

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

Name: Name suppressed
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RE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE SOUTH WEST SYDNEY GROWTH REGION

The Chairman of the Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make a submission to the above inquiry on the following matters:

My husband and I have lived in the area since 2004. During this period the Macarthur region has grown rapidly. Areas that used to be bushland are now treeless plains with many new suburbs including Bardia, Ingleburn Gardens, Edmondson Park, Macquarie Links, Harrington Park, Harrington Grove, Oran Park Town and many others. Campbelltown is set to become a sea of apartments and there is now talk of building 5 storey apartments on the old Gledswood winery estate.

The homes in these new suburbs will mostly be occupied by families with young children. This is where the problem lies with health issues. The area is serviced partly by Liverpool Hospital (Tier 1), Campbelltown Hospital (Tier 2) and Camden Hospital (grade unknown). I am led to believe that none of these hospitals can operate on children. They have to be transferred to the Children's Hospitals at either Westmead or Randwick. Neurosurgery can only be done at Liverpool Hospital and Camden Hospital has no maternity facilities. With such a large population I was appalled to find out we have only 10 palliative care beds in the whole of the Macarthur region. What a disgraceful state of affairs and we are only in 2020.

In my opinion the following needs to be done urgently, not thought about and then decided when and if it should happen.

1. A new hospital be built in the Badgery's Creek area.
2. All three existing hospitals (Liverpool, Campbelltown and Camden) be upgraded to provide all medical services (maternity, neurosurgery and paediatrics).
3. A special unit be built in the region for mental health and community and allied health services. This unit should be separate and not built as part of a hospital.

Campbelltown Hospital is some distance from the Railway Station, Camden is not serviced by rail and a new hospital at Badgery's Creek may not have or be near a rail station and therefore all of these hospitals should have free parking.

Staff at these hospitals do their best but sometimes their best is not enough. I have had two very bad experiences at Campbelltown Hospital.

Firstly, I attended Campbelltown Hospital emergency department with my then 9 year old son. He was suffering with severe stomach pains and vomiting. Upon arrival my son was triaged and I was told that he had a gastro bug and that I should take him home. I was not happy with this diagnosis as he has suffered stomach bugs before and this was very different. He was given some anti-nausea medication and we were told to sit in the waiting room. My son then immediately fell asleep but continued to moan and cry in pain whenever he moved. Approximately 4 hours later we were finally

taken into the emergency department. The pain of walking caused him to vomit and the attending doctor questioned whether he had been given the anti-nausea medication. After further assessment it was decided that bloods would be taken. These revealed that it was something more than a gastro bug. To cut a long story short, we were then transferred to Randwick Children's Hospital (as Campbelltown did not have ultrasound facilities on a weekend) some 7 hours later and it was found upon arrival at Randwick that my son required surgery to investigate. This surgery was performed and it was found that my son had a ruptured appendix which had perforated his bowel. My son could have died because of sub-standard treatment at Campbelltown Hospital.

Secondly, I, myself was taken by ambulance to Campbelltown Hospital with excruciating back pain. Upon arrival I was put into the emergency department. I was kept in emergency and then transferred to the short stay unit where I was told that I would be sent home that evening. Pain medication was not helping and I refused to be discharged until the pain was under control. I questioned the attending doctor regarding an MRI and was told that there was a 3 month wait as an inpatient. I was treated as though I was a drug addict and was only there for the pain medication. I asked the staff to check their computer and they would see that I had never been in Campbelltown or any other hospital requesting pain medication. After another 24 hours in the short stay unit I questioned whether it would make a difference if I was a private patient. After staff ascertained that I had private health cover, bloods were taken and an x-ray performed. After the x-ray results came through, an MRI was performed. Once the MRI results were available I was told that I had an epidural abscess and needed to be transferred to Liverpool Hospital immediately for surgery. I had by this stage lost the use of my right leg from the pressure that the abscess was putting on my spinal cord. Upon arrival at Liverpool Hospital I was told that the surgery was required to be performed that night. I went into surgery and returned to the ward at approximately 4.30 am. After surgery it was explained to me that normally 80% of people end up as paraplegics and the other 20% die from epidural abscesses. The notes made by one particular doctor at Campbelltown Hospital stated that I was "unco-operative". If I had not made such a fuss, I could have been one of these percentages.

These are just two of my personal experiences and I am sure that further investigation would find more. Over the next 30 years I would hope that all medical staff are well trained in all facets of health care.

I can only hope that an inquiry such as yours can investigate these problems, upgrade existing hospitals and build a new one. By 2050 people in the Macarthur region and surrounding areas may then have a sound and professional medical system to look forward to.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours faithfully