



Consumers
Health Forum
of Australia

Ref: L026D

30 November 2007

Ms Isabelle Arnaud
Director
Adjudication
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
PO Box 3131
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Arnaud

Collective Bargaining notification CB00006 - Wangaratta Anaesthesia Group

Thank you for your correspondence dated 22 November 2007 regarding the collective bargaining notification received by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission from the Wangaratta Anaesthesia Group. Specifically, the group proposes to collectively negotiate a value above the scheduled fee for the provision of no-gap billing to members of the HBA fund.

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is not in a position to comment directly on the negotiations proposed by the Wangaratta Anaesthesia Group. However, I would like to raise for your consideration that consumers' expectations about the provision of anaesthesiologists, and medical practitioners generally, should be met as follows:

- the medical workforce will be sufficient and appropriate to ensure safe, good quality healthcare where and when it is needed to meet community needs
- negotiations to achieve this will look to systemic solutions, not individual benefits, and be industrially neutral
- it will be nationally consistent and coordinated.

CHF urges the ACCC to consider these expectations in assessing the collective bargaining negotiations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Hopkins', written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Helen Hopkins
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR