Year in Review
1998-99
Letter to our community

This publication is dedicated to our patients, our staff and our supporters, and to the partnership we share. It provides an overview of the achievements made during the year 1998/99 as we worked together to promote and enhance the health and well-being of the people of the Central Coast.

Yours sincerely

Professor Donald George
Chairman of the Board

Mr. Jon Blackwell
Chief Executive Officer

Our history

The Central Coast Area Health Service, now using the name Central Coast Health (CCH), was established by an Act of Parliament, the Area Health Services Act of 1986. Central Coast Health provides the Gosford and Wyong Local Government Areas with public hospital and community health services. Health services on the Central Coast had their beginnings with the establishment of the 30-bed Gosford Hospital in 1945. Today, operating under the Health Services Act 1997 (NSW), Central Coast Health is a fully integrated service comprised of three hospitals, a healthcare centre and seven community health centres.

Our mission

To Promote and Enhance the Health and Well-Being of the People of the Central Coast.

We will provide quality health care in partnership with the community and other health care providers.

We have changed

We now use the name Central Coast Health, a change which reflects our desire for our Community to be able to relate to us more easily. Internal changes have also taken place. We have restructured a number of our Divisions to more effectively provide services.

Health improvement

In the International Year of Older Persons, it was pleasing to announce that a Quality Ageing Strategy was developed in conjunction with many other organisations across the Central Coast. This Strategy provides a wide range of policies that are required to respond to the challenges of an ageing population. The Strategy is much broader than health issues alone and incorporates community attitudes and social values, lifelong learning, opportunities for participation, transport, housing and neighbourhood design. It is now recognised as one of the leading initiatives for healthy ageing in NSW.

Tobacco control remains a high priority for CCH as smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death, disease and disability. The Health Promotion Unit continues to be recognised at a national level for their work in this area.

CCH has achieved considerable success in reducing alcohol harm for young people. Pre-entry breath testing at under age entertainment venues has shown outstanding results in reducing violence.

“Active Australia” is a key initiative of the next few years and will see cooperative effort with other government agencies including local government, private industry activity providers and General Practitioners.

Former Minister for Health Dr Andrew Refshauge with Julie Smyth-Kirk at the launch of the Quality Ageing Strategy.
Disaster response

For a four month period commencing in April 1999, CCH was involved in a prolonged disaster response operation following the outbreak of Newcastle Disease in chicken farms on Mangrove Mountain. The Health response included significant medical, public health and welfare involvement. It was necessary to activate all aspects of the local health disaster plan. Two million chickens had to be destroyed and disposed of and all farms disinfected. Although this disaster placed a significant emotional and financial strain on the local community, the emergency response agencies have received high praise for a very successful operation.

The CCH Disaster Plan/Area Health Plan which is a supporting plan to the Sydney North District Disaster Plan (DISPLAN) was completed in August 1998. The draft Critical Operations Standing Operating Procedures (COSOPS) were finalised in June 1999. Detailed contingency plans for all critical system failures are scheduled for completion by October 1999.

Financial management

CCH fully complied with its budgetary responsibilities. On a cash basis, the end of year result was approximately $1,900 favourable and on an accrual basis the end of year result was approximately $63,000 favourable.

Social Worker Jade Francis and Zac Sidiropoulos, one of the farmers affected by the Newcastle Disease Disaster. Zac and his wife Sue have been active in helping other farmers during this difficult time. Jade Francis was available to assist the residents of Mangrove Mountain from early June until the end of August, 1999. Many farmers are now busy with chickens in their sheds. Zac is holding a chicken from his second batch since the disaster, a welcome sign that Mangrove Mountain is starting to recover.
Facility and Equipment Improvements

The ongoing program of facility improvements included the creation of a Paediatric Section in the Gosford Hospital Emergency Department called ‘Kids Korner’. This was opened by the Minister for Health and provides an appropriate area for the treatment of children away from the adult trauma section. Numerous other projects were completed or are nearing completion including the Long Jetty Community Health Centre, the Audiology Department, Wyong Dental Clinic and the Harry Mattocks Education Building.

An exciting range of new equipment was acquired and the new CT Scanner was commissioned. The new CT Scanner is of major benefit for critically ill patients as it has significantly reduced scanning times.

The inpatient accommodation at Long Jetty Healthcare Centre, one of CCH’s oldest facilities, will be reconstructed in the coming year. This will improve enormously the comfort of patients and the ability of staff to provide services more effectively. The new facility will also improve occupational health and safety for staff at the Centre.

Capital funding has been received for the construction of three new community health centres. These will be located at Erina, Lakehaven and Tuggerah. This will enable CCH to improve access to health services in the community.

As the Central Coast has one of the fastest growing populations in NSW, and considering the high proportion of people 65 years and over, the demand for services increases significantly each year. In response to this growth, CCH has commenced, with Department of Health approval, a Project Feasibility Plan for the major redevelopments of Gosford and Wyong Hospitals. This Plan will be submitted to State Treasury towards the end of 1999 for consideration.

Quality health care

CCH successfully achieved a further full three year accreditation from the Australian Council on Health Care Standards (ACHS) following the April 1999 survey. The surveyors commented “that there was active commitment to the principles of EQUILP (the ACHS quality program) and to their application throughout all services”. They further commented that “all staff are to be congratulated on their commitment to service provision and performance improvement”. This is a significant achievement for all divisions, sites and services.

The Quality Resource Unit was commended by the surveyors “for their innovative approach to training, support and coordination and in particular their marketing approach to improving performance”.

The “CEO’s Innovation Award” has been established to showcase innovation and creative solutions across CCH and inaugural awards will be presented in September 1999.

Teamwork and the introduction of a Barcode Information Tracking system in the Central Sterile Supply Department has enhanced the quality of the sterilising process.

Aboriginal health

An Aboriginal Nutrition Project Officer was employed in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Unit and the Nutrition Department. A “Quick Meals for Koories” program was developed and piloted which included cooking demonstrations, education and practical sessions. A Trainer kit was developed to be utilised by Aboriginal health workers. The kit may be disseminated nationwide.

A part time Aboriginal Employment Coordinator was appointed and has commenced development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

Nunyara Aboriginal Health Support Network received an Award from the Minister for Health for the World AIDS Day Sport Day. Congratulations also to Vicki Bradford, Manager of Aboriginal Health, who received an Award for the development of a working partnership with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
Human resource development

In response to the new Early Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 early intervention strategies have been implemented. These included the employment of a second rehabilitation coordinator and a further development of the rehabilitation coordinator's role to include early injury management. A closer liaison with the CCH insurer GIO has resulted in a reduction in the time taken for injured staff to return to work. This has been achieved by the reporting of new claims within 48 hours of notification and the approval by GIO of medical intervention prior to liability being accepted.

WorkCover has made numerous visits to Central Coast Health over the past 12 months to investigate work-related injuries and assist in the improvement of occupational health and safety. WorkCover was impressed with the CCH commitment to meet legislative requirements and have recommended our model of practice to other health services.

Mental health

For the first time since 1995, we have a downward movement in the suicide rate on the Central Coast. This year the focus for the Suicide Safety Network has been on men in the 25 to 44 years age group.

The Mobile Youth Crisis Service (MYKS) was established as a partnership with Burnside to provide a rapid response to young people in crisis with underlying mental health problems and risk of suicide. It also provides support and consultation to other agencies such as the Department of Education, Department of Community Services and Juvenile Justice.

The Young People Prevention and Early Intervention Program Centre was opened by the Premier, Mr Bob Carr. During the opening, Kristen read a beautiful poem about the work of the Centre.
Community support

Once again the community support for CCH has been outstanding. The Pink Ladies Volunteer Service and Hospital Chaplaincy Service again provided an excellent complement to the regular staff and significantly enhanced patient comfort. The Hospital Auxiliaries raised over $139,000 for patient care equipment.

In April 1999 CCH launched the Central Coast Cancer Care Appeal. A community fundraising committee has been established with Fred Dawson as Chairperson and Harry Moore OAM as Patron. This Appeal is aiming to raise an amount of $750,000 to build a new Cancer Centre at Wyong Hospital as well as complete extensions to the Cancer Centre at Gosford Hospital. CCH is very grateful to NorthPower; our major sponsor, who donated $40,000 to the Appeal. We are equally grateful to the media, particularly NBN Television, Central Coast Radio and the Central Coast Express Advocate who have donated significant advertising and promotion to the Appeal.

Through the great efforts of the Way Woy Hospital Ladies Auxiliary and Umina Beach Women Bowling Club, five LIFTCARE beds were donated to Way Woy Hospital. Helen Merkenhof, Director of Nursing, Woy Woy Hospital, pictured on one of the new beds with Irene Ferrier, Vice President (left) of the Umina Beach Women Bowling Club, and Maureen Hurt, President of the Way Woy Hospital Ladies Auxiliary.

Anne Wooldridge, a cancer patient, has been actively involved as a spokesperson for the Central Coast Cancer Care Appeal. Anne is pictured with her children Jenny and Michael.

The Neonatal Monitor, valued at $30,000, was purchased for the Special Care Nursery from the funds raised for the Central Coast Children's Fund. Kerrie, a midwife supervising a student midwife Alvin.

In October CCH launched the "Central Coast Children's Fund" which is aimed at distributing donations across a broad range of children's services. The Fund received $123,000 this year. The major sponsor of the Fund was the Radio 2GO 'Give Me Five Appeal'. Other support was received from a number of fundraising events including the annual TWU/Sun Weekly Convoy for Kids.

Radio 2GO's Cameron and Sarah gave tremendous support to the Central Coast Children's Fund through their fundraising efforts in the annual 'Give Me Five For Kids Appeal'.

Baby Zachary, pictured right, spent time in the Children's Ward with respiratory problems. He is pictured here when well enough to go home.
Integrated bed management

Surgical services were expanded through key appointments during the year including a second Faciomaxillary surgeon and an additional Orthopaedic surgeon for Wyong Hospital.

