



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

Dr Brian Cornish, AMA(SA) President 1981 – 1982

During my Presidential term the AMA(SA) reached a membership of 2000, still a shortfall of one third of the medical practitioners in this State yet unquestionably representing health and the profession in State matters.

One of the significant long-term government related events of the year included the final agreement on the regulation of medical activity in all hospitals (other than teaching) for quality assurance and peer review, encapsulated in the document 'Guidelines for the Delineation of Clinical Privileges in Non-Teaching Hospitals'.

An agreement with government to revise the Medical Practitioners Act (aided by a five year working party) was imminent. Separation of the regulatory and disciplinary aspects of the Medical Board and the strengthening the latter were particularly important.

The establishment of an Australian Medical Council "with a general advisory role including accreditation of medical schools, recognition of overseas graduates and issues related to uniform medical registration" was decided in February.

Increasing public interest in community matters had led governments to broaden advisory body membership (eg Medical Board, hospital boards) to include 'lay' persons, previously the preserve of medical practitioners.

During the year Council discussed many subjects including the deliberations of Medical Manpower Steering Committee comprising representatives from the AMA(SA), university medical schools and the Health Commission. Also raised at the meeting was the direct access by chiropractors and other paramedical groups to order X-ray and pathology investigations.

In September the Federal Government Health Scheme was changed to embody a 'user pay' principle and to withdraw all payment for services to the uninsured in private hospitals. The Road Safety Committee deliberated on the amendments to the Road Traffic Act that required doctors to take blood samples for alcohol levels. The committee also sought assistance in preparing a brochure on alcohol and road safety.

Council endorsed the draft declaration on The Rights of the Patient from the World Health Association and the Federal AMA initiatives; "approval of the philosophy and practice of 'in vitro' fertilisation and embryo transfer" and the motion "that Federal Council does not condone either fraud or over-servicing. However it confirms that the frequency of medical services is a clinical evaluation dependent on medical judgement".

The delivery of ambulatory medical services to Lyell McEwin and country hospitals fee-for-service versus sessional payments was debated and it emerged that 87 per cent of patients were privately insured.



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A meeting of the AMA(SA) and Medical Board representatives discussed particular items in the new Medical Practitioners Act. On raising the issue of transparency of function as a guide to the profession, the AMA(SA) learned that an Annual Report, including a financial statement was to become routine, with the first publication soon to be issued.

The AMA(SA) welcomed a particular aspect of the new Workers' Compensation Act, namely the recognition of rehabilitation as a component of medical care for the injured worker.

The AMA(SA) regarded the Diamorphine ban as affecting optimal pain control in certain areas, particularly terminal malignancy.