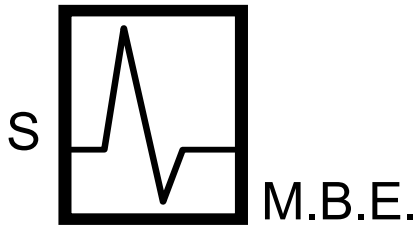


The Society for Medical &  
Biological Engineering S.A.  
Incorporated



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# NEWSLETTER

## July 2002

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### Affiliations

*Australian Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering  
International Federation for Medical and Biological  
Engineering*

## Visit to

## Motorola Australia Software Centre

Technology Park  
2 Second Avenue, Mawson Lakes

Date: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2002  
Time: 5-30pm for refreshments  
6-00pm Presentation  
Venue: Meet in cafeteria.

The Motorola Australia Software Centre (MASC) is one of only a few places where information technology ideas are being nurtured from science fiction into science fact. The MASC develops creative and innovative software solutions. Mr Richard Burford will tell us about the centre's activities and about some of the innovative ideas they have developed. He will then give us a tour of the facilities. This is an ideal opportunity to see first hand the operations of one of South Australia's premier high tech industries.

## Annual General Meeting

Our AGM is upon us again. A probable date for this meeting is Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August at the IEAust Bagot Street premises. More will be advised closer to date. However, we need to start thinking about elections. This year the positions of President, Secretary and 3 councillors become vacant. Please consider nominations and complete the nomination form at end of newsletter.

## **PRIVACY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

In recent times we seem to have been inundated with information in the mail from larger corporations such as banks and the like about their policies on privacy of personal information. This has come about due to a change in Federal legislation that was passed on December 2000. Privacy requirements that had been in place for many years applied principally to public sector agencies, but the latest amendments have extended its application to most private sector organisations as well. They came into effect in December 2001 and require organisations to comply with a number of National Privacy Principles that outline how personal information should be collected, kept secure, used and disclosed.

Vigilant as ever, your council recently looked into how this may apply to the SMBE and what action may be required of us to fulfill any obligations. As it turned out the legislation does not apply to us, as to come under the legislative requirements turnover of an organisation needs to be of the order of millions of dollars. However we felt it is only fair that we provide a commitment to members as to the manner in which members information, although very limited in nature, is handled.

The information retained on members comprises only name and address along with possibly some employer information. This is recorded on a database, two copies of which exist. One of these resides with the treasurer and the other with the secretary. This is to allow efficient access to the information for record keeping and mailing purposes. We are careful not to release our mailing list to any other organisation, be it private, public or professional. Even conference organisers for example typically do not receive it, we would much rather organise mail-outs ourselves after receiving promotional material in bulk.

If you have any questions or comments on this please feel free to contact any of the council members. It is also timely to remind members that they should keep us informed of any change of contact details, mailing or e-mail addresses. There are times when this is not done, it being no surprise that subsequently the member feels that they are being ignored and not receiving newsletters or meeting notices. Please help us to keep up to date.

## **Developments in Industry Regulation**

It has long been on the agenda of various groups and individuals within Australia to develop schemes or programs designed to provide recognition of

competent practitioners within Biomedical Engineering. This form of identification would also ultimately display a degree of industry self-regulation in that it could lead to in-competent or in-appropriate individuals being overshadowed by those that have been appropriately recognised and "endorsed". The SMBE has been a national leader in this campaign and long standing members will recall a significant investigation being performed by us at least 10 years ago. The challenges in bringing anything to fruition have always been many including identifying the appropriate body to administer any such scheme, setting it up, providing educational opportunities for those wishing to enter the field or improve themselves and subsequently motivating practitioners to embrace it for the good of themselves and the profession.

The Institution of Engineers, being the peak professional body for all engineering disciplines has answered this call on at least a couple of occasions. There have been and still are schemes in which people can become involved to develop and maintain their professional skills and have them recognised. Most recently the achieving of Chartered status within the Institution is the ideal means of doing this. The old saying "you can lead a horse to water" kicks in however and the taking up of these opportunities has been minimal within BME technical ranks. People typically, in what could be considered a shortsighted manner, simply think "what's in it for me" or "will it result in a pay increase".

