



Dr Michael Steiner
President



Dr Michael Gliksman
Vice President



Dr Saxon Smith
Chair of Council



Dr Andrew Zuchmann
Treasurer

Meet your new President and Board of Directors

With a long history spanning over 30 years in eye surgery Dr Michael Steiner was recently elected AMA (NSW) President. Dr Steiner is a private Ophthalmologist practising in Auburn and Northwood and has been performing laser vision correction since its introduction to Australia in 1991. He has a particular interest in cataract, glaucoma and laser refractive surgery and has been a member of the AMA (NSW) Council since 2001, holding a number of executive positions.

Dr Steiner says he feels the AMA is doing extremely well but that his goal as President will be to make sure Governments engage the profession in the lead-up to the changes expected to take place within NSW public hospitals following the agreement struck at the meeting of the Council of Australian Governments. "I want

the AMA (NSW) more than ever to be the true voice of the whole profession and for us to be the first port of call for the Government and other stakeholders when it concerns patients and the health system of NSW. The Commonwealth's proposed health reforms will bring about some changes to the NSW health system and I want for us to be on the negotiating table to make sure these changes achieve the best possible outcomes for both our patients and our doctors," Dr Steiner said.

He says the concern for the profession is that there is not enough money in the system to enable doctors to do what is best for their patients. "Doctors across the board are frustrated. They want to see improvements to the health system which will allow them to provide the best care to patients, rather than

just make-do. This is a key issue for specialists in our state's public hospitals. Our members are telling us their operating lists are constantly cancelled by hospital administrators to save money. We have been saying for a very long time there are not enough beds in our hospitals and what we are now seeing is the result of severe bed block," he said.

"The Government's proposed voluntary enrolment plan for people with diabetes is an issue of concern to GPs. It makes it more difficult for patients to access vital GP services. The AMA was not consulted but what the Government is proposing is a scheme that limits the amount of funds available for the care of patients with diabetes despite the Government's intention to improve access to GP-guided care."

With an increasing number of



Dr Elizabeth Feeney
Chair, Medical
Practice Committee



Prof. Brian Owler
Chair, Medical
Practice Committee



Dr Geoff White
Director



Dr Yusuf Bassa
Director

postgraduate medical students and the Government's recent boost to training places, Dr Steiner says the worry for the next generation of doctors is now adequate exposure to good clinical teaching and training. "We recognise the challenge of maintaining a health workforce of adequate size and quality to meet the future health needs of the community. Each member of the health workforce contributes an essential mix of skills and experience to achieve the highest quality of care for their patient and while there is some overlap between these sets of skills and experience it is important the core roles of doctors are preserved to ensure patient care does not become fragmented," he said.

Dr Steiner has provided many years of service to the AMA and to his speciality in Ophthalmology and has also been the Federal Councillor

representing Ophthalmologists since 2003. He is currently serving on the Hospital Practice Committee for the AMA (NSW). As a Federal Councillor he has represented the AMA and the profession on a number of Federal committees and is a sitting member on the Ethics, Medico-legal, Finance, Audit, and Therapeutics Committees. He was a member of the Medical Indemnity Taskforce when it was set-up at the height of the medical indemnity crisis and was also on the Therapeutics Committee when it achieved the big win of establishing a streamlining authority for medications.

Dr Steiner was President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists between 1999-2000. In 2003 he was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for services to the community and to Ophthalmology and subsequently in

2006 was elected a Fellow of the AMA.

Just last year Dr Steiner joined forces with AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce and together with the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists successfully lobbied against the Federal Government's proposed changes to Cataract surgery.

Of his commitment to the AMA over the years and what it strives to achieve, Dr Steiner says the collegiality between doctors is important. "I think as a profession we must always be united – that is the strength of the AMA, it represents the whole of the profession and is the only body capable of speaking for the profession in its entirety. We've achieved big wins over the years that no other body is capable of doing and we've got many more to come!"