



Consumers
Health Forum
of Australia

Ref: L026D

26 March 2008

Ms Isabelle Arnaud
Director
Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
PO Box 1199
DICKSON ACT 2602

FILE No:
DOC:
MARS/PRISM:

Dear Ms Arnaud

RE: Application for authorisation A91078 lodged by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia Limited – draft determination

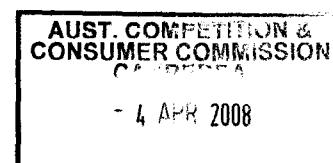
Thank you for your correspondence of 6 March 2008 regarding the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission draft determination in respect of the application for authorisation lodged by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia Limited (RDAA).

The Consumers' Health Forum of Australia is not in a position to comment directly on the negotiations proposed by the RDAA. However I would like to raise for your consideration, the following consumers' expectations about the provision of medical practitioner services that 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; and
- It will be nationally consistent and coordinated.

There are also particular access issues in rural Australia with its workforce challenges. These include minimising the impact for patients on out of pocket costs, and improving the availability of bulk billing and after hours services.

I trust that you have contacted the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT). Our member organisations, Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia Inc (HCCRA) and the Health Consumers Council (WA) Inc are also well placed to provide comments on the draft determination.



I trust that you will consider the views of the Consumers' Health Forum of Australia and the organisations listed above in making your decision in relation to the final determination on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Hopkins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Helen Hopkins
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR