

23 November, 2015

Book captures rich history of Sydney-Sydney Eye Hospital

Governor of NSW to attend launch of *Australia's First Hospital*

With a heritage that dates back to the arrival of the First Fleet, the handsome sandstone buildings of Macquarie Street's Sydney Hospital and Sydney Eye Hospital have long drawn the admiration of locals and visitors alike.

The rich, lively and fascinating history of this long-standing institution has been eloquently captured in a book titled *Australia's First Hospital*, which will be launched at a special ceremony **this Friday, 27 November**.

His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) wrote the foreword for the book and will attend the launch, which will fittingly be held within the grounds of the Sydney-Sydney Eye Hospital (SSEH).

Author Caroline Wilkinson, who has been a volunteer tour guide at SSEH for more than 25 years, is donating all proceeds from sales of the book back to the Friends of Sydney Hospital.

"During my many years as tour guide I have answered countless questions about the hospital and its history which required much research, so writing the book for Friends of Sydney Hospital has been a natural progression," Caroline said.

"There is really no institution in Australia like this, and it has been my pleasure writing this book, knowing that proceeds from its sale will be directed back to the hospital."

Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation, Kevin Gardner, said *Australia's First Hospital* was the result of its author's tireless dedication to researching the health precinct's history; she did this via the State Library of NSW but also through speaking with medical and nursing staff, both former and current.

"This has been a labour of love for Caroline who has devoted many months to writing this history, knowing that there is no other publication that tells the story for general readership," Kevin said.

"During this time she has gathered the 'folklore' and stories of all the characters that have made up the fabric of the hospital, and who created a culture and passion that has been retained by the staff today."

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South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Media contact: Carisa Mitchell (02) 9382 8398 or 0411 730 842

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Caroline commissioned Simon Fieldhouse, a Sydney-based artist who specialises in historic architecture, to add his outstanding skills to *Australia's First Hospital*, and these special drawings will be on display in the SSEH Boardroom as part of the launch. The book also features historical photographs and paintings.

Both management and staff at SSEH are eager to see the book unveiled, and gratefully acknowledge the enormous personal effort Caroline has put into its development.

For more information on the history of Sydney-Sydney Eye Hospital go to:

<http://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/SHSEH/history/history.asp>

WHAT: The launch of *Australia's First Hospital* book

WHERE: Claffy Lecture Theatre, Sydney-Sydney Eye Hospital, Macquarie St

WHEN: From 9am, this Friday 27 November

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