

Healthtalk

October 2004

Better Health, Good Health Care

United in building the best area health service

The combined population of the two areas of 1.3 million comprises 20 per cent of the population of NSW.

South Western and Central Sydney area health services are working as one on a transition management plan that will guide the merged organisations to a new structure by January 1 next year.

The strategy will define the processes, specific actions and timetable for the implementation of changes to both area health services from now to the end of the year.

Until then SWSAHS acting deputy chief executive officer Matthew Daly will provide ongoing daily management of operations in our area health service

with direct accountability to the administrator Dr Diana Horvath.

The Transition Management Committee and the Transition Steering Committee have been established to guide the amalgamation process.

The Transition Management Committee will manage and review the key deliverables of the transition plan.

The committee comprises administrator Dr Horvath, CSAHS deputy chief executive officer Mike Wallace and Mr Daly.

The transition steering committee, chaired by Dr Horvath, assists the transition management committee in evaluating proposals and developing options for consideration by the 21-member steering committee.

Dr Horvath has met with key administrative staff and healthcare practitioners at each of the six hospitals in SWSAHS.

Area health advisory councils, made up of clinicians, health consumers and community representatives, will be formed in each new area health service replacing the former area health service boards.



WELCOME TO SWSAHS: Administrator Dr Diana Horvath couldn't resist a cuddle of new arrival Samuel James Turner during her visit to Camden Hospital. Proud mum Kirsty Hannaford-Turner, dad Robert Turner, and Birth Centre midwife Tina Mulholland look on.

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From Diana's Desk



In the weeks following the announcement of the merger of Central Sydney Area Health Service and South Western Sydney Area Health Service, there has been considerable activity at both management and clinical service levels.

As the administrator of the two area health services, I have established a pattern of splitting my time between locations at south-western and central Sydney. At the same time, the two area health service executive teams have been undertaking a series of reviews to determine the best way to action our amalgamation.

Once options have been identified, we will discuss these with the key stakeholders, including the two Joint Consultative Committees, before taking definitive action.

In the meantime, the clinical service plans of both CSAHS and SWSAHS constitute the basis of the ongoing arrangements for enacting any clinical service changes.

The discussion paper, prepared by the Clinical Strategy Group, on the details of the clinical structure to be adopted in the existing SWSAHS, has now been circulated for comment. Once the services have been finalised, we will call for expressions of interest for the clinical co-directors.

The advertisements for the eight area CEOs were placed in the *Government Gazette*, and closed on September 10. Once the CEOs have been appointed and area structures approved, the senior positions will all be spilled and advertised.

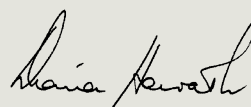
While this process gets underway, however, the real business of healthcare delivery continues unabated. Indeed this winter has been a particularly difficult one, as we are also coping with progressive changes in the patterns of care in our community.

After many years of falling lengths of (inpatient) stay, the trend has been reversing over the past two to three years. This year it has been necessary to open additional beds, and we are looking to enlarge our emergency departments progressively to cope with the changes.

We are seeing two emerging trends in our inpatient populations. The first is increasing numbers of older people who have very little in reserve and rapidly become quite dependent as illness and accident overtake them. These people need more care for longer periods to regain independence. The second group is the young survivors of intensive care – people who would not once have survived but can do so thanks to the wonders of modern healthcare. Once again, these fortunate people need more time to regain their health and so stay longer in our hospitals.

These changes are placing strains on the health services in all developed nations, particularly given the international shortages of doctors and nurses. We are experiencing the same effects in Sydney.

I want to place on record my personal appreciation for the professional and dedicated way all of you are continuing to treat each and every patient. This is no time for any of us to lose sight of the reason we chose to work in the caring professions, but to work together to ease the burden of illness in our communities.



Dr Diana Horvath AO
Administrator

ELEVEN-year-old Kate Hickey and mum Dianna help NSW Premier Bob Carr unveil the plaque at the new Sydney Children's Hospital Unit at Campbelltown Hospital.

Sydney Kid's comes to Campbelltown



It was a party atmosphere at Campbelltown in August when NSW Premier Mr Bob Carr and NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma joined SWSAHS administrator Dr Diana Horvath to launch Sydney Children's Hospital Macarthur Unit.

In a partnership that breaks new ground, the unit at Campbelltown will bring services to the area that families would have otherwise had to travel to Randwick or Westmead for.

The new unit offers:

- paediatric surgery
- enhanced paediatric emergency medicine, neurology
- a specialist service for children with diabetes.

Three new paediatric specialists will be cross appointed between Sydney Children's and Campbelltown hospitals to deliver the new services.

NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma hailed the initiative as an example of how improved clinical linkages between hospitals can deliver better services for NSW families.

"There are already strong links between the medical specialists and staff of the Sydney Children's Hospital and Campbelltown Hospital," Mr Iemma said.

"The creation of the Sydney Children's Hospital Macarthur Unit is

turning those linkages into better healthcare for families in south-western Sydney."

South-western Sydney is the fastest growing metropolitan area of NSW with young families driving that growth.

"Every year 13,000 children visit the Emergency Department at Campbelltown Hospital and the 30 bed paediatric ward admits about 3500 children," Mr Iemma said.

Campbelltown and Camden hospitals director of paediatrics Dr Andrew McDonald said the partnership was a great step forward for the parents and children of Campbelltown.

"This will make a big difference to the lives of many of our sick children who will no longer have to travel 50km to Sydney's eastern suburbs for their care, and will now be able to receive it very close to home at Campbelltown Hospital," he said.

"We hope that this new system of networking will lead the way for other units in NSW who care for our children," Dr McDonald said.

Minister Iemma said the creation of the Macarthur Unit will ensure that all staff specialists from Campbelltown will now spend time at Sydney Children's Hospital, while established cross appointments between the two hospitals will also be strengthened.

"The Sydney Children's Hospital is one of the icons of our health system and this initiative will ensure more families will benefit from the expertise and services the hospital can offer," Mr Iemma said. ■

New enhanced services include:

■ Paediatric surgery

The new service will see a fulltime staff specialist paediatric surgeon recruited to work as a joint appointment between Sydney Children's and SWSAHS.

■ Paediatric emergency medicine

Campbelltown Hospital's well established paediatric emergency service will be enhanced with a tele-health link to Sydney Children's Hospital allowing combined teaching rounds.

■ Paediatric endocrinology

This specialist service will provide care for children with diabetes and other endocrine conditions such as hypothyroidism. Children with these conditions would have previously travelled to Westmead or Randwick.

■ Paediatric neurology

A new service for Campbelltown providing specialist care for children suffering epilepsy, muscular, neurological and developmental conditions. This permanent service will replace a local clinic that was only open once a month.

■ A NSW Centre for Community Child Health

In a NSW first, a Centre for Community Child Health will be established in south-western Sydney, with a senior academic of Community Paediatrics cross-appointed between Sydney Children's Hospital, SWSAHS and the University of New South Wales.

■ Child and Adolescent Mental Health

A joint child and adolescent mental health unit will be formed between the two hospitals with shared appointments of clinical staff, clinical, safety and quality protocols.

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Statewide consultation is under way on the proposed councils.

Wendy McCarthy chaired a public consultative meeting of SWSAHS clinicians and the local community at Liverpool Hospital on August 27 on the role and responsibilities of the area health advisory councils.

Ms McCarthy is the co-chair of the Clinical and Community Advisory Group and a former deputy chair of the ABC.

The area health advisory councils are the peak clinical and community advisory groups at area health service level and provide advice directly to the area health service chief executive officer.

They also build on existing clinician, consumer and community participation structures at a local level; focus on health needs and services for local communities; give

members of local communities a voice in local healthcare delivery; and ensure local issues are taken into account in decision making processes at the area health service level.

