

**Submission
No 6**

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION OF
HEALTH SERVICES IN THE SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY
GROWTH REGION**

Name: The Hon. Mark Latham
Date Received: 3 March 2020

Submission to the Legislative Council Health Portfolio Committee Inquiry into Health Care Services in South-West Sydney

I am greatly concerned by the growing evidence of health care under-servicing by the NSW Government in South- West Sydney and congratulate the Committee on its Inquiry.

This fast growing region has been badly ignored in health care planning and service provision. There appears to be a State policy of freezing funding for new projects in South-West Sydney, out of line with rapid rates of population growth.

My concerns relate to six problems, as part of a pattern of neglect by NSW Health in the region.

The issues/problems include:

1. The Government's failure to identify land in the Aerotropolis land use plan for a new hospital site in the region. It is estimated that 1.3 million people will live west of the M7 in outer-western Sydney – the same population as Adelaide. Adelaide has four public hospitals yet our region, seemingly, will have none. An opportunity is being missed, linking a new hospital to health export income opportunities at Badgerys Creek Airport, and also to consider the need for a third Children's Hospital in Sydney, located in Outer-Western Sydney. The pressure on Nepean, Liverpool and Campbelltown Hospitals to fill the patient servicing gap will be enormous. Yet this Government won't even allocate land for a new hospital site, let alone fund a new facility.
2. The Government's failure to fulfil its planning process responsibilities in the new Oran Park housing estate. The South-West Sydney Local Health District has vacated the field as a planner and service provider in Oran Park. It appears the Government has a policy of shifting the costs of new health provision in new suburban areas onto the private sector. I urge the Committee to speak to the many health professionals in the district frustrated by this failing.
3. The absence of community and allied health services in disadvantaged suburbs, failing to meet the huge increase in the demand for these services over the past 20 years. This is another form of cost-shifting, as increasingly other areas of government have been funding this 'missing middle' of health service provision (such as the example of Ashcroft High School). South-West Sydney has over crowded secondary care (hospitals) and short-term primary care (GP clinics) but not a lot in between (community and allied health). Incredibly, the NSW Government has not built a new community health centre in our region this century. The last

was Rosemeadow in 1999. Health care planners have identified the need for six new centres – such as at Oran Park, Glenfield, Bringelly and Wilton – but these are likely to miss out on funding, as they have for decades.

4. The Minister for Health has failed to openly provide accurate information to the Parliament about service shortfalls in South-West Sydney. I cite the Legislative Council Question and Answer 431 where the Minister refused to provide information on the very serious issue of dialysis treatment waiting lists in South-West Sydney. A constituent of mine is badly affected by the dialysis shortfall in our region (travelling long distances each day to send her mother to care in the inner-city and then get herself to and from work and then back home again) yet the Minister treated her needs with contempt.
5. Medical professionals have approached me highlighting the disparity in state funding of acute procedures, with South-West Sydney receiving the lowest unit funding of any suburban area in NSW (as per Legislative Council Question and Answer 178). How has this disadvantage become entrenched in the NSW health system?
6. The Shepherd Centre has been seeking NSW Government support, on a 50:50 shared basis, for a new facility in Campbelltown, to assist the huge number of hearing impaired children in our region. It's an excellent project meeting a pressing need, but yet again, the Government has been unresponsive. The Centre's community-based fundraising for this project is at risk of being wasted.

There appears to be no relevant or imminent expansion of health services in South-West Sydney meeting the needs of a fast-growing population. It's a dreadful case of government neglect and on every front, warrants strong inquiry, reporting and recommendations by your Portfolio Committee.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Mark Latham MLC
Member of the Legislative Council

27 February 2020