-2019.pdf](http://www.northernbeacheshospital.com.au/application/files/1115/6133/3568/NB.H.DoctorsDirectory_20-6-2019.pdf)

Given this lack of Parkinson's specific expertise at Northern Beaches Hospital, and the dire results for a PLWP in an inexperienced hospital situation, I will be forced to drive my husband (who has Parkinson's) the significantly extra distance to Royal North Shore Hospital. Not an ideal situation! I would prefer to take him to the much closer (18 mins peak hour) 'transformed' Mona Vale hospital, if it included a Centre of Excellence for Parkinson's disease.

### 3. Very poor comparison with Royal North Shore Hospital.

Comparison of Northern beaches hospitals with Royal North Shore Hospital's provisions for PLWP <https://www.nslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/Services/Directory/Pages/nsrhs.aspx>

- **Neurology**  
Movement Disorder Clinic - Royal North Shore Hospital  
Neurogenetics Clinic  
<https://www.nslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/Services/Neurology>
- **Subspecialty outpatient clinics** are offered for patients with Movement Disorders like Parkinson's disease,.....
- **Centre of Excellence for Parkinson's disease** and Movement Disorders at Royal North Shore Hospital with specialist teams.
- **Parkinson's Disease nurse.** (vital to have for Northern beaches)  
<http://sydneydbs.com/rnsh-parkinsons-disease-information-morning-2017/>
- **Familial Parkinson's Disease Clinic**  
<https://www.nslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/Services/Directory/Pages/NeurogeneticsClinic.aspx>
- **Advanced Parkinson's Disease Clinic**

#### Summary of my concerns

- The Northern Beaches Hospital does not provide any Parkinson's specific expertise or programs to support the large and growing Northern Beaches Parkinson's community.
- There does not appear to be any plans to address this medical shortcoming.
- Mona Vale Hospital does not advertise any of its Parkinson's support activities on its new *Health, Northern Sydney Local Health District* web site. These activities have not had increased resourcing to match the demand.
- The nearest specialised medical support for People Living with Parkinson's on the Northern beaches is Royal North Shore Hospital and not a local hospital. It had been Mona Vale Hospital.