

8th Meeting Report Continued

She spoke on "How do you get what you want?" How to put together and negotiate an agreement.

The agreement between parties occurs inside a legal envelope—in NSW the Industrial Relations Commission via the Industrial Relations Act—which means that the representing bodies are the only people who can make an agreement. We *have* to work through our recognised legal representatives.

It is as if the CMOA has divorcing parents, but as a group are obliged to influence their separate representatives. Her advice: "Boof the reps on the head and get them to give you good industrial advice."

In short, the Dept of Health will only respond to a right and proper industrial representative in an appropriate forum.

In this regard she discussed the Illawarra situation, repeating that it was a unique situation, involving long-standing conflicts. The agreement deals with primarily the EDs—120 casuals working in that area health service, of which 70 had worked regular shifts for 2 -16 years. Staffing was basically provided through a locum agent - 80% of shifts were manned by these doctors, giving them a strong industrial presence, even though they didn't know it. Eventually they formed an industrial body, which battled along with management, and even went on strike. A number of doctors were travelling down from Sydney—at personal and financial cost. Management finally negotiated for an enterprise agreement. At which point the group called in the AMA - Jim - Noelene—who have been assisting since then. There were 12 core people involved—representing 70, who allocated the AMA as their agent.

The MMOs wanted reasonable money and a career path some commitment, some flexibility and training. Illawarra was in some disarray and the Area wanted a stable industrial body, financially and industrially. And needed some flexibility in return to allow for anticipated changes in demand.

Thus the negotiating process: Work out the five points that each side wants and look at how you can marry them together.

These were negotiated with the Area - the result is a Firewallled agreement, with no automatic flow on or access to other groups, however it also represents a shift in possibility.

5. Jim Deegan - Manager Industrial Services NSW AMA

Jim came along to point out once again that the AMA has heaps of resources, which the CMOA should consider accessing. He recommends that we access these by forming a craft group or sub-speciality group, a process which simply involves a group of 10 doctors to register a common interest.

He would encourage us to form a sub-group of the NSW AMA or a relationship with the federal AMA—the registered industrial body of employers to attend to employer related matters.

The final item on the Agenda was a Panel Discussion : Chaired by Steven Delprado. Participants Jim Deegan, Noelene Salmon. Peter Sommerville, David Brock.

This was an opportunity for the panel to hear back from the group as to what we actually want to achieve for ourselves. To which we replied:

Security
Fair remuneration
Education - right of access, portability of qualification
Diverse opportunity of entry
ie: the same things we have always wanted.

The meeting wound up in a welter of paper and good intentions. Now if only we had more people being more active about carrying them out.

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Disclaimer

Important: Read This

The views expressed within this publication are those of the authors, who enjoy freedom of speech and use it regularly. They are therefore occasionally neither wise nor politically correct. Neither do they necessarily represent the view of the CMOA.

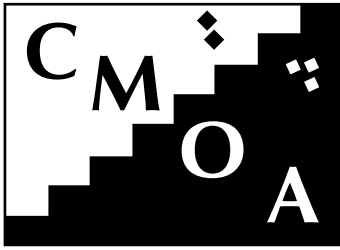
Next CMOA meeting:

June 19th 10am

Rozelle Hospital Education Block

(Same location as previous meetings.)

Be there!!!!



CMO Bulletin

Newsletter of the Career Medical Officers Association Inc

May 1999

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New President's Address

Mary G T Webber

To borrow a phrase from Big Bill "Now is the winter of our discontent"— or at any rate the autumn of our nervousness. If I said I wasn't nervous about taking on this job, I'd be whistling in the face of an obvious error, untruth. To follow in the footsteps of the one man band that is John Egan, without whom there would literally be no CMOA, is at best a daunting prospect. To take it on in the full knowledge of limited resources, difficult times ahead and a full and busy personal and professional life is probably an indication for little green pills or at any rate some serious counselling. However here I am, and if there was ever a cliché applicable to the whole CMO endeavour it would have to be, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained," and I shall endeavour to give it my best shot.

Make no mistake, there are difficult times ahead. This organisation grew directly out of the implications of the Provider Number Legislation, and those implications are, if not biting at our heels, at least a palpable breeze around our ankles. While the expected increase in numbers of doctors trapped involuntarily in the hospital system is not yet an identified problem (please carefully note the word 'identified'), our primary fear that we would lose our bargaining power and cease to be able to even access the CMO/SMO/ etc award/s, let alone advance through their grades, is a story just starting to be heard.

Fortunately, though for different reasons and for the time being, we are not quite alone in our concerns. Elsewhere in this bulletin is a report from the latest meeting of the HMO working group of the MTRP - the group that is supposed to be examining the CMO issue. The good the bad and the

ugly reality is that they're currently sitting tight and don't have the solutions. Whether they would accept serious suggestions or solutions from us is a different matter again.

1999 is a narrow window of opportunity. John has summarised in his report the pluses and minuses of our progress to date. Given the fact that this is an entirely voluntary organisation, operating on a shoestring and the goodwill and efforts of a very few busy people, we have made good progress.

But this year is in some ways the test. Can we survive to flourish after that initial impetus wears off? Can we muster the broader support of the CMO population in states other than NSW and QLD? Can we push for improvements in the award for NSW that can be leap-frogged into by CMOs working in those other states? Can we even *find* each other in our scattered locations and job descriptions? And will anything we do, in the end, make a damn bit of difference at the coal face?

Well, we're in the process of finding out. This is the year of the slog. We have to get that award off the ground. We have to finalise our involvement with the CPDP and then persuade CMOs to sign up and use it in a pilot project. We have to network at the local level and then gather our fellows by region and state until we can convincingly paint the picture of numbers and distribution to anyone who asks. We have to improve our internal communications and push our members to use the Web Site as a primary means of finding the industrial resources they need and making contact with us and with each other. We

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And two cartoons by Kien Coaxuan to relieve the monotony of all this information.