Doug's now a Pink Lady

Here's Health

with NEVILLE BOYCE

FOR the past 21 years the Pink Ladies Auxiliary has been recognised at Gosford and other hospitals on the Central Coast as a dedicated group of caring women who provide important voluntary services.

Recently the group's long-standing all-female status changed when volunteer Doug Litchfield was elected as honorary secretary.

"I believe we had a man serving with the Pink Ladies some years ago," Mrs Mary Bonnard, group supervisor, said this week.

"However, Doug is the first man to become an office bearer. He and his wife, Marcia, serve in our discharge lounge at Gosford Hospital."

Mrs Bonnard said service in the discharge lounge was one of the more recent duties added to the voluntary work.

"We spend time with patients who are waiting for relatives to pick them up on discharge. Serve cups of tea or lunch, chat and provide a 'listening ear.' I emphasise our conversations always remain confidential."

She said the Pink Ladies team numbered about 230, with women aged from their mid 30's to 86. "Some of our ladies are foundation members, having served in the hospitals for the past 21 years. We now also have Pink Ladies working at Mandalay Clinic."

Mrs Bonnard said Pink Ladies served, according to a roster, one day a week in a supportive capacity to the nursing staff. "We assist in any way we can, providing the aid we have is of a non-medical nature," she said.

"Our traditional duties include setting out flowers in the wards, baby folding in maternity, operating the mobile library, taking clothes to the hospital laundry for washing and assisting with hairdressing."

"Mrs Bonnard said, on some occasions, Pink Ladies carry out helpful errands for patients, such as banking or shopping for pyjamas."

"Although we're not a fund-raising auxiliary, we began raising funds some years ago as a special project to help finance the construction of a new hospital chapel and we now have more than $150,000 set aside for this project."

Mrs Bonnard would welcome inquiries from any lady who would like to join the team. Prospective volunteers need strong legs, a sense of commitment and a cheerful personality.

"Finally, should more men come into the service in future, Mrs Bonnard believes the auxiliary may have to change its name to 'Pink Angels, which would cover both sexes.'"

For information, phone 299711 ext 3450 between 8am to 9:30pm on weekdays.