

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

**Organisation:** St John of God Health Care

**Date Received:** 19 March 2020

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The Hon Greg Donnelly MLC  
Committee Chair  
Parliament of New South Wales  
6 Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to your 'Inquiry into Current and future provision of health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region'.

St John of God Health Care (and our antecedent organisations) have been providing health care to the community within the Sydney region since 1947. We have a proud history of delivering a wide range of high quality services to both public and privately funded sectors of the community, including unique services such as our Mother-Baby Unit at Burwood and our Mental Health services at Richmond featuring a Trauma Recovery Program. As an organisation, we are ready, willing and able to expand our service footprint to accommodate the rapid growth projected in the South-West Sydney Region and would welcome constructive discussion with the NSW government in that regard.

I have attached a document that provides further detail about SJGHC as an organisation and our current services near South-West Sydney, highlighting our specific capabilities.

We wish to continue to expand our enthusiastic and highly valued service contribution to the health of the rapidly growing population in the South-West Sydney Region and wish you well with your deliberation in this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

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**Group Chief Executive Officer**

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# Submission

## Current and future provision of health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region



**ST JOHN OF GOD**  
Health Care

### **St John of God Health Care**

Hawkesbury District Health Service (Acute Medical/Surgical)

St John of God Richmond (Mental Health)

St John of God Burwood (Mental Health)

Raphael Services (Perinatal Mental Health)

Casa Venegas (Mental Health Accommodation)

## About St John of God Health Care

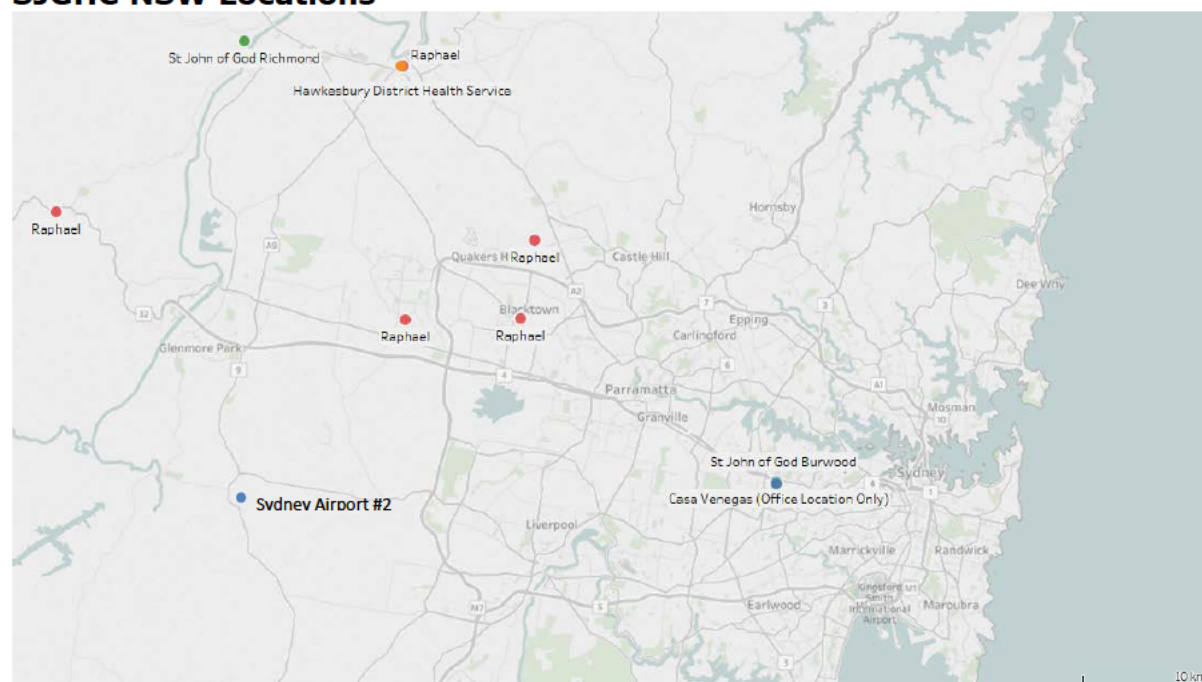
St John of God Health Care (SJGHC) is a leading not-for-profit provider of hospital services (including acute medical and surgical services, critical care, maternity, paediatrics, emergency services and mental health), ambulatory and home nursing, community mental health, disability services (including housing and outreach services for homelessness and early parenthood services) throughout Australia, New Zealand and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

SJGHC is Australia's third largest private hospital operator with 3,435 beds across 17 hospitals in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. In FY19 SJGHC undertook 363,656 admissions, delivered 110,805 episodes of care to patients outside of hospital and employed 14,570 caregivers across our various services.

