

**Submission
No 83**

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

Name: Mrs Marilyn Smith

Date Received: 22 July 2019

I have been in the hospital 6 times since it opened.

My first visit, to Emergency, was on Nov 4 & 5, 2018, soon after the hospital opened. The Emergency department at that time was in disarray. The staff were mostly trying their best although it was obviously understaffed, staff not trained to use the equipment, meals not being sent to the Short Stay area and a considerable amount of misinformation and confusion.

On April 6, 2019 I was admitted by ambulance after a car accident. I was attended to immediately and tests were done straight away which confirmed a fractured sternum and many soft tissue injuries. The care I was given was excellent, although, because of my injuries, I was moved the next day to Royal North Shore.

On May 25, 2019, I went to the Emergency Dept again with severe bowel problems as a result of the accident on April 6. The treatment was excellent although I was sent home that day as the symptoms gradually eased.

On May 31, 2019, I went to Emergency again with the same symptoms as the week before, although now, I was in severe pain. The Emergency staff could see that I was very distressed and took me in immediately. I was admitted for 8 days and put under the care of a Bowel Surgeon and given intravenous antibiotics for 7 days. Emergency was excellent and I was moved that same day to a private ward.

Over the 8 days I became aware of the staff problems on the ward. There were very few experienced nurses and far too many in training, which put too much pressure on the trained staff. My antibiotics were supposed to be given intravenously every 8 hours. There was no coordination in organizing this. From day one, I had to remind staff to order the medication two hours before it was due. If they ordered it earlier it disappeared into other wards. I also had to remind staff, even at midnight, that the antibiotic was overdue. Eventually one nurse brought a multiple box of the medication which was stored in my bedside drawer. Even then I still had to remind staff to administer it.

There seemed to be little organization in the ward generally at all. I was on a special diet which my specialist described in detail. There were differences between information I was given between my specialist and the ward doctor. I had to supervise meals as well because the wrong meals were brought twice. I did feel sorry for the three nurses who on their shift, were excellent, in my 8 days there. The others were either too inexperienced or came across as unfriendly. The board in my room was supposed to be kept up to date with my medication and nursing staff names. It was only used on one day out of the eight. The rest of the time it was blank.

In summary, I felt that had I not been astute and aware of the care I needed, I would have needed a family member there at all times to make sure everything was done correctly for me.

There was also a problem with visitors to the ward in the room next to mine. Two nights running, they were there talking loudly until 9.30pm the first night and 11.30pm the second.

On June 17, 2019, I had an MRI follow up of the bowel. This day visit to the hospital was excellent and the staff were friendly and efficient.

On July 15, 2019, I had another day visit to the hospital for a Colonoscopy. Everything was done efficiently and the staff were caring and friendly.

In summary, once the staff issues and organization in the wards comes up to standard, I will have no hesitation in going to the Northern Beaches hospital for a long or short stay.