

A HISTORY OF THE
ACHIEVEMENTS IN PROVISION OF HOSPITAL AND
HEALTH SERVICES ON THE CENTRAL COAST

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1945 TO 1985

OVERVIEW OF THE CENTRAL COAST

The development of the Hospital and Health Services on the Central Coast of New South Wales has primarily taken place over the past fifteen years. During this period, the population has increased from 80,000 to 190,000, an increase of 140%.

The increase in population has been mainly due to migration from Sydney. Population increases in the retirement age groups have continued to be high; however, the heaviest increases have been in the young married couples who have moved to the Central Coast because of land and housing costs which were substantially lower than the Metropolitan Area of Sydney. The population increase from the census data is summarized in Appendix I. The number of babies born each year at Gosford District Hospital is included in Appendix II.

The character of the Central Coast has changed over this period from a rural, citrus farming area with retirement and holiday villages near the beaches to large suburbs with permanent residential populations. Suburbs vary considerably in population mix from Niagara Park which has a very young population, 80% of whom are younger than forty, to Ettalong, which has a very high elderly population, of whom 46% are over fifty-five.

Finding employment for the residents of the Central Coast has always been a major problem, as the local industry and businesses have never been able to meet residents' demands for jobs. Over 8,000 commuters travel to Sydney each day, and the stress caused by twelve hours away from home causes a great deal of strain for all families affected by this problem. The current labour force on the Central Coast is approximately 60,000, and the unemployment rate has jumped from 8% in 1981 to over 16% in 1985. Over 10,000 persons are now unemployed on the Central Coast, largely due to the major downturn in the building industry.

Public transport remains minimal throughout the Central Coast with private bus companies and taxis providing all the services to the outlying suburbs. The bus services are mostly scheduled to major commercial areas and the railway stations at Wyong and Gosford. Services to outlying areas are few, with very limited transport being available after 6 p.m.

The tourist industry remains an important factor in the local economy, especially with the continuing increases in travelling costs. According to the local tourist office, it is estimated that over three million visitors holiday on the Central Coast each year.

DEVELOPMENT OF HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO 1960

Until the Second World War, the Central Coast was primarily an agricultural, timber and fishing area which had experienced little growth. The Baby Health Programme had been established by the Country Women's Association in the 1930's, and the School Medical Service was provided through the local councils.

The Gosford District Hospital, consisting of 34 beds, was constructed in 1945 when the population on the Central Coast was 27,000. The first Chief Executive Officer was Mr. John Walker and the first Director of Nursing, Miss Noni Knight. Home Nursing Services provided through the Hospital were introduced to Wyong Shire in 1955. The current Director of Nursing, Miss M. Lowndes, was appointed in 1959 as the first district nurse in the Gosford Shire. In 1958, Gosford District Hospital was extended to 63 beds, with the addition of a 30 bed maternity unit.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, 1961-1970

Mr. N. R. Boyce was appointed Chief Executive Officer in July, 1963. In the Annual Report of 1964 he forecast that it would be necessary to develop an extension of the District Nursing Service to provide domiciliary rehabilitation and Meals on Wheels services in order to maintain people in their own homes and minimize hospitalisation.

In 1966 the population of the Central Coast was 67,526. During 1966/67 an additional 72 beds were added to Gosford District Hospital, bringing the total to 135. Even with the additions, there were only two beds per thousand population.

In 1966 Dr. Ian Walters was appointed the first Medical Superintendent. During 1966 also, Blood Bank services commenced at Gosford.

Meals on Wheels commenced in 1967 with Gosford District Hospital cooking meals for people in Gosford, Springfield, Davistown, Saratoga, Wamberal and Wyoming suburbs. One hundred and fifty volunteers were rostered for three cars per day.

In 1969 planning commenced for the Woy Woy Hospital and Rehabilitation Unit. The verandahs were "closed in" in Maternity, adding 12 further beds, for a total of 146 at Gosford.

Mental Health services were provided in 1969 by the secondment from Morisset Hospital of a Psychiatrist who was supplemented by a nurse and welfare officer in 1970. In-patient services continued to be provided in the wards within Morisset Hospital.

Staffing for the District Nursing Service increased to 10, with 35,837 home visits being provided in 1969.

HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT, 1971-1974

In 1971 the Central Coast population was 89,057 and Gosford District Hospital had 180 beds. This represented only two beds per thousand population with an average length of stay of 6.9 days per patient.

Eighteen per cent of the population was over sixty-five years of age, compared to nine per cent for the State of New South Wales. There were only four nursing homes on the Central Coast and two thirds of the referrals necessitated placement in Sydney.

During this period of four years, major policy decisions were taken to decentralize the provision of hospital services. With the population scattered in small pockets throughout the Central Coast, it was decided to establish subsidiary hospitals which would provide care for less acute patients than those treated in Gosford Hospital. The subsidiary hospitals would also provide beds for patients closer to their homes, for recuperation following surgery or acute illness which had been treated in Gosford Hospital.

Woy Woy subsidiary hospital was opened in October, 1971, with thirty-four general beds. An after-hours emergency medical service was staffed by local general practitioners.

The Entrance/Long Jetty Hospital became a subsidiary of Gosford District Hospital in October, 1972. This added thirty general beds for use by patients who were transferred from Gosford, and by the local community.

In October, 1973, Wyoming Hospital was acquired to provide 56 beds for post-natal and female medical patients.

During this period planning commenced to develop an initial 400 beds and support services at Gosford District Hospital by 1980. Planning also began on the "band aid" project to construct additional casualty, out-patient and x-ray facilities, as well as an additional 50 beds.

In 1974, under the Regional Employment Development Scheme, a four-storey building was constructed to house pathology, administration, medical records and staff amenities.

With the additional subsidiary hospital beds providing care for less acute patients, the average length of stay for Gosford District Hospital patients was reduced to 4.8 days in 1974. This indicated that the expensive, acute hospital beds in Gosford were being used much more efficiently. Compared with 1971, almost five thousand more patients were treated in Gosford Hospital in 1974 with an increase of only 20 beds.

HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT, 1975-1985

During 1975/76 a number of major projects were constructed. These included completion of the "band aid" project, which incorporated the Paediatric Ward, D West Medical Ward, extensions to the X-ray Department, Catering Department and Clinics, together with considerable extension and modification of the Casualty Department, the provision of a covered area for transfer to/from Ambulances, two waiting rooms and extensions to the Nurses' Home and the Education Centre. The 30 bed Rehabilitation Unit at Woy Woy was also constructed.

Projects funded under the R.E.D. Scheme included a number of improvements to facilities and building construction. The Entrance/Long Jetty post-natal unit was added, and a four-storey workshop/storage building was constructed at Gosford District Hospital.

In 1977, a 10 bed psychiatric unit, Mandala Clinic, was opened. This provided the first in-patient psychiatric service on the Central Coast.

Gosford District Hospital and the subsidiary hospitals were surveyed by the Australian Council on Hospital Standards in 1978 to assess whether the required standards were being met in patient care, administration and ancillary services. Accreditation was received for three years, the maximum award, and in 1981 the hospitals were re-accredited for a further three years.

In April, 1980, Stage I of the proposed 400 bed hospital at Gosford was completed. This included 120 surgical beds, 6 operating theatres and an accident and emergency department. Areas vacated in the old hospital were renovated for physiotherapy, E.E.G., social work and occupational therapy.

Construction of Wyong Hospital was finished in September, 1980, after twenty-four years of negotiations with the Government. Thirty beds and the Accident and Emergency Unit were opened; however, staff for the twenty minimal care beds were not funded until 1983.

In July, 1983, an additional 8 beds were added to Mandala Clinic. Support has been received from the Regional Director for the construction of a 30 bed psychiatric unit suitable for involuntary patients.

In December, 1984, the corporate name was changed from Gosford District Hospital to Central Coast Hospitals and Area Health Service.

During March, 1985, funds were provided to construct the new Medical Records Department, Pharmacy and Dietary Department under Stage I at Gosford. The relocation of the Bloodbank was also funded.

In May, 1985, consultants were appointed to develop a master plan for the future expansion of Hospital and Health Services on the Central Coast.

The Diabetic Centre was opened in February, 1984. After major financial support by the Lions Clubs, the Renal Dialysis Unit with six chairs opened in November, 1984.

