



# QNU opening statement for Queensland Health EB8 negotiations

18/10/2011

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# Overview of presentation

- Background – about QNU
- History – reflections on past EBs
- Current context
- Major priorities for QNU
- Overview of EB8 claim/statement of interests
- Opportunities and imperatives

# About the QNU

- QNU is the voice of organised nursing and midwifery in Queensland
- QNU Mission statement:  
*Queensland Nurses' Union – the union for nurses and midwives – promotes and defends the industrial, professional, social, political and democratic values and interests of members.*

The image shows the cover of the Queensland Nurses' Union (QNU) Vision, Mission and Values Statements and Strategic Plan 2010-2012. The cover is red and white with the QNU logo in the top right corner. The title is "Queensland Nurses' Union" in a large, white, serif font, followed by "Vision, Mission and Values Statements and Strategic Plan 2010-2012" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The QNU logo features the letters "QNU" in white on a red background, with a white cross symbol to the right.

**VISION STATEMENT**  
The Queensland Nurses' Union – the union for nurses and midwives –  
– makes members to work together to achieve security and fairness in the workplace and fairness, equality and opportunity in the community;  
– promotes the recognition and acceptance of the legitimacy of the core nursing values of caring, professionalism, advocacy and justice as central to the identity and social contribution of nursing and midwifery;  
– advocates non-collective values in a health system that supports the efforts of nurses and midwives to provide high quality care, to work that is meaningful, and where their roles are advanced and rewarded as a recognised professional pathway within a social model of health;  
– promotes the general health and wellbeing of nurses and midwives and seeks an environmentally sustainable future for our members, families and communities.

**MISSION STATEMENT**  
Queensland Nurses' Union – the union for nurses and midwives – promotes and defends the industrial, professional, social, political and democratic values and interests of members.

**VALUES STATEMENT**  
The Queensland Nurses' Union commits to the following values:

Caring values	Working values
Collaboration	Caring
Equality	Professionalism
Fairness	Advocacy
Opportunity	Justice
Sustainability	

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2012**  
**DIRECTION AND FOCUS**  
– To promote the QNU's vision, mission and values in all aspects of its strategic operations.

**ORGANISATIONAL**  
– To achieve union growth, influence and power through the provision of adequate infrastructure and support.

**INDUSTRIAL**  
– To facilitate empowerment of members to achieve their industrial objectives  
– To provide effective industrial leadership  
– To provide effective representation  
– To maintain and improve wages and working conditions and  
– To work towards achieving positive legislative reforms.

**PROFESSIONAL**  
– To facilitate empowerment of members to achieve their professional objectives  
– To advocate for the maintenance and advancement of nursing standards  
– To provide effective professional representation  
– To provide leadership in the advancement of innovative nursing practice  
– To contribute to advancements in nursing education, research, training and development and  
– To influence and contribute to health and aged care policy at all levels.

**SOCIAL**  
– To facilitate positive and sustainable social change through clinical activities, education and policy development.

**POLITICAL**  
– To maximise the influence of the QNU in political processes.

**DEMOCRATIC**  
– To promote the participation of members in internal and external democratic processes.

1. Please refer to the QNU Statement of Values and the QNU Leaflet with members document for further details on the QNU's vision and mission values.

Endorsed by QNU Council 16 December 2009

# About the QNU

- Part of the Australian Nursing Federation nationally
- One of the largest and fastest growing unions in Australia/Queensland – over 46,000 members in Qld
- Growth not taken for granted – work hard at maintaining relevance to members
- Democratic union – branches are our building blocks
- Conference and Council determine our policy and direction – elections held every two years
- Importance of rank and file representatives at these negotiations – endorsed by QNU Council

# History – reflections on past EBs

- Turning point of EB5 campaign in 2002 – power of nurses and midwives realised
- Impact on relationships and trust very significant
- For EB6 and EB7 adopted an Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) / Interest Based Problem Solving (IBPS) approach to negotiations
- DONs at table for the first time – shared knowledge of and commitment to the value of the work of nurses and midwives
- Advantages for QH and QNU of this approach of focusing on shared interests
- Is what we have in this approach truly recognised and valued?

# History – reflections on past EBs

EB7 - 6.1 The purpose of this agreement is to:

- *Attract and retain sufficient numbers of appropriately skilled nurses and midwives to Queensland Health to deliver patient centred, safe, quality care, whilst effectively managing workloads.*
- *Deliver innovative and sustainable models of nursing and midwifery care supported by a responsive skills mix.*
- *Develop innovative and responsive approaches to fully utilise, develop and value nurses and midwives in all categories and levels and at all stages of their career.*
- *Build the non-acute health care system through innovative primary and preventative health care models.*
- *Deliver health services by optimising the use of the financial resources available while exploring all avenues to increase available financial resources.*

# History – reflections on past EBs

- *Meet the challenges of providing health services to rural, remote and regional Queenslanders.*
- *Recognise the QNU as the principal industrial and professional nursing union.*
- *The parties agree to devolve to district/facility level the partnership approach between the nursing and midwifery workforce and Queensland Health management as an effective way of achieving shared objectives.*
- *Develop a positive workplace culture where relationships are based on trust and respect and teamwork is fostered, ideas are freely shared and problems solved collaboratively.*

# History – reflections on past EBs

- Commitment demonstrated to implementation of agreements.

