

**Submission
No 98**

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

Name: Ms Ros Treloar

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Northern Beaches Hospital Experience



November 13 2018 7.30pm

I have the tick bite related Alpha-Gal allergy to meat and meat products which can result in anaphylaxis. I presented at Northern Beaches Hospital at 7.30pm with a tick deeply embedded in the back of my head. I had followed protocol and freeze sprayed it. ***I had seen online that anyone with tick related issues was automatically directed to NBH from Mona Vale Urgent Care so my husband drove me straight to NBH.*** I had developed hives from this tick bite which was a stronger reaction to a bite than I had experienced previously so was keen to have the tick removed in a medical setting and avoid it injecting further. Each tick bite strengthens any previous allergic reaction.

I had been treated for anaphylaxis 4 years previously at Mona Vale Emergency and hospitalised overnight.

At the admissions desk at NBH I was only asked "Do you want to see a doctor?" "Yes" So I was told "Sit on the chairs with the red dots". There were about 12 other people on the red dot chairs and about 40 in the emergency room altogether. ***Only one triage nurse was on duty at that time. He would put his head out of the examination room and ask "Who's next?" We patients all looked at each other and tried to remember who had arrived first.*** The only person "triaged" was a heavily pregnant woman who was invited to go straight in to the nurse.

Eventually a second nurse came on duty and I saw her about 8.30. I explained the tick allergy. ***She wandered around the room asking herself "Where is my tick kit?" She never did find it.*** She checked

that I had taken an antihistamine and had my EpiPen with me. She did freeze spray the tick and said she would try to remove it after 10 minutes but if it resisted she would respray. I said I didn't want her to experiment because if the tick was still embedded and she irritated it, it could inject further toxin. Huffily she told me "Well, you'll have to wait for a doctor."

After about an hour and a half my husband could see that the tick had "backed out" and looked like it could be safely removed. By this time the male nurse was free and I asked him to have a look at the tick. ***The only tweezers he could find to remove it were large green plastic ones that might be used to lift dressings.*** Again I didn't feel confident he could remove the tick cleanly and said I would wait for the doctor. I finally saw the doctor about midnight. A woman beside me had waited the same length of time with a broken wrist. The doctor removed the tick successfully with proper instruments.

I have no issue with the wait time as I understand doctors see patients most in need first.

However compared with my thoroughly professional treatment at Mona Vale Hospital I thought the triage system was very poorly organised. The lack of proper equipment was a concern. Staff at the emergency department at Mona Vale were very experienced with the Alpha-Gal allergy and very familiar with tick related complications which are common on the Northern Beaches. Even though one of the nurses at NBH was ex Mona Vale I didn't have confidence in her understanding of my problem. 😞

My specialist now recommends I call an ambulance immediately if I'm unlucky enough to get another tick. I have heard ambulance wait times have increased since the advent of NBH.

NBH now draws patients from a wide area. Mona Vale Hospital needs to be retained to properly service the Northern Beaches and not waste a wonderful PUBLIC resource. Northern Beaches Hospital would operate more efficiently as a fully public hospital. An explanation of the need for public funds to rescue the situation would, if delivered with humility and evidence, be accepted and welcomed by the community.

Ros Treloar