

Date: 17 March 2014

## **Bowral & District Hospital celebrates 125 years**

This year Bowral & District Hospital is celebrating an important milestone – 125 years of caring for the local community.

The idea of establishing a hospital was first discussed in 1885 at a public meeting of men from Berrima, Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale.

Opinions were divided and there were some objections, including a letter in the Bowral Free Press voicing local concern about infectious patients “driving visitors away and ruining the district.”

However, support for a hospital in the district increased and the Berrima District Cottage Hospital was officially opened on 4 September 1889, which was declared a public holiday.

The original design showed accommodation for six patients, four male and two female beds. The male and female wards were each overlooked by an inspection window from the matron’s bedroom and were well separated, their verandas having an outlook in different directions.

Bowral & District Hospital General Manager Alison Derrett said she felt very fortunate to be General Manager of the Hospital during such an important time in its history.

“Like the Wingecarribee community, the Hospital has grown and changed over the past 125 years,” Ms Derrett said.

“Ten years after it opened the Hospital was treating 115 patients, including 14 accident patients and 35 operations.

“Today our staff deliver around 450 babies each year, treat more than 17,500 patients in the emergency department and undertake more than 2,700 operations.

“Throughout its 125 years the Hospital has received strong community support and continues to enjoy this support today from groups like the Hospital Auxiliaries, the BDCU Children’s Foundation, the strong volunteer community, and the University of Wollongong.

The Hospital is kicking off a year-long calendar of events in April with the Nancy Reynolds lecture which is being presented by Dr Simon Grant.

Dr Grant is a Senior Staff Specialist and has a keen interest in plants, specifically rare and exotic maple trees. He will present on the historical use of medicinal plants including the opium poppy and camellia.

The lecture will be held at 8am on Wednesday 2 April in the Old Hospital Lecture Room. Places are limited so call 4861 0303 to book.

**FACT:** When the Hospital was first opened in 1889 it was called the Berrima District Cottage Hospital. This was changed to the Berrima District Hospital in 1919, before it was renamed the Bowral & District Hospital in 1968, following reports that some patients and visitors were travelling to Berrima looking for the Hospital.

'Like' the Bowral & District Hospital facebook page for historical photos and updates on upcoming events.