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*Conflict of interest: none declared*

## Adverse reactions and *Australian Prescriber*: back to the future

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The Australian Adverse Drug Reactions Bulletin was first published in 1974.<sup>1</sup> This monthly publication became colloquially known as the ADRAC Bulletin as its content was determined by the Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee.

In 1975 *Australian Prescriber* was launched and the ADRAC Bulletin was incorporated into it. There was some initial disquiet about the merger as the rate of reporting of adverse drug reactions reduced. This fall may have reflected the change from monthly to quarterly publication of the Bulletin.<sup>2</sup>

The Adverse Drug Reactions section was a regular feature of *Australian Prescriber* until 1982, when the publication of the journal was temporarily suspended.<sup>3</sup> The Bulletin then resumed its existence as a separate publication. It remained separate when the publication of *Australian Prescriber* restarted in 1983.

Both publications were distributed using a government mailing list, but an *Australian Prescriber* survey in 1989 found that more than 25% of respondents were not receiving the publications.<sup>4</sup> This problem was mentioned in the Baume review of drug evaluation in 1991. The review recommended that the mailing list should contain at least all medical practitioners, pharmacists and dentists. This was because the Bulletin was recognised as the major means of informing health professionals about the analysis of adverse drug reaction reports.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after the Baume review a decision was made to distribute the Bulletin in the same package as *Australian Prescriber*. Although there were concerns that this could affect the rate of reporting of adverse reactions, the joint mailing went ahead. This arrangement

has continued until now, despite *Australian Prescriber* moving publishers.<sup>3</sup> In 1999 *Australian Prescriber* increased publication to six issues per year and the Bulletin followed in 2003.

From 2010, information about adverse reactions will once again be included in a special section of *Australian Prescriber*. Medicines Safety Update will be prepared by the production team of the former ADRAC Bulletin under the guidance of the new Office of Medicines Safety Monitoring (OMSM). As the electronic version of *Australian Prescriber* has many overseas readers, the new arrangements will deliver important information about adverse reactions to a wider audience.

*Australian Prescriber* is pleased to be part of the new direction for informing health professionals about adverse reactions to medicines.

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