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Southcare celebrates two decades of caring for the elderly in the Sutherland Shire

The importance of caring for our elderly population has never been greater. Health figures show that the population of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is ageing. By 2026, the population aged 75 years and over will have increased by 60 percent, and those aged 85 years and over will have nearly doubled.

Sutherland Hospital's Southcare (Aged and Extended Care Services) has been at the forefront of healthcare delivery to the elderly population in the Sutherland Shire and is celebrating its 20th anniversary on Thursday 31 October, 2013. Located on the Sutherland Hospital site, Southcare is able to provide continuous care to patients who are being discharged from hospital to their home.

Following the amalgamation of existing aged care teams and programs into a 'one stop shop in aged care' for patients, carers and service providers in November 1993, the service known as Southcare commenced operation.

According to Associate Professor Peter Gonski, Director, Aged Care and Rehabilitation, Sutherland Hospital and SESLHD, Southcare provides a well developed and integrated aged care service that meets the needs of the elderly population.

"Southcare provides a range of home and community care services including, community options; community rehabilitation; continence services; dementia home monitoring program; dementia day care; frail aged care and podiatry.

"Our aim is to assist community members to remain independent and in their homes for as long as possible. In achieving this, we have established a range of services that have a major focus on care at home and in community locations, with carer support and dementia services also priorities," Professor Gonski said.

Professor Gonski said providing aged care services is a team effort with non-government services, aged care residential facilities and general practitioners all working together to provide quality healthcare services for the elderly.

"Medical diagnosis of conditions is extremely important and management of confusion and falls are the two most common medical problems of the elderly population.

"Without an accurate diagnosis and treatment, patients may endure unnecessary suffering or suboptimal care, or be cared for in inappropriate accommodation. Social assessment involving patients and carers and their interaction, relationships and ability to provide care is integral to their assessment," he said.

"Functional assessment of the patient, usually best performed in the person's home, is also critical to improve independence and reduced falls. Aged care workers are highly skilled in assessments and work with patients and their families to optimise better health and accommodation issues.

"The role of aged care services is to promote good health, optimise function, but most of all maximise quality of life. Carers are absolutely integral to this and are assisted by the services in the Sutherland Shire to give elderly people the quality healthcare they certainly deserve," Professor Gonski said.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

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