

**Submission
No 228**

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

Name: Mr David Catchlove and Mary Catchlove

Date Received: 30 July 2019

Submission to Parliamentary Enquiry on Northern Beaches Hospital

May we say generally that I believe the private/publicly contracted model of the NBH is fundamentally flawed, in that the profit motive of owners could well see the public element of the hospital downgraded over time. But time will tell. Meanwhile, we see the retention of Mona Vale Hospital (MVH) as a public hospital as an important ingredient in the provision of a balanced service on the Northern Beaches. Although this is an affluent area, it is believed that 40% of people here do not have private health insurance.

Mona Vale Hospital must be seen as a support hospital for NBH:

We are particularly concerned about the demolition of the Mona Vale Hospital and the installation of essentially private services on this hospital site.

When Mona Vale Hospital (MVH) had a fully functioning Emergency Department (ED) it had a vital role in servicing patients on the far north peninsula from Mona Vale to Palm Beach. Health Statistics clearly show this, as follows:

1. In the last year on record, 143 people arrived at Mona Vale Emergency requiring immediate resuscitation. Many no doubt arrived unconscious or semi-conscious. If they had had to travel up the Wakehurst, how many would have arrived alive? (NSW Health Department figures 2018)
2. 4,700 people arrived at emergency needing urgent medical attention within 10 minutes. Again, how many of these 90 people every week would have made it through the congestion and possible flooding to the new NBH?
3. 20 Local GPs in Mona Vale, Newport and Avalon have signed a statement to say they believe lives will be at risk now that Mona Vale emergency and maternity have closed.

The need for this enquiry to check on the adequacy of travel times to the NBH:

The assertion that MVH is in the geographically correct position to serve the far northern beaches is easily checked by this parliamentary enquiry by requesting wait and travel times to the NBH since MVH was closed. Anecdotally there have been many stories of very long, life threatening delays in getting to the hospital, either by ambulance or private car. In considering health services on the Northern Beaches, the focus should be holistic, taking the support capability of MVH into account. Not to do this would compromise the findings of the enquiry in our opinion.

In this regard, note also that MVH should not be considered in its present run down form but should be seen as a potentially integral networked part of the health system on the Northern Beaches.

Consider an appropriate model:

The opening of the NBH should not mean the closure of Mona Vale Hospital. On the Sunshine Coast, Nambour Hospital, which was in need of refurbishment and is similar in size to Mona Vale, now complements the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital with a complete Emergency Department. They did *not* sell off Nambour to line the pockets of the Queensland government and medical entrepreneurs.

The Nambour model is common overseas practice: large hospitals linked to small specialty hospitals equipped with Emergency Departments.

David and Mary Catchlove