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9 October 2007

Adj. Professor Margaret Banks  
Policy Team Manager  
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care  
GPO Box 5480  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

*Margaret*

Dear Adj. Professor/Banks

### **Alternative Model for Safety and Quality Accreditation of Health Care**

Thank you for the invitation to Royal College of Nursing, Australia (RCNA) to review the Report on Initial Stakeholder Consultation Review of National Safety and Quality Accreditation Standards July 2007 and Consultation Paper on An Alternative Model for Safety and Quality Accreditation of Health Care.

As part of this consultation process RCNA was also to have taken part in a forum on 19 September 2007. RCNA was extremely disappointed that this forum needed to be cancelled at short notice and that another date has not subsequently been arranged for that meeting.

In light of recent incidents reported in the media concerning inappropriate care practices in some of our major public hospitals, it becomes ever more critical that processes be instituted which can more effectively assure the Australian public of safety and quality in health and aged care services. RCNA recognises that the Commission has placed accreditation of health care services as a priority area for action. However, given the importance of getting the model of accreditation 'right' RCNA cautions the Commission to take the time to give due consideration to all available evidence in its deliberations.

In particular, RCNA is aware of the research being undertaken by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) and the University of NSW to examine the relationship between accreditation and organisational and clinical performance. The outcomes of this research would seem to be critical in informing the Commission in its current project on determining a model for a national accreditation system and standards.

RCNA therefore supports the ACHS in its request to the Commission that the results of this research be considered in developing a new national model for safety and quality accreditation standards and programs. While the final results of the research will not be fully available until some time in 2008 RCNA urges the Commission to confer with ACHS as to when preliminary results might be available to assist in its work on the new model for accreditation of health care systems.

RCNA looks forward to participating in the stakeholder consultations proposed for later this year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rosemary Bryant FRCNA  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**