



Benalla &
District Memorial
Hospital

28 March 2008

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

Dear Ms. Arnaud,

Draft Determination - A91078

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

Our agency 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. Our largest General Practitioner clinic has already advised us that they will refuse to negotiate a new contract locally on the expiration of the current contract, as local negotiations are "... stressful and unpleasant". This would be a most unfortunate outcome and leave the Hospital and community in a difficult situation.

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,

Barbara Alexander A.O.
President