Computer services were established in the Hospital Bank Building in September, 1984.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Community Health Services commenced with the provision of Baby Health Centres in the Country Women's Association's rooms during the 1930's. Centres were established by the C.W.A.'s in Woy Woy, Gosford, Terrigal, Toukley and Wyong. Medical services to the schools and immunization programmes were provided through the local Councils.

District Nursing Services were first provided through Gosford District Hospital in 1955 for the Wyong Shire and in 1959 for the Gosford Shire. The service gradually expanded, and at the beginning of 1975 there were 13 sisters covering the entire Central Coast. In 1975 the District Nursing Service was the largest service outside the Sydney Metropolitan area.

The Mangrove Mountain Bush Nursing Service was established in 1963, with the construction of a cottage and treatment area.

Provision of an integrated health care service had been a major objective of all staff involved in the "early days" and a committee, chaired by Mr. N. R. Boyce, was established in 1971. It was called the Central Coast Health Services Committee, and included representatives of the Hospital Board, Health Department, the local Medical Association, Ambulance Services, clergy and Education Department.

HEALTH SCARCITY STUDY

In 1973 Dr. Howard Gwynne, from the Department of Health, conducted a survey of the health care needs of the residents of the Central Coast. The survey documented the implications of factors such as geography unemployment, education and population trends. It also listed the dramatic shortfalls that existed in the provision of hospital and health care services in this area. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for the provision of services in the fields of rehabilitation and geriatrics, mental health, family and child health and general community nursing.

Based on this survey, the Central Coast was declared a "Health Scarcity Area", and the documentation and justification for an immediate injection of substantial resources dovetailed with the commencement of the Labor Party's Community Health Programme in 1974.

DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH CENTRES

Decentralization of the provision of health services throughout the Central Coast was a major development policy. It was decided to establish bases for the field staff in the major population centres of Woy Woy, Gosford, Terrigal, Long Jetty/The Entrance, Toukley and Wyong.

The Central Coast area was divided into six "sectors" each surrounding one of the health centres. Each sector was divided into nursing districts based on the age structure, total population and other factors, such as travelling distance.

HEALTH CENTRE DEVELOPMENT - 1974 TO 1976

In 1974 decisions were made to purchase cottages in Toukley and Wyong to function as the bases for community nurses and mental health staff. Facilities were leased in 1976 to establish a health centre in the Terrigal Medical Centre.

Planning to construct a health centre in Gosford, which would become the base for all Community Health services, commenced in 1973. Tenders were called in 1975, and the building was occupied in 1976. The mental health, child health, rehabilitation and geriatric services and community nursing services, as well as a dental clinic, drug and alcohol, youth counsellor and conference areas, were located in this building.

The Entrance/Long Jetty Health Centre was opened in 1976 on Crown Land which was subject to redevelopment at a later stage. This necessitated the use of demountable buildings for this centre, which was constructed at a cost of \$150,000.

The Health Commission assumed control of the Bush Nursing Service in 1975, and the area serviced by the community nurse was designated as a "sector".

HEALTH CENTRE DEVELOPMENT - 1977 TO 1985

Facilities were leased in 1977 for the rehabilitation workshop in Showground Road. It was decided to name this facility the "Harry Mattocks Rehabilitation Centre", after Mr. Mattocks, who was greatly involved in the Frail Aged Day Care Programme and provided the first venue in his home.

In 1977 the Woy Woy sector office transferred from the Aged Persons' Centre at Woy Woy to a new centre on the grounds of Woy Woy Hospital. In this centre was also provided a kiosk and a blood bank. The Baby Health Service was transferred to this facility from the Woy Woy C.W.A. building.

An addition to the Wyong Health Centre in 1978 provided toilet facilities, interview rooms and a group room. In 1978 a family support cottage was opened at 68 Holden Street, Gosford, to provide day mothercraft programmes. This facility was also used by the Spastic Centre and the Chatswood Assessment Team.

In 1979 funding was provided to construct a health centre in Toukley in the shopping area between the new Senior Citizens' Centre and the Coles supermarket. Built by Hospital staff, the air-conditioned centre cost only \$130,000 and was opened in November, 1979. The Baby Health Centre was transferred from the C.W.A. building to the new health centre. Located in an ideal situation, this health centre has become the largest drop-in centre and is now very over-crowded.

