



香港僱主聯合會
Employers'
Federation
of Hong Kong

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21 February 2003

Dr The Honourable Lo Wing Lok
Chairman
Bills Committee on the Occupational Deafness
(Compensation) (Amendment) Bill 2002
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Hong Kong

Dear Dr. Lo,

Occupational Deafness (Compensation) (Amendment) Bill 2002

Thank you for inviting the Employers' Federation of Hong Kong (EFHK) to express views on the proposed amendment bill which was introduced to implement the outstanding recommendations arising from the review of the Occupational Deafness Compensation Scheme (the Scheme) conducted in 1996 together with further improvements identified in the review conducted in December 2000.

The EFHK representing over 500 corporate employers in Hong Kong with the objective of advocating good employment practices supports in principle this Amendment Bill. However it is vital that a reasonable balance should be maintained between better protection for employees and the need to guard against abuse.

In a memorandum tabled for the Labour Advisory Board meeting held on 30 January 2003, it's been brought to our attention that in the third meeting of the Bills Committee held on 27 January 2003 in examining the proposal of reimbursement for hearing assistive devices, there was suggestion that no ceiling should be set for the reimbursement. Alternatively, the maximum should be increased from what has been agreed at \$15,000 to \$21000. The purpose of the increase is to include the purchase of digital hearing aids ... etc.

The EFHK is of the opinion that reimbursement for hearing assistive devices is an item newly added on top of the compensation required by Ordinance to employees who suffer noise-induced deafness by reason of their employment in noisy occupations. The ceiling for reimbursement originally proposed was carefully set after taking into consideration of the advice of audiologist and otorhinolaryngologist, market prices of hearing assistance devices and administrative feasibility of the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board (Board). Under no circumstances should the reimbursement for hearing assistive devices be open without ceiling as this would mean an open-ended liability for the Board funding of which comes from employers as a collective liability.

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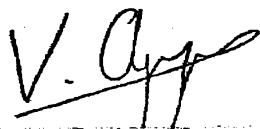
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For the benefit of the HK community as a whole, employers and employees need to work hand in hand for their mutual benefits and any one-sided protectionism should not flourish especially in the present economic environment where most employers and employees are cultivating ways and means for survival.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Apps", written over a horizontal dashed line.

Victor Apps
Chairman