The federal Liberals and Nationals also support the idea.

- What does it mean for nurses and midwives?
- And our communities?
- And what can you do about it?
What does privatisation mean for nurses and midwives?

Privatisation of public hospitals is bad news for nurses and midwives, as well as the wider community.

First, let’s discuss some of the implications for nurses and midwives.

1. Undervaluing of nurses and midwives
   Privatisation is usually about letting corporations make a profit or NGOs a healthy surplus at the expense of staff, such as nurses and midwives. Blue Care recently admitted as much and Brisbane’s Mater Public Hospital recently tried to scale back nurse and midwife wages (see adjacent box).

2. Less staff
   As part of their drive to build a profit, private operators also usually try to scale back staffing levels and the nursing/midwifery skill mix. So nursing and midwifery workloads will increase and safe staffing levels could be compromised.

3. Less training and professional development opportunities
   The drive to cut costs and increase profits/surpluses will also lead to a reduction in training and professional development opportunities for nurses and midwives.

4. Flow on to other sectors
   The public sector has traditionally led the way in terms of improving nurse and midwife pay and conditions. One reason is that governments are more sensitive and accountable to public opinion and we have been able to use public scrutiny and public support to ensure nurses and midwives are properly valued for the work they do.

   This has forced other sectors, such as the private hospital and aged care sectors, to also improve nursing and midwifery pay and conditions.

   Therefore, reduced pay and conditions in public hospitals means, over time, reduced pay and conditions in other sectors as well.

TO PUT IT BLUNTLY:
Privatisation is about paying you less, increasing your workloads and reducing your rights at work.

SUNSHINE COAST NURSE SPEAKS OUT AGAINST HOSPITAL PRIVATISATION

The new Sunshine Coast University Hospital is one of the first public hospitals Newman and Springborg are considering privatising.

Sunshine Coast QNU delegate, Julie Ann Burgess, speaks out:

Every nurse and midwife, irrespective of where they work, should oppose privatisation of our public hospitals and the scaling back of aged care and community health services.

Queensland has a long tradition of providing quality, affordable hospital and health care for its people. Now big business and NGOs want to get their hands onto health and rip out money as profits. This money should be spent on patient care, providing safe staffing and paying nurses and midwives properly.

Privatisation will also lead to increased costs for patients and their families as the private operators seek more profitable revenue streams. Private operators are also less accountable to the community than governments, which we can vote out every few years if we are not happy.

These are some of the reasons we are fighting hard against the privatisation of our new Sunshine Coast public hospital. I urge every QNU member, in every Queensland community, to also fight to protect their public hospital and health services. Start now. Don’t wait until privatisation is almost upon you.

BLUE CARE CONFIRMS PRIVATISATION IS ABOUT UNDervaluing NURSES AND MIDWIVES—THAT IS, PAYING YOU LESS.

The cost at which we provide HACC services is lower than the cost to the State Government for providing HACC services for a whole range of reasons - from the overheads, efficiencies and the salary levels that we pay staff.

Blue Care executive director, Robyn Batten
The Satellite 23 April 2013

Privatisation is about the government trying to get nurses and midwives on the cheap. Money is taken from nurses and midwives and put into company and NGO profits. For example, here are the Blue Care comparisons:

We have recently seen Brisbane’s Mater Public Hospital try to break a decades old tradition of maintaining pay parity with Queensland Health facilities. By undervaluing nurses and midwives these NGOs and private operators are in a better position to tender for privatised hospitals and health services and make more money for themselves.
What does privatisation mean for Queenslanders and their communities?

As a Queensland nurse or midwife you have probably already witnessed first hand, or been advised by your colleagues about, the distressing impact on staff, patients and residents of hundreds of nursing and midwifery job losses in recent months. QNU members are campaigning against these ruthless and dangerous attacks on nursing and midwifery services. We also successfully campaigned against the Newman Government's attempt to close services like the Moura and Theodore hospitals.

Privatising our public hospitals and community health services takes things to another level. Standing up for patients and quality health care based on clinical need, not capacity to pay, is part of being a nurse or midwife. So, let's discuss some of the implications for your patients and the wider community.

Profit before services – instability and uncertainty

Private companies and NGOs have to be profitable to be viable. A certain amount of their funding is diverted into profit or surplus. Therefore there is less for services or they keep coming back to the government/taxpayer for more funding to keep services going. When attempts to privatisefail, governments have had to take or “buy” various hospitals back.

The NSW auditor general said the NSW people paid twice for the Port Macquarie Hospital, when the State Government had to take it back in the early 2000s. There have also been scandals, such as incentive payments to doctors to push patients into situations that attract higher funding.

