THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In June of this year I prepared a brief article for the ACMJ Journal stating my belief that the role of the Australian College of Midwives will continue to grow in respect to the development of the profession, the maintenance of standards and the provision of quality continuing education.

The article attempted to draw attention to the need for plans to be developed and actioned, that furthered the aims of the profession toward growth and social responsibility.

It was emphasized that it would be imperative for every College member to share in the work and participate in the decision making for our collective future.

Key questions were posed and comments sought from the membership.

The article attracted only minimal response, however State Branches through various State Delegates have endeavoured to give their views.

The following is a compilation of these views:

**Question 1.**

**What social and/or political changes do you see having an impact on midwifery practice in the next five years?**

1. **Ethos of political party in Government,** concerning health – increased cost of health care.
   
   1.1 **State of the economy**
   
   - reduced finance for health care and health benefits
   
   - reimbursement of fees

1.2 **Community attitudes/needs,**
   
   - changes to birthing practices
   
   - consumer choice and increased consumer awareness and lobbying
   
   - out of hospital birth
   
   - hospital length of stay decreasing
   
   - independent midwifery practice
   
   - Casemix, DRG's
   
   - Birthing Services Reviews

1.3 **Education of midwives**

   - transfer into the tertiary sector
   
   - changes to Legislation – Nurses Acts

1.4 **Decrease in number of Obstetrical Practitioners**

1.5 **Introduction of DRG's and Casemix funding**

1.6 **Role of the Midwife as interpreted by Governments and consumers**

1.7 **Gender issues**

**Question 2.**

**What will be the key factor in A.C.M's success in the next five years?**

2.1 **Sound well constructed strategic plan.** Needs to be facilitated by “expert” strategic planner. Based on needs analysis and Mission statement.

2.2 **Political awareness and maturity**
   
   - actively promote midwifery
   
   - be aware and motivated to respond to issues on the political agenda that effect midwifery.

2.3 **Ensure that the College is seen as the professional body for midwives, raise the profile of the College.**

2.4 **The College should be the accrediting body for midwives and also accredit educational programs.**

2.5 **Develop a system of ongoing education for midwives on a national basis.**
   
   Ensure standards of practice are maintained and midwifery competencies are established.

2.6 **Increase membership.**

2.7 **Encourage membership participation at large, so they are involved in the decision making process which will in time promote changes within the College.**

   Attempt to demystify the organizational structure of the College.

2.8 **Development of midwifery leaders within the College.**
2.9 Database for ready access to information for midwives and consumers.
2.10 College involvement with the Australian Nursing Council.
2.11 Development of Research facilities.
2.12 Development of a comprehensive system of ongoing education for midwives nationally, and in affiliation with State organizations.

Question 3. **Whom would you recommend the A.C.M. develop strong alliances with?**

3.1 Health professionals involved in midwifery and women's health eg: ANC, ANRAC, RCNA, ANF, ALCA, RACOG, RACGP, RACP.
3.2 Consumer groups eg: Maternity Alliance, NMAA, and Women's Electoral Lobby.
3.3 Federal and State Government key groups and personnel eg: DHH & CS, AIDAB and – most important is the need to speak with one voice on issues effecting Women's Health particularly midwifery care.
3.4 Other professional groups such as physiotherapists and social workers.
3.5 Tertiary Sector.

Question 4 **What role would you like to take in ensuring A.C.M’s continued success?**

4.1 Professional commitment
   – encourage the membership to participate at State level
   – formation of more Sub-branches
   – involve membership in decision making
   – restructure of the College to allow Branch discussion and planning for the future.

4.2 Political involvement
   – State branches to actively lobby midwifery advisors to Government
   – lobby for national midwifery legislation.

4.3 Promotion of the activities of the College via education and research programs for midwives and consumers.

4.4 Promote consumer awareness of childbearing process and choices through public information booths, media kits and leaflets.

The results of the survey formed the basis of a discussion paper which was received by the Executive Committee at the October meeting.

The paper attempted to outline the process needed to begin a strong project planning framework that will take the College forward over the next 5 years.

State Branches are presently reviewing the document prior to the next Executive meeting in February 1993.

My thanks to all members who contributed their views and comments.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a Very Happy Christmas and New Year.

_Judi Brown_
_President_