



NEW ZEALAND MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

10 September 2010

Australasian Faculty of Occupational
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By Email: afoem@racp.edu.au

Attention: Dr Robin Chase
Professor John Kolbe
Dr David Beaumont

Consensus Statement on Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Work

Thank you for the invitation to become a signatory to this proposed consensus statement on the health and wellbeing benefits of work.

The NZMA supports the principles set out in the consensus statement. We acknowledge the evidence that supports the health benefits of keeping people in, or returning them to, their place of work. The statement however suggests that the signatories are going to undertake certain actions, many of which the NZMA is not set up to do. For example the statement provides:

“We agree to advocate for and work towards improvements in the health of the working age population and their families by

- Assisting those who have the potential to work, but who have never worked, to gain the skills, experience and confidence that will help them get a job, and supporting them into the workplace...”

At first reading there seems to be something of a disconnect between the opening statement and the bullet point. If the signatories are simply being asked to support advocacy that leads to such assistance etc, then the NZMA is likely to support this. If on the other hand the signatories are being asked to go beyond advocacy and provide direct assistance then this is something well beyond our capabilities. Before we can sign up to this statement we need clarification of what further realistic action it is expected that the signatories will undertake?

Secondly we also seek clarification of bullet point four which states

- drawing attention to the influential role played by health professionals, particularly in relation to medical sickness certification processes, as these have significant influence on work absence and work disability”

While we acknowledge that the statement is correct, we are uncertain as to what action this is requesting.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Foley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Peter Foley
Chair, NZMA