Dr Horvath said local hospitals in the south-west sat at the heart of the community.

"It is important the community retains its voice and has input," she said.

"Area health advisory councils will cement the involvement of communities in the future planning of healthcare."

The merger of South Western and Central Sydney area health services will bring Liverpool, Camden and Campbelltown, Bankstown, Fairfield and Bowral hospitals together with Royal Prince Alfred, Concord, Canterbury, Rozelle and Balmain hospitals and The Sydney Dental Hospital.

The combined population of the two areas of 1.3 million comprises 20 per cent of the population of NSW.

Dr Horvath said that until the new year the two area health services would operate as separate entities and it would be "business as usual" for those delivering healthcare.

She said she was confident the merger would add value to health delivery in the two areas.

"We have a well established area health service teaming up with a young, vigorous and growing area," Dr Horvath said.

"The amalgamation will also allow us to streamline some of the non-clinical functions that support the delivery of our health services.

"The health minister has given us an assurance that the savings achieved through the reforms will be spent on health within our area," she said.

"The merger will allow the complementary skills and expertise of clinicians from both areas to be shared, to broaden access to services and improve the quality of care and health outcomes for patients.

"There are already strong clinical links between the two areas," Dr Horvath said.

In 2003/04 residents of SWSAHS accounted for about 9000 inpatient admissions to hospitals in CSAHS, while residents of CSAHS accounted for 5000 inpatient admissions in SWSAHS.

"By dropping the boundary between the two we can ensure the processes and protocols are uniform across the area," Dr Horvath said.

"This will not only maximise the efficiency of services but will improve outcomes for patients."

Talking and listening to the staff of SWSAHS and CSAHS, as we implement this major change, will be one of the key factors driving its success.

One of my major initial tasks will be to ensure there are sufficient medical, nursing staff and allied health staff available to meet the patient needs of south-western Sydney. ■



The new South Western Sydney Area Health Service.

Karitane celebrates 10 years in south-west

Mr Iemma presented 18 service awards to dedicated staff members for 10 or more years of continual service.

NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma recently helped leading parenting centre Karitane celebrate its 10-year anniversary of service to families in south-western Sydney.

In a fun-filled day, Karitane launched two new parenting resources and unveiled its new Aboriginal artwork *Creation*, among a range of multicultural activities.

Mr Iemma launched Karitane's unique help video *Asleep at Last! – A guide to settling babies 6-18 months* that will help NSW families battling sleepless nights with their baby.

"Every year Karitane's 24-hour Careline receives nearly 9000 calls from parents seeking help for unsettled babies and night waking," Mr Iemma said.

"An unsettled child can be the cause of significant stress for parents and every year Karitane helps more than 4000 parents through its sleeping and settling programs.

"This new video offers hope for frustrated parents and can be easily watched again and again, even when a parent is feeling tired or overwhelmed," Mr Iemma said.

Including an essential *Six Steps to Settling*, the video highlights the changing sleep needs of children, how to recognise tired signs in older babies, preparing children for sleep and the benefits of a sleep routine.

Minister Iemma said Karitane was recognised as a centre for best practice in child and family health for providing care and support to NSW families for more than 80 years.

Karitane moved its base from Randwick to Carramar in south-western Sydney 10 years ago to meet the growing needs of families in the area.

The move to Carramar led to the establishment of Jade House, a Family Care Cottage at Liverpool, and a Volunteer Home Visiting Program funded by the Department of Community Services.

Guests included Fairfield major Nick Lalich as well as past and present board members, some of whom led the organisation's important move to meet the increasing demand for services in south-west Sydney.

Mr Lalich unveiled *Creation*, by local Aboriginal artist Ms Shareen Clayton, an artwork that will feature in Karitane's foyer as a welcome to Aboriginal families.

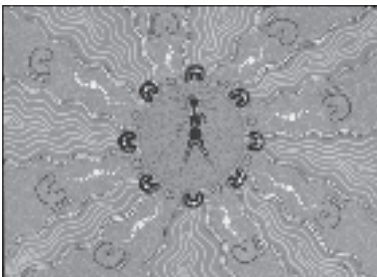
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) executive director Mr Jorge Aroche relaunched The Baby Map, an important communications tool for parents.

Produced in partnership with STARTTS and the Auburn Migrant Resource Centre Families First Project, The Baby Map is available in six different languages and encourages parents to participate in and enjoy their child's development.

Mr Iemma presented 18 service awards to dedicated staff members for 10 or more years of continual service.

"Today marks an important milestone for families as we celebrate the achievements of Karitane in helping them cope with the reality of parenting and appreciating the joys of being a mother or a father," Mr Iemma said.

Karitane focuses on improving the emotional wellbeing of parents during the early stages of pregnancy and the first few years of childhood to give children the best start in life. ■



CREATION: New artwork by Aboriginal artist Shareen Clayton welcomes families to Karitane.



CONGRATULATIONS: NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma with Karen Cawthorne, one of the dedicated Karitane staff who received a 10-year service award.

Finals preparation child's play for Bulldogs

The rugby league heroes and Bulldogs chief executive officer Malcolm Noad presented a cheque for \$5000...

Mitsubishi Electric Bulldogs former skipper Steve Price and forward Andrew Ryan took precious time out from their NRL finals preparations to put a smile on the face of children and staff at Bankstown Hospital's Paediatrics Ward.

The rugby league heroes and Bulldogs chief executive officer Malcolm Noad

presented a cheque for \$5000 to the ward, proceeds of the club's 70 Anniversary Dinner.

Acting nurse unit manager Naomi Ellis said the money will go toward the purchase of a new cardiac monitor that will help staff provide a better service to children under their care.

"We appreciate the community support and donation from the Mitsubishi Electric Bulldogs," Naomi said.

Children from the hospital's childcare centre also joined in the fun and received signed posters from the boys. ■



OVER THE MOON: Nursing staff at Bankstown Hospital's Paediatrics Ward elated to be in the company of Bulldogs former skipper Steve Price (left) and Andrew Ryan.

Strategic Directions Statement launched

The SWSAHS *Strategic Directions Statement 2004-2007* (SDS) was rolled out with a series of information seminars to staff, other agencies and community members.

The SDS is the culmination of a comprehensive planning process that has involved a broad range of people over the past two years.

The recently released new health plan *South Western Sydney Health Network: The Way Forward 2004-2008* and the *SWSAHS Community Participation Framework* are key strategies of the SDS.

The SDS, together with the new health plan and the Community Participation Framework will guide the way SWSAHS will carry out its work over the next five years. View these documents on our intranet site www.swsahs.nsw.gov.au

The SDS sets out the vision and purpose of the organisation, and a clear set of organisational values.

It delineates a series of focus areas for action by SWSAHS over the next three years.

SWSAHS's organisational values are critical to the successful pursuit of the organisation's purpose and vision and to

the attainment of the outcomes identified for each focus area for action.

A SDS map summarises the future direction for SWSAHS and will be used as the strategic framework to guide further corporate and health service planning and reporting across all levels of the organisation.

The continued vitality of the networks, alliances and partnerships that have been forged throughout the planning process are of strategic importance to the implementation of this statement over the next three years. ■

Liverpool Hospital awards excellence in nursing

The awards
recognised
excellence in work
performance over
the past
12 months...

In celebration of International Nurses Day, NSW Premier Bob Carr visited Liverpool Hospital to present five major awards at the Annual Nurse Achievement Awards.

The accolades recognised the significant contribution of nursing staff to Liverpool Health Service and its community.

