

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Hello,

I'm a father of two teenagers and live with my wife in Newport on the Northern Beaches. We moved to the Avalon / Newport area 20 years ago in the knowledge that we had a good quality hospital in Mona Vale. Never in my wildest dreams did I image that with a growing population more congestion on our roads and the increased need for healthcare as the population ages, that a NSW state government would close this much needed facility at Mona Vale.

I was going to write about the importance of the Golden Hour – that first and most critical hour after trauma or a major medical emergency – that Life or Death moment!

But in undertaking a google search came up with the following which I believe covers my sentiments:

With regard to emergency trauma care, a few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. This first hour of definitive medical care is called the “golden hour.” It is usually this first hour where the patient’s medical fate is sealed. In general, the faster that medical care is rendered, the better the medical outcome will be.

The old adage that all bleeding stops at sometime is true. In a traumatic situation, you would hope that the bleeding has stopped because of an emergent intervention by the emergency physician or a trauma surgeon. The other way that bleeding stops is when the patient runs out of blood, which is obviously not the ideal outcome.

The golden hour is not just limited to traumatic emergency situations. This first hour of emergent medical care is also very important in situations such as heart attack or stroke, where time is heart muscle or brain tissue. Emergent medical interventions can have a profound impact on a patient’s survival and ultimate ability to function. Patients and loved ones need to be aware that not all hospitals have the ability to offer definitive medical care. For patients who arrive at an emergency department that is unable to provide the emergent medical care that is needed, the transfer process will begin. The time that is wasted during the transfer process can lead to disaster.

Patients should be aware of the golden hour principle and the fact that each hospital has their own strengths and weaknesses. If you have time and a particular medical problem arises, be aware that you or your loved one needs to be at a hospital that can offer definitive medical care. The best advice is to research your local hospitals ahead of time to determine their specialty capabilities. In other words, go browsing the “medical shops” before you need to buy. With this knowledge, you will be able to make the most informed and most appropriate decision about where to go when the need arises. Most people do not plan for a medical emergency, although everyone will have one at one time or another.

<https://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2011/02/golden-hour-difference-life-death.html>

A quick analysis of estimated travel times between Newport (my home) and the Northern Beaches Hospital (Frenches Forest) - using Google Maps provided the following information.

Midweek Morning peak	Typically +/- 30 minutes
Midweek Normal	Typically +/- 27.5 minutes
Midweek Evening	Typically +/- 22 minutes

Weekend Morning	Typically +/- 22 minutes
Weekend Midday	Typically +/- 30 minutes
Weekend Afternoon	Typically +/- 27.5 minutes

Compare that to estimated travel times between Newport (my home) and the Mona Vale Hospital (Mona Vale) – 18.4km using Google Maps provided the following information.

Midweek Morning peak	Typically +/- 12 minutes
Midweek Normal	Typically +/- 11 minutes
Midweek Evening	Typically +/- 11 minutes

Weekend Morning	Typically +/- 11 minutes
Weekend Midday	Typically +/- 12 minutes
Weekend Afternoon	Typically +/- 11 minutes

In other words, a doubling if not close to a tripling of travel time. That most important Golden Hour just wasted in getting to the hospital. Of course that is assuming that an ambulance is sitting at the end of your road waiting for you to have an accident or a medical emergency - which of course they aren't!

How many lives have so far been lost and how many more will be lost over the years due to this short-sighted and disastrous decision to close Mona Vale Hospital?

We need Mona Vale Hospital to be renovated and back to full operation capacity of a level 4 hospital or above immediately.