

HEALTHCARE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Bill seeks to correct an apparent anomaly arising from the amendment in 2008 that was made when the MBF Group ceased to provide medical benefits cover to persons resident in Norfolk Island. The purpose of the amendment was to ensure that persons who had been covered by that organisation (and who had received a suspension from payment of the healthcare levy) would not be disadvantaged in respect of pre-existing illness or injury upon joining the healthcare scheme.

It has come to the attention of the Administration that the MBF Group was not, in fact, the only organisation that has provided medical benefits cover to Norfolk Island residents and that the Australian Unity Group had done so and has announced that it withdrew cover from 31 December last. In order to ensure that persons who had insurance with that organisation are not disadvantaged, the present amendment will remove specific reference to the MBF Group and apply generically to any health scheme previously providing cover to Norfolk Island residents and which is withdrawn.

The Bill provides in clause 1-3 for the short title of the Bill, its commencement (upon gazettal of assent) and the reference to the principal Act being amended.

Clause 4 removes from subsection 19(6) reference to the MBF Group and makes the subsection referable to any organisation providing health cover in a health scheme and removes the time limitation. All the subsection requires is that if a health cover is withdrawn and the person does not replace it with similar cover (for which a suspension from the healthcare levy has been granted) then when the person joins the Norfolk Island scheme the limitation on prior illness or injury will not apply.

18 January 2013