In 1980 the old Toukley Health Centre was moved to Long Jetty Hospital and plans were drawn to incorporate it with the Extended Care Centre, which was then provided in what had been the Nurses' Cottage and garage. The Gosford Extended Care Cottage was opened in a house at 3 Short Street, in conjunction with the Gosford City Community Services. Also in 1980 the Gosford Baby Health Centre was relocated to the Community Services Building in Albany Street.

During 1981 the Kalinda Mental Health Day Centre was established in a cottage which had been purchased for \$3,000 and relocated next to Mandala Clinic in Short Street. Bindaree Centre, the Mental Health Day Centre in the Wyong Shire, also commenced operations in the Wyong C.W.A. building.

In February, 1982, the Long Jetty Extended Care Centre became fully operational, catering for over twenty patients per day.

The Gosford Extended Care Centre was transferred to the renovated Roma Hospital in February, 1983 (from a cottage in Short Street). Kalinda Centre was moved to this vacated cottage in July, 1983, when Mandala Clinic was extended to 18 beds.

In April, 1983, a cottage was leased in Toukley to establish a Family Support Service for the Wyong Shire.

During July, 1983, Wage Pause funds were allocated to build a health centre, blood bank, kiosk and extended care centre at Wyong Hospital. Construction also commenced on a rehabilitation workshop to replace the rented Showground Road facility. Work also started on the construction of a Health Promotion Centre to be located next to "The Hut".

The Health Promotion Centre and Staff Gym opened in February, 1984, and the Harry Mattocks Workshop opened in July, 1984.

Planning is currently under way for construction of the Kincumber Health Centre under the Community Employment Programme.

FRAIL AGED DAY CARE

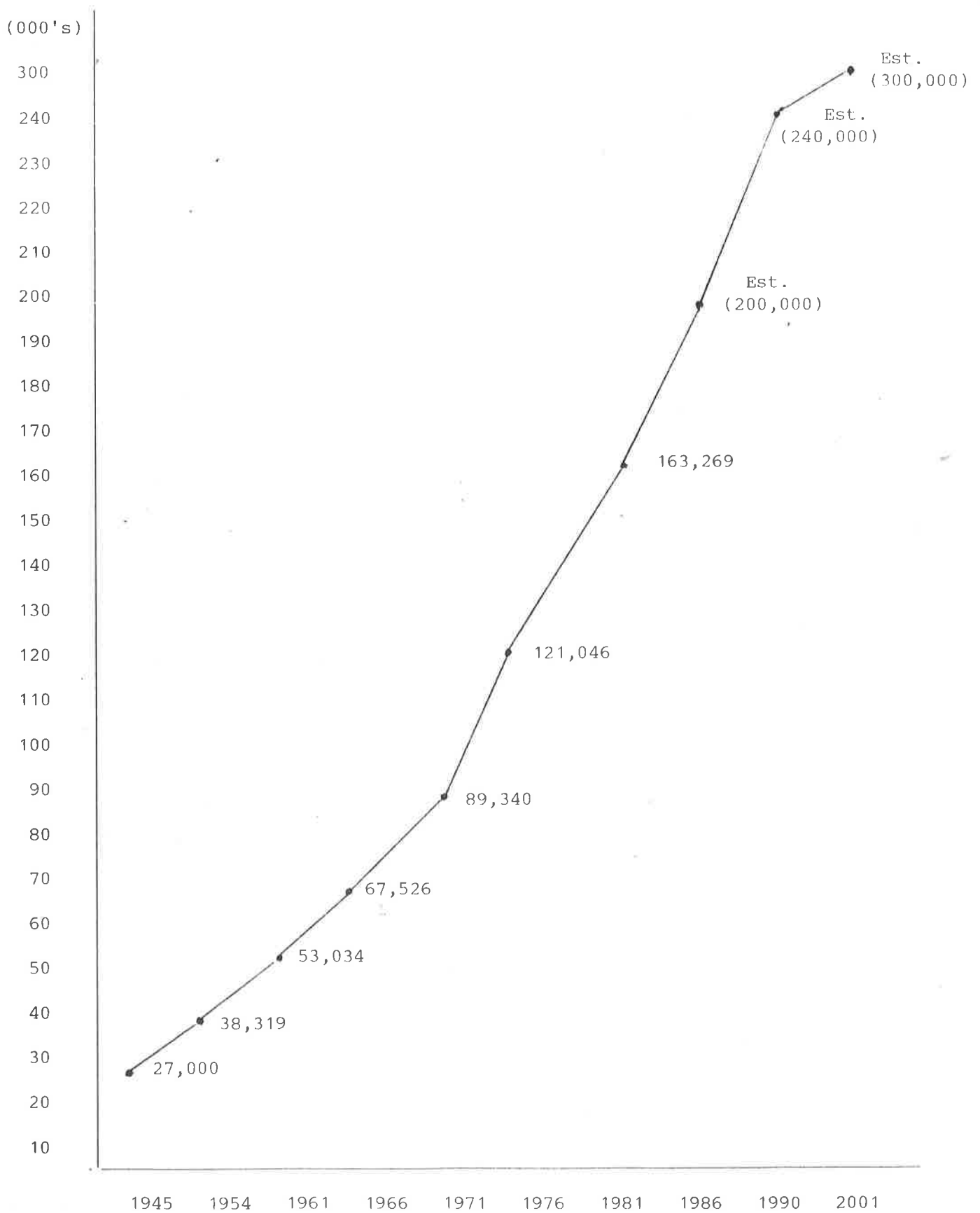
The Day Care Programmes, established in conjunction with a number of voluntary organisations at ten venues throughout the Central Coast, have been a major success in providing socialisation and activity programmes for the isolated elderly. A more detailed history is included in Appendix IV.

