

Question on Notice
No. 585
Asked on 7 August 2014

DR LYNHAM asked the Minister for Health (MR SPRINGBORG)-

QUESTION:

When will the outcome of contestability processes in Metro North Hospital and Health Service, which includes the Royal Brisbane and Prince Charles hospitals, for cleaning, portage, food services and other clinical support services be made available to staff, and have any discussions been held with potential private providers of these services?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Stafford for his question.

I am advised that currently no contestability process has been carried out on cleaning, portage or patient food services across Metro North Hospital and Health Service. Over the past 12 months, many improvements have been made to these services - with positive improvements in patient satisfaction, as well as efficiency and productivity.

The LNP Government has been open about the contestability processes, in stark contrast to the approach of the Labor Party, which oversaw a range of outsourcing activities including a hidden Memorandum of Understanding at Royal Children's Hospital which saw union membership kept in the dark while Labor both considered and in some cases entered into binding agreements on a range of services, including:

- private inpatient services;
- private outpatient services;
- pathology services;
- pharmacy services;
- engineering services and facility management;
- food services;
- biomedical engineering services;
- fire safety; and
- security.

As the Honourable Member would be aware contestability is not just about outsourcing or privatisation, but rather it is a process to: improve efficiency and effectiveness; promote a more diverse supply of services that can lead to greater satisfaction for users, and stronger incentives to innovate; and better meet consumer needs through a multiplicity of providers.

It is important to remember that the outcomes of any assessment process cannot be pre-empted and if it is found that services are being delivered cost effectively when tested against the market, then it would be a bad decision to change the way things are done.

Queensland is a great State with a good health system, but there are many opportunities for improvement. This Government's imperative is to investigate more efficient ways to deliver a high quality public health system run for the benefit of patients, that delivers world class care, is financially sustainable and delivers value for money.