



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

DEPUTY SECRETARY

Ms Isabelle Arnaud
Director
Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms Arnaud

Collective bargaining notification CB00004 by the Australian Medical Association (Vic) Pty Ltd

Thank you for your letter of 17 September 2007 in relation to the above notification lodged by the Australian Medical Association on behalf of 39 medical practitioners seeking an exemption under the *Trade Practices Act 1974* to collectively negotiate their conditions of engagements with the Latrobe Regional Hospital.

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing is committed to ensuring that all Australians have access to public hospital services free of charge on the basis of clinical need and within clinically appropriate times. This is a condition of Commonwealth funding under the Australian Health Care Agreements. The management of individual public hospitals to meet this objective is a matter for the State, and in this case, the Victorian Government.

The Department notes that parts of the Gippsland region serviced by Latrobe Regional Hospital are classed as districts of workforce shortage. The Department has no information which would indicate that the supply of doctors to this region would be affected one way or the other by the use or otherwise of a collective negotiation.

The Department is keen to ensure that employment arrangements support the recruitment and retention of doctors in rural areas and should not affect the quality or amount of supervision provided to medical students and trainees by VMOs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Kalisch'.

David Kalisch
Deputy Secretary

28 September 2007