

30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY of THE A.C.H.S.E. N.S.W.
MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM 1975-2005

It is a pleasure and honour to address you tonight as we are celebrating 30 years of the Management Training Programme.

Warren Westcott and his staff, with some help from other members of the College, have provided an excellent resume of the Training Programme from its beginning at Hornsby Hospital.

I have been given the task to talk on the early years of the programme for ten minutes or so.

I am sure Stan Williams, the Founding Father while C.E.O. of Hornsby Hospital, will be listening to me from above and if I don't do the job correctly I will "cop it" if we meet up again.

Because of the written history provided, I have broadened my topic to cover how and why we trained as Health Administrators over fifty years ago and my early experience as C.E.O. of a hospital participating in the Training Programme whilst at Gosford Hospital.

I also want to suggest what I believe is needed to get to the top, if that is your ambition. I will give a few words of wisdom at the end of my paper if time allows.

- How and why did we study in the early years to be members of the College?
- Why did we study over 50 years ago in Health Management? If anyone had ambition to get to the top in those days you needed qualifications and experience because over 200 hospitals in New South Wales, with separate Boards of Management, needed a Secretary (now titled C.E.O.)

The Hospital Officers' Association, the registered Union with over 700 members in New South Wales, worked with the Hospitals Commission to structure an Award to create positions leading to the top job e.g. Chief Clerk, Accountant, Deputy and C.E.O.

It was the “done thing” to move around to hospitals in New South Wales to follow one’s career path to eventually become a C.E.O. in a large hospital.

I am at a loss, when visiting large Area Health Services and reading the titles on the doors, to understand what is the role and function. It sure shows my age.

- How did we study over 50 years ago to qualify for admission to the Australian Institute of Hospital Administrators?

On my appointment as Accountant at Kurri Kurri Hospital in 1953, I was advised almost from day one to study Health Administration by Bob Martin, the C.E.O. who was on the State Branch Council

My first task was to make contact with Mr. W. Harcourt Baird, Director of the “In Service” School of Hospital Administration at the Hospitals and Charities Commission, Melbourne.

By 1959 the University of N.S.W. School of Hospital Administration appeared on the letterheads. We completed our studies by correspondence.

We had “live in” inservice lectures by our Seniors and Mentors and staff from the Hospitals Commission in Sydney during University vacation time.

- Do you have an identified career path in today's Health Services to get to the top?
- Is there a surplus or scarcity of skills?
- Are you in a position in the Health Service, to fully use your potential?

The early days of a career leading to a C.E.O. position is now almost non-existent.

In today's Health Service or whatever field you are in – public, private or the Public Service your career path should always be in the back of your mind – to achieve your potential and be a leader.

Now, to the point of my paper.

How did Gosford become involved with Hornsby and how and why did it happen. Here are some memories of the early days.

It may seem strange to admit, but I became involved following a very successful week's conference at the Florida Hotel at Terrigal.

I was elected to the State Branch Council and the Hospital Officers Association, but more important I became Stan Williams' chauffeur to these meetings and it was always a good opportunity for us to "pick each others brains".

Many of the successful ventures of both Hornsby and Gosford hospitals had their origins or their solutions during these trips.

Stan had long been acknowledged as a leader in Health Care. He had the dual qualities of academic ability and practical approach and they had proven to be extremely effective right throughout his career in the health field.

Stan was an innovator as can be seen by the success of the training programme today.

I can recall at least 10 of the early trainees at Gosford in the 1970s – 1980s and I understand many have succeeded in their chosen field.

Gosford and the Central Coast had an expanding health service needing all types of staff and the inclusion of trainees within our growing staff was easily funded. The first trainees were placed in Finance and Administration areas and in later years, moved around the hospital system at Gosford and the other hospitals on the Central Coast. These hospitals were controlled by one Board of Management.

Trainees were placed at Gosford following a phone call to Stan, outlining our needs and the skills needed to help the trainee.

When Stan needed a person to go to the country to relieve a C.E.O. at a small hospital who was on annual leave, we would discuss suitable staff at Gosford and Hornsby as to their experience and maturity.

Trainees at Gosford would also relieve in higher positions while our staff were on leave.

I can still recall the phone call from Stan when the C.E.O. of Tamworth Base Hospital retired and Tamworth needed a C.E.O. to relieve for a couple of months. We both felt we did not have a suitable trainee for this large country Base Hospital.

We suggested that my deputy at the time, David Briggs, might fill in and he was eventually appointed to Tamworth. This move began David's distinguished and dedicated service to the Australian College of Health Service Executives.

David is now titled the former A.C.H.S.E. Federal President.

The inclusion of trainees in our health service was a positive development. They were keen to learn and progress and this also instilled a thirst for knowledge in our senior staff!

I am sure many of the early trainees will remember the cricket matches between Hornsby and Gosford at Peat Island. I can't remember who won the match, but I can remember the lovely reception we received from the residents of Peat Island Hospital and also some of the "goings on" before, during and after the match by the players. It seemed that the thirst for a robust social life matched the thirst for knowledge!

Such was this dual thirst for knowledge and things social it was not out of the question for a group of senior staff and trainees to take a hospital car and drive on a Friday to far flung places such as Bathurst even Leeton to attend a ACHSE seminar and support their country colleagues. The stamina of my senior staff reinforced and they tell me often led by the trainees was legend.

However, the outcome of all this was a group of individuals who have all made successful friendships and careers in health. The time spent at

Gosford and other hospitals, in some small way was beneficial in developing a successful career in Health Services or your chosen field.

We are here tonight to celebrate, along with over 200 trainees who have passed through the programme. Many have moved to other states and may not be here tonight, but I conclude by saying on behalf of you all, a big “thank you” to the late Stan Williams.

Thank you Warren for the privilege of saying a few words tonight.

Neville Boyce
2nd September, 2005.