

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

**Name:** Ms Virginia Rigoni

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Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Secretariat

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Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

NSW Parliament ,

**25 July 2019**

The Hon. Greg Donnelly MLC, **Committee Chair,**

**Portfolio Committee No. 2 Health**

Dear Committee Chair and Portfolio Committee No.2- Health

**Re: Inquiry into the operations and management of the  
Northern Beaches Hospital**

Please accept the enclosed submission for the inquiry into the operations and management of the Northern Beaches Hospital.

This Submission has a focus on several of the items listed in the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry which I understand will report on the operation and management of the Northern Beaches Hospital(NBH).

The select items are listed below:

**(a) The contract and other arrangements establishing the hospital,**

The Project Deed and Contract Executive Summary found on the NSW Treasury website highlight the terms for engagement and the expectations of standards and for the operating obligations, including that which have relevance to:

**innovation , service standards, new business models, health initiatives and Intellectual Property .**

The Contract Summary highlights that the operator is required to implement models of care that follow specific principles(project scope, Executive Summary) . It also highlights that NBH will be an integral part of the Northern Sydney Local Health District Network and with the NSLHD able to influence and with capability to make and offer suggestions in relation to workforce and recruitment and new models of care.

The Project Deed for the NBH project found on the NSW Treasury website, highlights that the operator has an obligation to consider and review health initiatives and to be considering new business models, promoting innovation in service delivery- including digital health as relevant for the people of the Northern Beaches.

Workforce and communications, third party retail space and associated spaces were all ongoing challenges of the project as reported in Board minutes of Northern Sydney L D H Hospital Board in 2017 .

The Executive Summary and the project Deed for NBH (project Deed 52.7, 52.8 , 56.3, 56.4) including in the outline of obligations under **Health Initiatives** have relevance to this matter.

Since 2015 I have attempted several times to introduce my company's(VR Consulting) innovative business model and health initiatives for the purposes of working collaboratively - and its myriad service offerings(for example with respect to recruitment at a basic level there is no traditional candidate placement fee as one example) . Collaborative opportunities also included in the significant IP which is registered locally and internationally have been presented , and extensive opportunities for research and development (as invited of the Kolling Institute), along with highlighting subsequent cost savings to the Northern Beaches Hospital and its management, yet these attempts have unfortunately been met with highly arrogant, and dismissive behaviour by former and current members of management.

This behaviour appears to be in conflict with the contract documents and operating obligations.

Having delivered recruitment and search services to the healthcare industry with the utmost levels of professionalism, expertise , integrity and honesty over many years, (including a successful General Management recruitment appointment to the operator several years ago where the candidate remains in her position today) it has been bewildering and most disappointing to observe this pattern of behaviour from both former and present members of management towards a services provider creating new services and product for the industry and for the benefit of the patients of the Northern Beaches Hospital and more broadly.

I had hoped to introduce innovative health concepts , product and services for collaboration in the project, including collaboration in respective IP and product innovation. I had understood the NBH project was to include new innovation and that the State was hoping to take advantage of new concepts, innovative models and technologies coming to the market to bring to the people of the Northern Beaches.

#### **(d) Standards of service provision and care at the hospital,**

The Project Deed and operating obligations highlight the standards of service provision and care at the hospital which are required of the operator of the Northern Beaches Hospital.

The mistakes/ errors and issues which have been highlighted and reported in the press since the hospitals opening have impacted on patient safety, morale of workforce and appear to be matters relating to protocols , adequate and appropriate resourcing including future planning of key workforce, culture , and quality safety standards.

Opportunities to better integrate health services of the surrounding communities and to respond to key challenges experienced by the hospital , including in areas of workforce challenges have been presented to the hospital management on several occasions .

The refusal by the NBH management to engage or seek to collaborate effectively and cooperatively with stakeholders with expertise, knowledge and service offerings has prevented and slowed innovative services and product offerings, including effective workforce solutions to ensure the highest quality of service provision, and to advantage of cost savings, new initiatives and new technologies from being introduced to the people of the Northern Beaches and surrounding communities.

This lack of engagement appears also to have had implications for staffing, and for standards of service provision and care at the new hospital.

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

Staffing challenges at the hospital have been observed and noted even by former management of the Northern Beaches Hospital 2017 where it was reported in the local District Health Board minutes .

It was reported in minutes of the local District Health Board that workforce, information flow, ICT and culture were all critical focus areas and challenges of the new hospital.

The ongoing staffing challenges that have been observed and which have plagued the Northern Beaches Hospital since its opening may have been avoided by having a stronger focus on culture , and workforce planning in true partnership with industry experts/ stakeholders and respective key initiatives.

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

Public Private partnership arrangements for the provision of health care in many countries around the world have evolved to include different consortia who are and can be partners in such an arrangement. The definition of a PPP has therefore been altered significantly as new consortia bring different offerings and opportunities to such a partnership.

In considering this item in the Terms of Reference I encourage the Committee to read an editorial and research topic "Public-Private Partnerships as drivers of innovation in healthcare" published by Frontiers in Medicine (May, 2019) and edited and reviewed by Michel Goldman. The authors of the editorial are Remcol, A de Vruhe, Jon S.B. de Vileger Daan J. A Crommelin .

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmed.2019.00114>

I believe there is merit in considering future key drivers of an effective Public Private partnership for the provision of health care in the context of broadening the consortia who are eligible to

engage in such partnerships and to ensure it captures both virtual and physical companies and infrastructure to be of mutual benefit including to users of healthcare services .

I see continued merit in different partnerships and collaborations for the provision of healthcare services, however, only if these arrangements are patient and consumer centred and are true to the purpose of an effective partnership , providing opportunity for new initiatives and innovation to be introduced and embraced for the provision of high quality health care services.

A review of the merits is necessary in order to ensure that true and fair competition exists to deliver integrated, affordable and relevant high-quality health care . A review of the merits is also timely to ensure the Public Private arrangements reflect a progressive, innovative and contemporary public private healthcare model which also offers opportunity to embrace cost savings, identify new revenue streams and greater efficiencies.

I believe it would also be useful to clarify the way the respective partners work together including with a respective local District Health Board .

I am in support of a review of the National Public Private Partnership (PPP)Policy Framework (2015) for the purposes of supporting effective integration in healthcare services, for the inclusion of innovation, new social ventures, greater choice and better care outcomes for our patients.

A review of the merits of Public Private arrangements in their current form for the provision of healthcare is timely in order to fully realise the significant benefits of new concepts and initiatives, which can be part of such an arrangement. This could also bring about opportunities in encouraging further innovation, providing for new IP financing schemes , collaborating in strategic assets , opportunities for commercialisation and provide for a fairer competitive process .

**(h) any other related matter**

Thank you to the Portfolio Committee for inviting submissions on this important matter and for taking the time to read this submission along with the respective attachments. I look forward to following the Inquiry's progress.

I can be contacted on \_\_\_\_\_ or on \_\_\_\_\_ for clarification and/ or any questions the Committee may have on any part of this submission.

Kind regards

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VR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd

VR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd has experience over many years in offering high quality recruitment and Search services and in delivering workforce solutions to the healthcare industry.

Inquiry into operations and management of Northern Beaches Hospital  
Submission V.Rigoni VR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd

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