

# KEEP SHELLHARBOUR/ PORT KEMBLA HOSPITAL PUBLIC!

## A guide in writing to the Minister for Health

A handwritten letter is the most effective way to communicate and have your voice heard (other than a face-to-face meeting). Politicians/political parties receive hundreds of letters each day, so make it personal! Below is some helpful info and tips to make your letter stand out.

### Address it appropriately and include a subject heading

▶ The correct formatting for addressing your letter is as follows:

*The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001* (Your address)

Dear Minister,

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

### Introduce yourself

▶ Tell the Minister who you are and why your opinion matters

### Make your purpose known

- ▶ Start by explaining your reason for writing. Eg. "I am writing to you about the government's decision to privatise my local public hospital"
- ▶ 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 private provider has committed to nurse-to-patient ratios. We know this PPP will mean less staffing hours per patient day, which threatens safe quality care
  - 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. A private operator cannot make a profit 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. The government is abandoning its responsibility to provide access to public health services
  - 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

- We've seen issues with PPPs in the past where providers are able to pick and choose the services they run and leave more costly and less profitable services, such as emergency, to the government to run on taxpayers' money. This is unfair on us – the hard working community members – who have a right to access quality public healthcare from the taxes we pay to the government
- Casual staff and integral clinical positions like Clinical Nurse Educators are not available at private hospitals and will therefore not be offered jobs. Others who may not want to work for a private operator will be forced to move their entire family to another area with a public hospital. This is simply unfair on local nurses and health workers who have limited choices in the Illawarra
- A lot of people in Shellharbour don't have private health insurance. This model heavily relies on private patients and will not work for our community. The government will end up putting taxpayers' money towards private profits

### Make it personal!

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

### Be polite

- ▶ Take a firm position and build a rational argument. Try to avoid venting your frustrations 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 the Minister to take action at the end of your letter

- ▶ "It's clear this community does not want a PPP. I'm urging you to reverse the decision and invest in growing the public health system to meet the demands of a growing community."

### Request a response to your letter

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