

I therefore ask you to reject the present proposal to artificially restrict the hourly rate paid to nurses. It is Discriminatory, Anti-Competitive, Anti-Women, and Not in the Public Interest in the long term, as Nursing will become a less appealing profession, or short term as it is in the Current Public Interest for Nurses to Work Extra Shifts.

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AUST. COMPETITION &
CONSUMER COMMISSION
CANBERRA
- 4 JAN 2002

To Gavin Jones
ACCC
PO Box 1199
Dickson
ACT.

From Margaret Llewellyn
10 Ireland St
Ringwood
Vic 3134.

01/01/2002

Dear Mr Jones,

I write concerning the intention to restrict the hourly earnings of division one nurses in Victoria. Similar restrictions are not placed on administrators or executives.

This is discriminatory and contrary to the spirit of free trade and competition. Further it is contrary to the public interest. It is anti nurse, and since the vast majority are women, is anti woman, and therefore sexually restrictive discrimination.

In my permanent job, I work 40 hours per week paid, plus 2 hours unpaid, since being in charge of the ward on a per shift basis, I am usually unable to take a meal break. For this I receive just over a dollar an hour more than the nurse next below me in the hierarchy. For a third of my income I rely on the 'penalty' payment associated with the antisocial nature of the hours worked.

Having a permanent job in a public hospital, I note that executives and assorted other 'higher ups', receive all sorts of packages and special benefits. Yet I am expected to not ask for payment for being on call/working through a meal break period. And now it is proposed to restrict any casual payment for extra shifts worked.

If I need money for study or a holiday, I must gain extra work through a Nursing Agency. The hospital system benefits from this as unfilled shifts and sick leave can then be covered; thus it is in the public interest that I work these extra shifts. Many of my colleagues would be in the same position.

The result of any casual hourly rate restriction would be that either: I should need to double the number of casual hours worked, or find employment in some other occupation. (The cleaner in some local offices earns \$22 per hour!) How can this be in the public interest?

Considering the professional expectations Nursing is already underpaid. It requires:

- Hard Physical Work,
- High levels of Responsibility,
- Antisocial Work Practices,
- Expensive University Education to gain Clinical Knowledge Reasoning, and Skill,
- Continuous Update through Ongoing Self-Education.

It is not in the long-term public interest to intentionally make Nursing unattractive to young people in particular women. Women's expectations have changed.

I therefore ask you to reject the present proposal to artificially restrict the hourly rate paid to nurses. It is Discriminatory, Anti-Competitive, Anti-Women, and Not in the Public Interest in the long term, as Nursing will become a less appealing profession, or short term as it is in the Current Public Interest for Nurses to Work Extra Shifts.

Margaret Llewellyn