

**3 June 2024: Media release**

**Dr Sophie Scamps, Federal Member for Mackellar and Mr Michael Regan, NSW  
Member for Wakehurst**

## **We need to know what's really happening at Northern Beaches Hospital**

The performance of Northern Beaches Hospital and its ownership structure - a public hospital run by a private company, Healthscope - will be reviewed by the NSW Auditor-General, for the first time since opening in 2018.

The federal member for Mackellar, Dr Sophie Scamps and the state Member for Wakehurst, Michael Regan welcomed the recent announcement that the performance audit has commenced.

“We are proud that following our advocacy, this audit is now taking place,” the two MPs said.

“The Northern Beaches Hospital is staffed by skilled and committed doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, and this audit will assess whether these professionals are being supported structurally by Healthscope to be able to deliver the quality of care the Northern Beaches community deserves.”

“I would also like to thank the NSW Auditor General, Bola Oyetunji, for his engagement with my office and other local stakeholders regarding the scope of the audit,” Dr Scamps said.

“I have been pushing for this audit since the Northern Beaches Hospital declined the \$7.5million offered by the NSW government to provide a four-bed youth mental health unit. That rang alarm bells for me. There needs to be far greater transparency regarding the hospital's performance” she said.

“Securing an independent performance audit of Northern Beaches Hospital has been a key priority for me since being elected to state parliament last year. At every opportunity, I have made it clear – we need it, and we need it now. Our community needs more scrutiny and accountability around the quality of care being delivered at Northern Beaches Hospital. That is what this audit will deliver,” Mr Regan said.

The audit will provide a real opportunity to test whether this unique public private arrangement is delivering for the 350,000 people who rely on Northern Beaches Hospital as well as assessing whether it is delivering value for money for taxpayers.

The official statistics from the Bureau of Health Information released this week confirm that wait times in Emergency are getting longer. Only 49.2% of patients left emergency within four hours during the January to March quarter compared to the state average of 56%. This was a significant deterioration compared to a year ago.

“The Northern Beaches Hospital is the only major hospital in the state operating under this model where public hospital services are provided by a private operator, Healthscope,” Dr Scamps said.

“Constituents contact my office with stories of unacceptably long waits in emergency. Doctors and nurses report chronic understaffing,” she said.

“I am also concerned about the reports in the media about Healthscope’s \$1.6bn debt burden and the financial pressures of the private health system more generally. I hope the Auditor- General can reassure the public that the service at Northern Beaches Hospital is not being impacted by cost pressures.”

“An independent performance audit will be a very useful reference - providing more transparency and clarity for our community. Where the hospital is found to be performing well, we can build public confidence. Where there are issues, we can understand and work to address them,” Mr Regan said.

“Northern Beaches is a private hospital, from which the NSW Government purchases public services. But to all intents and purposes, is the local public hospital, and the northern beaches community has every right to expect the same quality of services as other comparable public hospitals.”

“After all, that is what was promised with the opening of the Northern Beaches Hospital in 2018, when the two previous truly local public hospitals in Mona Vale and Manly were closed.”

Details on the performance of Northern Beaches hospital can be found here

[Bureau of Health Information - Hospital Performance \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/health-and-care-services/health-information/bureau-of-health-information-hospital-performance)

For more information: Anne Davies 0408223875 (Dr Scamps)

Ishbel Cullen 0406940914 (Michael Regan)