RECOGNITION OF AREA HEALTH SERVICES

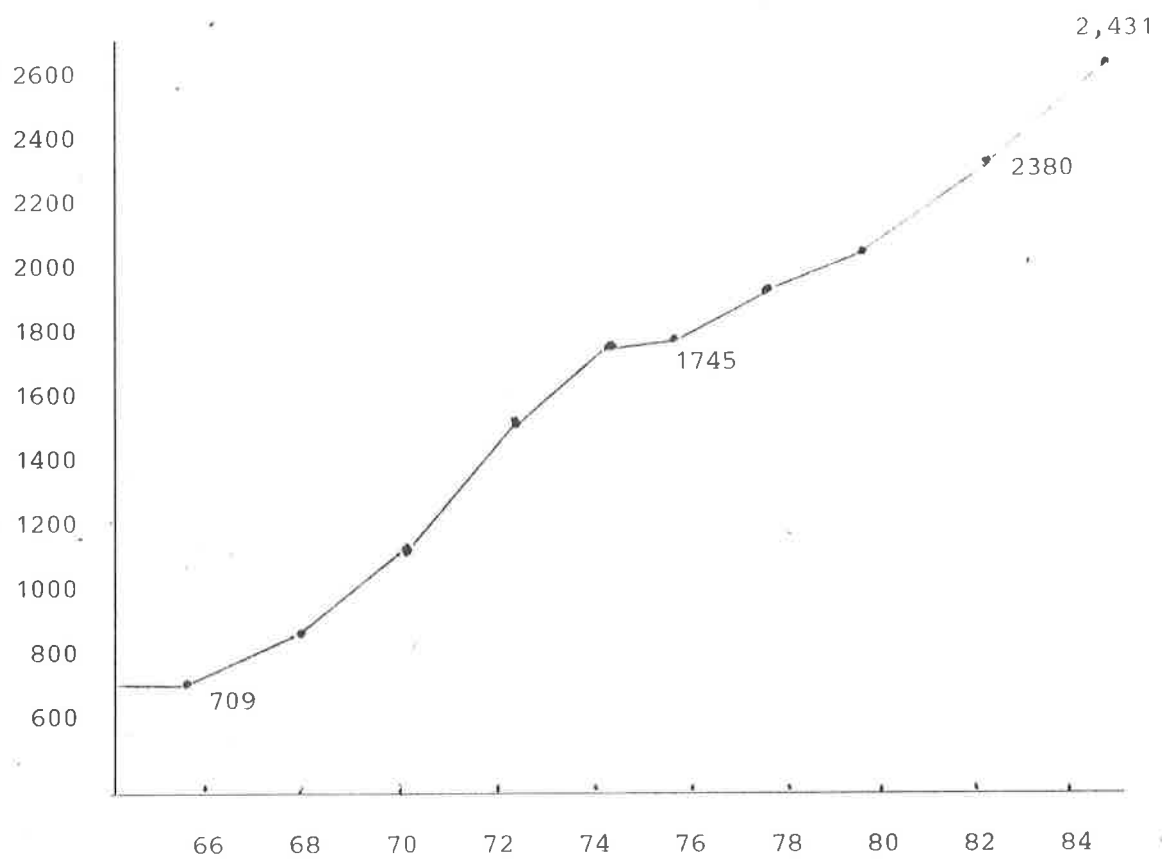
The Australian Hospital Association awarded Gosford Hospital first prize in the city section of the Community Outreach Award presented at the World Hospital Federation Convention in October, 1981.

