

23 October, 2014

The Healing Saint – hospital celebrates 120 fabulous years

What cares for more than 68,000 sick and injured people each year in its Emergency Department, welcomes 2,600 tiny new southern Sydney residents annually, has 3,400 dedicated staff and is a thriving testament to providing world-class medical care?

The answer is, of course, St George Hospital – which celebrates its 120th birthday on 16 November, 2014.

The world was a very different place in 1894 ... there was a great deal of excitement in Australia about the first public showing of Thomas Edison's kinoscope (moving pictures), a vaccine for diphtheria was announced by Dr Roux of Paris and the Australian national anthem was God Save The Queen.

Closer to home, St George residents were celebrating the official opening of St George's Cottage Hospital. On 16 November, 1894 Mrs Lamrock – wife of Dr James Lamrock, founding Honourable medical officer of the hospital – officially opened the door and distributed small gifts to each patient.

Cath Whitehurst, Director of Operations, St George and Sutherland Hospitals, said the hospital had come a long way since opening its doors 120 years ago.

“The first patient was admitted to St George's Cottage Hospital with typhoid fever and two days later, three more patients were admitted, all suffering from a fever of zymotic origin. By the day of the official opening, the hospital was fully occupied,” Ms Whitehurst said.

“One hundred and twenty years on we are a 627-bed hospital, the Level 1 Trauma Centre for South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and have one of the busiest Emergency Departments in NSW.”

A large part of the Hospital's success in the years since has been its ability to reinvent itself to keep up with the times.

“From its humble beginnings as a ‘cottage hospital,’ the hospital progressed well beyond its original function of providing a basic level of care for the ill and injured within its community. By 1934, St George Hospital had become the equal of any district hospital in metropolitan Sydney,” Ms Whitehurst said

“In 1964, St George Hospital became a major teaching hospital with specialised departments. In the late 1980s, following a NSW Government grant of more than \$200 million, the hospital began its transformation into a world class tertiary teaching hospital.

“In the years since, the redevelopment and building of physical facilities, expansion of services and acquisition of new technology have been complemented by the recruitment of nationally and internationally recognised staff.

“The reputation of the hospital as a major teaching facility has resulted in St George Hospital becoming one of the most popular first preferences among graduates of both nursing and medicine as a place of employment.”

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
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Celebrations kick off on Monday 17 November, 2014 with an historic photographic display in the Gray Street foyer, a staff barbeque, birthday cake and doctors and nurses dressed in historic uniforms.

A community appreciation dinner will be held on Wednesday 19 November at 7pm at the Georges River Sailing Club and tickets are \$60 per head (tables of ten). For information and bookings contact the Community Relations Department on 9113 2901.

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