

03.01.2001

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or

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The General Manager  
Adjudication Branch  
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission  
P.O.Box 1199  
Dickson ACT 2602



Dear Sir,

Approximately one week ago I received information regarding proposed changes to my employment conditions including whom I could work for, hours of employment etc and most importantly my remuneration. I found it absolutely amazing that a Labour Government would consider altering all this without any reference to me, or would even consider this at all.

Please excuse my ignorance as to how to write this letter. I have been endeavouring to find out what to do this last week but everyone, including solicitors are enjoying the Christmas break.

I would respectfully ask, if it is my life, my job, why wasn't I informed? Surely those who propose the enormous changes to my employment: Health Purchasing Australia should have notified me and others who are employed by the agencies. I don't believe there is any valid reason why this could not have been done. Surely if they have the power to impose all that they are proposing they have the ability to inform nurses personally or at least publicly and honestly.

It is my understanding that Health Purchasing Australia are requesting interim authorisation to go ahead with the proposed act despite the fact that it is against the Trade Practices Act 1974 by their own admission, suggesting that it is a matter of urgency and that public benefits outweigh the disadvantages. (What about the disadvantage to myself as an agency nurse and the huge detrimental affect this is going to have on my wellbeing? Are they prepared to reduce their own wages in order to benefit the Public? I think not.) I object strongly to the suggestion that it is a matter of urgency, as I believe giving them short-term immunity would cause an irreparable shift in the state of the market (health industry). The only urgency is one of saving the industry money, but at what cost? Already we are severely short of ward and specialist nurses and reducing the agency nurses pay by 30-40% as proposed would mean many of the agency nurses who are currently picking up shifts where there are staffing shortages because it is finally financially beneficial to do so would cease to do so, leading to staff shortages again.

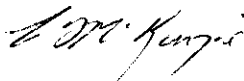
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To grant immunity initially and then to possibly ultimately deny the proposal would again have detrimental affects on the industry.

Please consider the prosed Act carefully as it is of great concern to other nurses and myself. And does it stop here with nurses? What about other professions that supply services on mass to the government? I am not aware of any other profession being expected to take a reduction in pay. I think that is something that is frequently forgotten, we are a profession and act as professionals, please recognise this and treat us accordingly.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carol McKenzie'.

Carol McKenzie  
Critical Care Registered Nurse