

Mansfield District Hospital



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28th March 2008

Ms. Isabelle Arnaud
Director, Adjudication Branch
A.C.C.C.
GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms. Arnaud

Re: Draft Determination – A91078

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Determination regarding the application by RDAA.

Our organization strongly supports a determination that will allow RDAA to negotiate Visiting Medical Officer contracts on behalf of our doctors directly with the Department of Human Services. As a small rural agency providing procedural services including surgery and obstetrics, our negotiations are often difficult and stressful for both parties. It can take a long time to re-establish relationships with the doctors after difficult contract negotiations. A number of small rural agency CEOs have long lobbied the Department for central negotiations without success and the Board of Management of the Mansfield District Hospital believe it is now time for the Department to assume this responsibility centrally.

Our understanding is that the authorisation granted by the ACCC for the RDAA to seek a common agreement is voluntary and therefore not binding, meaning that DHS may simply refuse to negotiate centrally. If this is correct, the authorisation may well be of little practical value or assistance to communities in situations such as ours.

We encourage you to strengthen the Authorisation such that centralised negotiations are an outcome of this process, not simply a possibility.

Yours sincerely,

JANENE RIDLEY
Chief Executive Officer
On behalf of the Board of Management