

# NEWS AND COMMENT

## SECOND PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT MEETING

**T**he second meeting of directors of the public health units was held at Rozelle Hospital on September 3, 1990. Some of the major issues discussed at the meeting were as follows:

- Public health units were introduced to the concept of standardised reporting rates for notifications. These data will be included in the Public Health Bulletin.
- Infectious disease reporting systems are under review. The input of public health units is necessary for a functional system to be devised. The Infectious Diseases Interest Group was formed at the meeting. Members include Rod Kennedy, Steve Christley, Julian Gold, Michael Stanford, David Jeffs, Syd Bell and staff of the Epidemiology and Health Services Evaluation Branch. The first task of this group will be to discuss details of the transfer of infectious diseases data from laboratories and medical practitioners, through the PHUs, and on to the Epidemiology and Health Services Evaluation Branch.
- Strategies to address the broad range of important environmental health issues. The meeting adopted the suggestion that each public health unit develop a particular area of environmental health expertise which could then be called on by other units as necessary. It was also recognised that the department's central office is the most appropriate body to negotiate with the other principal government agencies involved in environmental health. A meeting of representatives from all public health units to discuss the co-ordination of environmental health activities is being convened this month.
- The department's executive information system. An outline of the functions and capabilities of this system was followed by a demonstration.

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Suggestions for improving the reporting of infectious diseases are most welcome.