



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA (Chair), Mr Mark Parton MLA (Deputy Chair)

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Planning for the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency Centre (SPIRE) and the Canberra Hospital campus and immediate surrounds.

Submission Number: 08 - Health Care Consumers Association

Date Authorised for Publication: 26 February 2020



The Committee Secretary
The Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601
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Re: Inquiry into Planning for the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency Centre (SPIRE) and the Canberra Hospital campus and immediate surrounds.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward consumer views on planning for the SPIRE and the Canberra Hospital campus.

HCCA is a member-based organisation and draws on the views and experiences of our membership and networks in our work. For this submission we consulted the HCCA Health Policy Advisory Committee, HCCA Accessibility and Design Consumer Reference Group, HCCA Health of Older People Consumer Reference Group and HCCA consumer representatives on the SPIRE Project Consumer Reference Group and clinical user groups.

Yours sincerely

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Dr Alan Thomas
President

19 February 2020



HCCA Submission to the
ACT Legislative Assembly
Inquiry into Planning for the Surgical Procedures,
Interventional Radiology and Emergency Centre
(SPIRE) and the Canberra Hospital Campus and
immediate surrounds

Submitted: 19 February 2020

About Health Care Consumers' Association

The Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) is a health promotion charity and the peak consumer advocacy organisation in the Canberra region. Last year we celebrated forty years of incorporation. HCCA provides a voice for consumers on health issues and provides opportunities for health care consumers to participate in all levels of health service planning, policy development and decision making.

HCCA involves consumers through:

- consumer representation and consumer and community consultations;
- training in health rights and navigating the health system;
- community forums and information sessions about health services; and
- research into consumer experience of health and human services.

Introduction

Large health infrastructure projects, such as the SPIRE project, are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to design and construct facilities that will deliver high quality and safe health services that meet consumer needs and expectations. Consumer centred facilities and services cannot be created without the authentic involvement of consumers and carers through the entire lifecycle of a project - from initial concept design through design briefs, design user groups, commissioning and post-occupancy evaluation. Our experience to date of involvement with the SPIRE project has not been consistent with this.

Between 2009-2016, HCCA was actively involved in the planning, design and governance of ACT Government health infrastructure. Firstly, through the Capital Asset Development Program (CADP) and then the Health Infrastructure Program (HIP). HCCA was funded by the ACT Government to engage consumers and the community in health infrastructure planning, design and governance, as part of a jurisdiction-wide program of health services expansion and redesign.

Consumers participated in the design, planning, implementation and governance processes of a number of significant programs including:

- I. expansion of the Canberra Hospital Emergency Department
- II. Canberra Region Cancer Centre
- III. University of Canberra Hospital
- IV. Gungahlin, Belconnen and Tuggeranong Community Health Centres
- V. Village Creek Centre (relocation of rehabilitation, aged and community care services to the south Canberra suburb of Kambah)
- VI. Duffy House, accommodation for six patients undergoing cancer treatment and their unpaid caregivers at the Canberra Hospital
- VII. Building 15 for Rehabilitation at the Canberra Hospital
- VIII. All nurse-led Walk in Centres
- IX. Dhulwa Secure Mental Health Unit
- X. Calvary Hospital car park.

Consumer representatives participated in user groups, design workshops and Project Control Groups. Consumers were also involved in strategic decision making and governance committees, including the Redevelopment Committee and the HIP Strategic Committee. Our involvement was nation leading and is outlined in our report ["Of course it's better if we're there": Consumer involvement in health infrastructure in the ACT, 2009-2016.](#)

HCCA can advise that with the cessation of HIP, there was no significant consumer input into the SPIRE Project between July 2016 and September 2019, when Major Projects Canberra contracted HCCA to provide consultancy services to the SPIRE Project, including the provision of advice and support for consumers to effectively participate in the SPIRE Consumer Reference Group and participate in the review/development of Models of Care.

Consumer representatives and HCCA staff members are participating in the SPIRE Project Consumer Reference Group (CRG) and working groups established to consider the Integrated Service Model and Functional Briefs and the Preliminary Sketch Plans.

