

**Date:**

2 October 2002

**Subject**

NIB and Ramsay Health Care group to meet to discuss resolution of dispute

NIB Health Funds and Ramsay Health Care group will meet next week to discuss resolution of the dispute over new contract negotiations for Lake Macquarie Private Hospital at Gateshead.

NIB CEO, Mr Mark Fitzgibbon, said that he would meet his Ramsay counterpart, Mr Pat Grier, in Sydney next Tuesday morning prior to a conference later in the morning before the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman.

Ramsay has rejected NIB's latest offer for a new contract at Lake Macquarie Private Hospital and told the fund that all agreements with other Ramsay owned and operated hospitals would also be terminated on October 22.

"It is evident we have different views over the pricing of their hospitals and what is fair and equitable," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"We also have some issues with Ramsay about the manner they have informed NIB members booking in for treatment at their facilities since the dispute arose.

"Nevertheless, we share common ground in wanting to ensure none of our members are disadvantaged and hopefully this goodwill will lead to a quick resolution."

Mr Fitzgibbon said that NIB understands that the Ombudsman, Mr Norman Branson had called the meeting later on Tuesday to seek assurances and agreement on services to be provided to fund members already booked into Ramsay facilities for treatment.

He stressed that any NIB members uncertain about their current predicament should contact NIB on 13 14 63.

**NIB Health Funds Limited**  
A.B.N. 83 000 124 381

Head Office  
384 Hunter Street  
Newcastle NSW 2300

Phone: 13 14 63  
Fax: 02 4921 2444  
Web: nib.com.au

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