The following Outstanding Contribution Awards were presented for exceptional performance in nursing:

- **Exceptional contribution to nursing advancement**
Julie Bligh, nurse practitioner,
Diabetes, Liverpool Hospital

- **Exceptional contribution by an assistant in nursing in supporting new models of care**
Susan MacRae, Aged Care Unit,
Liverpool Hospital
- **Exceptional contribution by an enrolled nurse**
Olivia Shipway, Cardiothoracic &
Cardiology Ward, Liverpool Hospital
- **Long-term contribution to the profession of nursing**
June McEachern, Oncology Ward,
Liverpool Hospital
- **Exceptional teamwork in nursing award**
Division of Medicine, Liverpool Hospital
for Length of Stay project



ACHIEVEMENT: NSW Premier Bob Carr (centre), NSW Health Director-General Robyn Kruk (back right) and Liverpool Hospital general manager Dr Teresa Anderson (centre-right back) with the winners of the exceptional teamwork in nursing award, the Division of Medicine.

The awards recognised excellence in work performance over the past 12 months as well as rewarding a range of achievements to the area health service or community through clinical research or nursing practice.

Liverpool Hospital hosted a Nurse Practice Forum and bed making competition as well as launching a winter ward decorating competition.

Across the area, Campbelltown and Camden hospitals took a light-hearted approach to the day with a visit from the Dr Fruitloops Show by the Humour Foundation.

Bankstown Hospital presented several awards and read a Nurses Honour Roll that included Maureen Newse who received an Order of Australia last year for services to children with cancer and their families.

Fairfield Hospital began the day with a celebratory breakfast, presenting Recognition of Achievement Awards to nursing and midwifery staff in the afternoon. ■

If you didn't know...

International Nurses Day is held each year on March 12, Florence Nightingale's birthday. Born in 1820, Florence Nightingale is remembered as a pioneer of nursing and a reformer of hospital sanitation.

Florence's push for reform of the British military health-care system is generally recognised as the start of nursing as a profession.



“The people who work at SWSAHS are creative, innovative and successful and I’ll miss them.”

Colin cooks up a new lifestyle

Long-serving executive Colin Froud’s retirement got off to a good start when he swapped his tie and suit for a barbeque apron.

Colin, who has retired from his post as director of finance and information management at SWSAHS, began his career in health care as a hospital inspector in 1969. He began his long career with the NSW public service in 1959 as a stamp duty officer.

In 1970 he served an accountancy stint at Auburn Hospital before moving up to the position of deputy chief executive officer in 1976.

In 1983 he was appointed chief executive officer of Auburn Hospital where he remained until 1986.

After a transfer to the then Lang Area Health Service as the director of finance and administration, Colin was appointed director of corporate services at the formation of SWSAHS in November 1988.

Over the coming years Colin filled the positions of finance director, director of operations and then, finally, director of finance and information management.

“I am looking forward to playing golf, playing with my grand-daughters and some community work for Bankstown Community Credit Union,” Colin said.

“I have had an excellent experience working at SWSAHS and have been fortunate in the opportunities I have had in health.

“There is very little I would change about my career.

“The people who work at SWSAHS are creative, innovative and successful and I’ll miss them,” Colin said. ■



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS: Colin Froud pictured with previous personal assistants Margaret Vaughan (left) and Annemarie Aldridge at the farewell barbeque.

Zero tolerance to violence

Every person working in or using the health system has a right to personal safety and has a responsibility to minimise the risk of violence. Threatening, abusive or physically violent behaviour will not be accepted under any circumstances.

On June 9 this year the Area Management Group approved the new Zero Tolerance policy.

The key messages from this program are violence and aggression will not be tolerated in our health facilities, either from patients, visitors or employees – it is OVER.

Employees must be aware of the following:

- Options** know what options you have when an incident occurs.
- Violence** all forms of violence or abuse will NOT be tolerated.
- Everyone** has the right to be safe in all NSW Health facilities.
- Report** ALL violent and abusive incidents, including near misses.

All staff within SWSAHS will now require training in the new program. Managers will be trained as a high priority, followed by staff from high risk areas, including:

- Emergency
- Mental Health

- Drug and Alcohol
- Maternity
- Aged Care
- Dental

Bridging and refresher training will also be available for staff who have previously attended the course previously called Aggression Minimisation.

Posters and brochures have been distributed to general managers for distribution to high-risk and patient waiting areas.

The executive and management of SWSAHS are committed to ensuring any reported incidents and complaints will be followed up and actioned in a consistent manner, in order to provide a safer workplace.

For further information contact Melanie Pegler, commercial services officer on 9828 6062. ■

More than a stitch in time

Fairfield Hospital general manager Michael Woodhouse congratulated all award winning employees and said recognition of an employee's service was extremely important.

When Nora Moore started working at Fairfield Hospital she thought her job would last for six months, long enough to save the money to buy roof tiles for the new family home. That was 46 years ago.

Fairfield Health Service celebrated Nora as the longest serving staff member at an Inaugural Service Awards Presentation in June.

The ceremony paid tribute to more than 400 staff for continuous service to the organisation – ranging from five to more than 30 years.

As the hospital's dressmaker Nora has spent most of her days in the linen room surrounded by fabrics, patterns, an overlocker and a reliable sewing machine.

During this time it's more than likely Nora has sewn more stitches than the doctors tending to patients.

She can whip up custom-made uniforms on demand and ensures that any curtains losing their hems are fixed.

Still working full-time, the mother of two and grandmother of three shows no signs of slowing down.

"I can't believe it's been all those years," Nora said. "I went to work for six months and here I am 46 years later.

"There's a real family atmosphere here and it doesn't matter if you are at the top of the ladder or the bottom of the rung, the staff are there for each other," she said.

Fairfield Hospital general manager Michael Woodhouse congratulated all award winning employees and said recognition of an employee's service was extremely important.

"These awards are a reflection of their integrity, hard work and loyalty to Fairfield Health Service," Mr Woodhouse said.

"We commend our employees for their long-serving commitment to the community."

Nora has many fond memories of the hospital, dating back more than 50 years when she first moved to Fairfield with her late husband Neil.

"I remember the great excitement at the time the foundations were laid," Nora said.

"The lovely ladies in the auxiliary were fundraising on the street, selling plants in jam tins for sixpence."

"Looking back, I wouldn't have worked anywhere else.

"It's been very rewarding to see so many people committed to their work and giving to our community," she said. ■



AWARD STITCHED UP: Fairfield Health Service's longest serving staff member, dressmaker Nora Moore, celebrated 46 years of continuous service to Fairfield Hospital.

Villawood food expo makes impact on healthy living



More than 1000 people attended the Villawood Food Expo at the Senior Citizens Centre for a fun-filled day promoting the importance of healthy living.

The expo was organised by Villawood Food Action (VFA), a group of residents and community and health workers, who aim to reduce poverty and hunger in the area.

Officially opened by the founder of the Exodus Foundation Reverend Bill Crews, the expo featured delicious food, entertainment and stalls from more than 30 local services.

"Traditional health education programs that emphasis cooking skills tend to have limited results as people may not have enough money to buy the necessary equipment or ingredients," Gabi said.

"Rather than making people feel bad for not eating the right foods, we are working on improving supply and access to fresh fruit and vegetables," she said.

"The expo highlighted the importance of the relationship between diet, health and wellbeing and promoted how to access quality food through community services, gardening programs and local food production."

People queued for free calico bags filled with the daily requirement of fresh fruit and vegetables.

It is hoped the expo will become an annual event.

VFA started in February this year as an advisory group to the SWSAHS health initiative *Running on Empty*.

Initially convened by the Community Health Division at Bankstown Health Service, VFA is now evolving into an independent nutrition advocacy group. ■

"It's great to see events such as the Food Expo happening in Villawood."

"It was extremely well supported by local community members and gave our children the opportunity to be involved in and learn about the importance of support networks and what our local community stands for."

Graeme Brims
Principal of Carramar Primary School

Bankstown Health Service health promotion officer Gabi Martinez said the day aimed to tackle poor nutrition by promoting local community organisations and networks to residents.