The "Report on Co-ordinating Health Services in the Community", released in August, 1983, by the Department of Health, has recommended establishing area health services similar to the Central Coast throughout the State. It summarized and drew together recommendations from a number of other major reports such as "Jamison", "Hausfield", "Richmond", and "Webster", all of which supported the area health concepts which have been in operation since 1976 on the Central Coast.

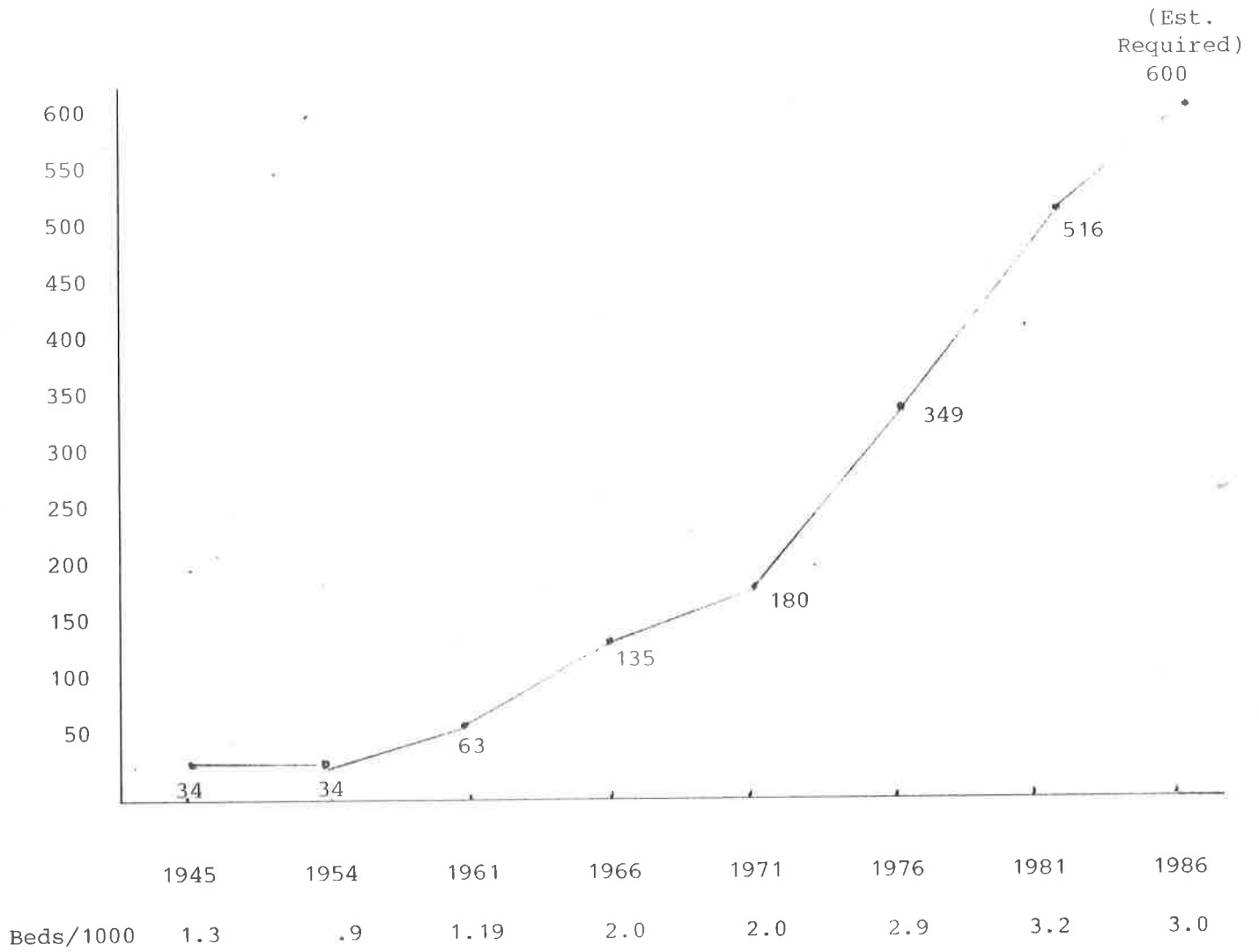
CENTRAL COAST POPULATION



BABIES BORN AT
GOSFORD DISTRICT HOSPITAL



CENTRAL COAST
PUBLIC HOSPITAL BEDS



CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY
GOSFORD DISTRICT HOSPITAL
AND
CENTRAL COAST AREA HEALTH SERVICE

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| 1945 | Gosford District Hospital constructed (34 beds). |
| 1955 | Home Nursing Services provided through Hospital introduced to Wyong Shire. |
| 1958 | Gosford District Hospital extended to 63 beds with addition of 30 bed Maternity Unit. |
| 1959 | Miss M. Lowndes appointed first District Nurse in Gosford Shire. |
| 1959 | District Nursing Services provided to Gosford Shire.' |
| 1963 | July. Mr. N. R. Boyce appointed Chief Executive Officer. |
| 1963 | Mangrove Mountain Bush Nursing Service established. |
