



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

FILE No:
DOC:
MARS/PRISM:

DEPUTY SECRETARY

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

Dear Ms Arnaud

Application for authorisation A91078 lodged by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia Limited

Thank you for your letter of 17 December 2007 in relation to the above notification lodged by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia Limited seeking exemption under the *Trade Practices Act 1974* to collectively negotiate with state/territory health departments the terms of contracts for visiting medical officers (VMOs) in rural areas.

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 and is keen to ensure that employment arrangements support the recruitment and retention of doctors in rural areas.

Employment of doctors to provide VMO services in public hospitals and health facilities is the responsibility of health departments within each state and territory and the Department has no information which would indicate the supply of doctors to rural areas would be affected one way or the other by the use or otherwise of a collective negotiation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue and we would be pleased if you could keep us informed of the progress of the application.

Yours sincerely

David Kalisch
Deputy Secretary
31 January 2008