Recipe for success



NEW START: Liverpool Hospital trainees Vantha Ly Korn (back), Maya Kong and Ratha Kong (front) are part of the Corporate Partners for Change Program Behind The Label Food Services Program.

Liverpool Hospital has given Cambodian and Vietnamese clothing outworkers a chance to break away from isolated jobs to fulfil new careers in food services.

Under the State Government's *Behind The Label* (BTL) strategy, which is part of the Corporate Partners for Change program, the women graduated with training in food services for the hospital and aged care industry.

Trainee Vantha Ly Korn and sisters Maya and Ratha Kong recently graduated, after completing their on-the-job training at Liverpool Hospital.

Outworkers face huge challenges such as isolation, long hours and difficult conditions that are enhanced by cultural and language barriers.

Further education is often an unachievable dream for people in such a position, however, the \$4 million BTL strategy has trained more than 840 outworkers and placed more than 350 into new careers including information technology, aged care nursing, retail, food services and electrical trades. ■



Canvassing the artistic



The arts have an important role in our lives, allowing us to talk about feelings and dreams, and to express our human values and stories.

At SWSAHS, arts and cultural programs connect the health services with their local communities.

The programs help create a positive and friendly environment for staff, patients and visitors to community health centres and hospitals.

Liverpool Health Service Arts and Cultural Enrichment Program has been very active in promoting creative and relaxing activities for staff.

From belly dance and salsa, to painting classes, the program now in its eleventh year, has successfully created opportunities for the local community to exhibit artworks in the four Arts for Health Galleries at Liverpool Hospital.

The last exhibition, *Create*, showcased works by staff.

The showing of 60 works by staff at Karitane, Liverpool, Bankstown, Fairfield and Macarthur Health Services was a great success, with many people commenting on the quality.

A people's choice award was given to the most voted artist John Preston from Liverpool Environmental Services for his paintings *Blackboys by the Lake* and *Thredbo River 3*, followed by Jacob Jamesraj from Liverpool Division of Women's and Child Health for his work *Window 1 and 2*.

Create connected the artistic side of staff and their children, by showing an exhibition of works from Liverpool Hospital Child Care at the same time.

The little artists were very proud, as were their parents.

Liverpool Health Service Arts and Cultural Enrichment Program plans to hold *Create* each year, so staff should start working on their new creative endeavours. ■



WINNERS: *Blackboys by the Lake*, by John Preston (top), and *Window 1 and 2* by Jacob Jamesraj (above).



A cuppa for a good cause

Staff, patients and volunteers took time out for a good cause and a well-deserved cuppa to participate in Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, raising money for cancer.

Hospital volunteers served up tea, coffee and a range of donated cakes and delicious goodies to raise funds for the NSW Cancer Council to help improve the

lives of patients and their families in south-western Sydney.

Cancer services in SWSAHS work with the NSW Cancer Council, which provides a range of patient and educational materials on cancer, and refers people to local information, healthcare and support services through the Cancer Helpline.

The morning tea raised \$1000 at Liverpool Hospital's Cancer Therapy Centre. Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre raised \$364. ■

GOOD CAUSE: Liverpool Hospital Cancer Therapy Centre volunteers.

SWSAHS Community Participation Framework launched

SWSAHS recognises and values community involvement in all aspects of the health service.

Over the past 15 months SWSAHS has been working with our community representative network, staff, senior executives and the broader community to develop a structured model for community participation.

The result was the *Community Participation Framework* document which was officially launched by NSW Health Participation Council chairperson Wendy McCarthy AO and SWSAHS Consumer Community Council chair Harry Collins.

The framework will guide the way participation works alongside the Strategic Directions Statement and area's new health plan *The Way Forward*.

SWSAHS recognises and values community involvement in all aspects of the health service.

Involving the community across a range of levels is crucial to creating a culture of openness, transparency and a relationship of trust.

A Community Representative Network has been formed with community representatives from across south-western Sydney.

Each hospital has its own structure such as the Macarthur Health Community Council.

Community representatives have been appointed at all levels including the Area Clinical Council and Area Health Priority committees.

A community representative was part of the interview panel for the general manager at Fairfield, Liverpool and Campbelltown hospitals.

Community participation manager Alice Wood said community participation was about community members, staff and hospital executives working together.

"It is about providing opportunities for people with a range of perspectives to get together and discuss health issues..."

"It is about building relationships, partnerships and trust," Alice said.

"Working at the system level helps us develop a culture where a range of perspectives are featured in the decision making processes and these perspectives are valued.

"This doesn't mean that there will always be agreement, but it does mean we will have a robust process," Alice said. ■



WORKING TOGETHER: Building relationships, partnerships and trust.

Building Bridges with Aboriginal women

Helping Aboriginal women take control of their health, equity and needs are issues of national priority and the basis for a successful empowerment program implemented by Wingecarribee Health Service.

The *Building Bridges* project was developed to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of Koori women living in the Wingecarribee Shire, focusing on understanding stress, dealing with loss, self esteem and being in control.

Wingecarribee Health Service women's health nurse Mignon Aistrope said the sessions were delivered within a supportive and cultural environment assisted by Women's Health, Mental Health and an Aboriginal elder.

"We were able to improve understanding and knowledge of how to identify and manage stressful situations and let the women know how our mental health services could help and support them," Mignon said.

"The program further bonded partnerships between health and associated non-government organisations.

"*Building Bridges* has helped us improve the way we deliver mental health services to the Koori community and we're investigating the idea of employing an Aboriginal community mental health worker," she said.

An additional outcome was the formation of TAFE accredited indigenous art classes with attendance from the women's group, along with a community based indigenous art program. ■

A decade of high-risk baby care

Over the past 10 years the hospital's Newborn Care Unit has nurtured 6184 babies with the smallest success story weighing in at just 505g in April this year.

Over the past 10 years Liverpool Hospital Department of Newborn Care's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) has looked after 317 sets of twins, 24 sets of triplets and the famous Baker quads.

The unit recently celebrated 10 years of providing care to high-risk newborn babies and mothers at threat of complications.

At the celebrations 15 staff members received awards for 10 or more years of continual service and 34 employees received five year service awards.

Newborn Care director of neonatology Dr Robert Guaran and neonatologist Dr Ian Calendar opened NICU on September 13 1994, about six months after the establishment of the hospital's Caroline Chisholm Centre for Women and Babies.

"The unit was opened after years of planning, recruitment and training specialist nursing and medical staff in the care of the newborn babies," Dr Guaran said.

"In a milestone for newborn care at Liverpool Hospital and south-west Sydney, our first high-risk baby was delivered about a week later."

The specialist staff who make up the Newborn Care Unit are well known across the State for the excellent outcomes they achieve.

The team includes medical and nursing staff who specialise in neonatology, midwives, social workers, physiotherapists and other allied health professionals.

"We provide an established state-wide tertiary referral neonatal service with advanced life support and stabilisation for premature and sick newborn babies.

"Among a range of first time innovations, our NICU was the first in Australia to screen for deafness using Automated Auditory Brainstem Responses, a test now used in hospitals nationally," Dr Guaran said.

Over the past 10 years the hospital's Newborn Care Unit has nurtured 6184 babies with the smallest success story weighing in at just 505g in April this year.

The heaviest baby born in the unit weighed 6150g, about double the average birth weight.

Additional services provided by the Newborn Care Unit include the Neonatal Family Support Program that facilitates the early discharge of neonates and provides home-based neonatal care and support to families.

The unit also runs a Neuro-Development Follow-up Clinic, known as Rainbow Clinic, where babies are assessed on their neurological and developmental progress and referred to therapy services if required. ■



BABY CARE: Neonatologist Dr Jacqueline Stack (left) and NICU nurse unit manager Rebecca Gibson with 54-day-old Aaliyah Yim who was born 14 weeks premature.