To date, however, there have been limited opportunities to provide well-considered and comprehensive consumer input on key planning and design issues within these committees due to the simultaneous and conflicting process and the timeframe. HCCA is working with Major Projects Canberra to ensure there will be appropriate opportunities for consumer input. Dr Alan Thomas (HCCA President) chairs the CRG and attends the SPIRE Project Control Groups for Main Works and Enabling Works, but not as an official member of these groups. To date there is no consumer representation in decision making and governance processes for the SPIRE project. This something we want to see remedied.

Based on HCCA's experience supporting consumer involvement in health infrastructure projects, we are pleased to provide the following comments on selected Terms of Reference, focusing specifically on consumer and carer concerns and engagement in the planning of the SPIRE project and longer-term planning for the hospital.

1. Planning for the SPIRE project

1.a Site selection

HCCA was not involved in the selection of the location of SPIRE. HCCA does not support the selected location for SPIRE. We acknowledge that the ACT Government will not be reconsidering this location. We understand that the Government has further work to do to finalise the actual footprint of the building.

HCCA has a number of concerns about the SPIRE location which need to be addressed through the Master Planning process. Our concerns include:

- I. The need for integration of SPIRE into the broader hospital campus, including the clinical and public linkages between SPIRE and other areas of the Canberra Hospital. There are particular concerns for the safety and privacy of patients who require urgent transfer from other areas of the hospital, such as the wards in Building 1 and the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, to SPIRE for emergency surgery or intensive care.
- II. Accessibility to the Emergency Department (ED) by self-presenting consumers and carers, including:
 - a. the distance people will be required to walk from the car parks and public transport to get to the ED, especially for people with mobility issues.
 - b. drop off and parking close to the ED
 - c. impact on the traffic flow, especially on Hospital Road
 - d. impact on public transport options with the potential closure of Hospital Road.

- III. The impact of increased traffic flows and demand for parking in Palmer St and Gilmore Crescent during and after the construction of SPIRE. We also note the safety concerns raised by the community about ambulance access to SPIRE via Palmer St.
- IV. SPIRE will create an additional two new entrances to Canberra Hospital (the public entrance and entrance to the ED). This will add further confusion about the “front door” of the hospital for consumers navigating the campus.

1.b Consultation

The importance of consumer engagement in the design and construction of health infrastructure is highlighted in the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standard 2 – Partnering with Consumers.

The Standard for Partnering with Consumers reflects the evidence that the delivery of care that incorporates consumers’ needs and preferences can lead to:

- I. better health outcomes
- II. better experiences
- III. greater efficiency of care.¹

HCCA is concerned and disappointed that consumers, carers and other key stakeholders were not consulted during the early planning and design decisions made regarding the SPIRE project.

While Major Project Canberra has established a Consumer Reference Group (CRG) for the SPIRE Project, this group did not meet until 2 October 2019, sometime after the announcement of the SPIRE project. The proposed site and scope of services for the SPIRE project had already been determined.

To date, the CRG has met monthly but has not been actively engaged in providing any significant input into the planning and design of the SPIRE project. Meetings have primarily focused on Major Projects Canberra sharing information with the CRG rather than seeking input to the process. Consumer representatives on the CRG have expressed their concern that the Reference Group is at risk of becoming a tokenistic consultation process. Falling attendance at CRG meetings by various consumer groups reflect these concerns.

Our concerns have been expressed to Major Projects Canberra and we are working together to address the issues identified. We have been assured by Major Projects Canberra that the level of the CRG and consumer engagement will increase as the project moves into a more detailed design.

We continue to be committed to working with Major Projects Canberra and Canberra Health Services to ensure that the voice of consumers and their carers are

¹ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Standard 2 Partnering with Consumers accessed at <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/standards/nsqhs-standards/partnering-consumers-standard> on 12 February 2020

considered in decisions regarding the design and construction of SPIRE and other health infrastructure projects.

Major Projects Canberra has also established a Local Community Reference Group (LCRG) in response to concerns raised by local Garran residents, the Garran Primary School and the Woden Valley Community Council.

HCCA welcomes the establishment of the LCRG but would also encourage Major Projects Canberra to ensure that opportunities are made available for community consultation that extends beyond the immediate neighbourhood, reflecting the regional focus of the hospital.

