

11 June 2015

Birthday Celebrations at Karitane Carramar

Karitane at Carramar marked a milestone 21 years of supporting mothers and families yesterday in celebrations that also recognised 100 years of baby clinics in NSW this year.

Karitane CEO Ms Grainne O'Loughlin said Karitane had been caring for families since 1923.

"The service began as the Australian Mothercraft Society and like similar philanthropic organisations was part of a world-wide wave of concern about high infant mortality around the turn of the twentieth century," Ms O'Loughlin said.

"The Matron of the Australian Mothercraft Society was World War I nursing veteran Elizabeth McMillan who believed in the mother-centred approach to baby care and became the founding director.

"We have come a very long way, now offering our services through a mobile website specially designed for smartphones allowing parents access to expert advice anytime.

"We are extremely proud of our history as a trusted source of information and assistance for parents of newborns with issues such as sleep, settling and breastfeeding.

"The Residential Unit at Carramar has helped many local families and is a cornerstone of our service to families," she said.

Ms O'Loughlin said the residential Unit at Carramar was allocated to the western suburbs to meet the needs of the growing number of families of Sydney in the west experiencing parenting issues.

The Unit opened its doors in 1994 on the old Fairfield Hospital site and at the time of opening there were more babies being born in Sydney's greater west (25,800) than in three Australian states (TAS, SA and WA)," Ms O'Loughlin said.

"Karitane Carramar opened with a 24 hour Careline and a 7 day a week residential unit as well as an education centre for professionals.

"It provided, and still provides, professional support to many families across NSW for parents in crisis with children 0 - 4 years.

"Today, the Unit includes the Residential Unit with 11 baby and mother beds and three family suites. Jade House, our Perinatal Infant Mental Health Service also opened in 2008 at the Carramar site following extensive refurbishment, along with the Toddler Clinic (2012), Education and Research Precinct and Conference Centre," she said.

Karitane's philosophy is to empower families by enhancing parenting knowledge, skills and confidence allowing clients to make a successful adjustment to parenthood.

The event is also part of the year long celebration to mark 100 years of Child and Family Health Services in NSW.

The NSW Baby Clinics, Pre-Maternity and Home Nursing Board was established in 1914 and over the past 100 years, almost 7.4 million babies have been born in NSW, most of whom have been seen and cared for by NSW Health's child and family health nurses, or the equivalent at the time.