Media Release

Volunteers celebrated at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital

For the past 21 years Jean Trevor, of Marrickville, has helped man the kiosk at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital (SSEH) – providing a friendly face and light refreshments to patients, staff and visitors.

Today Jean celebrates her 80th birthday at SSEH, the place that she holds dear to her heart, along with her fellow Ladies Auxiliary volunteers and hospital executive.

The 80-year-old is one of more than 80 volunteers who dedicates her time and skills to assist staff and patients at Australia's oldest hospital.

Mrs Trevor began volunteering with the Ladies Auxiliary, which has been assisting Sydney Hospital since 1919, after she retired from her job at David Jones.

"I have always been interested in medicine and health and I wanted to help in some way. That's the way we were brought up, that you did do something to help, so I did and I really put my heart and soul into it," she said.

"Once you retire you have to have an interest. People need that social side of life and a commitment to something. It's very good for you mentally, physically and emotionally."

Due to recent health problems, Mrs Trevor has reduced the time she spends volunteering from two days a week to one but says she will continue to help as long as she is able.

Other volunteer groups at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital include the Friends of Sydney Hospital (FOSH), who sell their carefully crafted knitwear, handmade toys and souvenirs at The Little Shop on Macquarie Street and manage a small trolley located in the main hospital that provides patients, staff and visitors with snacks and drinks.

The FOSH volunteers have been providing their services to the hospital since the group was established in 1962.

Volunteers in the Emergency Department, set up in 2012, help to ease the emotional distress and anxiety experienced by patients and their families and friends by providing practical and emotional support.

The Lucy Osburn Museum, the home of the oldest nursing school in Australia and the original nurse's wing constructed in 1868 with its design approved by Florence Nightingale, is also managed by volunteers, who coordinate museum tours for visitors.

Jon Roberts, General Manager of Prince of Wales and Sydney-Sydney Eye Hospitals, said volunteers provide invaluable support to the hospital through their fundraising and pastoral care.

"Volunteers play an important role within the hospital community and their fundraising efforts allow us to purchase vital equipment which has a direct impact on the treatment and care we are able to offer to patients," he said.

"I would like to thank them all for their unwavering commitment and dedication."

Sydney Hospital is Australia's first hospital and dates back to the arrival of the first fleet in 1788. It has been located on its present site on Macquarie Street since 1811.

If you, or someone you know, would like information about becoming a volunteer at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital, please contact Annabela Ventura on 9382 2675.

Media opportunity: Friday, 22 May 2015, 10am, Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital