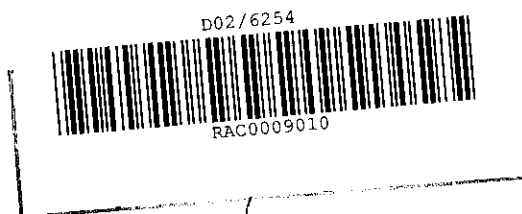




A.C.N. 006 040 964
Suite 2 / 47 Railway Road,
Blackburn, Victoria 3130.
Telephone 03 9877 2533
Facsimile 03 9878 6117
PO Box 399, Blackburn,
Victoria 3130

Professor Allan Fels AO
Chairman
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
PO Box 1199
DICKSON ACT 2602
Fax: (02) 6243 1199

11 February 2002



Dear Professor Fels,

As manager of Belmore Nurses Bureau, I recently invited our nurses to make written comment on the proposed tendering arrangements by Health Purchasing Victoria.

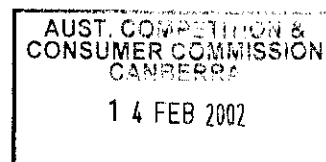
All of our nurses comments illustrate the impact that tendering will have on their professional and personal lives if the proposed tendering proceeds.

We felt it very important that you be aware of the attitudes of the people that you are making decision upon.

Yours Sincerely


Maria Bottaro

Managing Director
Belmore Nurses Bureau



" I have children and cannot work full-time. I want flexibility and not to feel that I am letting the team down should I need to be home e.g. sick kids. I feel only agency work begins to remunerate me at my true value. I study law and have other skills, so will NOT work for peanuts! I do consult on project work with another health service in the community health sector".

Name and Contact details not supplied

"The agency over the years has provided me with flexible shifts and sufficient work so that I have been able to provide for my family. Without the agency work I would not have financially survived nor would my family of 5 children have had a decent education. There are hundreds of Nurses who rely on agency nursing to support their families. Nurse bank is unreliable and inflexible – and not family friendly."

Jon Crowe
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

" I believe that the rates I am paid with the agency reflect the true value of my skills and intensity of the work, but I feel the night duty allowance is too high, but will take it as long as it is available".

Dorothy McCormack
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

"Agency work gives me relief from the stress of the excessive documentation required in Nursing Homes. I would rather spend time with the residents / helping PCA's with hands on care. I believe documentation could be maintained by RN 1 or 2 particularly interested in this area, that being their sole task."

Name and Contact details not supplied

"I have no choice but to work agency. My husband is a shift worker and the shifts I am available to work must be very flexible."

D. Benton
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

"Finally nurses get recognition and especially experience – being an important requirement in the nursing profession. I feel that agency rates should also pay according to experience e.g. a Grade 2, Year 1 with a certificate in speciality should not be paid the same as a Grade 2, Year 8".

J. Weintjens
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

" I do not believe that nurses are greedy. I believe that for many years nurses have received less then they are due in both public recognition and remuneration. I have over 20 years experience in Nursing and many is the time I have had to compromise my personal life to fit my professional life. Agency work provides me with the option of working as little or as often as suits me and my family. Given my experience and qualifications I strongly believe that I am paid appropriately for my skills ".

Tracey Bisas
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

" I do not work bank – too low pay. Not enough variety – I like to move around. "

Colin Allica
Contact Number Supplied

" I cannot understand how the State Government believes they will attract casual nurses to work for lower pay in the public hospital system. My opinion is that nurses will refuse to work on a casual basis in public hospital nurse banks which will create an even greater shortage than currently experienced. The State Government may find that it will create an even greater problem for itself with the introduction of the proposed 'Nurse Bank'.

Suzanne Benesovsky
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

" Nursing is a profession and unlike many male dominate professions it is not a well paid profession by comparison because the government employs most nurses they may put a celery on the worth of a nurse.
By providing other pathways such as a Nurses Agency the nurse can pursue better conditions and pay; this avenue would be crushed should the government have its way".