Five priority areas in EB6:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Workloads
- Models of care
- Education and development
- Work Life Balance

Four priority areas for EB7

- Workloads
- Career and Classification structures
- Models of Nursing and Midwifery
- Working arrangement

IBPS approach used elsewhere – QH payroll disaster and joint QNU/QH Nursing and Midwifery Summit in 2010

# Current context

- Context is everything (and is challenging):
  - Current high stress levels and workloads arising from payroll disaster
  - Loss of faith and trust in QH – low morale, anger, uncertainty and exhaustion
  - *Health Action Plan's* positive achievements significantly undermined
  - Shift to LHHNs and national health reform agenda– management of change and governance issues e.g. future role of NaMIG and NaMCFs
  - EB 8 negotiations – QNU focus will be on getting the best possible outcome for nurses and midwives
  - Upcoming state election – must be held by June 2012
  - Economic environment challenging



# Current context

- Nursing and midwifery workforce –critical challenges ahead:
  - Significant nursing and midwifery workforce shortages – QNU stands by its estimation of 14,000 shortfall by 2014
  - Short term focus rather than strategic – e.g. critical shortfalls in employment of new graduates
  - Disconnect between state and federal govt agendas re health workforce
  - Long lead times for health workforce solutions must be factored in – QH service expansions at risk

# Current context

- In summary – a large amount of change occurring in the context of damaged relationships and trust
- Importantly, crucial QH management reps in nursing and midwifery (e.g. NUMs, NDs and DONs) under significant stress and disillusioned and disengaged
- Everyone “running on empty” so risk to maintaining positive relationships
- Threat to the very concept of IBB/IBPS – QNU membership want to “punish” QH not help them, problem solve

# Major priorities for QNU

- Focused on getting the best possible outcome for nurses and midwives in EB8 and address stark inequities
- Improving workplace culture through demonstration of respect for and valuing of nursing and midwifery
- This involves redistribution of power within health system – disconnect at present where there is responsibility but limited authority – e.g. budgets
- Getting the governance right – especially given shift to LHHNs
- Adequately capturing the nursing/midwifery value add – nurse/midwife sensitive indicators, linking NaMIG into initiatives of other areas e.g. CHI and Health Workforce

# Major priorities for QNU

- Getting answers to some fundamental questions:
  - What does a “partnership” approach look like in the new environment?
  - Are our members best interests served by taking an IBB/IBPS approach for this negotiation?
  - Is QH committed to adopting an IBB/IBPS approach and if so how is this demonstrated?
  - How do we best promote the proper valuing of nursing and midwifery and the role of the QNU?

# Major priorities for QNU

- ❑ Is it possible to re-distribute power in the health system using an IBB/IBPS approach and by nursing/midwifery acting in isolation?
- ❑ What are the levers to affect positive change and is QH committed to playing a more active and planned role in achieving this?
- ❑ How do can we best tie in national health reform initiatives with the Qld agenda? (Especially those related to health workforce such as HWA agenda and optimising new graduate employment.)

# Major priorities for QNU

- Evidence informs our position – *Your work, your time, your life.* research – heavy workloads, work stress, workplace culture, recognition of nursing/midwifery work and workplace violence key themes
- QNU overarching *Nurses. For you. For life.* campaign priority areas remain relevant
- 8 action areas:
  - More nurses and midwives
  - Safe workloads and skill mix
  - Supportive and safe workplaces
  - Quality and accountability
  - Equity
  - Education
  - Advocacy
  - Innovative and sustainable care



# Overview of EB8 claim/statement of interests

- Based on QNU conference resolutions – Council has endorsed:
  - Wages –
    - Sufficient increases to ensure attraction, recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives
    - Parity between nursing/midwifery classifications and other comparable health professionals
    - Accurate payment of wages in wake of payroll disaster, including one off payment to nurses and midwives in recognition of the effect of payroll system failures on staff

# Overview of EB8 claim/statement of interests

- Effective and timely workload management
- Changes to the Career and Classification structure
- Particular initiatives to support NUMs
- Enhancements with respect to nursing and midwifery models
- Enhancements to the Remote Area Nurse Incentive Package
- Guarantees in relation to National Health Reform changes
- Improvements sought in relation to:
  - a range of conditions of employment and hours of work
  - Annual Leave and leave loading
  - Family Leave and Bereavement Leave
  - Sick Leave
  - Professional Development and Study Leave
  - Car parking

# Opportunities and imperatives

- QNU and its members have shown a commitment to IBB/IBPS approach since 2005 – natural problem solvers
- We share a common interest in “working together for a healthier Queensland” and are committed to ensuring the integrity of our public health system
- Advancing primary and preventative health and patient centred care across settings is a priority
- Nurses and midwives can play a significant role in improving health outcomes and access to care
- Nurses and midwives are able to make significant productivity enhancements – they just need to be empowered to do so
- Major improvements in governance and culture are required – LHHNs a potential vehicle for this

# Conclusion

- For EB6 and EB7 the imperative was to re-build public confidence in QH post Bundaberg Inquiry
- QNU and its members partnered with QH to do this
- For EB8 the imperative is for QH to rebuild the confidence and trust of its workforce
- If QH does not have its workforce onside it can never have the confidence of the community
- Must be framed as risk mitigation given the centrality of workforce to achieving high quality outcomes for patients

# Conclusion

- Nurses and midwives are central to rebuilding community confidence in QH
- Attracting, recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of skilled nurses and midwives to QH must be a top priority
- Giving nurses and midwives more authority not responsibility alone is key
- QNU will work in partnership with QH to achieve common interests on the proviso that QH values nurses and midwives treats them equitably and with respect
- Trust, openness, honesty and transparency are essential ingredients to successful negotiations