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Preface

Welcome to the seventh edition of *Australia's Health*, the two-yearly summary of information on health in Australia. *Australia's Health 2000* is a special edition because it summarises Australia's health record at the end of the twentieth century. Yet, like its predecessors, it provides a contemporary view of health and will be of maximum use over the next 2 years. As always, it contains a mass of factual and objective data to inform community discussion and policy debate on health issues. These include health status (including new information summarising the burden of disease and injury), service provision and performance.

Australia's Health 2000 follows a more ordered structure than in the past and includes some other special features. Chapter 3 focuses on health determinants, in line with the interest in population health planning from work being undertaken under the auspices of the National Public Health Partnership. Chapter 6 brings together information on health service strategies and performance, reflecting the interest of AHMAC in monitoring the performance of the overall health system. As chapter 7 points out, these are both areas where more information development is needed to complete the picture.

Chapter 8 examines changes in Australia's disease profile in the twentieth century. It draws on work by JHL Cumpston, the first and longest serving head of the Commonwealth Department of Health (from 1921 to 1945) and the most important figure in public health in Australia this century, and of HO Lancaster, who examined in detail the Australian mortality experience in the early part of the century. It also draws, directly and indirectly, on a range of contemporary sources illustrating the depth of knowledge of mortality in Australia right through the century.

The range of contributors is large and many have worked long and hard to produce this book. But special mention must go to Diana Hetzel for her work on chapter 8, to Geoff Sims for his coordinating effort, and to the editor Tony Wood (as in 1998).

The Institute hopes that *Australia's Health 2000* will find a place on many bookshelves for many years to come. On behalf of all the authors I wish readers an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Richard Madden
Director

