

Decade of Hard Work Rewarded

Lindsay Roberts, FRCS FRACS

Chairman, Australian Day Surgery Council, 1990 – 2000

President Elect, International Association For Ambulatory Surgery 1999

It is now 10 years since the Australian Association of Surgeons set the wheels in motion concerning day surgery.

The initiative of the medical profession to formalise the establishment and development of high quality day surgery facilities was expressed in a paper entitled "Introduction And Establishment of Day Only Facilities and Services", which was adopted at a meeting of the New South Wales Committee of the Australian Association of Surgeons on June 16, 1980.

The Paper was adopted and expanded by Council of the Australian Association of Surgeons and its document, entitled "Policy For The introduction And Establishment of Day Surgery Facilities And Services", was forwarded to the Council of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons on August 20, 1980, with the suggestion that these two organisations form a working party to prepare a manual of standards for day surgery. As a result a joint working party of the College, the AAS, Faculty of Anaesthetists of the College and The Australian Society Of Anaesthetists was formed, as a quadripartite working party of equal representation with power to co-opt.

The Working Party's publication "Day Surgery", September 19, 1981 was the first manual of standards for organised high quality day surgery in Australia.

There was little interest from Federal and State Governments for the next five years, however construction of several high standard day surgery facilities, the first at Dandenong, Victoria and several others in Sydney, stimulated formation of the New South Wales Day Surgery Facility Professional Standards Advisory Committee on December 1, 1985, and this Committee published the first Manual For The Accreditation of Day Surgery Facilities in June 1986. It is also a quadripartite committee, of the New South Wales Branches of the same four organisations which constitute the working party. The New South Wales Committee was granted imprimatur status by the Working Party for the purpose of accreditation of day surgery facilities in that state, and two successful accreditation surveys were completed - the first accreditation process by the medical profession, applying its own standards, in Australia.

The Working Party produced a revised edition of its publication "Day Surgery" in January, 1987 and at a meeting in June, 1987 determined that it be formalised as The National Day Surgery Facility Standards Committee.

On October 28, 1998, recognising a necessity for the Committee to advise on all aspects of Day Surgery facilities, the decision was made to change its name and therefore the scope of its determinations to the National Day Surgery Committee. At a meeting on December 9, 1989, the Committee decided that a Charter should be prepared to govern its future activities.