

The Consumers' Federation of Australia (CFA) is a peak body for over 100 community based consumer organisations and consumer advocates. CFA is managed by a volunteer Executive Committee sourced from member groups and does not employ any full-time staff.

Since 1997, despite a high degree of apparent need for and interest in obtaining consumer viewpoints and input to Federal Government and Departmental processes, the CFA has not received any Federal Government funding.

As a result, it is with regret that we decline your invitation to provide a submission. Whilst we agree there is a clear need for a consumer voice to be heard on important issues, our lack of resources means that CFA does not currently have the capacity to provide input.

In the circumstance we can only encourage the Chiropractic, Dental, Medical, Optometry, Osteopathy, Podiatry and Physiotherapy National Boards of Australia to keep the following basic principles at the forefront of their minds:

*Consumers in Australia are entitled to:*

- *affordable and equitable access to essential services*
- *protection from unsafe or unfit products and services*
- *products and services that are sustainable in terms of their environmental effects*
- *fairness*
- *information and education to assist them in making choices in an increasingly complex marketplace*
- *accessible and effective remedies for failures and breaches of the law*
- *active monitoring and enforcement of consumer protection laws*
- *input through representative bodies to policy-making that affects their interests*

*Low income and disadvantaged consumers deserve special protection.*