On a more positive note we commend Canberra Health Services for the extensive consultation process they undertook, in consultation with Health Care Consumers' Association and Carers ACT, to seek stakeholder views on the accommodation needs of outpatients, carers and families who use Canberra Health Services and live outside of the ACT. While the outcome of that process is not yet public, we think this is a good example of an inclusive and collaborative process.

1.c Project timeline

HCCA is concerned that an unrealistically tight timeline means that there are a number of important processes to develop or update key planning documents running concurrently with SPIRE design development work and the procurement process. Best practice is that these processes should proceed sequentially, not concurrently. For example, work on updating Models of Care and Functional Briefs, which are key planning documents to inform work on Preliminary Sketch Plans, are still to be finalised despite design development work being underway for some time. Ideally, a Master Plan for the Canberra Hospital would also have been finalised prior to decisions about site and design of SPIRE being made.

HCCA is concerned that this process, compounded by the tight timeframe to implement the project, will impact on the capacity for the SPIRE project to deliver high quality and safe health care for consumers as it does not allow sufficient time for Major Projects Canberra to undertake effective consumer engagement. The existing timeframe does not accommodate the time organisations such as HCCA and the Mental Health Consumer Network require to identify and train consumer representatives for clinical user groups. Nor does it allow health consumer organisations to seek input from their broader membership base.

It also has the potential to put undue pressure on already busy CHS staff and could lead to decisions being made without sufficient time to properly consider important clinical issues.

1.e Other traffic and parking issues

This is addressed in TOR 2.d below.

1.h Impact on existing hospital and emergency infrastructure and services

This is discussed in TOR 1.a.l. above.

2. Longer term planning for Canberra Hospital

2.a Development of a Master Plan and possible Canberra Hospital Precinct Plan

The development of the Canberra Hospital Master Plan is critical to ensure the Canberra Hospital can meet the future health needs and demands of a growing and ageing population.

While the SPIRE project addresses increased demand for surgical and acute care, the Master Plan will need to address the greater challenge of meeting increasing demand for medical care, especially for older people and people with dementia; those requiring oncology services; and palliative care. HCCA has a very strong interest in how the ACT Government is planning to meet the projected demand.

The Master Plan will also need to ensure that SPIRE is fully integrated into the broader campus and addresses the consumer concerns about the site (refer TOR 1a). This must be part of a Territory-wide approach.

Critical consumer concerns that need to be addressed in the Master Plan include:

- I. ensuring patient safety, privacy and comfort when they are transferred between and within SPIRE and the main hospital building
- II. access to and around Canberra Hospital, including wayfinding, transport and parking
- III. provision of residential services on campus

HCCA looks forward to working with Canberra Health Services to develop the Master Plan and contributing to the work of the Health Directorate in planning territory-wide health services.

2.d Traffic and Parking within the hospital campus

Consumers have expressed serious concerns about access to Canberra Hospital, particularly in relation to parking issues and the implications of a proposal to close Hospital Road. Consumers representing people with disabilities and mobility issues have been particularly vocal in expressing concerns about accessibility. HCCA notes that many of these are pre-existing issues that predate the SPIRE project.

Consumers have expressed concerns about:

- I. accessibility to SPIRE, especially the ED, for consumers of all abilities.
- II. the distance consumers are required to walk from carparks or bus stops, which can be a burden for ill, elderly or disabled patients, carers and

- visitors. Consumers are concerned that SPIRE will exacerbate the current situation.
- III. the need for the hospital to be accessible by public transport as a viable alternative to the car. Public transport options need to be available after business hours and on the weekends as well as the usual business hours.
 - IV. the need for seating to be provided along the way between the car park, bus stop and hospital entries.
 - V. lack of parking options near the ED requiring people to drop off very sick family members who may then have to wait unattended until the person has parked their car and returned to ED.
 - VI. insufficient parking, including disabled parking, particularly during the period of 10.00am to 2.00pm on weekdays.
 - VII. the need to provide additional parking for people with disabilities or who have mobility issues as close to hospital entry points as possible including the ED, the Hospital Main Entry and the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children.
 - VIII. whether the hospital courtesy bus is accessible to consumers of all abilities. Some consumers have indicated that they are currently unable to use the courtesy bus because of their disability
 - IX. issues with signage and way finding, including the need to provide signage and directions in an accessible format.

3. Any other relevant matters

3.a Geriatric Streaming in the Emergency Department

HCCA strongly recommends the introduction of care for older people in the SPIRE ED, referred to as geriatric streaming (refer to the [HCCA 2020-2021 Budget Submission](#)). Experience in NSW and US hospitals that have introduced geriatric streaming demonstrated better health outcomes and increased patient satisfaction, higher rates of post discharge independence, fewer re-presentations, lower admission and readmission rates.

We note that discussions with the clinical user group for the SPIRE ED indicate that they are supportive of geriatric streaming. However, the updated Model of Care does not refer to geriatric streaming nor is it reflected in the early schematic designs for the ED. HCCA is concerned that the intention to introduce geriatric streaming may be lost due to competing pressures for space and resources as the SPIRE design develops.

3.b Inpatient Palliative Care Ward

HCCA has long advocated for a dedicated Inpatient Palliative Care ward to be located on the Canberra Hospital campus to improve the experience of consumers who die while in hospital (refer to the [HCCA 2020-2021 Budget Submission](#)). This ward should be considered as part of the Master Plan for the Canberra Hospital.

3.c Canberra Hospital Residential Accommodation Services

The Residential Accommodation Services (RAS) currently occupies Building 5 on the Canberra Hospital campus and will need to be relocated when the building is demolished to make way for SPIRE. The RAS currently houses interstate consumers travelling to the ACT to receive care and to care for unwell family members. There are also a large number of units.

The future of the Building 5 residence has generated much public interest. Consumers are concerned that future accommodation options are provided at low cost on campus or as close to the campus as possible, and that, if required, transport needs are met.

As mentioned above, Canberra Health Services, in consultation with HCCA and Carers ACT, undertook a consultation process on Residential Accommodation Services. They engaged a company called Communication Link to undertake this work.

Canberra Health Services are currently considering a report prepared by Communication Link that proposes a range of short and longer-term solutions. Options include:

- I. repurposing some of the existing doctor's accommodation located in Building 9 to be used as a place for patients and carers to stay while attending treatment at the Canberra Hospital. This would also accommodate emergency residential requirements following trauma incidents involving interstate consumers
- II. increasing the occupancy level of Duffy house to maximise the available space
- III. negotiate with local hotels close to the Canberra Hospital.

The provision of residential accommodation must be considered within the Master Plan. It is important to ensure that proposed changes to accommodation do not result in a move away from providing the level of accommodation support currently available. HCCA strongly supports the need for residential accommodation for patients and families to be available on the Canberra Hospital campus.

3.d Importance of access to outdoor areas and the use of natural light

There is a building body of evidence about the therapeutic benefits of nature in health care environments. Access to natural daylight and views of the outdoors have been found to improve patient outcomes by improving sleep, reducing stress and anxiety, and alleviating pain and reducing the use of pain medications.²

Evidence also strongly suggests that the presence of nature in healthcare settings (indoor and outdoor gardens, plants, and window views of nature) not only reduces

² Salonen, Heidi & Morawska, Lidia (2013) Physical characteristics of the indoor environment that affect health and wellbeing in healthcare facilities: a review. Intelligent Buildings International, 5(1), pp. 3-25.

stress and improves mood, but it also increases patient as well as family satisfaction with the healthcare provider and the overall quality of care.³

We note that the initial schematic designs for the SPIRE project have sought to include some of these features for patients; family members and carers; and staff. HCCA is concerned that as the design process progresses, pressures for space and concerns about costs may lead to a reduction in access to light and outdoor spaces within SPIRE.

3.e Responding to the changing climate

The ACT's recent experiences of extreme heat, poor air quality due to bushfire smoke and dust and the damage from severe storms have highlighted the need ensure that SPIRE and the broader hospital campus are designed and built to respond to the changing climate by reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and creating liveable and climate change resilient buildings.

HCCA supports the implementation of key priorities outlined in the [ACT Government Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025](#) and want to see this reflected in the planning and design of SPIRE and master planning of the Canberra Hospital campus.

Concluding comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the planning of the SPIRE project and the longer-term planning of Canberra Hospital. HCCA looks forward to seeing how this consumer feedback is incorporated and we would be glad to discuss any aspect of our feedback in more detail.

³ Op cit.