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The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on
Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

I enclose my submission to the Senate Committee on the Professional Services Review scheme, together with my Curriculum Vitae.

I look forward to hearing from the Committee.

Yours faithfully

Nicolas J Radford

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Senate enquiry into the Professional Services Review

Submission by Dr Nicolas Radford, Chairman of the Determining Authority

I would much appreciate the opportunity to present to the Committee, if it so wishes, my views and experience of the Professional Services Review from the perspective of one who has been involved in the scheme and its antecedents for a number of years.

I have been Chairman of the Determining Authority established under Section 106Q of the Health Insurance Act since the establishment of the DA. The DA is charged with the responsibility of determining sanctions to be applied to practitioners who have found to have acted inappropriately with respect to Medicare services. It also considers Section 92 agreements made by the Director of PSR with practitioners, and makes decisions either to ratify or reject the agreement.

In 1977 I was appointed a member of the Medical Services Committee of Inquiry for Victoria, and served as Chairman of the First MSCI for Victoria from 1984 until 1994.

Upon the establishment of the Professional Review Scheme in 1995 I became a Deputy Director of Professional Review for Victoria. When in 2000 the Determining Authority was set up I became its first Chairman, and have been reappointed to that post since. I have thus been in a position to experience at first hand the evolution of the system of professional review from its inception until now.

The present PSR scheme is the product of many years of change, informed by the experience of the administrators of the scheme and of the practitioners involved in this implementation, together with the outcome of investigations into its effectiveness and acceptance by the profession in general. As is the case with newly legislated schemes, this has involved litigation, which has served to define the limitations under which the committees and other aspects of Professional Services Review must act according to law. It has always been an underlying principle of PSR that natural justice must be afforded to practitioners under review; this has been reinforced by the outcome of litigation, and by education and training programmes instituted to train deputy directors, panel members and the members of the Determining Authority, together with the administrative staff of PSR.

I feel it is most important that the Senate Committee inform itself fully on the matters referred to it, and therefore request that I be given the opportunity to appear before it.

NICOLAS J RADFORD