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Government of South Australia
SA Health

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Dr Richard Chadwick
General Manager
Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Dr Chadwick

RE: DRAFT RESPONSE TO AN AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION OFFER TO PARTICIPATE IN A CONSULTATION PROCESS REGARDING THE SELECTION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS FOR GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Thank you for your email of 9 July 2014, regarding a further application for authorisation from the Australian National University, on behalf of the Graduate Australian Medical School Admissions Test Consortium, to operate a single selection and interview processes for graduate-entry medical schools.

The South Australian Department for Health and Ageing has no objection to the application. The proposed process will not impact upon the supply of the medical workforce, and will still provide an opportunity for individual medical schools to give weighting to specific selection criteria, such as prioritisation of students from a rural background. It is considered the overall benefits to both applicants and universities outweigh any potential disadvantages that may result from a single application, selection and interview process.

However, it should be noted, this may change in the future. The application notes in Paragraph 75 on Page 14 that medical school enrolment is currently highly regulated with both the '...number of places offered by each medical school... and the student contribution towards the cost of their education (commonly known as HECS)' determined by the Commonwealth Department of Education.

The recent Federal Budget released in May 2014 foreshadowed significant reforms to the higher education sector, including removal of the fee caps on Commonwealth-supported places from January 2016. If this change is implemented this may allow each university to set their own fees to study medicine. It is recommended, if this change occurs, the ACCC investigate whether this fundamentally changes the competition premise that is used in part to substantiate the public benefit argument.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Associate Professor Alison Jones, Manager, South Australian Medical Education and Training Unit on telephone (08) 8226 7231.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'D. Swan', written over a circular scribble.

DAVID SWAN
Chief Executive

21/7/14

CC: Professor Paddy Phillips, Chief Medical Officer, SA Health
Associate Professor Alison Jones, Manager of the South Australian Medical Education and Training Unit