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Liverpool Hospital celebrates 200 years

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today launched Liverpool Hospital's 200th anniversary, with Menai MP Melanie Gibbons.

The bicentenary celebrations were marked by the opening of a museum, which will house historical memorabilia including medical equipment, instruments, films and recordings, artwork, uniforms and published documents created or used over the course of the hospital's history.

The day kicked off a year-long series of events and activities to commemorate Liverpool Hospital's 200 years of serving the community and also included a presentation of staff long service awards.

Mrs Skinner said that when Liverpool Hospital was established as a brick building on the banks of the Georges River in 1813, it originally had only three rooms housing up to 12 patients.

"Liverpool Hospital is now the biggest hospital and tertiary referral centre in NSW," Mrs Skinner said.

"It is also a teaching hospital of the University of New South Wales and University of Western Sydney, leading the way in all aspects including technology, teaching and learning, equipment, design and technique.

"Over the years Liverpool Hospital has cared for the state's sickest patients, with a commitment to innovation, pioneering a number of world class treatments using state-of-the-art technology."

Menai MP Melanie Gibbons said Liverpool Hospital has an exciting future ahead of it as it continues to grow and evolve to meet the needs of the growing population.

"Liverpool Hospital will continue to provide quality health care with the dedication of its staff and continued support from its local community," Ms Gibbons said.

"I would like to congratulate Liverpool Hospital on its 200 years of caring for our community."

Hospital General Manager Anthony Schembri said the hospital had a rich and interesting history.

"We have discovered some quirky similarities between the hospital 200 years ago and today. For example, medicine in the early half of the 1800s was limited, with treatments including blood-letting using leeches," Mr Schembri said.

"Today, Liverpool is only hospital in NSW with a dedicated 'medical leech tank' which supplies medical leeches to the rest of the state. They are generally used in plastic surgery as a natural alternative to reduce the pooling of blood after an operation.

"200 years ago, doctors at Liverpool Hospital dealt with patients suffering trauma injuries from accidents and snake bites. Today, the hospital has pioneered a state-of-the-art surgery theatre to operate on critically-ill emergency patients and is classified as a major trauma centre for NSW."

As part of the celebrations, the Hospital has launched a 200th Anniversary website <http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/liverpool200/> with historical images, a history of the hospital and information about upcoming events, including a Liverpool Hospital community open day and launch of the hospital's bicentenary book.

To donate historical photos, uniforms and other memorabilia to the Hospital Museum, please contact the Liverpool Hospital Library on 02 8738 3557.

A brief history

Liverpool Hospital has been operating since the end of the eighteenth century and is now the largest hospital and tertiary referral centre in NSW.

Having likely started as tent hospital in the 1790's, Liverpool Hospital was established in a brick building on the banks of the Georges River in 1813, where it was run as a Hospital for soldiers and convicts. In 1825, a larger stone building was designed by Francis Greenway and built using convict labour. This building, now occupied by the TAFE College, contains a display of rare images taken during the development of the campus.

A main hospital building was opened in 1958, followed by the Don Everett medical wing (1975), Ron Dunbier House (1979) and Alex Grimson surgical wing (1983).

Liverpool Hospital became the principal teaching hospital of the University of NSW in 1989 and the University of Western Sydney in 2011. It continues to have an active education programme for medical practitioners, nurses and health professionals, with a range of clinical placements available for students from universities around Australia.