Healthscope

Private hospitals launch public campaign against insurers that fail to fund patient care

- Nationwide campaign across Healthscope's hospitals including Sydney's Prince of Wales, Nepean, Northwest, Melbourne's Knox, La Trobe and Brisbane Private, Gold Coast Private
- Insurers such as Bupa and the Australian Health Service Alliance funds including Australian Unity are bleeding Australia's private hospitals dry
- 70 private hospitals have closed during the past five years, with more closures and service cuts imminent if insurers don't properly fund hospitals
- Without fair funding, services including cancer, mental health and maternity services will be placed increasingly at risk in private hospitals
- Private hospital closures will push patients onto public hospital wait lists

Healthscope, Australia's second largest private hospital group, has initiated a campaign to educate the public on the big health insurers who aren't properly funding hospitals for the care provided to hundreds of thousands of patients.

Bupa and the Australian Health Service Alliance which includes insurers such as Australian Unity, are refusing to meet the rising costs of patient care, including for cancer treatment, maternity and mental health, while hoarding super profits and surpluses. Local hospitals may reduce services, or close all together, if these insurers don't release more funding.

Healthscope will communicate the dire situation about some insurers' underfunding with patients across its 38 hospitals and advertise nationally on radio and in newspapers to highlight their refusal to pay their fair share to improve hospitals. Further information about participating in the campaign can be found at www.protectyourhospitals.com.au

Private hospitals are an indispensable part of the Australian health system – any reduction in private hospital beds will increase the burden on the public system. Overall Australia private hospitals provide:

- 2 out of every 5 patient admissions
- 2 out of every 3 elective surgeries
- 1 out of every 3 specialist mental health beds
- 1 out of every 2 same day chemotherapy treatments

Almost three-quarters of private hospitals in Australia are losing money, as costs have risen. By contrast, insurers have recorded record profits ($2.2 billion in FY23) and have paid out less funds for members' care. Bupa paid out 81 cents in the dollar in FY23, while Australian Unity paid just 70 cents in the dollar, compared to an industry average of 83 cents in FY23, down from 88 cents pre-pandemic.

Greg Horan, CEO of Healthscope, said:

"Bupa and the Alliance insurers including Australian Unity are bleeding local private hospitals dry. Without an improvement to industry funding arrangements, there will be catastrophic impacts to the entire health system.

"A strong private hospital sector supports our hardworking public system. Regional private hospitals are also at risk, which will mean patients will have to travel further for care they should be entitled to in their local community.

"Hospitals, and the fantastic doctors and nurses on the front line, will not compromise on patient care and safety. If the funding from Bupa and the Alliance health funds like Australian Unity, doesn't cover private hospitals' costs, further cuts to services, higher out-of-pocket costs for patients or indeed hospital closures will become inevitable. This is unsustainable and without urgent action, ordinary Australians will suffer.

"Consumers pay their insurance premiums with the expectation they will have access to privately funded care at their local private hospital. Without hospitals, the private insurance that 46% of all Australians pay handsomely for is virtually worthless."

Healthscope operates some of Australia's largest private hospitals including Prince of Wales (Sydney), Knox (Melbourne), La Trobe, National Capital (Canberra), Brisbane and Gold Coast, as well as critical regional health services.

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List of Healthscope Hospitals

Australian Capital Territory
- National Capital Private Hospital

New South Wales
- Campbelltown Private Hospital
- Hunter Valley Private Hospital
- Lady Davidson Private Hospital
- Nepean Private Hospital
- Newcastle Private Hospital
- Northern Beaches Hospital
- Norwest Private Hospital
- Prince of Wales Private Hospital
- Sydney Southwest Private Hospital
- The Hills Private Hospital
- The Sydney Clinic
- Tweed Day Surgery

Northern Territory
- Darwin Private Hospital

Queensland
- Brisbane Private Hospital
- Gold Coast Private Hospital
- Peninsula Private Hospital
- Pine Rivers Private Hospital
- Sunnybank Private Hospital

South Australia
- Ashford Hospital (ACHA)
- Flinders Private Hospital (ACHA)
- Griffith Rehabilitation Hospital
- The Memorial Hospital (ACHA)

Tasmania
- Hobart Private Hospital

Victoria
- Dorset Rehabilitation Centre
- Holmesglen Private Hospital
- John Fawkner Private Hospital
- La Trobe Private Hospital
- Knox Private Hospital
- Melbourne Private Hospital
- North Eastern Rehabilitation Centre
- Northpark Private Hospital
- Ringwood Private Hospital
- The Geelong Clinic
- The Melbourne Clinic
- The Victoria Clinic
- The Victorian Rehabilitation Centre

Western Australia
- Mount Hospital