

SHORTER NOTICES

New Directions for Western Australia's Economy by *Mal Bryce*

(Office of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Industry and Technology, 32 St. George's Terrace, Perth, 6000) pp.76.

This booklet brings together five keynote addresses and papers given during 1986 by Mal Bryce, Deputy Premier and Minister for Industry and Technology for the Australian Information Industry Association, the First ASEAN Science and Technology Week Conference, and the Royal Australian Institute of Public Administration. These papers address the general issues of industrial and technological change and emphasize the extent to which new patterns of trade and demand, combined with a more open international environment, call for new ideas and strategies from policy makers.

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Bone Mineral Assessment and Osteoporosis by the *National Health Technology Advisory Panel*

(Commonwealth Department of Health, Canberra, 1986) pp.vi + 39 ISBN 0-642-11044-1.

Surgical Stapling by the *National Health Technology Advisory Panel*

(Commonwealth Department of Health, Canberra, 1986) pp.vi + 28 ISBN 0-642-11078-6.

In 1981 The Commonwealth Government established the National Health Technology Advisory Panel (NHTAP) to "identify and examine existing and emerging medical technology, to determine methods and priorities for assessment, and to make recommendations to the Minister with respect to assessment and funding of new technology."

In 1984 a secretariat of two was established. These publications are the ninth and tenth Reports issued by HNTAP since its establishment.

Osteoporosis is a gradual loss of bone mass associated with ageing, and the onset of menopause in women. The ninth Report discusses therapy briefly and concentrates attention on three alternative measurement techniques which could be used to identify women who could benefit from therapy. A review of present evidence indicates that no technique could distinguish between those at risk and those who were not. *Inter alia*, the Report recommended "the widespread routine use of bone mineral measurement techniques for the detection of developing osteoporosis should not be supported at this time" (p.2).

The tenth Report is concerned with the use of stainless steel or absorbable staples for the closure of surgical wounds. Surgical stapling is an alternative to manual suturing. There is some evidence that surgical stapling is well established in Australia and that its use is rising. Table 2 in the Report presents some data that indicate that stapling is considerably more expensive than manual suturing. Generally the Panel felt that "...the question of the effect of stapler use on operative time and patient outcome probably requires further study, and that with many operations significant advantages of staplers in those areas have still to be demonstrated" (p.15).

Copies of the reports are available from

The Secretary, National Health Technology Advisory Panel,
P.O. Box 100, WODEN, ACT 2606, Australia

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