

Submission
No 88

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

Name: Name suppressed

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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION & MANAGEMENT OF THE NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL (NBH)

My husband and I live in Avalon, an approx.10 minute drive north of Mona Vale Hospital (MVH) site compared with the distance we might have to travel in an emergency to the Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH), which is a minimum of 30 mins drive, assuming that the Wakehurst Parkway is not closed due to flooding or an accident in which case this emergency journey could take considerably longer, possibly causing loss of life due to a lack of prompt emergency treatment.

We are part of the rapidly growing & aging population, and we welcome any new hospital, just not at the expense of 2 public ones. We 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).

Our comments on the Terms of Reference 1(f), the impact on surrounding communities etc. The points below have been widely expounded at various protest meetings associated with Northern Beaches locals attempting to keep MVH open. We'll therefore add these again as they are extremely important:

1. 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
2. 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 the building 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?
3. 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
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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

7. 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.

8. 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.

It is unbelievable 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 fewer. It is a basic essential service not a luxury. We appreciate the opportunity to be heard and hope the factual & honestly frightening impact of the closure of MVH resonates with those decision makers working for the good of our community. We 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 for future generations of the Northern Beach.

Your faithfully,