



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

DEPUTY SECRETARY

Dr Jon Jureidini
Chair (Australia) Healthy Skepticism
34 Methodist Street
WILLUNGA SA 5172

Dear Dr Jureidini,

Thank you for your letter of 23 September and for your interest in the second Joint Medicines Policy Conference. The Department and the pharmaceutical industry are jointly staging this event which will include two international speakers.

Sir Michael Rawlins, Chair of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in the United Kingdom, will present his views on future challenges in health technology assessment (HTA) and Dr Durhane Wong-Rieger will give her views of the role of consumers in HTA. Dr Wong-Rieger is not speaking as a "designated consumer advocate".

Dr Wong-Rieger's support of patent protection and direct to consumer advertising is well known as are details of industry funding of groups with which she is associated. The Joint Medicines Policy Conference will provide an arena where a range of views can be aired and discussed. As is the case for all participants, not just our international speakers, the opinions expressed will be personal. A diversity of views is fully expected.

In addition both international speakers will be participating in panel sessions that will include, among others, representatives of the Consumers' Health Forum and Choice magazine. Delegates to the conference will have the opportunity to engage with the panellists during these sessions. I expect that the conference will encourage robust discussion and contribute to the development of pharmaceutical policy in Australia.

I hope you are able to attend and participate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Learmonth', with a checkmark at the end.

David Learmonth
Deputy Secretary

21 October 2008