K. Thomas
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 2)

" I see the extra pay we receive for Agency work as a compensation for not having:

- continuity of care with patients
- no ongoing relationships/interactions with staff
- no holiday or sick leave pay
- no set roster or guarantee of work and income
- needing to be more flexible with time and place of work.

There is more emotional stress involved when working in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar staff and routines everyday."

Glenda Whitbourn
Contact Number Supplied

" I think it's absolutely disgusting what the Government are looking at doing. We choose Agency nursing because it suits us and we are paid according to our skills and experience AND because of all the hardships Agency Nurses endure i.e. Unfamiliar workplace, don't know anyone or where anything is or any patients, have to travel anywhere, stay on call, sometimes get cancelled or miss out on work, last minute bookings thus cannot plan our days sometimes etc, etc... I'm relying on Agency pays to survive, especially for the next 10 years".

Jacki Cotter
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 2)

" As a current DIV 2 I feel my wage (award) is very poor for the amount of years experience and the fact that due to current DIV 1 shortage often have to take on far more responsibility then adequately paid for, at least Agency rates due compensate a little. Also working Agency allows me more money whilst I am studying – currently doing my Registered Nurse DIV 1 training and this is also maximum benefit for Victoria which will cost me \$ 20,000 I feel the least I deserve is a decent wage".

Darlene Furlone
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 2)

" As a nurse recently refreshed, and previously working in nursing and hospitality professions, I feel that the modern nurse is both physically and mentally challenged with each shift. Even on an ordinary shift where patient workload is reasonable you will come off your shift feeling both physically and mentally drained. A nurse needs to be organised, efficient, alert, attentive, compassionate, caring and available for his / her patients for their physical, psychological well being for the entire shift.
Pay us well and keep us Nursing".

Phyl Swindley
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

"Where I currently work permanent part time I am not allowed to work a tenth shift through BANK as they do not wish to pay us overtime for four hours of that tenth shift! "

Name and Contact details not supplied

" I have worked most of my professional life in a hospital on staff. I have really enjoyed working Agency rather than be on a roster which at times I had no control over. I love the autonomy which I think is sadly lacking in the hospital setting, probably Nursing is the only profession where autonomy is so lacking".

Christine Calder
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse DIV 1)

" If private Hospital Agency's offer the same amount as I am paid now I would move from the public sector into private Nursing. Therefore I would only choose private Hospitals from Agency and the public hospitals would suffer, as other nurses I have spoken to have said they would do the same too".

Megg Hess
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse DIV 1)

" If the VIC State Government changes the structure I would definitely leave Nursing. I believe hospitals pay Nurses far too little. I work Agency for the casual rates as well as the benefits of choosing my shifts and hospitals. The Agencies provide a great service!"

Sue Billsborrow
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 2)

"When you consider that we receive NO holiday pay (I previously received 6 weeks) or sick pay (10 days) we have to be paid at a higher rate to compensate".

Rebecca Reye
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse DIV1)

" I feel angry at this Government attack on Nurses and insulted at the inference of Agency Nursing as somehow imposing a burden on the Health System, as it is the Agency Nurses who have supported hospitals through an acute period of severe staff shortages (having worked on wards with NO permanent staff for that shift). It is a 'divide and conquer' mentality against the nursing profession and treatment of contempt and lack of respect".

Jenny Manassa
Contact Number Supplied
(Specialist Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

" Agency Nursing enables me to support my family and be actively involved in my children's care. I am the sole income earner currently. It will have an enormous impact on my family to loose this flexibility and income".

" Working Agency is great for those studying as you can work around your classes".

Name and Contact details not supplied

- Hospitals need to offer personal agreements with staff at increased rates of pay
 - Agency rates of pay is the first time I've been paid what I believe I am worth
 - Hospitals are under extreme pressure currently
- I believe the whole issue revolves around a lack of Nursing Leadership and an ineffective ANF UNION".

Chris Simpson
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 1)

" I am very happy with Belmore, and the flexibility they allow me to be able to work around my husband's work hours".

Barb Sorell
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse, DIV 2)

"Because the government is not allowing me to work agency at other hospitals part of the same network to where I work bank, I have just resigned from the bank of eastern health"

Michael Hoey
Contact Number Supplied
(Registered Nurse Div 1)
