

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to Inquiry into the operation and management of the Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH)

By way of background, I live in Clareville, a 10 minute drive north of Mona Vale Hospital (MVH) site.

With the rapidly growing & aging population, I welcome any new hospital, just not at the expense of 2 public ones. I only hope the serious issues surrounding the NBH can be resolved. Given its location well away from the actual coastal strip & allegedly built to take pressure off RNSH, it already has a huge catchment area. Frenchs Forest itself has a conservatively estimated extra 30,000 residents anticipated (along with the cars) if the Beaches Tunnel is approved. (SMH 2018).

There are wiser people than me to comment on the actual NBH itself so I will address the:

Terms of Reference 1(f), the impact on surrounding communities etc.

It beggar's belief that in 2019, with the rapidly growing and aging population, any Government would see fit to close a fully functioning local public Hospital. Logic would suggest that taxpayers need and expect more public hospitals, not less. It is a basic essential service not a luxury.

I am seriously concerned that the closure of MVH as a level 3 Public Hospital along with it's vital A&E Unit, will prove life threatening. Those of us north of MV not only have added travel time to reach the nearest A&E but are at serious risk of being isolated from an A&E if fire or flood block our only road accesses.

Facts:.

- It's closer in distance from Bondi to the NBH than from Palm Beach, however they have many closer options such as SVH, RPA, POW, RNSH etc. Those of us living north of MV & the 10000s of visitors to the area have no such option
- MVH is only 50 years old. It's construction type was built block on block meaning it's possible to just gut the inside of the building and modify it. It is claimed that it doesn't meet the 2018 fire standards and hence it needs to be bulldozed. The NSW Government has money to rebuild 20-year-old stadiums, Hornsby Hospital, the RPA and St Vincent Hospital. Why not MVH? Also, if asbestos is such an issue, why was Maternity redone at huge cost with staff still working on other floors if it was so dangerous?
- the enormous surge in residents in Warriewood, Ingleside, aged care facilities in Terrey Hills etc. Many of whom will be the vulnerable young and old who require accessible emergency care
- the NBH has 50 A&E beds, with the loss of 16 at MVH, is not many, particularly with the increase in drug/mental health related (eg ICE) admissions.
- the single lane, congested or flood prone roads for those of us North of MV (ambulances included). Upgrades will not be completed in the foreseeable future & add to the congestion.
- further pressure to an already stretched ambulance service....and not forgetting the unnecessary & cruel suffering to both patient and their oft elderly partner who have no direct public transport to NBH
- life threatening injuries north of MV can't be treated at the current MVH "Urgent Care" as it only sees "minor cases" according to NSW Health.
- without surgical back up at MVH, any inpatient in the palliative or rehabilitation units who suffers a setback requiring surgery (not uncommon) will need to be go through a transfer/admission to the new hospital. Again, a distressing move for both patient and family alike.

I appreciate the opportunity to be heard and hope the factual & honestly frightening impact of the closure of MVH resonates. It could be one of your loved ones as easily as mine!

I implore the committee to recommend the refurbishment & retention of MVH as a level 3 public Hospital as an essential public health service. To do otherwise would be a short sighted travesty