Nurses Re-Connect

“It’s an excellent opportunity for qualified nurses to return to the NSW health system and upgrade their skills over time.”

In the lead up to the busy winter period NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma called for qualified nurses who were not working in the NSW health system to seriously consider a paid, supported return to work through the Nurses Re-Connect program.

SWSAHS nurses Carol Ryman and Margaret Newton attended the relaunch of the Nurses Re-Connect program at Canterbury Hospital with the minister to promote the initiative that saw them go back to nursing.

More recently, selected nurses have shared their experience of returning to work through the program in the local media, playing a valuable role in attracting more nurses back to SWSAHS.

Since its launch in 2002, Nurses Re-Connect has attracted more than 1000 qualified staff back to nursing in NSW, with 84 returning to SWSAHS.

The Nurses Re-connect campaign has been a key driver in encouraging nurses to return to the workforce by offering a range of opportunities and flexible working conditions.

Bankstown Hospital registered nurse Margaret Newton described the Nurses Re-Connect program as the best thing she ever did and recommends it to anyone considering a return to nursing.

“The Nurses Re-Connect program made the transition back into midwifery very easy,” Margaret said.

“I love my work and it’s provided a new lease on life.

“The ongoing support from nurse educators was excellent and I appreciated the peer support network from other nurses going through the program,” she said.

SWSAHS Nurses Workforce Planning Manager Jennifer McPherson said hospitals in south-west Sydney have registered 42 new nurses for the program since it was relaunched at the end of May.

“Nurses Re-Connect offers a clinically focused re-entry plan tailored to suit individual needs on a fulltime or part-time basis,” Jenny said.

“It’s an excellent opportunity for qualified nurses to return to the NSW health system and upgrade their skills over time.”

Key features include:

- Paid re-entry into the workforce
- Tailored, individual and supported re-entry in general and specialty areas
- Full-time and part-time positions, at the hospital of choice in most cases

Entry Requirements

A requirement of re-entry into nursing through the Nurses Re-Connect program is a qualification as a registered or enrolled nurse.

Registered or enrolled nurses interested in joining the program can call 1800 330 933 or visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing. ■

Macarthur heart failure collaborative a winner

Heart failure is a leading cause of admission to hospital for those aged over 65 years.

Research has shown that many of these admissions are preventable by implementing early and effective management.

Macarthur Health Service and Macarthur Division of General Practice represented SWSAHS in a project along with 22 teams from 17 other area health services called the Chronic Care Collaborative.

The Macarthur team won the award for the Best Metropolitan Area presentation at the recent state-wide Chronic Care Collaborative conference.

The program aims to define standards of care for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation of chronic heart failure.

The Chronic Care Collaborative is an initiative of NSW Health under the guidance of the Institute of Clinical Excellence to implement the state-wide Clinical Services Framework.

Various strategies are employed at different stages of the patient’s condition ranging

from acute in-hospital stay to long-term community management including providing support to patients and their families.

The Macarthur winners are a multidisciplinary team including doctors, nurses, Allied Health and representatives of the Division of General Practice.

Community forums involving patients and their carers were held regularly to provide input to the project.

If you would like a copy of the Clinical Service Framework for Heart Failure please contact Robyn Tumeth or Karen Owen on 4634 3614. ■

“More than half the mothers were from non-English speaking backgrounds.”

Bankstown makes young mums at home

Bankstown Health Service gave birth to a unique pilot scheme aimed at assisting young mothers.

Called the Young Parents Home Visiting Project, it offers home visits to mothers under 22 years of age who have given birth at Bankstown, Canterbury or St George hospitals.

Twenty mothers took part in the program, where healthcare workers visited young mothers at home for six months after the birth of their babies.

Corner Youth Health Service manager Voula Kougelos said each mother was visited regularly by a member of the team which included nurses, health workers and counsellors.

“They provided a range of advice and help, including information about playgroups, medical and financial services, government departments and social contacts,” she said.

“More than half the mothers were from non-English speaking backgrounds.

“Often they were very isolated and totally unfamiliar with how to access the services they needed,” Voula said.

The project was a pilot and certain aspects will be incorporated into services currently provided. ■



VALUABLE ASSISTANCE: Sekneh Hammoud, Arabic speaking psychologist, Corner Youth Health Service, with young mum Emily Succarie and baby Moustafa.

Nursing initiative set to speed up wait at Bowral Hospital

The Advanced Clinical Nurse (ACN) program at Bowral Hospital is improving services provided through the Emergency Department.

Patients are offered quality treatment by suitably qualified nursing staff, based on documented best practice leading to improved waiting times.

In 2002, Bowral Emergency Department nursing unit manager Kathy Bowie identified that services offered by the Emergency Department could be enhanced by better utilisation of highly experienced and skilled nursing staff in more advanced roles.

Emergency Department clinical nurse specialist Kathy Arthurs said the ACN program is an innovative work practice allowing early assessment and implementation of appropriate clinical care without the need to wait for medical officer assessment.

ACNs use procedures, protocols and standing orders that have been ratified and authorised by the Health Service Quality Committee, the director of Medical Services and general manager.

Nursing administration has supported the initiative as the patient achieves definitive care as soon as possible based on documented best practice.

The ACN program is undertaken by trained, experienced registered nurses who fulfil

education requirements and competencies associated with the role, while working within the set guidelines.

The role was put into practice in May this year after many hours of hard work by Kathy Bowie, area clinical nurse consultant for Emergency Jenny Morris, Emergency Department clinical nurse specialists Helen Reynolds, Lynn Anderson, Bernadette Lawlor and Kathy Arthurs and senior nurses Maie Pikkat and Sue Henning.

Maie Pikkat and Kathy Arthurs have presented the concept at the New Zealand College of Emergency Nurses National Conference and have received encouraging feedback. ■

Dare to dream

Participants at the SWSAHS Disability Planning Day were encouraged by facilitator Ally Dench to dream and visualise what could be for people with disabilities and their families.

Attendees were consumers and their carers, community members, employees of

SWSAHS and other agencies including the Department of Education, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, The Northcott Society, and local councils.

The aim of the day was to review the achievements of the previous Disability Action Plan 2000-2003, which was intended to guide SWSAHS efforts in the area of disabilities. It was also a day to move forward and plan our new directions.

Feedback on local achievements included changes to signage, training of staff in the use of TTY phones, planning for adult change facilities and local celebrations for the International Day of Disability.

The original strategy was developed as a result of the committed SWSAHS Disability Reference Group.

Originating in 2000 and representing the interests of the area health service and its stakeholders in disability issues, the planning committee did not want to lose the good work achieved to date but needed to move forward.

Solution-focused sessions were held to plan for the consumer's early years, school years, after school transition and adult life. This group work will be the basis for the new strategy to be developed next. ■



LOOKING AHEAD: Back left – Bob Leste and Julie Deane, front left – Lyndal Millikan, Joanna Burdajewicz, Pricilla Hillam and Ally Dench.

Today is a day for dreaming!!! I want to give each and every one permission to dream, to take a breath, relax and dream.

I want to encourage everyone to dream again for their children, their families and the people you love, to dream for people who access or need to access health services in the south-west Sydney area.

I dared to dream for my son when he was born with challenges that others would not even dare contemplate in two lifetimes.

While everyone else was reacting, while they were diagnosing, and analysing his and our families' needs, we actually dared to dream for him.

We dared to dream the same dreams, the same possibilities, the same opportunities that other families also dared to dream for their sons who did not face the same challenges that our Rod did.

We dreamed and refused to let our dreams be turned into the nightmares others around us were saying we were living or going to live.

We just kept dreaming and visualising. Visualising what he wanted out of life. Visualising what we wanted for him out of life.

You see, it is when you dare to dream that visualisations of solutions come to life and what we saw as our realities began to actually form as our realities. That is why I am daring you to dream today.

