This is my last Editorial as the Scientific Editor of the Australian Journal of Physiotherapy. At the end of this year, I will complete my second and final three-year term in this position. This is according to the policies and procedures established at the inception of the Journal’s Editorial Board in 1990. This policy ensures that the Scientific Editor changes regularly, different people bringing with them a fresh approach and new initiatives. Although I am sorry to be leaving the Journal, I think this rotation policy is healthy and long-term, the Journal will benefit.

During the past six years, the Journal has continued to develop as a credible avenue for scientific communication within the profession, both in Australia and internationally. For example, the style of publication has been revised, an international editorial advisory panel has been recruited, listing in a number of new indexes has been negotiated and new features such as the Critically Appraised Papers have been introduced. We now have subscribers from 45 countries and we are receiving an increasing number of submissions from overseas authors. Credit for these innovations must go to the Editorial Board, whose members work consistently towards achieving a better publication, internationally recognised for its quality.

Much is yet to be achieved. We continue to aspire towards MEDLINE listing. Because MEDLINE is so widely used as the primary index of the biomedical literature, our absence from this listing undoubtedly has implications on the impact of the Journal. That said, we are listed by a number of international bibliographic indexes. Listing with Science Citation Index Expanded, which commenced in 1999, means SCI impact factors for the Australian Journal of Physiotherapy should be available next year. Early in the New Year, the full text of the Journal will be available on line through the Australian Physiotherapy Association’s web site at <www.physiotherapy.asn.au>, providing convenient access for APA members and non-member subscribers alike.

The continued success of the Journal is dependent upon support from its contributors. Our product can only ever be as good as the contributions we receive. Physiotherapy research in Australia is world class. As the Australian Journal of Physiotherapy is the acknowledged archive of the profession in this country, it is critical that the standard of physiotherapy research and practice in Australia is reflected in the quality of the papers we publish. So although I recognise the need for researchers to publish internationally, once again, I must ask you all to consider also publishing in the Australian Journal of Physiotherapy.

Efficacy, effectiveness and availability are core criteria of the evidence-based practice model that has been adopted by the Australian physiotherapy profession. Recent issues of the Journal have included papers addressing each of these criteria. Also important in the evaluation of health care is efficiency, which refers to the comparative analysis of alternative treatment approaches in terms of both their costs and consequence. In the general physiotherapy literature, there are relatively few studies of the efficiency of physiotherapy interventions. Therefore I see this as an area where we can expand our research initiatives so that we have a more complete evaluation of our interventions. Fundamental research is also necessary to develop the conceptual framework for physiotherapy practice. This is another area worthy of development.

In previous Editorials, I have acknowledged the important contribution of the reviewers who ensure that the Journal standard is maintained and that accepted papers are honed to their optimal level of readability. Nothing has changed in this regard and the reviewers remain critical to the success of the
Journal. No less important are those responsible for administration and production. Our Editor, Wendy Cross, is committed and tireless in the quest for a consistently high standard of publication. Advertising is skilfully managed by Elise Olney, with the assistance of Advertising Co-ordinators Paula Havelberg and Rachelle Postregna. Louisa Cunningham provides administrative assistance and subscriptions are handled by Melinda Huntley. Desktop publishing by Shane Scanlan, who is very patient about revisions, and efficient service provided by the production team at Printgraphics ensures that readers receive a finished product of consistently high standard.

I am proud to have been involved with the Australian Journal of Physiotherapy and I wish my successor, Dr Rob Herbert, well in his new role as Scientific Editor. I am confident that the Journal will benefit substantially from his contribution.