

# WARD VETO

## Woy Woy Hospital set-back

**Woy Woy Hospital will not get a casualty department in the foreseeable future judging from comments made by the Minister for Health, Mr Kevin Stewart, in a**

**letter to a Umina resident.**

Mr Stewart told Miss Gwen Griffin of Umina the matter of a casualty service at Woy Woy Hospital had been raised on many occasions but added it "was not possible to justify the extra cost of over \$150,000 a year" to set up such a service when Gosford District Hospital was so close.

He went on to say that he considered the local Central Coast Health Services Board had adopted a responsible approach to the health needs of the region and had attempted to avoid pressures from many organisations for duplication of expensive services.

Provision of a casualty section at Woy Woy Hospital would mean duplication of the extensive services provided at Gosford Hospital which was about to be upgraded and which was in reasonable proximity to the people of the Woy Woy peninsula by ambulance or private vehicle, compared to areas such as The Entrance and Toukley which also looked to Gosford for hospital services, he said.

Doctors and ambulance officers were aware of the nature of the services provided by Woy Woy Hospital and it was on comparatively rare occasions that patients were transferred to Gosford for specialised services, Mr Stewart added.

The letter to Miss Griffin was passed on by her to South Woy Woy Progress Association which has led local agitation for provision of casualty services at Woy Woy Hospital over a number of years.

Association president, Mr Dave Abbott, said Mr Stewart was "acting like an ostrich with his

head in the sand" if he thought the Woy Woy peninsula, with more than 33,000 people, did not need an emergency casualty service at its own hospital.

"The point is that Woy Woy has an established hospital and was promised a casualty department when that hospital was first built.

"We are not asking for any grandiose scheme which will cost a fortune — just a simple emergency service which would be available 24 hours a day to the people of this area.

"We fully realise that expensive services available at Gosford cannot be duplicated at Woy Woy but it is reasonable to expect that an area with a population so large should have a casualty service for immediate emergencies."

Mr Abbott said his association had not yet received an answer from Mr Stewart on its most recent plea for a casualty department and nursing at Woy Woy Hospital made last November

## Transport blow

Volunteer members of the Woy Woy Women's Refuge Committee are continuing to use their own vehicles in refuge work following an accident involving the refuge station wagon on New Year's Eve.

The station wagon, which was hit in the rear by another vehicle whose driver has since been charged with drink driving and being an unlicensed driver, and who was also uninsured, has left the refuge without transport.

However, the biggest blow to the refuge has been the collapse of its insurance company, Palmdale (Express, January 15).

The refuge, whose only government support is a small annual grant to cover operational costs, now faces a repair bill of \$3,690.

The refuge is appealing for community assistance.

Donations can be sent to the Woy Woy Women's Refuge, Box 69 Post Office, Ettalong. Contact can be made by phone through Woy Woy Community Service.