| 1966/67 | Additional 72 beds added to Gosford District Hospital bringing total to 135. |
| 1966 | Dr. Ian Walters appointed first Medical Superintendent. |
| 1966 | Blood Bank Service commenced. |
| 1967 | Meals on Wheels commenced for people in Gosford, Springfield, Davistown, Saratoga, Wamberal and Wyoming. |
| 1969 | Planning commenced for Woy Woy Hospital and Rehabilitation Unit. |
| 1969 | Verandahs "closed in" in Maternity, adding 12 further beds - a total of 146 at Gosford. |
| 1969 | Mental Health Services provided by the secondment from Morisset Hospital of a Psychiatrist. |
| 1969 | Staffing for District Nursing Service increased to 10, with 35,837 home visits being provided in 1969. |
| 1970 | Mental Health Services supplemented by a Nurse and Welfare Officer. |
| 1971 | Central Coast Health Services Committee established. |
| 1971 | Central Coast population 89,057. Gosford District Hospital had 180 beds. There were 4 nursing homes on the Central Coast. |
| 1971 | October. Woy Woy subsidiary hospital opened, with 34 general beds. |
| 1972 | The Entrance/Long Jetty Hospital became a subsidiary of Gosford District Hospital, adding 30 general beds. |
| 1973 | Dr. Howard Gwynne, Department of Health, conducted a survey of health care needs of the residents of the Central Coast. The Central Coast was declared a "Health Scarcity Area" as a result of this survey. |

