



Please address all correspondence via
Cathy Cordi
ASCMO Office Manager
378 Forest Road Bexley 2207
email: officemanager@ascmo.org.au

7th December 2005

**To: The Hon. John HATZISTERGOS, MLC. Member of the
Legislative Council,
Minister for Health, Member of Australian Labor Party**

From : Dr Michael Boyd, President, ASCMO

Dear Mr Hatzistergos,

I refer to your recent radio program on 2UE in which you touted an overseas travelling roadshow designed to fix the shortage of medical staff in public hospitals. As President of the Australasian Society for Career Medical Officers I write in follow up to the concerns raised by our members that the Department is actively losing good senior doctors by not attending to their needs and award entitlements whilst seemingly trying to replace them with overseas doctors.

Apparently you missed the call from a senior CMO ringing up to say that he was in the process of resigning not only from hospital but from public medical life. All due to his feeling that your department is renegeing on its agreement to provide the senior grading to which he is entitled by the new award and that your Department is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future.

CMO's have waited and worked for ten long years for a new award, have been more than patient and willing to work towards a better health system in which senior practitioners are adequately supported and provide an environment in which adequate training can occur. It seems that there are many CMO's who are not prepared to wait any longer and view the latest delay as a sign that the department will not honour its agreement despite being in clear breach of the award provisions.

I will remind you that CMO's make up a large proportion of the medical workforce in public health, in areas as diverse as emergency and psychiatry. The feedback I am getting from our members is that they are quite sick and tired of continual delays in processing applications for senior grading due entirely to the lack of a grading committee as set out in the award. Whilst this might be due to sheer incompetence there is a feeling that its real genesis results from a keenness to subvert the award. I hope this is wrong.

The small persistent slide of senior doctors leaving the public health system now threatens to become an avalanche at a time when the system can no longer afford to lose any more practitioners of high quality medicine.

I write for clarification on this matter and seek assurances that the grading committee has now been set up, that your department will honour the award and that you are not aiming to replace current CMO's with those trained overseas.

Yours Faithfully

Dr Michael Boyd