



# The Coeliac Society of Australia Inc.

ABN 60 103 887 670

January, 2006

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Membership and the requirement for a Doctor's Letter**

We are writing to advise the rationale for the decision of the coeliac societies in Australia to require a referral letter from a registered medical practitioner for membership.

The state societies are self help charitable organisations which give information and support to people with coeliac disease, dermatitis herpetiformis and those medically diagnosed as requiring a gluten free diet. The information and support given is for the gluten free diet which is the only treatment for these conditions.

This decision was made in consultation with our consultant doctors and solicitor after receiving many applications for membership from those putting themselves on gluten free diets and those being put on gluten free diets by alternative practitioners without any medical testing. Many of these people were coming to us later saying that they wished we had told them to seek a proper diagnosis as they now do not know if they have these conditions or not.

Our consultant specialists advise that a gluten free diet should never be trialed as this does not provide a diagnosis of coeliac disease and subsequent investigations whilst on a gluten free diet will render a false negative. The trialing of a gluten free diet may also delay the diagnosis of a more serious condition.

From a legal point of view, we are told that as we are giving information on the treatment for these medical conditions then a member should have a referral from a medical practitioner.

The referral required must state that the person has either coeliac disease, dermatitis herpetiformis or diagnosed as requiring a gluten free diet.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,  
THE COELIAC SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC

GRAHAM PRICE  
TECHNICAL OFFICER