Hospital board strives to meet expanding needs

A great deal had been achieved in the past 12 months—the long sought additions to the hospital building had begun, there had been increases to the staff and the financial position had been maintained at a satisfactory level.

This was stated by Gosford District Hospital Board chairman, Mr. R. G. Mathews, in his report to the board's annual meeting on Monday night.

The board was very much aware that what had been achieved was only a beginning, that its vigour and initiative must be sustained at an ever increasing rate if the capacity of the hospital was to keep up with the expanding needs of the community, Mr. Mathews said.

Mr. Mathews added that because of the current building extensions, the hospital was going to assume a new role in the future.

"There will be many changes from the present system. A medical superintendent will be appointed. "Residential medical officers may become available on a roster system from one or more of the large Sydney Teaching Hospitals.

"The prospect of top line specialists from one or more of the Teaching Hospitals is being very carefully examined here and in Sydney," he said.

Mr. Mathews said it was expected that the enlarged facilities at the hospital would encourage specialists to establish private practice in Gosford.

These services, augmenting the sterling work of the overworked honorary medical officers, who would continue on the honorary medical panel, would ensure a range of medical attention equal to all reasonable needs of a non-urban community.

"With the hospital services consolidated and the growing district nurses providing daily nursing care at home, the wide ranging service of the hospital will begin to have a deeper meaning to local residents," said Mr. Mathews.

Mr. Mathews reported on progress to the hospital extensions, stating they would be ready for occupation early in 1966.

He said a new nursing home similar to the three-storey, or self-contained flatette-type units for senior nursing staff, will be required urgently to meet the approved increase in nursing staff to twice the present figure.

Thirteen positions of trainee nurse and five other positions had been provided in preparation for the opening of the new wing.

Mr. Mathews said a further 20 to 25 trainees would be recruited towards the end of the year.

Necessary staff would be made also for the kitchen, laundry, boiler, stores and office.

Mr. Mathews said the daily average of occupied beds increased from 61 to 62.5 making a total of 3641 in-patients for the year, while the average period each patient spent in hospital fell from 6.5 to 6.3 days.

District nursing visits (which allow earlier discharge in certain cases) rose rapidly from 19,743 to 26,764.

Mr. Mathews said the hospital had operated at a loss of £1718 during the year, but a grant of £1800 from the Hospitals Commission had offset this loss.

He said continued financial support from auxiliaries, committees and friends of the hospital provided the funds to purchase special items of equipment beyond the reach of the board from normal subsidy funds.

Typical items purchased with money donated during the year were electro-
cardiograph, suction unit, vulite projector, cystoscope, children’s ward cot and text books for the training school.

Mr. Mathews said the ladies’ auxiliary continued their unflagging efforts to raise funds during the year and donations amounting to £1396 were received. This was made up as follows: Gosford £800, Ourimbah £175, Hardys Bay £150, Ettalong £136, Kinumber £135.

Mr. Mathews said the immediate future was charged with an atmosphere of enthusiasm and anticipation with the opening of the new buildings in the new year.

“The foundation stone was laid at a ceremony on February 20 this year. Since then a major effort has been given to arranging the selection of furniture, equipment and instruments; in devising an organisational pattern for staffing; and in devising a suitable accounting system. “The real challenge, however, lies in the period following occupation,” Mr. Mathews said.