

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Exemptions](#)
Subject: ACCC submission
Date: Friday, 28 May 2021 7:29:33 PM

RE: Honeysuckle Health Buying Group Authorisation number: AA1000542

I am writing to voice my opposition to the formation of the Honeysuckle Health Buying group (HHBG).

I have read the ACCC draft determination which outlines the proposal between Honeysuckle Health and NIB to form a “buying group”. I also read with interest the involvement of the US based company Cigna Health, currently fighting legal battles in the US for refusing care to patients.

I am an Orthopaedic Surgeon, and I have worked in Australia, the UK, US, and to a more limited extent in France, Italy and Austria, and have experience of these different health systems. I am nearing the end of my working life, so I do not have any regard to my own ongoing income.

I am dismayed that it appears likely that HHBG will be granted an exemption for 5 years or more to change the Australian Health System to one much more akin to the US, which will be greatly to the detriment of the Australian public, and greatly to the advantage of for profit corporations and their investors and shareholders. The Australian Healthcare system with its public-private partnership is generally regarded as one of the best in the world. Certainly not perfect, and no doubt open to improvement, but one of the best.

The changes which are proposed place this system at severe risk, and almost certainly, for little, or no public benefit. Having watched the great harm done to patients by the adversarial cost containment activities of work cover insurers, I expect the same outcome from aggressive health insurers. And this will be compounded by the inevitable conflicts which will arise when doctors are contracted to large insurance companies. It is all very well to say that doctors should always owe their first allegiance to their patients, and they certainly should, but in this brave new world which is proposed, that will no longer be a realistic option.

I hope that you will give very careful consideration to the entirely foreseeable consequences of this decision for the future of Australia’s world class health care system. There is no certainty that any bad outcomes will be reversible in 5, or 10 years when this authorisation ends.

Yours sincerely,

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