

PINK LADIES AUXILIARY.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

Mrs. Muriel Westerweller, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors (Gosford District Hospital) was the instigator and driving force behind the formation of the Pink Ladies Auxiliary.

Mrs. Westerweller first suggested that it was feasible for volunteers to work alongside paid staff in 1967 and she proposed that a "Pink Ladies" Auxiliary be formed along the lines of those already operating elsewhere in N.S.W. and Victoria. Her inspiration came as a sequel to her visit in 1967 to a relative in Hornsby Hospital when she had been impressed by the valuable contribution Volunteers made to the service at that hospital.

With encouragement and assistance from the C.E.O. of Hornsby Hospital, Pink Ladies and other members of Hornsby staff, Guidelines were formulated. Gosford Hospital Senior Executive totally supported the concept of Pink Ladies working in Gosford hospital.

Public meetings and committee meetings took place during 1968 to inform the public and to recruit the first volunteers.

The inaugural meeting was held at Gosford District Hospital on Wednesday 28th January 1969.

Present were:-

Mrs M. Westerweller, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Director (Mrs.) A. Findlay, Matron I. Inskip, Mrs. B. Riley, Mrs. B. Kirkness, Mrs. G. Edmondson, Mrs. J. Arkins, Mrs. W. Timmins, Mrs. M. Heath, Mrs. C. Allmey, Mrs. E. Lynch, Mrs. E. Armstrong, Mrs. I. Levenspiel, Mrs. S. Hunter, Mrs. E. Beattie, Mrs. M. Ranyard, Mrs. M. Wennerbom, Mrs. V. Vaughan and Mrs. L. Scott. Apologies from Mrs. Dibben, Mrs. Hoskin, Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Burnet.

The final paragraph of that historic document states that:-

“Mrs. Riley was instructed to order 3 rolls of pink mini care poplin from Lawford and Co. for dispatch to Dixon Manufacturing Co. and an order be placed for 20 smocks as decided earlier. 20 name badges to be ordered from Perfection Plate similarly.”

Please note:-

The new badges for the “HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE” were supplied by the same company.

In March 1969 the Pink Ladies commenced their duties with one lady each day being chosen to co-ordinate that day's work. This proved difficult to sustain. It was only when the Matron of the day agreed to make do with one less nurse that a supervisor could be employed and so Mrs. Jean Arkins became the first paid supervisor of the 'Pink Ladies' and by July 1969 there were 71 paid up members.

From these early beginnings, the number of Pink Ladies has increased to over one hundred and fifty and they are to be found in Gosford, Wyong, Woy Woy, and Long Jetty hospitals. There are also volunteers helping at the Blood Bank, Immunisation clinics and Family Care Cottages.

Volunteer tasks have to be non medical and non clerical but it is amazing just how many such tasks exist within the hospital system and how eagerly the service of volunteers is sought by the staff. Volunteers work in the Children's Ward, the Short Stay Ward, the Renal Unit, Endoscopy, Labour ward, Accident and Emergency, and The Transit Lounge at Gosford Hospital. At all four hospitals, there are Hospital Volunteers to deliver mail and attend to the patient's flowers and help wherever they are needed. They collate, stamp, stick, white out and alter, and do a myriad of time consuming tasks to assist the paid staff and are happy to do so.

The department continues to grow and Diane Wood now has three Relief Managers who can be called upon (singly) if she is sick or on holiday.

In compiling this document I have used information from a speech given by Mrs. Mary Bonnard (Pink Lady Supervisor for 13 years) newsletters and Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Pink Ladies Auxiliary.