



**Australian  
Competition &  
Consumer  
Commission**

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30 June 2010

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c.c Ms Nicole Smith  
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*By email: [nsmith@claytonutz.com](mailto:nsmith@claytonutz.com)*

Dear Ms Evans and Ms Smith

**Vision Group Holdings Limited application for authorisation A91217  
- PRE-DECISION CONFERENCE**

The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (the ACCC) has been requested to convene a conference in relation to the draft determination issued by the ACCC on 9 June 2010 proposing to grant authorisation (A91217) to Vision Group Holdings Limited.

A pre-decision conference provides a valuable opportunity for applicants and interested parties to make oral submissions to the ACCC about its draft determination.

The ACCC will hold the conference on **Thursday 22 July 2010 at 10.30am**. An ACCC Commissioner will chair the conference. The conference will be held at the ACCC's Sydney office, located at Level 28, Angel Place, 123 Pitt Street (between Hunter Street and Martin Place), Sydney. Video links may be available from ACCC offices in other capital cities if necessary.

Under the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (the Act), the conference may be attended by the applicant and other interested parties. Please advise the ACCC of the names of Vision Group Holdings representatives who will be attending and their position titles, and indicate who will be Vision Group's chief spokesperson. Please provide this information by **cob 16 July 2010**.

I would also note that, while conference participants may bring outside legal or other professional advisers to assist them, the Act prohibits these advisers from participating in conference discussions.

Attached for your information are procedures usually followed at pre-decision conferences.

A copy of this letter has been placed on the ACCC's public register. If you require any further information in regard to the conference, please do not hesitate to contact Erin Donohue on (02) 6243 1291.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R Chadwick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Richard Chadwick  
General Manager  
Adjudication Branch

## AN OUTLINE OF THE PROCEDURES USUALLY FOLLOWED AT CONFERENCES IN RELATION TO APPLICATIONS FOR AUTHORISATION

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) tries to conduct such conferences as informally, flexibly and speedily as possible.

An interested party attending a conference may have the assistance of outside legal or other professional advisers, however, they are not entitled to participate in the discussion.

The conference will serve a useful purpose in that it gives the ACCC and all interested parties the opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss the operation and effect of the applicant's conduct and the ACCC's draft determination. The applicant and/or interested persons have the opportunity to persuade the ACCC to accept their view. The ACCC benefits from direct contact with the parties, and its perceptions of public benefits and detriments are tested in a forum of interested parties where points are often quickly and forcefully made.

### **1. Preliminary procedures**

- (a) When you arrive at the conference you should identify yourself to ACCC staff before the conference begins. Further, please complete the attendance book when arriving at the conference. This assists ACCC staff to identify attendees for the purpose of recording the discussion.
- (b) The Chair (a Commissioner) will open the conference by welcoming those present and outlining the requirements of the *Trade Practices Act 1974* and the manner in which the conference will be conducted.
- (c) If you intend to present a written comment (and you are encouraged to do so), it is helpful if the ACCC receives it before the conference date. It can then be copied and distributed at the conference. In this way, both the ACCC and other parties present are assisted, and your submission forms part of the conference record. If you cannot complete the written submission earlier, it is helpful if you come to the conference with extra copies which can be distributed.
- (d) Any document you present without making any request for it to be excluded from the public register will be placed on the ACCC's public register.

If you intend to present a submission at the conference and you wish it (or certain details in it) to be excluded from the public register, you should make your request to the Chair at the time of presenting the document, and you should state in general terms the reason for your request. (See ACCC guidelines on excluding information from the public register.)

### **2. General procedures**

- (a) The conference has been convened to discuss the draft determination, to canvass points of view and to assist the ACCC's weighing of issues and its interpretation of the information given to it.

- (b) The procedure is discretionary. The Chair controls the order of discussion, and may take particular topics separately, so that all the discussion, on any given topic may be heard at the one time.
- (c) The conference is not a court, and there is no right of cross-examination. You may request the Chair to ask questions of other parties present, but the Chair retains the discretion as to whether your questions will be put. The Chair, of course, may also directly question the parties at the conference, and they have discretion whether or not to answer.
- (d) ACCC staff present will make a record of the discussion. This will be in minute form, not a verbatim record. The conference record is placed on the public register, and all who attend the conference will receive a copy.
- (e) When the Chair believes that all present have been given a reasonable opportunity to express their views, he/she may terminate the conference.
- (f) The Chair (and any other Commissioner at the conference) cannot give a final decision at the close of the conference. Each Commissioner is only a representative of the ACCC and is required to report back to the ACCC, which will make the final decision.

### **3. Other matters**

- (a) Following the pre-determination conference, the ACCC will review its draft determination in the light of discussion and further submissions made at the conference (or within a set period of time after the conference), and will publish its final determination as soon as possible thereafter.
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