

Submission
No 184

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 28 July 2019

Partially
Confidential

The new hospital looks lovely but I don't have confidence in the services and in the event of a major issue, I would now go to the North Shore. My GP even told me that if I experienced heart issues to avoid the Northern Beaches. Many of the staff who work in Emergency, whilst friendly and enthusiastic, are young and quite inexperienced.

I have had two visits to the emergency department at the hospital as I developed pulmonary embolisms.

The first time, the tests did not pick up the embolisms in my lungs and I was discharged; however no clear answer was given to explain my symptoms (other than that they weren't because of embolisms) nor was I given a referral to a lung specialist for further testing.

No food or drink was offered while I was at emergency that whole day. I was told not to walk around as it wasn't clear if I had a heart issue.

Five weeks later, I attended a PRP facility, as by now I had a respiratory specialist, and was given a VQ scan. It determined I had multiple embolisms in both lungs. As the specialist was now overseas, and my GP was also on holiday, PRP told me to go straight to the hospital.

In Emergency, the radiologist seemed more concerned with establishing that PRP had made an error in their report than my health, and insisted on repeating the VQ scan, subjecting me to further nuclear radioactivity. The results were the same.

I was asked what medication I usually took, as I would be staying overnight, but my medication never arrived.

The Emergency doctor told me they needed to establish if the embolisms were chronic or acute. I asked if the treatment would be different and she told me if they were chronic, I would receive no treatment. I said but I have been having symptoms for three months now, and they are getting worse! Surely I should be having some treatment for this! However, I stayed at the hospital overnight and the new doctor in charge dispensed a script for the appropriate medication.

The staff seem inexperienced in taking blood samples and failed to find a vein in both arms or my hand, despite using an ultrasound. If I had been offered water during the day, this might have helped the issue. The next day, they finally were able to insert a cannula.

I was discharged, again with no referral to a specialist and with no follow up care organised, and told to see my GP. As my GP and respiratory specialist were both overseas, I found this very stressful. When I finally saw him, my GP was shocked that no blood tests were done at the hospital to see if I had a clotting disorder. He gave me a referral to a cardiovascular specialist, who was equally horrified that I had had three months of symptoms before I had a final diagnosis.

As I mentioned, the staff were very friendly and they are doing their best given their obvious lack of experience. However I decided I wouldn't return to the hospital and would attend the North Shore from now on.

On both occasions, the Northern Beaches hospital did not organise referrals or appointments with appropriate specialists; having to go back to see a GP after the first occasion, and then organise a specialist cost me five weeks, which is time I could have been taking anticoagulants and gone a long way to fixing my issues.

My husband and I are elderly and live in Avalon, and the loss of Mona Vale hospital means we are now an unacceptable distance from a public hospital. If there is flooding

on the roads or a car accident near Oxford Falls, getting to the new hospital would be a nightmare.

Finally, our eldest son is a volunteer surf life saver at Whale Beach and is horrified at the closure of Mona Vale hospital. Last year the club had 42 rescues, with around half sent to Mona Vale hospital. With a resuscitation, time is of great importance and minutes mean the difference between life and death or brain damage. Rescues are often not locals, so the loss of Mona Vale hospital doesn't just impact Pittwater residents, it impact tourists and day visitors to the beach. The same thing can be said for the closure of Manly.