To dream about what an area health service would look like for people with a disability and their families in the south-west Sydney area, to visualise what could be.

Excerpt from the address by Ally Dench

“They have confidence to get on with their everyday lives knowing a care coordinator is just a phone call away.”

Leader in cancer care

SWSAHS is leading the way in the management of patients suffering from cancer.

A state-wide plan, announced by NSW Premier Bob Carr, calls for the recruitment of 50 new cancer care nurses, to act as a one-stop contact point for patients needing help with every stage of their illness and treatment.

South-Western Sydney Cancer Service project manager Katherine Tynan, based at Liverpool Hospital, said they already had not just one, but five specialised coordinators already doing this job.

“The coordinators provide a continuous stream of information, and help patients diagnosed with cancer through the often complex treatment process,” she said.

“For example, a patient may require surgery, then chemotherapy or other treatment, and also require support from their family and community.

“The coordinator is there every step of the way to help and guide them through all the appointments, treatment, referrals and anything else they have to undertake,” Ms Tynan said.

South Western Sydney Cancer Service lung care coordinator Clare Baulman said patients did not need to go to hospital as often.

“They have the confidence to get on with their everyday lives knowing a care coordinator is just a phone call away,” she said.

Ms Baulman, a registered nurse with a background in Neurosurgical Intensive Care as a clinical nurse specialist, is the single point of contact for lung cancer patients any time during their illness.

She organises regular multidisciplinary team meetings where the patient's history and treatment are discussed by a variety of clinical specialists to make sure the best treatment is given.

Ms Baulman also attends hospital business meetings where she provides feedback from the point of view of the patient, right through the system to management.

Campbelltown resident Reg Wales, who was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer last year at the age of 57, said that without Ms Baulman his treatment would have stalled.

“She arranges everything and took two calls from me while she was on holidays,” Reg said.

“Claire's helped lift our spirits by spending time with me and my family.”

There are 30,000 new cases of cancer diagnosed in NSW every year – 12,000 people die from the disease.

The State Government plan includes the formation of a new institution called the Cancer Institute NSW and the release of a discussion paper to develop a cancer plan for 2004-2006. ■



Birth centre picnic day

PICNIC DAY REUNION: Almost 40 mums, dads and babies attended the inaugural Camden Hospital Birth Centre Picnic Day on Sunday July 4 at the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens. The day was a great success with plans for future get-togethers every six months. The informal picnic lunch provided a way for mothers with new babies and young children who had experienced care at the Birth Centre to reconnect with their midwives. ■

Understanding diabetes

“A major cause of deaths in Aboriginals are disorders of the circulatory system such as heart attacks.”

Aboriginals in south-western Sydney and beyond will benefit from a new educational video called *Sugar* developed by the local Aboriginal community and SWSAHS health workers aimed at helping them understand diabetes.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, life expectancy for Aboriginals is shorter by 21 years for males and 20 years for females, compared with the total population.

Liverpool Hospital director of Diabetes Services Professor Stephen Lillioja, who is part of the team that produced the video,

said an estimated 6000 Aboriginals lived in the Campbelltown area, and about 1000 in Liverpool.

“Major causes of deaths in Aboriginals are disorders of the circulatory system such as heart attacks,” Professor Lillioja said.

“Diabetes is an important contributor to such blood vessel problems.”

The video features real-life stories of Aboriginal people suffering from diabetes.

They discuss how they felt when they found out about their condition and the changes they have made to manage their illness.

SWSAHS has been running an Aboriginal health clinic at Liverpool Hospital for the past three years to screen, investigate and produce educational information about diabetes.

“We have a high residential indigenous population,” said nurse practitioner Julie Bligh who helped set up the clinic.

“Studies show Aboriginal people are hesitant to use mainstream health services so we run a culturally appropriate community diabetes and vascular service central to where they live.

“They don’t need an appointment and we provide transport,” she said.

Ms Bligh recently won the SWSAHS 2004 International Nurses Day award for Exceptional Contribution to Nursing Advancement for her work with indigenous people. ■



SUGAR LAUNCH: The SWSAHS team that produced the video with NSW Health Aboriginal Health director Ken Wyatt and some of the cast who appeared in the video.

Tasting new cultures

Children from the Samoan, Arabic and Nigerian communities living in south-western Sydney were brought together by SWSAHS for a series of creative workshops including painting,



photography, singing, dancing and sampling food from the different cultures.

The project, *United We Stand*, ran for four days and involved giving the children, aged between 5 and 12 years, the opportunity to spend time with each other undertaking a range of creative activities.

Project coordinator Florence Olugbemiro, from Liverpool Health Service, said the children were split into three groups according to their age.

IN SYNC: Children enjoying a sing-a-long while participating in the United We Stand project.

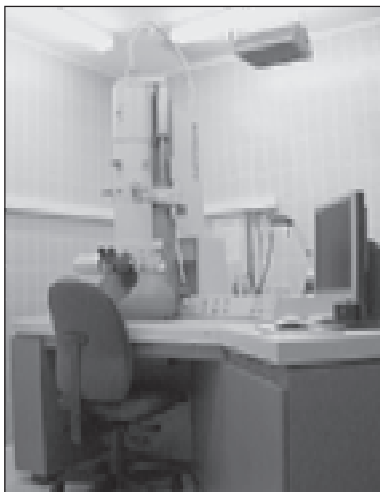
“They rotate between sessions of photography, painting, singing and dancing,” she said.

They also get to sample the food from each country, including Australia.”

The youngsters were taken on a photographic assignment followed by meeting an experienced artist who helped them select a photograph for enlargement and display in an exhibition.

They also painted squares of fabric representing something of their culture and these were sewn together to make a quilt. ■

The instrument easily allows viewing of single cells, bacteria and even individual virus particles.



\$400,000 microscope puts SWAPS in the know

Patients with the possibility of a rare disease or condition now have access to the most sophisticated diagnostic equipment in the southern hemisphere.

The South Western Area Pathology Service has installed a new FEI Morgagni electron microscope.

It is the first instrument of its type in Australia and the southern hemisphere, employing a high degree of user-friendly computer control.

Electron Microscopy Laboratory senior hospital scientist Dr Murray Killingsworth said the new generation microscope has been specifically designed for use in pathology and biomedical research where high specimen throughput must be balanced with high quality image production.

Many diseases require electron microscopy for their diagnosis with SWAPS examining about 160 kidney biopsies each year.

Other cases requiring this form of technology include soft tissue tumours and skin and respiratory diseases.

Money is also saved as we are able to more thoroughly and quickly process biopsy specimens.

The \$380,000 instrument is named after Giovanni Morgagni, the famous 18th century Italian anatomist, who at 79 published what is widely regarded as a pioneering work on pathology.

With a magnification range of 35x to 280,000x and resolution of structures as small as 4 Angstroms (4x10⁻¹⁰ metres) the instrument easily allows viewing of single cells, bacteria and even individual virus particles.

The microscope will also be used for research and teaching within SWSAHS. Others to benefit will be work experience students from local high schools who attend the laboratory each month. ■

Fresh food source close to home



FRESH PRODUCE: Villawood resident Hazel Knudsen at a tomato farm in Fairfield Park.

Bankstown Community Health Centre hosted a tour of nearby farms for Villawood residents recently as part of a health education initiative linking urban dwellers directly to their food source.

They visited four farms run by farmers from culturally diverse backgrounds – Cambodian, Vietnamese, Arabic and Chinese – to see how different vegetables are grown in the area.

Bankstown Community Health Centre health promotion officer Gabi Martinez said the excursion was organised as part of the *Running on Empty* program, an initiative supported by SWSAHS that aims to improve food security in the area.

“The excursion aimed to encourage city dwellers to eat fresh, locally produced food and support the struggling local growers in

the Sydney Basin who are under threat from increasing urbanisation,” Gabi said.

