HOSPITAL SITUATION IS STILL CRITICAL

It is a slow process towards the goal of a 600 bed hospital for Gosford, but recent announcements have indicated that $10 million has been ear-marked for the purpose.

Unfortunately the time when this becomes a reality has not been settled and the new-look Health Commission with so many other commitments on its plate, is cautious about committing itself.

With an election looming later this year, this could be the time for Gosford to be given a few promises that will be honoured with a deadline set and honoured.

Gosford Hospital will service three electorates — Gosford, Peats and Munmorah — so it should have some political pull.

The proposed purchase of Wingello Nursing Home will ease the bed situation considerably, but by the time the change-over is completed the position will be no better.

Gosford currently has 200 beds — give or take a few — with 34 at Woy Woy, 16 at Long Jetty being increased soon to 30, and now a further 70 proposed for Wingello — to be renamed Wyoming Hospital — will bring the total to 320 which is well short of the target.

One of the advantages of the proposed Wyoming Hospital is that it will enable Gosford District Hospital to utilise a fourth operation theatre, which was built last year but could not be used because there were insufficient beds for post-operative cases.

No doubt the backlog of operations will soon fill any vacant beds available after the take-over early next month.

With the rapid expansion of the Central Coast, which will not doubt be increased following recent planning announcements, the greatest need of the area is hospitalisation.

When the Federal Government implements its proposed health scheme, the burden placed on hospitals like Gosford will increase.

Fortunately the Hospital Board is well aware of the critical situation, and has left no stone unturned to keep pressure on the Minister.