

PRESIDENT'S REPORT to the Annual General Meeting, 1997

At the Annual Meeting last year I reported to you that it was difficult to envisage our Association progressing in its present structure and that consideration should be given to adopting the system used in the United States of America. There they have a national organisation with state sub branches.

This giant step required a lot of thought and we believe that the present structure of the executive was in urgent need of review and restructure before proceeding any further. To this end A Strategic Planning Committee was formed and the report "The Way Forward" is published in this Journal.

The executive committee is very mindful of the responsibility they bear to the members and have worked hard on this plan to restructure the organisation with both short and long term goals.

I will briefly discuss the short term goals which are, I believe, essential to our progress.

TERMS OF OFFICE BY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Under our present constitution each state organisation has a representative on the executive whose term coincides with the elections in that state. Terms of office may change in that state depending on when their AGM is held so that during a two year term, two different people may serve from the one state.

These inconsistencies considerably weaken the efficiency of the executive. At most meetings there are new members and I'm sure they will all testify to the fact that for at least the first meeting they are unproductive members of that body.

To overcome this we propose that the state nominate a person, be it the president or another member, and that that person serve for a full two years with the term beginning in July regardless of the timing of that state's AGM.

SECONDLY THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT

This position is one of great honour and I have been only too aware of this. However, members in the past have been dissatisfied with the method of selection which is that someone is chosen from amongst its members at the executive meeting prior to the AGM.

To be truly democratic we propose that the President is elected from the AICA membership by a simple majority and that the journal is used as the forum for candidates. The first elected president should take office in July 1997.

THIRDLY THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

For some time we have been aware of the cost in both time and money of these events and of increasing competition. More seminars and workshops could then be conducted in country and other outlying areas to meet the different needs in the health care industry. We are aware of the concerns members may have if we change this tradition. However, we feel it must change to every second year and by doing this it will be a bigger and better conference. We would give consideration to assisting a near Asian neighbour to conduct a conference in the

intervening year. Hong Kong has already expressed an interest.

Obviously we will have to formulate a plan so the Annual General Meeting proceeds as per our constitution as well as the issue of state funding, should you agree for us to proceed. During the year we have formed a very close association with the American Practitioners in Epidemiology and Infection Control and no doubt their experience will be of value to us in our planning.

As you can see it has been a very busy year and I think each member of the executive would agree that it would have been very easy to give up the day job to cope with the work load imposed on them. I hope it has not been in vain.

The list of achievements includes:

- Formation of the Strategic Planning Committee.
 - Drafting of a recruitment form that will facilitate the formation of a database of members willing to serve the association in an area of their expertise.
 - Draft education proposal.
 - Incorporation. The Association became registered with the Department of Corporate Affairs.
 - A sub-committee met to plan the credentialling of Infection Control Practitioners and is working towards competencies as a first step.
- The Association, as promised, now has a permanent mailing address and telephone number.
- The National Standards for Infection Control Practice are available and will be reviewed before the end of the year. A database will record all standards holders to facilitate distribution of updates. I must thank Valda Mentjox from NSW who has volunteered to single handedly look after the distribution of these standards. A huge job.

I could put a name or several names against each of those achievements but I may miss someone. The total commitment shown by all executive members has been outstanding. No one could ask any more of them. They have not only served you well and loyally but they have also looked after me which is quite a challenge.

We must continue to move forward. It was obvious to me when I was in Ireland that internationally we have come of age and have the golden opportunity to move even further ahead.

I have been very honoured to serve as your president for the past two years and I thank you all for giving me this opportunity. I think I have looked after it and hand it back in pretty good shape.

I love Infection Control and think only the nicest people take of this challenging and very professional specialty.

Look after it. Maintain a united front to the healthcare industry or we will fade into oblivion. In 1768 in America. J. Dickinson's Liberty Song said in part "... by uniting we stand, by dividing we fall". Let that also be our cry. I would even go so far as to say "united we will show others the way forward".

Madeleine McPherson
President