



Australian Society of Ophthalmologists

MEDIA RELEASE

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OPHTHALMOLOGISTS INSTALL NEW LEADER

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PIONEERING eye health lobby group the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO) installed Adelaide ophthalmologist Dr Arthur Karagiannis as its new president.

Dr Karagiannis took over the leadership from Brisbane ophthalmologist Dr Brad Horsburgh who finalised the successful lobbying campaign to overturn the Federal Government's arbitrary decision to slash Medicare patient rebates for cataract surgery by 50 per cent.

Dr Karagiannis has been a long-term active member of the ASO Executive and was Vice President in 2010.

Dr Karagiannis said he was committed to maintaining the ASO's medico-political agenda during his presidency.

"There are a number of issues currently concerning ophthalmologists practising in Australia," Dr Karagiannis said.

"The cost of delivering world-standard eye healthcare to patients is increasing at a rapid rate, while the traditional support framework for patients - namely the Medicare system - has become a focus for Government cost-cutting," he said.

"As the ASO / Access Economics 2011 Practice Cost Study has shown, Medicare patient rebates are falling significantly behind practice overheads. This has had a negative impact particularly in paediatric ophthalmology and the ASO will actively lobby for improvements in this area

Dr Karagiannis said the ASO met with Federal Health Department staff on a regular basis to voice its concerns.

"We try to present acceptable and affordable solutions for problems facing public eye health.

A common sense approach to problems rather than solutions based on ideology".

"We have a positive dialogue happening with Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon and we want that to continue," he said.

"However, we won't be coy about raising concerns about issues we feel the Government is ignoring.

"It is the ASO's role to ensure Australian patients enjoy quality, access and equity when it comes to specialist eye health services and we have proven we won't back away if services are at stake."

Ends.

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