

# APLA Queensland Report

Peter Carter, Carter Capner, Brisbane

## Backslide on patient access to records

The Federal Government has shelved its proposal to legislate for patient access to doctors' medical records. It is said that this would be an unnecessary administrative burden on doctors as small business proprietors.

How can this be justified when thousands of law suits are issued annually simply to get the records doctors refuse to provide? Surely the administrative overheads and anxiety caused to the doctor (not to mention the patient) of dealing with a law suit of this type should be avoided.

Before the backslide was announced, doctors were arguing that the new legislation should only apply to records created after the date of the legislation. Does this suggest that doctors' record keeping methods will be altered henceforth? Any exemption of past records would have meant that any new law was seriously deficient.

Members are asked to fax the Federal Minister for Health, Dr Michael Woolridge (fax: 06-273 4146) to express the concern of your injured clients that such important public interest legislation will not proceed.

## School bus safety

The Queensland Branch has now secured APLA national support for its school bus safety campaign. This campaign was pioneered for a number of years by Rob Davis. It is hoped that with the weight of the national organisation of APLA behind it, some significant advances for the safety of travelling school children can be achieved. The major objects of the campaign are as follows:-

- Mandatory lower speed limits in the vicinity of school buses.
- Mandatory fitting of large visible hooded traffic signal lights to the rear of school buses for the purpose of requiring following traf-

fic to stop when school bus passengers are boarding or alighting.

- Elimination of all advertising signage from rear of all school buses and mandatory placement of large distinctive school bus signage.
- Reform of Queensland traffic laws to require all traffic to stop when a school bus stops and placing a clear onus on drivers to give way to children while a school bus is stopped.
- Mandatory fitting of all school buses with seatbelts.
- Mandatory requirement that no passengers be carried on school buses other than in a seated position.
- Abandonment of the three for two seating policy for primary school students on school buses.

APLA is seeking a sponsor for publicity for this campaign which, through Rob Davis, already has the support of Parents' and Citizens' Associations of most Queensland state schools.

## Injured Persons Association

This association has been in existence for a number of years although mainly in New South Wales where it has proved politically a very effective force especially in the field of compensation for motor vehicle injuries.

Given that there are certain to be further assaults on the rights of the injured to access the common law system for damages suffered at the hands of wrongdoers, it is in the interests of APLA members to encourage membership of this organisation.

Queensland members are encouraged to join the association themselves and also to have their clients join. At \$10.00 their membership is a worthwhile investment.

*Membership applications for the Injured Persons Association can be obtained from the APLA Member*

*Services Officer - tel: (02) 9415 4233  
fax: (02) 9415 4210 or Email:  
apla@mpx.com.au.*

## Medical Negligence Special Interest Group

Two meetings of the Queensland Branch of the Medical Negligence Special Interest Group have been held to date with encouraging attendances by members. Dr David Schlect, Radiation Oncologist of the Wesley Hospital Cancer Care Unit, addressed the group's first meeting providing an interesting discussion relating to the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

At our second meeting on 15 April 1997, Dr Andre Astier provided an insightful presentation with regards to hospital medical charts, explaining to members what they should look for in the notes and how they might recognise when information is missing.

Future speakers to the group will include Dr Dominic Wood, Pathologist with Queensland Medical Laboratory, who will address the group in relation to pathology testing and how errors may arise. Any members wishing details as to dates of future meeting should contact Gemma McGrath, Carter Capner Solicitors, ph (07) 3221 1833.

*Peter Carter is President of the Queensland branch of APLA.*

## APLA Membership

### Membership as at 31 March 1997

NSW .....	237
Queensland .....	172
Victoria .....	106
SA .....	52
WA .....	25
NT .....	10
ACT .....	10
Tasmania .....	6
International .....	28
TOTAL .....	646