SJGHC has a proud history of providing public and private services to the New South Wales (NSW) community. SJGHC currently operates three hospitals across the Metropolitan and Western Sydney areas. St John of God Richmond and St John of God Burwood hospitals are flagship private mental health services operated by SJGHC and provide a range of best practice mental health therapies including the only Mother-Baby Unit in NSW and the only major Trauma Recovery Program (TRP) accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs in NSW. In 2015 SJGHC took over operation of Hawkesbury District Health Service, a purpose-built 131-bed hospital providing public and private services including maternity, an emergency department, paediatrics and critical care services.

In addition to our hospital-based services SJGHC has a long and prominent history of work with the disadvantaged in NSW. Over 2018 Raphael Service supported 251 parents in NSW through the emotional challenges of early parenthood and Casa Venegas provided temporary accommodation to 37 individuals transitioning back into the community following a mental health treatment.

## SJGHC NSW Locations



## **South West Sydney**

As outlined by the Upper House Committee, the population of the South-West Sydney area is projected to grow at a faster rate than overall Sydney. Successful health services planning in population growth corridors including Western Sydney, South East Melbourne and Perth's Northern Corridor has been fundamentally underpinned by a successful collaboration between the private and public sectors. The private sector currently provides a substantial contribution to servicing the health demand in NSW with private hospitals undertaking approximately 41% of all hospital admissions in the state in FY18<sup>1</sup>.

SJGHC is enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with the NSW government and community members to determine how best to support the population of South-West Sydney. While market forces have historically been the primary mechanism for private sector engagement in the health system this approach is sub-optimal to careful and deliberate health services planning that ensures services between the private and public sectors are complementary and focused on delivering the best outcomes for the community.

Additionally, there are several characteristics of the populations of growth corridors including a younger average population, a higher proportion of families and a higher proportion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups that could shift the focus of the support provided by private hospitals. Some of these impacts are outlined below.

### **Mental Health**

The populations of growth areas are generally younger and according to the AIHW, mental health is the primary cause of reductions in life expectancy for those aged under 45<sup>2</sup>.

It is generally accepted there is a gap in mental health services for individuals with a 'mild to moderate' mental health condition. These individuals generally do not meet the criteria for admission to public mental health services and require some kind of stepped-up support to successfully manage their condition and avoid escalation to a crisis. The private sector is uniquely positioned to service this cohort and the provision of private with public services creates an increased opportunity for the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled and in demand workforce.

### **Obstetrics**

As noted the populations of growth areas tend to be younger and orientated to expanding the family. Obstetrics is one of SJGHC's foundational services and across the organisation over 10,000 babies are born in our hospitals each year and in NSW over FY18 22% of all births were undertaken in private hospitals. Private services generally take a higher proportion of low risk births to allow public services to specialise towards higher acuity services. Private services promote a genuine patient choice and assists in supporting a broader wrap-around industry of ancillary services such as lactation support, child health nursing, mothers' groups and increased training opportunities for midwives and junior doctors.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Ministry of Health data released to SJGHC via Hardes & Associates

<sup>2</sup> AIHW; Burden of Disease 2015

**Palliative Care**

As a mission driven organisation SJGHC is committed to providing community members with a genuine choice regarding their end-of-life care. While the proportion of the population requiring palliative services in growth areas is generally lower than in established communities with older populations, SJGHC recognises that this often causes services to also be under-represented. SJGHC is working to ensure the communities we service are provided with holistic end-of life care that provides care in the right setting, including in the home, community and hospital when needed.

**Emergency Demand Management**

As currently being evidenced globally during the COVID-19 outbreak the private sector is able to assist the public sector in dealing with unpredicted periods of increased hospital demand. The private sector has the ability to quickly escalate occupancy of surgical and medical services and as a mission driven organisation, SJGHC is committed to supporting the communities its services in periods of increased health demand.