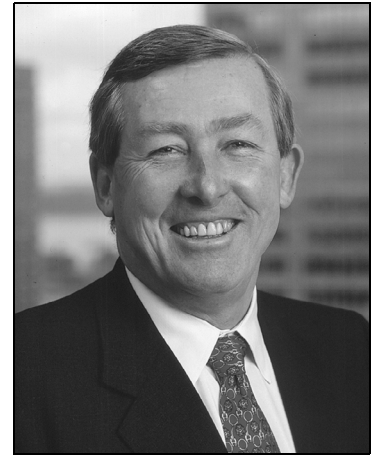

Foreword



ASTHMA IS, quite literally, a household word in Australia, a disease so commonplace that there is a tendency within our community to understate the seriousness of it. But when you have a disease that affects one in four primary-school-aged children, with no known cure, there must be unceasing vigilance in the fight against it.

Clearly, we need to know more about asthma and its causes — why some groups are at greater risk than others; why some people carry it into adulthood when others don't; and the conditions unique to Australia that aggravate asthma. Only when we know the answers to these questions can we take the appropriate measures to reduce its incidence.

That is why Macquarie Bank is proud to have formed a partnership with Asthma Australia to promote and support Australian research into asthma. The partnership, which aims to tackle the problem from a number of angles, is designed to

- raise awareness about asthma;
- assist in developing new research into asthma;
- enhance communication about asthma research; and
- generate further funds for asthma research.

The inaugural Macquarie Bank Asthma Australia Research Colloquium, held in February 2002, was an important aspect of the partnership, bringing together many of the country's leading childhood asthma specialists to help formulate future directions for research into the disease.

This Supplement, which presents the results of the Colloquium, will, we hope, stimulate discussion among research professionals, lead to research opportunities and establish an agenda for future research into childhood asthma.

The Commonwealth Government has identified asthma as one of its National Health Priority Areas. The research questions that have come from the Colloquium and the dedication and commitment of Australian researchers augur well for progress in tackling this important community health initiative.

David Clarke AO

Executive Chairman, Macquarie Bank Limited