The ramifications of the industry not displaying any degree of self-regulation are potentially severe. History shows, internationally, that it may take no more than a single misadventure by a BME practitioner to see heavy-handed legislators move in to introduce schemes or controls that may be quite inappropriate. Thankfully examples are few and far between but this is not ever a reason for complacency. A death in New Zealand within the last couple of years, possibly directly caused by technician incompetence, saw the coroner make some quite pointed recommendations about training and certification within the industry in that country.

So what developments have taken place recently that may once again move this whole issue forward? The TAFE system within NSW is working steadily towards developing a distance education program targeted specifically at BME technical staff. The curriculum is emerging as we speak. Once finalised we, as a profession, will at last have a substantial formal academic program available to technical staff that are keen to enter the field or those within that need to extend their skills. Running in parallel to this is IEAust

working on a specific set of competency standards dedicated to Biomedical Engineering against which individuals may be measured to assess their skills. This is part of a larger IEAust drive that is calling upon government to introduce legislated controls over high-risk areas of engineering practice. Biomedical Engineering is clearly on their list of disciplines that could benefit from such control. This could potentially produce a good outcome, with government-mandated regulation that stems from within the profession itself possibly providing the best of both worlds i.e. appropriate standards that have some teeth! Watch this space, this is all a happening thing.

**IEAust proposes Email list.**

One of the challenges facing all people involved in Biomedical or Clinical Engineering is keeping in touch with what is happening in the field, key issues that are arising and what our peers or doing or involved with. We all have various ways of doing this and vehicles such as this newsletter provide an invaluable forum. The National Panel on Clinical Engineering within IEAust also remains committed to facilitating communication at a national level and plans to do this via their web site. It is proposed that this site will be used to post articles, communications and other things of interest. When an update takes place it would be desirable to let interested people know that this has taken place. To achieve this a national email mailing list is proposed, a brief message being sent to people on the list prompting a visit to the site to catch up on the latest.

If you would like to be included on this list please email the National Panel administrator, Nina Lenz, at [nlenz@ieaust.org.au](mailto:nlenz@ieaust.org.au).

The website resides at <http://www.ieaust.org.au>, go to "About Us", "Our Groups", "National Committees" and then "Clinical Engineering". It will be coming up to speed progressively in the near future.

**MBEC News**

As I think I mentioned some time ago the MBEC news is no longer available in print. We have access to it via the web at <http://ifmbe-news.iee.org/>. You should check this regularly to look for the current edition. The May 2002 edition is the latest. An archive of past issues is available.

**Other meetings of interest.**

Included with this newsletter you will find brochures advertising 2 meetings. The first titled "A Healthy

Exchange" discusses issues in health facilities planning and management. The second is an evening for the budding entrepreneurs amongst us. The speaker, Mr. Stewart Mitchell will discuss the role of engineers in society and will look at how to develop an idea into a commercial product.

**Conferences**

**EPSM 2002** 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002 ,Rotorua, New Zealand <http://www.epsm2002.com/>

**World Congress on Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering.** 24<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> August 2003, Sydney. <http://www.wc2003.org/>

Advertising rates			
Full page	....\$100.00	½ page	... ..\$50.00
¼ page	....\$25.00	Business card	.\$25.00

**Nomination for Council position 2002/2004**

I .....nominate

..... for the position of President/Secretary/Councilor

Signed.....nominee .../...../....

Signed.....proposer .../...../....

Signed.....seconded .../...../....

Send to Robin Woolford, Flinders Biomedical Engineering, Flinders Medical Center, Bedford Park, SA 5042 or fax to same on 82044840 or email to [robin.Woolford@fmc.sa.gov.au](mailto:robin.Woolford@fmc.sa.gov.au) .

**Nominations to be received by COB 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002.**

**E. & O.E.**