

## Deputation to Minister

Minister for Health, Mr. A. H. Jago, said last week that he would follow-up undertaking in respect of a hospital at Wyong that the former Health Minister, Mr. W. Sheahan had given.

Mr. Jago said this to members of a deputation from Wyong District Hospital Committee.

The deputation comprised Dr. H. Selle, chairman, of the Hospitals

Commission of NSW; Ald. H. Jensen, MLA for Wyong; Cr. H. Montgomery and Messrs. Moodie, Doig, Roberts and Wilson.

Mr. Moodie stated that Mr. Sheahan had promised that Wyong would be included in the next three-year plan.

Mr. Jago replied: "While not wishing my remarks to reflect on my predecessor, upon assuming office, I discovered there had been promises of new hospitals dating back 25 years.

"For example, 15 years ago, Dubbo had been promised a new hospital."

### Population increase

In outlining the deputation's case Mr. Moodie pointed out that the representations were based on the increase in population in the Shire of Wyong.

For 18 years endeavours had been made to obtain a hospital.

Wyong's population was 22,000 in 1964 and 27,000 in 1965.

"The shire is expanding to the north and the weekend population would be about 30,000.

"Toukley's population has increased from 17,000 to 21,000 and that of The Entrance from 18,000 to 23,000.

"Industrial development would have a further effect on population increase.

"Wyong is on a main road and there is a high accident rate," Mr. Moodie said.

### Land donated

Mr. Moodie said that ten acres of land had been donated by the late Mr. A. I. Chapman and accepted by the Hospital Commission for a new hospital.

Mr. Jago said that consideration had been given to financing the proposed hospital.

The State allocation expected for 1965/66 was already committed and £1 million of the expected loan allocation for 1966-67 had also been committed.

Belmont had received £1,243,000, £500,000 from the current year and £675,000 from 1966-67.

Mr. Jago said £1½ million was being spent on Belmont at the moment, which had some relation to the northern part of Wyong Shire.

He said a new ward block at Gosford had cost £455,000.

It was expected that £234,000 would have been spent up to the end of June and that £221,000 would come out of the 1965/66 estimates.

Mr. Jago stated that £8 million could be used if the high priorities were considered.

"Firstly there is the expenditure incurred in providing a hospital. Secondly, the operating cost.

"A total of £17 million was to be found from fees



Ald. H. Jensen

paid by patients, £7 million from poker machine taxation and £26 million from consolidated revenue.

"The initial cost is the smaller and can be clearly determined, but there is also the operating cost," Mr. Jago said.

Mr. Jago pointed out that £½ million was being spent at Gosford which was 13 miles south of Wyong and £1½ million was being spent at Belmont, just outside the northern boundary of the shire.

Dr. Selle said that when a hospital was provided at Wyong it would have to be part of an integrated system.

Regard would be paid to facilities in other areas, but the problem was not so much buildings, but the big question of expert medical opinion, he stated.

Within the next two or three years, there would be a large number of specialists in Gosford, whose services would be available to Wyong.

Dr. Selle said two points were clear:—

- The need for active co-operation between hospitals (nurses' training schools, for example, would not be erected at both Gosford and Wyong).

- The position should be reviewed in 12 months' time. The Hospitals Commission was not anxious to proceed with active planning, if active construction was not to follow immediately.