

## Appendix A – Initial One Page Letter to MP re Contract

[INSERT YOUR ADDRESS]

[INSERT NAME] MP

Member for [ELECTORATE]

[MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT IF RELEVANT]

[ADDRESS]

[DATE]

Dear [NAME],

### **Re: Proposed Queensland Health Contracts for Senior Medical Officers (SMOs)**

I am writing to alert you to my concerns regarding the proposed Queensland Health (QH) contracts for SMOs. Despite many outstanding concerns about the contract by the majority of senior doctors, negotiations have now been terminated by QH.

SMOs do not oppose the introduction of a fair contract. Regrettably the proposed contracts are fatally flawed. I would like to request your assistance in raising this matter within the Liberal National Party so that these matters can be re-opened for negotiation and properly resolved.

#### Key concerns

There are a number of flaws in the contract, and the underpinning industrial relations legislation, which make them unacceptable to SMOs. In particular:

- the contract can be detrimentally unilaterally amended without notice or consultation with SMOs (including by Health Employment Directive);
- independent arbitration has been removed as a dispute settlement process;
- up to one sixth of salary is at risk based on undefined performance parameters;
- the SMO can be forced to participate in shift rosters (including nights);
- the SMO can be forced to work shifts in a distant location from their usual hospital;
- there has been legislative removal of access to unfair dismissal claims; and
- the employer can arbitrarily terminate SMOs without cause at any time.

#### Outcomes

SMOs have been told that they will lose a third of their current salary from 1 July 2014 if they do not sign the new contract by 30 April 2014. Accordingly, a number of my colleagues are already making plans to enter private practice or to leave the state or have already done so. Employment alerts have been issued across Australia, in New Zealand and overseas, warning doctors not to accept employment with QH.

This will be a problem for patients who will no longer be able to access timely, high quality health care provided by experienced, senior doctors. Further, it will not be possible to train replacement specialists without senior doctors to teach them. Inability to retain and recruit experienced senior staff has been identified as a root cause behind the Bundaberg scandal. Regional areas will suffer disproportionately.

SMOs have now received their remuneration “snapshots” from the 2012/2013 financial year, the year on which the financial modeling for the contract proposal is based. Many SMOs, including myself, have identified substantial problems and errors with the final figures presented to us. There is a serious risk that this will become another QH payroll disaster.

I request your assistance in raising these issues with the Premier and the Health Minister so that a fair contract can be negotiated and offered to the senior medical workforce of Queensland, and the quality of our quality public health system preserved. Please also cc me to any relevant correspondence.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

[NAME]

[ROLE – IF DESIRED], [HOSPITAL – IF DESIRED]

[ACADEMIC OR OTHER RELEVANT APPOINTMENTS – IF DESIRED]