



**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC**

**Dr Richard Kimber, AMA(SA) President 1984 – 1985
(From his annual report in 1985)**

During the last twelve months, the affairs of the Association principally have revolved around the introduction of Medicare eighteen months ago. The changes which Medicare produced had their greatest effect on practice in public hospitals interstate and in country hospitals right across Australia. Problems in the Adelaide metropolitan area were less pronounced as we have quite a good proportion of private beds in private hospitals and services to public patients in public teaching hospitals had been provided under sessional arrangements for visiting medical staff for approximately a decade.

We have advocated with vigour for the rights of patients treated and doctors working in country hospitals. We have adhered firmly to the principle that a properly organised fee structure embodied in the Medical Benefits Schedule be the guiding principle for setting fees for services in country hospitals. Although one or two other concessions to try and ensure the viability of private practice in our community have been achieved, debate concerning the level of remuneration continues at the time of writing this report.

This controversy about problems of organised but ethical and effective industrial action has led to the formation of a Country Practitioner's Representative Committee to formulate the policies and develop a negotiating committee to pursue these rightful claims. The Branch Council has welcomed and endorsed this development and looks forward to effective and fruitful negotiations in the future. After some rivalry and recrimination between industrial bodies around the country with the constitution and power to act as unions representing Salaried Medical Practitioners, 1985 has seen the formation of ASMOF (the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation). This body, which has lodged an application for registration as a union, is constituted in such a way as to be able to appear for Salaried Medical Officers before the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in the future. The early AMA body AMPIA, (Australian Medical Practitioners Industrial Association), - has been absorbed by ASMOF and all salaried staff are urged to support this body which it is believed will assume a very important role in the Commonwealth industrial scene.

During the year, many reports have been published. The Sax Committee Report made a number of very wide ranging recommendations about health services in this State and some of these are at the early stages of implementation. The Penington Report on Private Practice in Public Hospitals is a long, scholarly and detailed document on the history of the formation of Medical Services in Australia. It looks closely at present practice and makes a number of recommendations about the future. Broadly, these recommendations had the support of practitioners and special groups canvassed in this State but the State Health Commission appears slow to plan and implement the recommendations. Furthermore, the recent negotiations between Dr Lindsay Thompson and the Federal Government have reduced the impact and the role of the suggested Penington Interim Committee.

The Association in this State is in a healthy condition. Membership continues to grow, attendance at meetings and interest in affairs is excellent. As a measure of enthusiasm and an index of the



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importance of its role is a new local association – the Mid North Branch – which was formed at the instigation of the local practitioners this year.

Communications between the country groups and the State Branch continues to improve and another local group will probably be formed later this year. Successive presidents have paid tribute to the commitment of the secretariat and one can only continue to second these sentiments. The group headed by Mr Ian Dobbie and Mrs Tina Evans is a remarkably, capable, dedicated and energetic group. I also thank very seriously the office holders during 1984/85. I have nothing but admiration for the time and effort which such voluntary workers are prepared to devote to the cause of the Association.