1973	Community Health Programme commenced. A decision was made to establish bases at Woy Woy, Gosford, Terrigal, Long Jetty/The Entrance, Toukley and Wyong.
1973	Wyoming Hospital was acquired to provide 56 beds for post natal and female medical patients.
1971/74	Planning commenced to develop an initial 400 beds and support services at Gosford District Hospital by 1980. Planning also began on a "band aid" project to construct additional casualty, out-patients and x-ray facilities, as well as an additional 50 beds.
1974	Under the R.E.D. Scheme, a four-storey building was constructed to house Pathology, Administration, Medical Records and Staff Amenities.
1974	Cottages purchased in Toukley and Wyong and facilities leased at Terrigal medical Centre from which to provide health services.
1975	Health Commission assumed control of Bush Nursing Services and the Mangrove Mountain Area was designated as a centre.
1975	Tenders called for building of Health Service Centre in Gosford.
1976	Health Services Centre occupied.
1976	The Entrance/Long Jetty Health Centre opened.
1975/76	Completion of "band aid" project, which incorporated a Paediatric Ward, D. West Medical Ward, extensions to X-ray Department, Catering Department and Clinics.
1975/76	Extensions and modifications to Casualty Department, provision of covered area for transfer to/from ambulances, two waiting rooms and extensions to Nurses' Home and the Education Centre.
1975/76	Thirty bed Rehabilitation Unit at Woy Woy constructed.
1975/76	Under the R.E.D. Scheme, The Entrance/Long Jetty post natal unit was added, and a four-storey workshop/storage building was constructed at Gosford District Hospital.
1977	Ten bed Psychiatric Unit, Mandala Clinic, was opened to provide the first in-patient psychiatric service on the Central Coast.
1977	Facilities leased in Showground Road, Gosford, for Rehabilitation Workshop.
1977	Woy Woy Sector office transferred from Aged Persons' Centre to new centre in grounds of Woy Woy Hospital. The centre also provided a kiosk and blood bank.
1977	Baby Health Services transferred to Woy Woy Health Centre from Woy Woy C.W.A. Building.
1978	Addition to Wyong Health Centre provided toilet facilities, interview rooms and group room.
1978	Family Support Cottage opened at 68 Holden Street, Gosford.

1978	Gosford District Hospital and subsidiaries surveyed by Australian Council on Hospital Standards. Accreditation received for the maximum three years.
1979	Funding provided to construct Health Centre at Toukley. Opened in November. Baby Health Centre transferred from C.W.A. Building.
1980	Old Toukley Health Centre cottage moved to Long Jetty Hospital to incorporate it with the Extended Care Cottage.
1980	Gosford Extended Care Cottage opened at 3 Short Street, in conjunction with Gosford City Community Service.
1980	Gosford Baby Health Centre was relocated to Community Services Building in Albany Street, Gosford.
1980	April. Stage I of the proposed 400 bed hospital at Gosford was completed.
1980	September. Wyong Hospital, with 30 beds and Accident and Emergency Unit opened.
1981	Gosford District Hospital re-accredited for a further three years.
1981	Australian Hospitals Association awarded Gosford District Hospital first prize in the city section of the Community Outreach award.
1982	February. Long Jetty Extended Care Centre became fully operational.
1983	February. Gosford Extended Care Centre was transferred to Roma Hospital.
1983	April. Cottage leased in Toukley to establish Family Support Services for Wyong Shire.
1983	July. Kalinda centre moved to Short Street cottage.
1983	July. Wage Pause funds allocated to build Health Centre, Blood Bank, Kiosk and Extended Care centre at Wyong Hospital.
1983	July. An additional 8 beds were added to Mandala Clinic. Support received from Regional Director for construction of a 30 bed psychiatric unit suitable for involuntary patients.
1983	July. Work commenced on construction of a Health Promotion Centre near "The Hut".
1983	August. Construction commenced on a Rehabilitation Workshop to replace the Showground Road facilities.
1983	September. Extensions to Woy Woy Rehabilitation Unit.
1984	February. Diabetic Centre opened.
1984	February. Health Promotion Centre and Staff Gym opened.
1984	July. New facilities for the Harry Mattocks Rehabilitation Centre opened.

- 1984 July. Construction commenced on Wyong Rehabilitation and Accident and Emergency extensions and Morgue.
- 1984 July. Construction commenced on Woy Woy Hostel and Hydrotherapy Pool and Wyoming Hospital Post Natal Unit under C.E.P. funding.
- 1984 September. Computer installed.
- 1984 November. Wyong Health Centre and Rehabilitation extensions officially opened.
- 1984 November. Renal Dialysis Centre opened.
- 1985 March. Construction commenced on new Pharmacy, Medical Records and Dietary areas.
- 1985 March. Construction of Developmentally Disabled Day Activities Centre at Long Jetty Hospital commenced.
- 1985 April. Modifications to Gosford Bloodbank in Administration/Pathology building commenced.
- 1985 May. Consultants appointed to Planning Project for Stage II of the development.