The loss of affordability

Queensland was a world leader in the 1930s and 40s in providing affordable healthcare through free public hospitals. If the private/NGO sector gets widespread control of public hospitals the pressure to charge fees will increase. This feeds their profit/surplus requirement. This would impose serious and unnecessary costs on individuals and families, for an essential service that is a right not a privilege.

It has been a failure

Finally, the hospital privatisation experiment has actually been a failure and governments have taken many back. All the evidence indicates that public hospitals and community healthcare is something that governments do better (not perfectly, as nothing is perfect) than private companies. Governments are also more accountable to the community.

RAMSAY DONATIONS TO LIBERALS

By far the biggest donor to any party was the health mogul Paul Ramsay. Paul Ramsay Holdings, whose investments include Ramsay Health Care and the Sydney FC football club, donated $505,000 to the Liberal Party while related entity Ramsay Health Care also donated $100,000 to the Liberals.

(Sydney Morning Herald, 2 Feb 2013)

ABC radio, 11 January, 2012 10:19AM AEDT

PRIVATE OPERATION OF MILDURA HOSPITAL UNDER FIRE

By Deb Banks

Mildura's longest-serving surgeon is urging the Victorian Government not to renew the contract of the hospital's private operator in its current form, claiming that the privatisation of the hospital has been a failed experiment.

Mildura Base Hospital is Victoria's only privately-run public hospital. The initial 15-year lease to Ramsay Healthcare is due to expire in 2015, but there is a possibility that the private operation of the hospital will continue until 2030 if the lease is renewed.

Since the privatisation of the hospital's administration, senior specialist surgeon Doctor Kevin Chambers says he's observed a steady decline in productivity, standards of care and staff morale.

Dr Chambers has written to the State Government warning of a potentially calamitous situation developing at the hospital.

"I certainly don't want the status quo to continue because I think it's detrimental to this town," he says.

"You will have a rump of a hospital; you are already getting a rump of a hospital."

For more information on the community concerns about the Mildura Base Hospital privatisation visit www.reclaimmildurabase.com

This is only one example of how the few hospital privatisations, tried around the country, have either failed or generated serious community concern.

More information on others can be found at the QNU website—www.qnu.org.au—and follow the links.
STEP UP AND HELP
stop the privatisation of our public hospitals and health services

Here's what you can do:

a) Get the information out
   1. Tell your family and friends that:
      - the Newman State Government wants to privatise our public hospitals and many other important health services; and
      - Tony Abbott's federal Coalition also supports the idea and, if elected, will push for more privatisation of public hospitals and health services.

b) Be involved in local, State and national anti-privatisation campaigns
   The QNU will be running a strong campaign, at all levels, over this issue, and all members, their families and friends are encouraged to stand with other Queenslanders as we fight to keep patient care the priority, not corporate profits.
   1. Attend QNU branch meetings at your workplace, called to discuss this issue.
   2. Attend workplace and community meetings and rallies called to express opposition to the sale of your hospital or health service.
   3. Get on the front foot—and help set up an "Our hospital or health service is not for sale" campaign committee in your workplace and/or community.
   4. Become a QNU anti-privatisation contact at your workplace—if you are prepared to be an anti-privatisation contact please let us know at www.qnu.org.au, and follow the links.
   5. Sign, and get your family and friends to sign, the QNU petition on this issue at www.qnu.org.au, and follow the links.

c) Contact the State and federal political leaders—and your local State and federal MPs and senators
   1. The main ones trying to sell our public hospitals and health services are the State LNP and federal Liberals and Nationals. It is vital they get a strong message, opposing privatisation, from nurses and midwives and their communities.
   2. So email the LNP premier, Campbell Newman, and health minister, Lawrence Springborg, and tell them our public hospitals are not for sale.
   3. Also, Tony Abbott and his federal Liberals and Nationals support the privatisation of our public hospitals, so also email him and tell him our public hospitals are not for sale.
   4. However, we must also keep the Labor Party honest on this issue. The ALP established public hospitals and Medicare and so has a much stronger history, and is generally more reliable, on health issues. But it is important to keep them on their toes.
   5. So, also contact the State opposition leader, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and prime minister, Julie Gillard, and let them know you are opposed to the privatisation of our public hospitals and health services.
   6. You should also contact your local State and federal MPs and senators and let them know you are opposed to the privatisation of our public hospitals and health services.

Contacting MPs made easy
The QNU office has made it easy for you to do this. We have set up an email campaign function on our website, so you can send a message to ALL of the politicians above in one click. Go to the QNU website www.qnu.org.au to tell them all that our public hospitals and health services ARE NOT FOR SALE.

More information on this campaign and other campaign materials are also available on the QNU website.

GET INVOLVED
For more information on this important
Our public hospitals are not for sale campaign,
go to www.qnu.org.au

Our public hospitals are FOR SALE