

InTouch

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Privatisation and Enterprise Agreement – Major Election Issues



You will soon be voting in the state election to be held on March 15th. The results of that election will have significant impacts on your work, our health system and on the well being of all South Australians.

That is why the ANMF (SA Branch) has been doggedly pursuing commitments from the present State Government and the Opposition to provide a strong and progressive public health service for all South Australians.

Our Health Policy Position Statement has been in the hands of the major parties since October and with it our concerns and suggestions for the development of a sustainable and successful public health and hospital system. The detailed statement is available on the ANMF (SA Branch) website.

With the countdown to the election less than six weeks away, the spectre of privatisation and industrial relations changes implemented in Queensland are a timely reminder of the need to secure health policies from both sides of politics.

My counterpart at the Queensland Nurses Union, Beth Mohle, spoke recently in SA on how a Commission of Audit, created by the LNP after it took

office, set up a privatisation agenda across Queensland's public health system.

Almost two years of the Newman Government in Queensland has seen the planned closure or scaling back of rural public hospitals and the sale of State Government nursing homes. More than 1,000 nursing/midwifery jobs have been cut from the public health system including many in direct client care roles.

On top of this is a High Court challenge, now underway, to legislative changes to IR rules in Queensland which attack the enterprise bargaining structure, strip rights and conditions for nurses, midwives and personal care assistants and put senior public sector employees on individual contracts.

Such an extreme agenda was not canvassed by the LNP before the election.

While the QNU has claimed a recent victory over Campbell Newman's Government by forcing the reversal of a decision to privatise the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the new Children's hospital, there are lessons for the ANMF (SA Branch) and its members.

We must hold major parties to account and make them commit to a health plan which provides for strong, progressive and efficient public health services and allows nurses and midwives to continue their work and advocacy.

As ANMF (SA Branch) members, you already know the importance

of collective bargaining, fairness, equality and opportunity both within our profession and as advocates for the patients we care for.

The ANMF (SA Branch) is independent and unaffiliated with any political party but we will fight on behalf of, you, our members for rights in the workplace and the wider desire for a universal health care system which gives equal access to all South Australians.

This edition of In Touch contains information regarding the commitments received from both Labor and the Liberal parties to the time of printing.

We hope that you will take the time to review these commitments, and our comments regarding them, so that you and the rest of the SA community are assisted to make informed choices based on accurate information.

Given that the next edition of In Touch will arrive very shortly before the date set for the election we will continue to update our website with information provided by both major parties as it comes to hand.

I urge all of you to take the time to consider this important information and to vote for the party which convinces you of their commitment to a strong and effective public health system in South Australia and which promises to protect your rights in the workplace.

Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars
CEO / Secretary