

## Visitors to the Centre

### Professor Roger Higgs

Professor Higgs will be visiting in the region during April. Professor Higgs is a William Evans Fellow, jointly hosted by the Bioethics Research Centre and the Department of General Practice of the University of Otago. He is Professor of General Practice at King's College, London, and an expert in the field of medical ethics. He has been editor of the Case Conference series of the *Journal of Medical Ethics* since its inception in 1975 and is a co-author, with Professor Alastair Campbell, of *In That Case: Medical Ethics in Everyday Practice*. He has also published chapters in several books, including *Manual of General Practice* edited by Fry, J., and *Moral Dilemmas in Modern Medicine* edited by Lockwood, M.

Professor Higgs will speak at the following CME seminars for general practitioners and physicians:

11 April,  
Dunedin 18 April,  
Queenstown 22 April, Invercargill

Topics: *Principles at the Coal Face, the Mental Health of Doctors, Confidentiality in Primary Care.*

For times and locations, please contact the Bioethics Centre.

During his visit to the Bioethics Centre, Professor Higgs will participate in advanced seminars and deliver a public lecture on the euthanasia debate (see advertisement elsewhere in this issue).

### Ian Freckelton

The Faculty of Law and the Bioethics Research Centre will be jointly hosting a William Evans Fellow for the month of March. Ian Freckelton, a barrister, of Melbourne is a leading Australian author and editor in the area of law and medicine with an international reputation for scholarship in the area of expert

evidence. He is the author of *The Trial of the Expert* (O.U.P., 1987), and co-editor and a major contributor to *Expert Evidence* (4 volumes, Law Book Co, 1993); he is current editor of the *Journal of Law and Medicine* (Law Book Co, Australia); and he is the President of the Australian and New Zealand Association of *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, which holds a lively annual conference and has recently established the journal *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* (Australian Academic Press).

While in Dunedin Ian Freckelton will participate in the academic programmes of the Faculty of Law, the Otago Medical School and the Bioethics Research Centre; he will address mental health professionals and the Dunedin Medico-Legal Society; and will present a public lecture. He may be contacted via John Dawson at the Faculty of Law or directly at the Faculty of Law.

## Readers' Views

Dear Editor

### *Budgetholding Commentary*

Regarding the Budgetholding Commentary published in the last issue of the Otago Bioethics Report, Gillett and Nicholas appear to ignore the private fees generated by a budget holding practice (BHP), amounting to 50-60% of practice income.

Is there an assumption or hope that BHP's will limit themselves to income from the RHA?

To cover themselves against heavy cost-load BHP's would presumably insure themselves, if prudent.

Does anyone know how Hippocrates made his income and whether he had dependents to provide for?

B H Young, Hamilton

Professor Gillett responds:

It is true that in the precis of our report we did not discuss the complications introduced by the 50-60% of fee-for-service private income to a practice. The full report does take this into account. Our precis report therefore outlines only our major findings and recommendations in relation to the RHA component of the practice income (which itself, in non BHP settings, is a fee-for-service income).

A practice could insure for heavy cost loadings, but our preferred option was a non risk-sharing option which avoids that problem.

Hippocrates was a physician and teacher, born about 460 BC, who practised and taught medicine for a fee (except, we presume, for the sons of those who instructed him). Most Greek doctors of the sixth to fourth

centuries BC were in private practice except for the occasional physician who was retained by a city state, usually for a period of a year at a time. It is thought that these fees may have been "retainers" supplemented by private fees, although the Hippocratic writings advise that doctors should sometimes treat without asking a fee and also explicitly warn doctors against avarice. Hippocrates did have dependents at least one of whom he married off to Polybus who is one of the authors of the Hippocratic writings.