

KEEP OUR HOSPITALS PUBLIC!

STOP

THE AMERICANISATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH!

A guide in writing to your MP

A handwritten letter to your local MPs is the most effective way to communicate and have your voice heard (other than a face-to-face meeting). Your MP represents you and your community, so they have a duty to listen to you and take your concerns on board.

Politicians/political parties receive hundreds of letters each day, so make it personal! Give those MPs who support your position a story to tell in parliament and those who don't a reason to care. Correspondence enables MPs to let parliament know that they have been inundated with calls and letters on the issue.

Below is some helpful info on your local MPs and tips to make your letter stand out.

Address it appropriately and include a subject heading

- ▶ Relevant MPs and their addresses are listed on the back of this document – choose those that are appropriate to you. It's best to send a letter to both the Health Minister for NSW and the member in your relevant electorate
- ▶ The correct formatting for addressing your letter is as follows:

(MP address) (Your address)

Dear Minister,

RE: Strong concerns about the privatisation of my local hospital (*you can alter this as you please*)

Introduce yourself

- ▶ Tell your MP who you are and why your opinion matters (mention you are a constituent in their local electorate if applicable)

Make your purpose known

- ▶ Start by explaining your reason for writing. Eg. "I am writing to you about the government's decision to enter into a public – private partnership
- ▶ We do not want our 'public' healthcare to be generating profits for a private company

Keep it short

- ▶ Focus on your three most important points
- ▶ Some to consider:
 - No large private hospital operator has been prepared to agree to nurse to patient ratios anywhere in NSW. How can we be sure these standards of patient safety are maintained under a private operator?
 - How can a private operator come in and turn a profit for its shareholders off a struggling system without sacrificing staff, cutting corners and compromising safe patient care?
 - We pay taxes to have access to public hospitals and to ensure all Australians have access to equitable health care. They are the responsibility of governments. Taking hospitals out of public hands and gifting private operators with the opportunity to run the partnership partly off the taxes we pay doesn't add up. It's public money going to private multinational corporations
 - This is a step towards the privatisation of our public health system: we do not want an American-style privatised health system in Australia
 - Nursing staff deserve to stay as public health employees

- It's a myth that privatised hospitals are cost-efficient. Private companies owe a duty to shareholders – not patients, so there is financial responsibility to deliver profit on investment
- There is a strong history of failure in privatised hospitals around Australia – look at La Trobe, Port Macquarie and Royal North Shore (cleaning services). Waiting times at Joondalup in WA are out of control – only 26% of urgent patients are treated on time (peer group average is 66%).

Make it personal!

- ▶ Use your own words and draw from personal experience
- ▶ Include an brief anecdote if appropriate

Be polite

- ▶ The purpose is to help MPs realise that the issue is important to their constituents, so they will take action. Take a firm position and build a rational argument. Try to avoid venting your frustrations by targeting the MP or focusing on what they haven't yet done to fix the issue. Threats or rude remarks may lead to your letter not being taken seriously

Ask for your local member to take action

- ▶ Ask them to take a stand with you in opposing the privatisation (if they haven't already):
- ▶ "I ask for you to raise the matter in your party room and seek support for your party to publically oppose the move." Point out that the issues are important enough to warrant discussion in parliament

Request a response to your letter

- ▶ Politely ask if they will respond: "I look forward to hearing from you"

MP CONTACTS:

NSW Health Minister:

The Hon Brad Hazzard
Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research
PO Box 405
Dee Why NSW 2099

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Shellharbour:

<i>(Liberal MP)</i>	<i>(Labor MP)</i>
The Hon. Gareth Ward, MP	The Hon. Anna Watson, MP
Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast	Member for Shellharbour
102 Terralong Street	Shop 3, 10 College Ave
Kiama NSW 2533	Shellharbour City Centre
	NSW 2529

OR

Wyong:

(Labor MP)
The Hon. David Robert Harris, MP
Member for Wyong
Shop 4, 142 Pacific Highway
Wyong NSW 2259

OR

Maitland:

(Labor MP)
The Hon. Jenny Aitchison, MP
Member for Maitland
PO Box 920
Maitland NSW 2320

OR

Bowral:

(Liberal MP)
The Hon. Jai Rowell, MP
Locked Bag 2
Kings Cross NSW 1340