A Harmonic Scalpel that allows advanced laparoscopic general surgery was purchased. This technology reduces the recuperation period for patients as it is designed around the principles of ‘minimally invasive surgery’.

Six dual purpose beds were introduced primarily for eye surgery patients. These custom built beds double as an operating table which means that patients no longer have to be lifted from a ward bed to an operating table and back to a ward bed. The discomfort to patients is minimised and there are obvious occupational health and safety benefits for staff who no longer need to lift patients between the two.

Teaching and research

CCH signed a five year Partnership Agreement with the University of Newcastle to provide a framework for both organisations to work together to advance health education, research and service.

CCH achieved a further three years accreditation for the training of Junior Medical Officers from the Postgraduate Medical Council.

Nursing Education was restructured and the Evidence Based Management Quality Framework was implemented within the Learning and Development Service. Thirty-one managers enrolled in the workplace assessment program leading to a Diploma in Front-line Management.

A consultant has been appointed to prepare a Research and Development Plan which is scheduled for completion by April 2000.

Our affiliation with the University of Newcastle continues. The refurbished lower floor of the Harry Mattocks Building was opened for teaching in September 1998. This facility accommodates the new three year Undergraduate Nursing Course.

Pictured left to right are: Professor Roger Holmes, Mr Jon Blackwell, Professor Margaret McMillan, Dr Roberta Carter-Brown, Ms Jenny Becker and Professor Donald George.

Nicole a Midwife in Maternity Ward, shares a moment with Mardi and her new baby. The Graduate Diploma in Midwifery course, a collaboration between Central Coast Health and the University of Newcastle, is a unique program enabling Registered Nurse students to register as practising Midwives within only twelve months.
CCH is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud. To this end CCH has implemented a Fraud Control Strategy that includes Education Programs, a Code of Conduct, Protected Disclosures, Fraud Reporting Mechanisms and Fraud Risk Assessment. The reporting of fraud and unethical behaviour continues to be encouraged from both internal and external sources.

**Appreciation**

This year we welcomed two new Board Members, Mrs Georgia Sidiropoulos and Mr Neil Rose. We also farewelled the Director of Nursing of Long Jetty Healthcare Centre, Miss Margaret Curthoys, who had served with distinction in that position for nine years.

There are always many people to thank in the operation of CCH. We wish to acknowledge our sincere appreciation to:

- Each member of staff, the Visiting Medical Staff, the Chairpersons and Deputies of the Medical Staff Councils, the Hospital Auxiliaries, Fundraisers and Sponsors, Pink Ladies, Chaplains, Volunteers, the Area Executive, the Board of Directors, our local State and Federal Members of Parliament, the Director General of the NSW Department of Health and the NSW Minister for Health.

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### Key performance results

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<th>Admissions (thousands)</th>
<th>Occupancy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Occupied Bed Days (thousands)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Admissions increased 0.8% over the previous year.</td>
<td>Occupancy Rates continued to rise to this year's peak of 94%.</td>
<td>Occupied Bed Days decreased due to a decrease in Average Length of Stay.</td>
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**Average Length of Stay (days)**

Average Length of Stay continued the downwards trend decreasing to 3.8 days.

**Same Day Admissions (thousands)**

Same Day Admissions remained relatively constant at over 26,300.

**Non-Admitted Patients Occasions of Service (NAPOOS)**

Non-Admitted Patients Occasions of Service (NAPOOS) continued the increasing trend due to the enhanced services of the previous year.

**FTE Staff per ADA**

Full Time Equivalent Staff per Adjusted Daily Average increased due to the full year impact of last year's service enhancements.

**Net Cost of Services per ADA (Indexed)**

Net Cost of Services per Adjusted Daily Average (Indexed) increased due to some award increases and the full year impact of the previous year's service enhancements.

**Hospitals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>(total beds 735)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gosford</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyong</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woy Woy</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Jetty Healthcare Centre</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Acute Facilities</td>
<td>26</td>
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*FTE* Full time equivalent

**ADA** Adjusted Daily Average is a comprehensive measure of the average daily patient workload.
The population of the Central Coast in June 1997 was estimated to be 277,475. From 1986 to 1991 the Central Coast population grew by 20.9% (NSW 6.6%) and from 1991 to 1996 the growth was 13.0% (NSW 4.9%). While growth rates generally are slowing, the Central Coast remains one of the fastest growing areas in the State.

The Central Coast continues to have a high proportion of people aged 65 and over compared with the state average (Central Coast 16.7%, NSW 12.7%) and a slightly higher proportion of children aged 0 to 14 (Central Coast 22.1%, NSW 21.0%). While the Central Coast population continues to grow, the birth rate, in keeping with the rest of the State, is slowly declining (1997 Central Coast crude birth rate was 13.7 births per 1,000 population, NSW 13.8). Over the last few years the number of births to Central Coast residents has been stable at around 3,800 p.a.

For a copy of the CCH Annual Report please contact the Public Relations Department on 02 4320 3221.