



RECORD OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION			
Matter name	WAG collective bargaining notification CB00006		
ACCC parties	Isabelle Arnaud, Ilona Balint, Kristy Randall		
Other parties	Emma Zipper, Head of Legal, BUPA	Date	27/11/07

#### Notes:

On 27 November 2007, ACCC staff spoke with Emma Zipper, Head of Legal for BUPA. The purpose of the conversation was to obtain factual information relevant to the notification lodged by Wangaratta Anaesthesia Group (WAG).

Emma Zipper provided the following information.

#### *Ezyclaim process*

- Medical practitioners register as an Ezyclaim medical practitioner and when they do so, agree to Ezyclaim terms.
- The terms of Ezyclaim include the medical practitioner agreeing to accept the BUPA fund payment as full payment, except when they are allowed to charge a known-gap for specific modalities.
- In the case of anaesthetists, BUPA provides no option for charging a known-gap using Ezyclaim, just the option of no-gap.
- Should anaesthetists agree to use Ezyclaim, they agree not to charge a fee higher than that provided for by BUPA, and that there will be no out of pocket expenses for patients.
- When medical practitioners register with Ezyclaim, they are able to elect to use it on a case basis. They do not have to use it all the time, it is an opt-in system.
- If medical practitioners elect to use Ezyclaim for a particular treatment, benefits are paid electronically and the funds are received by medical practitioners within 20 working days. A higher benefit is paid by BUPA for the treatment that applies where Ezyclaim is not used.
- Ezyclaim is an MPPA.

#### *Market share – BUPA*

- BUPA consider that their share of the PHI consumer market in Victoria is approximately 22% (based on whole of fund membership), however, that figure may increase or decrease depending on the region.
- BUPA is not the largest private health insurer in Victoria and there are also local and regional funds which have a strong presence in some areas.
- BUPA commented on the critical role of medical practitioners in assisting patient's choice of hospital and specialist referrals.

#### *Efficiency argument for allowing collective bargaining to occur between members of WAG*

- BUPA recognises there may be efficiency in dealing with a group of medical practitioners in a single practice, rather than dealing with each medical practitioner in a practice individually.