

## Mona Vale to get its own ambulance station

**Robbie Patterson**

PARAMEDICS will have a permanent presence at Mona Vale Hospital for the first time in a bid to ensure access to emergency services on the peninsula's north.

Pittwater MP Rob Stokes yesterday announced a new ambulance station at the hospital, which will lose its emergency department as part of changes with the roll-out of the new hospital at Frenchs Forest.

The new station is part of the State Government's \$150 million Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure

### But residents still fighting to save emergency ward

Strategy (SAMIS) program.

It comes as residents have planned a public meeting, to take place tonight, in a last-ditch attempt to "save Mona Vale Hospital" and retain its emergency department.

Protect Pittwater Association President Bob Grace said the community was not convinced that services at Northern Beaches Hospital would meet all its needs once Mona Vale Hospital closed.

He will host the meeting at 7pm at Mona Vale Memorial Hall and is urging Northern

Beaches Council to support the cause.

Recent briefings about hospital care in the Pittwater area were given by medical professionals. However, he said their presentations revealed that many serious residents' concerns would not be met.

Mr Stokes said the improvements to ambulance infrastructure were just part of the grander plan, which would create a better service network.

He said helicopter services

and other transport linkages to Frenchs Forest would be added to the ambulance bay, with planning underway.

He pointed out that the majority of patients in the area picked up by ambulance went to Royal North Shore Hospital, meaning the arguments for an emergency department did not stack up.

Statistics released by NSW Health show that of the 32,776 transports made by ambulances in emergencies in the 2016-17 financial year 19,758 went to Royal North

Shore. Just over 7000 went to Mona Vale and almost 6000 to Manly.

"When you look at figures over the last decade, the reality of ambulance transport is it goes to North Shore hospital," he said.

"This will actually make it easier to have an ambulance take you to the even closer Northern Beaches Hospital.

"It is a significant improvement on what we have at the moment."

A temporary ambulance facility has been operating at Mona Vale Hospital since February 17 to support paramedics.