



## BACKGROUND

The Royal Hospital for Women has been one of Australia's foremost specialist hospitals for women and babies, since its early beginnings as New South Wales first 'lying-in' hospital for women in 1866. As a principal teaching hospital of the University of NSW in the fields of obstetrics, gynaecology and neonatology the Royal has a history of innovation in women's health care services, teaching and research.

In 1992 the Benevolent Society of NSW withdrew from the management of the Royal Hospital for Women. A Deed of Agreement between the Society, the Minister for Health (on behalf of the Crown) and the Eastern Sydney Area Health Service formed the basis for the transfer of the Royal to become an incorporated hospital of the Eastern Sydney Area Health Service. Amongst other conditions, the Deed enabled the Royal Hospital for Women to remain on the Paddington site for 5 years from June 30, 1992 with a one year extension at a commercial lease rate.

The then Minister for Health The Hon Mr Ron Phillips, following a community consultative process, announced the relocation of the Royal Hospital for Women to a new \$40 million purpose built hospital at Randwick.

## VISION OF RHW

To provide women, their babies and their families with excellent care in a responsive collaborative environment that promotes best practice, teaching, research and staff.

## AIMS OF RHW

As the only women's hospital in NSW we aim to :

- i. provide leadership in the provision of care for women and babies;
- ii. improve further our national and international recognition for contributions to women's and babies' health;
- iii. provide excellent undergraduate and postgraduate education for nurses, midwives, medical students and trainee specialists in Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Neonatology;
- iv. conduct high quality peer-reviewed research in women's and babies' health.

## RHW SERVICES

The services we offer are specific to the unique health care needs of women. The way we provide services reflects our values of partnership, respect, choice and compassion.

### RHW Services Provision

- RHW is a tertiary level teaching hospital affiliated with UNSW and Sydney University providing maternity, neonatal and gynaecological services with a Statewide Services role delineation of Level 6 (top level for dealing with acute and complex issues in patient care).
  
- Provision of Statewide Services in
  - Maternal 'high-risk' pregnancies
  - 'at risk newborn babies
  - Complex gynaecological disorders
  - Gynaecological cancer
  - Telephone and face-to-face clinical and teratogen information and counselling service ("Mothersafe")
  - Breast disorders
  
- Provision of maternal and newborn services for 'low-risk' mothers and babies residing within the local South Eastern Sydney area and for women with gynaecological disorders. Gynaecological services include reproductive medicine and endocrinology; endogynaecology; menopause therapy; family planning and paediatric and adolescent gynaecology.
  
- Provision of education for undergraduate and postgraduate students of medicine and nursing/midwifery, and specialist training in Obstetrics & Gynaecology.
  
- Conduct of research related to women's health and its disorders and in maternal and newborn health.

In 2013 The Royal developed a Strategic Plan 2014 – 2020 to enhance the services provided into the future.

## THE RHW THREADS OF TIME

- 1820:** The Benevolent Society established a "Female Committee" to begin caring for underprivileged women during pregnancy and childbirth.
- 1821:** The Benevolent Society opened the Benevolent Asylum in Pitt Street and began providing lying-in facilities to underprivileged women in the Lying-in branch of the Society.
- 1851:** Men and most of the children were transferred out of the Benevolent Asylum to create more room.
- 1866:** Dr. Arthur Renwick converted the Lying-In branch to the Lying-in Hospital which was the leading obstetric facility in New South Wales.
- 1871:** A Florence Nightingale nurse was appointed as Matron of the Hospital.
- 1877:** The Hospital became a training school for midwives and nurses.
- 1885:** The Hospital became the Teaching Hospital in Obstetrics and Gynaecology for the University of Sydney.
- 1901:** The Lying-in Hospital moved from Pitt Street Sydney, to Paddington. It was known as the "Women's Hospital Paddington."
- 1904:** In October King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra conferred the Royal warrant and the Hospital became known as the Royal Hospital for Women. There were a total of 477 births at the Hospital throughout that year.
- 1906:** The first baby health centre in Australia was opened at the Hospital.
- 1912:** The first antenatal clinic in Australia was opened at the Hospital. The clinic is now the longest running antenatal clinic in the world.
- 1926:** Dr. Margaret Harper opened a premature nursery and halved the neonatal death rate.
- 1935:** Blood transfusion services were introduced in the Hospital and Dr. T.H. Small devised the ether box at the RHW for analgesia during labour.
- 1943:** Australia's first female and male sterility clinic was opened at the Hospital.
- 1949:** Australia's first gynaecological cancer detection clinic was opened the RHW.
- 1950:** The 100,000th baby was born at the Hospital.
- 1962:** Australia's first diagnostic ultrasound service was established.
- 1965:** The Royal Hospital for Women forged links with the University of New South Wales as a teaching hospital for obstetrics and gynaecology.
- 1966:** The premature nursery moved to a new purpose built nursery on the Hospital's 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- 1970:** The world's first cardiac ultrasound of a baby in-utero was performed.
- 1974:** The world's first cranial ultrasound of a baby in-utero was performed.
- 1978:** Australia's first menopause clinic was opened.
- 1978:** The premature/intensive care nursery became known as the Newborn Care Centre following the appointment of a Director of Newborn Services.
- 1983:** Opened one of the first birth centres in Australia.
- 1983:** The first Level 3 intensive care neonatal bed was opened in the Newborn Care Centre.
- 1985:** The world's first in-utero procedure to save a baby's life was performed at the Hospital.
- 1989:** Australia's first comprehensive Gynaecological Oncology Unit was opened.
- 1990:** The adult Acute Care Centre, specialising in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, was opened.
- 1992:** Management of the Royal Hospital for Women was transferred from the Benevolent Society of NSW to the Eastern Sydney Area Health Service.
- 1997:** The Hospital moved on the 23 June from Paddington to Randwick to be co-located with the Sydney Children's Hospital and the Prince of Wales Hospital. Hospital staff members were warmly welcomed by the Eora people, the traditional landowners.
- 2000:** January : Establishment of Mothersafe – a NSW Statewide Teratogen Counselling service which provides information to pregnant women and those women planning a pregnancy who are concerned about fetal or lactational effects of medication, natural therapies or exposure to other agents. It also provides information of the same type to medical practitioners and other health care professionals.
- 2002:** The 300,000th baby was delivered at the new Royal Hospital for Women.
- 2004:** The Royal Hospital for Women celebrated 100 years as "The Royal"; the Centenary of the Royal warrant being conferred.
- 2010:** March : Commencement of Midwifery Group Practice – provides continuity of midwifery care
- 2011 :** March : Launch of the Midwifery & Women's Health Nursing Research Unit in collaboration with the University of Sydney.