“It was arranged as part of the *Running on Empty* program that works directly with the community to improve supply and access to affordable, culturally appropriate and nutritious food.”

Food security is a relatively new term that refers to the ability of individuals, households and communities to access a nutritious and culturally acceptable diet at all times.

Ms Martinez said ensuring a supply of fresh vegetables was available helped improve food security.

Residents can buy fresh local produce directly from the Farmers Market at Warwick Farm every Saturday morning. ■

“This is in recognition for commitment to providing a safe place, an abundance of choice and overwhelming support for women and their families.”

International Midwives Day at Liverpool Hospital

The first baby born at Liverpool Hospital on International Midwives Day was given a special gift to mark the occasion and staff treated to a celebratory BBQ lunch.

Women’s and Child Health acting nurse manager Sahida Chand said about 70 per cent of all births at Liverpool Hospital have a midwife in attendance.

“We believe childbirth is essentially a normal life event in which midwives play a vital role in providing care during pregnancy, childbirth and the newborn period,” Sahida said.

Liverpool Hospital’s only male midwife, Gerald Oude-Vrielink, who has been with the hospital for 14 years, said he never tired of the thrill of bringing new life into the world. ■



PROUD PARENTS: First baby born Heidi Shong with mother Huang Yi Mei, father Shong Shi Jie and their son.

Midwife of the Year Competition

International Midwives Day celebrations continued with Liverpool Hospital’s Division of Women’s and Child Health awarded the Midwife of the Year State Award by Johnson & Johnson and the Australian College of Midwives for being the maternity unit in NSW with the most number of midwives nominated by new mothers, their families and members of the community.

Camden quilters brighten cancer therapy

Campbelltown Hospital Cancer Therapy Centre (CTC) is showcasing eight colourful quilts stitched by the Camden Country Quilters Guild Inc to help brighten the days of patients and visitors to the centre.

Lining the walls throughout the centre, the donated quilts are bringing a smile to cancer patients and staff at the hospital.

Campbelltown Hospital CTC director Dr Stephen Della-Fiorentina said the centre appreciated ongoing support from community groups.

“We are deeply touched by the continuous support from Camden Country Quilters,” Dr Della-Fiorentina said.

“These magnificent quilts will lighten up the mood of patients attending the centre for treatment.”

The centre’s main foyer features a quilt with hand appliquéd butterflies crafted by

Mrs Barbara Gower, who has been making quilts for almost 30 years.

“The butterflies break out of the quilt and remind us of moving on or breaking free from situations in life that can overwhelm us such as cancer,” Mrs Gower said.

Seven other quilts were made at a Camden Country Quilting ‘community day’ when 20 women met to sew and bind the crafted pieces.

Dr Della-Fiorentina said the process of creating the centre’s new quilts matches the building of a community cancer centre.

“It takes team work and ongoing communication by listening to the needs of the community,” he said.

Over the past 18 months Camden Country Quilters has donated \$15,000 to the Cancer Therapy Centre to establish invaluable resources such as the wig library. ■



UP IT GOES: CTC nurse unit manager Denise Burns (left) with Camden Country Quilters Betty James, Barbara Gower, Ann-Maree Riley and Nancye Aitken (right) with maintenance assistant Laurie Darmanin (back) and CTC director Dr Stephen Della-Fiorentina.



Our findings will be used to plan sufficient resources to meet the needs of the population...

Groundbreaking cancer research to cut waiting lists

Groundbreaking research at Liverpool Hospital has revealed a way to provide quicker access to treatment for cancer patients.

The three-year study by researchers at the Collaboration for Cancer Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CCORE) achieved international recognition when it reported more than half (52 per cent) of all cancer patients in Australia should receive at least one course of radiotherapy.

Conducted by Dr Geoff Delaney, Associate Professor Michael Barton and Dr Susannah Jacob, it is the first study of its kind in the world with the results published in prestigious international medical journals, *Cancer* and *Lancet Oncology*.

CCORE project manager Dr Susannah Jacob said cancer patients in many countries including Australia, the UK, US and Canada have to be placed on waiting lists for radiotherapy due to a shortage of facilities and staff.

Radiotherapy is an effective treatment that is used to treat many cancers, though it is expensive to set up and operate.

Linear accelerators that deliver radiation cost about \$3 million and must be housed in specially constructed rooms.

Many highly specialised staff such as radiation oncologists, radiation therapists

and physicists are required to deliver the treatment safely and effectively.

In order to plan for sufficient facilities and staff, it is very important to know how many cancer patients should receive radiotherapy.

Until now, health planners and policy makers did not have accurate information on the proportion of cancer patients who should ideally be treated with radiotherapy, and had to rely on estimates that were not based on scientific evidence.

The findings will be used to plan sufficient resources to meet the needs of the population and may reduce the future likelihood of there being not enough equipment to provide treatment.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and sponsored by the National Cancer Control Initiative, the study will provide information to compare what should happen with patient treatment for cancer versus what currently happens, allowing easier identification where the health system needs improving.

The recommendations for radiotherapy are based on cancer treatment guidelines issued by internationally recognised institutions such as the National Health and Medical Research Council in Australia, the National Cancer Institute in the US and the Royal College of Radiologists in the UK. ■

Our Professional Practice Unit

Staff, visitors and their families will be able to contact the Professional Practice Unit (PPU) via a purpose-built website.

The PPU will initially be available to staff on the SWSAHS intranet and later to the community on the SWSAHS internet.

The role of the PPU is to look at serious complaints and grievances in a way that is transparent, fair and objective.

Since it was established in December 2003, the PPU has addressed 215 complaints and staff grievances.

The PPU aims to:

- Continue to build on ethical work standards, practices and professional conduct across SWSAHS
- Improve response to complaint and conduct issues
- Strengthen incident management and reporting systems
- Support clinical and managerial staff through training, education and advice to enable system-wide reliable and timely investigations.

Complaints to the unit may come from patients, relatives or staff.

The unit does not replace your patient liaison officer/service or staff manager as the first

point of contact should you have a concern or problem or feel your complaint or grievance has not been resolved.

The staff in the PPU have legal, clinical and mediation skills to appropriately and promptly assess concerns and grievances of patients, relatives and staff about patient care and safety.

Brochures on the PPU have been distributed to all staff with their payslips. They are available to all patients and the general public in waiting rooms, cafeterias, community health centres, wards and admissions.

A second print run of the pamphlets is now available. Copies can be obtained by phoning the PPU from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays) on 9828 5959. ■

Go smoke-free in pubs and clubs

Community representatives have worked tirelessly to recruit the general public to the lobby.

SWSAHS and local community members worked together for World No Tobacco Day to actively support the *Go Smoke-free in Pubs & Clubs* campaign.

The program is a joint effort of the Cancer Council NSW, the Heart Foundation (NSW division), the Asthma Foundation of NSW and the Australian Medical Association (NSW).

The aim of the campaign is to lobby members of state parliament to support

the proposal of a ban on smoking in all pubs and clubs in NSW.

SWSAHS took an active role in recruiting community members to support the campaign.

Pubs and clubs are known as "smoking nurseries" as they can act as social smoking cues for people aged under 30.

Smoking in pubs and clubs is also a serious occupational health and safety issue.

