

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 28 July 2019

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into the operation and management of the Northern Beaches Hospital

In response to the terms of reference:

1 (a) the contract and other arrangements establishing the hospital,

As the contract has not been made available to the community and therefore it is impossible to comment. We consider that it is in the public interest that the contract be made available so the community has a thorough understanding of the conditions of the contract between the NSW State Government and Healthscope and the impact of the future sale by Healthscope to Brookfield.

(b) changes to the contract and other arrangements since the opening of the hospital,

It would also be in the public interest to know if there have been changes to the contract. How does the public-private partnership work? Is there equitable access for public patients who under Medicare are entitled to free health and emergency services in public hospitals?

(c) ongoing arrangements for the operation and maintenance of the hospital,

As the Northern Beaches Hospital is privately operated and is exempt from proper scrutiny by the Auditor-General, the hospital's performance is not transparent and open to question.

(e) staffing arrangements and staffing changes at the hospital,

It is our understanding that there are staffing issues including working conditions, overtime, retention, support, training, resources and the number of casual staff.

(d) standards of service provision and care at the hospital,

Critical information that affects the performance of the hospital does not appear in the public domain and therefore we have absolutely no confidence in the Northern Beaches Hospital. My family plan to bypass the Northern Beaches Hospital and go straight to Royal North Shore Hospital.

Ongoing reports, submissions to the Inquiry and anecdotal reports have reinforced our concerns in the competency of the hospital's processes and procedures and also reinforced our decision to go directly to Royal North Shore Hospital. The Northern Beaches Hospital appears to have systemic and ongoing failures of process that are putting people's lives at risk.

(f) the impact of the hospital on surrounding communities and health facilities, particularly Mona Vale Hospital, Manly Hospital and Royal North Shore Hospital,

The Northern Beaches Hospital was expected to provide an improved health service to the Northern Beaches community and to take the "load" off Royal North Shore Hospital. Neither of these expectations has been achieved. The catchment area for the Northern Beaches Hospital ranging from Manly to Palm Beach and west to suburbs such as St Ives far exceeds that of both the former Mona Vale and Manly Hospitals. Mona Vale has been downgraded to a sub-acute medical centre on a trial basis only and Manly closed. We believe the impact of losing acute services at Mona Vale has created a level of anxiety within the Northern Beaches community. Mona Vale Hospital is no longer a hospital and to call it such on not only misleading but dangerous.

The time taken to get to the Northern Beaches Hospital from the Pittwater peninsula can be a matter of life or death. Access to the Northern Beaches Hospital via Wakehurst Parkway is, at

times, problematic due to flooding and/or accidents on the Parkway. Alternate routes along Mona Vale Road or Pittwater Road only increase the travel

time to the Northern Beaches Hospital. It appears that any complex condition presented at the Northern Beaches Hospital is sent to Royal North Shore Hospital anyway. We hold grave concerns for those living at the northern end of the peninsula and for the off shore community due to the increased distance and therefore travel time to seek hospital attention.

The engineers report shows that Mona Vale Hospital is structurally sound and can be refurbished as a Level 3 Hospital. Having acute care at Mona Vale Hospital would take significant pressure off the Northern Beaches Hospital and potentially allow it to operate more effectively as a Level 5 Hospital. Once Mona Vale Hospital is demolished and the land leased to private entities on 99 year leases the opportunity to provide acute services to the Northern Beaches community is lost.

(g) the merits of public private partnership arrangements for the provision of health care, and

The NSW State Government abandoned plans for public-private partnerships for Wyong, Goulburn, Shellharbour, Bowral and Maitland Hospitals in 2018. Unfortunately the private-public Northern Beaches Hospital was already underway. Past privatisation failures include Port Macquarie Base Hospital in NSW, La Trobe Regional Hospital and Mildura Base Hospital in Victoria, St Vincent's Hospital in Queensland and Modbury Hospital in South Australia.

The Northern Beaches Hospital should be purchased by the NSW State Government and operated as a public hospital. Mona Vale Hospital should be reopened for acute care and in the future complement the services provided by a Public Northern Beaches Hospital.

A report by The McKell Institute in November 2014 titled *Risky Business The pitfalls and missteps of hospital privatization* includes many of the concerns that we have with the Northern Beaches Hospital.

Link :<https://mckellinstitute.org.au/research/reports/risky-business/>

Thank you for the opportunity to have our concerns regarding the provision of hospital care to community of Pittwater and the surrounding areas heard.