

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

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Northern Beaches Hospital building is state of the art. Unfortunately, what occurs on the inside of the building does not match the outside.

My 98 year old grandmother was admitted to the hospital twice. Once in early April and again in late May, 2019.

On the first occasion, my grandmother was diagnosed with pneumonia. The ward she was in was very obviously understaffed and the staff that were working were clearly overworked and inexperienced, which was worrying. Basic supplies such as tissues were not available and on asking for some, I was given a box of already opened supermarket tissues. Although light meals were being brought to my grandmother, they were being placed on a table that was inaccessible to her and then just left there when they weren't eaten. In fact, the sick elderly lady on the opposite side of the room called me over on the third day of my grandmother's admission to tell me "they're not feeding Mum you know." Although we had a feeling that was the case, it was rather distressing that an elderly patient on the other side of the room had observed this and had been concerned enough to tell my grandmother's family. Although it may have not been the intention, we felt as though my grandmother was literally being left to die just because she was 98 and had pneumonia. On the fourth morning of my grandmother's admission we brought her some fruit to eat. It was evident as she ate it that she was starving.

When my grandmother was in the emergency department, the second time she fell ill with pneumonia, she was given diuretics and as a result of this was urinating uncontrollably. She was left lying in soaking wet sheets and was in a very distressed state because she had never experienced this and wanted to know why it was happening. Two very young nurses attended and told me that they only had the low absorbency nappies available and that is why my grandmother's bed was all wet. Once again, this was extremely upsetting to witness and could have been avoided with more adequate supplies. The young nurses then proceeded to change my grandmother's bed sheets and her nappy, but were called away so many times that it took quite some time to complete.

Although the doctors and nurses I encountered on both occasions were most likely doing their best, they came across as being extremely overworked and pushed. There was not the cohesiveness that I had experienced in the past when family members were treated at Manly, Mona Vale and Royal North Shore Hospitals.

Perhaps the Northern Beaches Hospital was opened too soon. Maybe, there are other reasons why - but my experience of the hospital was that it is not a fully functioning and properly established hospital and that is a scary prospect.

As a result of what I have witnessed, I am now fearful, not only for my elderly family members, but for all my family members, should they need hospital assistance. In the near future, if the need arises, I would most likely avoid going to that state of the art building at Frenchs Forest and go to Royal North Shore Hospital instead.