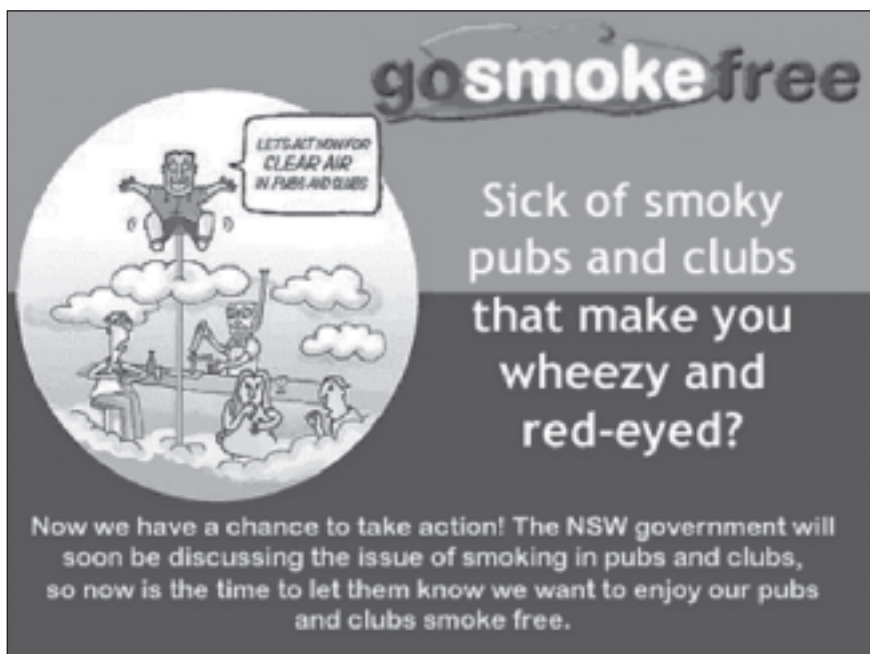
Community representatives have worked tirelessly to recruit the general public to the lobby.

Recruits completed a Go Smoke-free postcard. Their efforts have been well rewarded with the Cancer Council receiving more than 1000 postcards from SWSAHS, a 16 per cent response rate from the postcards distributed.

The Cancer Council had a response rate of 12 per cent and to date has received more than 25,000 postcards.

A big thank you to our community representatives and others involved in the campaign.

For more information contact: Andrew Perusco on 9828 5911 or go to <http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/editorial.asp?pageid=1441> ■



Fighting child obesity

With the obesity epidemic increasing, health service staff in Wingecarribee are assisting local schools to promote healthy eating and physical activity practices.

Dietitians have teamed up with a paediatric occupational therapist to develop two kits for use in primary schools as part of the Wingecarribee Health Service *Health Promoting Schools* program.

The kits aim to improve healthy eating and physical activity practices among children aged 5 to 12 years in Wingecarribee.

Wingecarribee Health Service dietitian Cadi Child said it was important to provide the necessary education to children to give them the skills they need to improve their nutrition and physical activity habits.

The nutrition kit provides lesson plans, accessories for use in the classroom, background information for teachers and nutrition articles for school newsletters.

"A major emphasis of the program has been providing in-service training and information resources for teachers, which can then be applied within the classroom and playground," Mrs Child said.

"This approach has the potential to benefit the entire school community, pupils, teachers and parents."

The activity kit provides information and resources teachers can use to plan and implement physical activity programs.

Seven Wingecarribee primary schools are currently piloting the program.

It is hoped the nutrition kit will be accessible to all schools in the SWSAHS region.

For further information phone Wingecarribee Health Service health promotion service manager Maria De Domenico on 4861 8081.

In brief

Everything you wanted to know about the amalgamation

During October and November, all staff are invited to meet SWSAHS Administrator Dr Diana Horvath. Dr Horvath will address forums and answer questions at Bankstown, Bowral, Campbelltown, Camden, Fairfield and Liverpool hospitals.

For dates, times and venue details, visit the *What's New* section of the SWSAHS intranet site.

The SWSAHS Stroke Conference

"Current Innovations in Stroke Management" on November 19 2004 will provide the latest information on stroke management along the continuum of care in SWSAHS.

Registrations for the one-day conference at Liverpool Hospital's Thomas and Rachael Moore Education Centre close on November 12.

For further information and registration please contact Area stroke clinical nurse consultant Cathie Crowe on 9828 4978 or email catherine.crowe@swsahs.nsw.gov.au. ■

Macarthur doll, bear & creative fair

The annual Doll, Bear and Creative Fair held at Campbelltown RSL saw more than 80 traders, selling collectable dolls and bears, along with doll and bear supplies.

The day was a huge success, due to

the tireless efforts of Shirley and John Baardwyk.

They plan to make it an annual event with the proceeds going to Macarthur Health Service.

This year they raised \$2000 for the Cancer Therapy Centre. ■

Do you suffer from hot flushing and/or night sweats?

If yes and you are female aged between 45 and 65 and in general good health... then we are looking for you!!



We are investigating the effectiveness of a herbal formula in reducing hot flushing and improving quality of life.

For more information please contact:
Corinne Patching on 02 9555 6608 or 0414 48 1950.

Chinese Medicine Clinical Research Centre
Liverpool Health Service

University of
Western Sydney



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Healing garden stimulates recovery



HEALING GARDEN:
Horticultural activities in the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit garden will provide patients with a sense of achievement.

Liverpool Hospital's Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit recently celebrated the opening of its sensory garden with an official handover from the Rotary Club of Liverpool Greenway.

The therapeutic garden is designed to stimulate the senses by incorporating a range of colour, sounds, textures, shapes and smells and invites visitors to actively engage with the plants, flowers and installations including a fairy and a cascade water feature.

Designed by landscape designer Judi New, the garden is the long-term dream of Liverpool Hospital past employee Patricia Johnstone for rehabilitation services to include the healing benefits of gardening.

Liverpool Hospital Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit senior community occupational therapist Debbie Sharp said

the garden would be used by clients, their families and staff for leisure as well as therapeutic activities involved in rehabilitation.

"Horticultural activities in the garden will help improve memory and motor skills important for rehabilitation, while providing clients with a sense of self-achievement as they watch their plants grow," Debbie said.

The garden was funded with money raised by the Rotary Club of Liverpool as well as many goods and in-kind services donated by the Rotarians and other members of the community.

All Saints Catholic School painted a mural featuring a tree with the Rotary logo in the bark, and leaves blowing in the wind highlighting the names of donors who helped create the garden. ■



Mailbag

Bowral Hospital

I am writing to let you know about my total satisfaction with the Cardiac Assessment Unit at Bowral Hospital.

Following a valve replacement, I was directed to the unit for assistance and received such help (physical and psychological) that I am getting back into shape in the shortest possible time.

I attended the series of eight lectures, each one worthwhile and informative; the managing stress one being especially valuable.

The twice-weekly gym sessions mark steady progress in a safe environment.

I particularly would like to mention the splendid teamwork of Nerida, Robyn, Dianne and Anthea. They are always welcoming, encourage everyone, and are a mine of information.

I would say that no such unit anywhere could do a better job. My congratulations to everyone concerned with this great outfit!

Yours faithfully

J.S.

Bankstown Hospital

I admitted myself to Bankstown Hospital Emergency Department with renal colic (kidney stone). Upon advising reception of my plight, I was immediately fast tracked to the Emergency Ward where I was placed on painkillers.

Over the next 24 hours I was constantly monitored to see if I would pass the stone. Unfortunately I did not and it was surgically removed.

The physical care I received from the emergency staff was outstanding, but more important to me was the emotional support that was provided (in particular by Aaron, Penny and Hallall). It allowed me to get through this most distressing problem in a positive way.

Yours sincerely

G.P.

Campbelltown Hospital

I would like to write this letter in support of the nurses at Campbelltown Hospital. Being a patient with minimal movement, I would like to thank every shift of nurses who cared for me during my stay at Campbelltown.

To the dedicated nurses on the Surgical Ward who found massaging my aching back at 2am part of their duties, always with a smile on their faces and a kind word, thank you.

I have never received such dedicated service in one's job. Thank you all for making my stay here more tolerable.

Love W.C.

Healthtalk Contributions:

To contribute stories or photos to *Healthtalk* please contact Public Affairs on email: sharlene.rolph@swhsahs.nsw.gov.au.
Phone: 9828 6848 Fax: 9828 5704

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