

Medical computer company agrees to liquidator

By **SHAUN McILRAITH**
Medical Correspondent

Preventicare, the Sydney company providing diagnostic tests and computerised history-taking for doctors throughout Australia, has agreed to the appointment of a provisional liquidator.

But the company was not in danger of going out of business, one of its two directors—both doctors—said yesterday.

The doctor, whose name cannot be published for ethical reasons, said a provisional liquidator appointed by the Equity Court would act as a temporary business manager to straighten out the company's affairs.

He said Preventicare had incurred debts because some of its operations were not economically sound and because of slow payment of patients' accounts, totalling far more than the company owed.

One health insurance fund had taken up to 12 weeks to pay medical benefits on the accounts of the Preventicare pathologist, who was performing more than 4,000 services a week.

Despite these setbacks, the company was becoming more active and was continuing to conduct Sydney's busiest pathology laboratory and doctors' locum service.

Recently, Preventicare scaled down its data-processing activities, dismissing six of its eight computer staff.

It has decided not to keep a large IBM computer installed in its Camperdown premises last month and will continue to rely on time-sharing with IBM's computer centre at Rosebery.

The Preventicare director said the company had not returned to IBM any of the 130 computer terminals it provided free for its doctor clients.

He said some of the terminals had been re-allocated to busier doctors' surgeries in a rationalisation of the company's operations. Some were serving two or three surgeries.

"The terminals are expensive and although they can perform a very useful function, they cannot be justified economically in some doctors' surgeries," he said.

Some of the nursing sisters employed to work in doctors surgeries had been dismissed in the rationalisation, the director said.

Others had been re-allocated to busier surgeries or had been rostered to serve two or three surgeries.

But the total number of nurses employed by Preventicare was still 130.

The director said Preventicare was serving more than 700 doctors throughout Australia, including 450 in Sydney.

Its locum service, a major part of the business, covered 400 doctors in Sydney.

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Plane crash kills student

AUCKLAND, Thursday.
— An 18-year-old student pilot, Stewart Angus, a university student, was killed when a Piper Cub plane crashed into the sea today on an approach to land at Nelson Airport.