

PMBH has half emergency beds we need: audit

By LISA TISDELL

Corridor care not good enough

A HEALTH Department audit has revealed the number of beds in Port Macquarie Base Hospital's emergency department needs doubling.

According to a recent audit, the department which has 10 beds actually needs 20 to service the needs of the population base.

Those statistics go some way to explaining the intermittent crises which the department is facing more regularly, said emergency's director Dr John Roberts.

"If funding doesn't rise at the same rate as the population, it's going to be very difficult for us," Dr Roberts said.

He said the Hastings had an ageing population and funding was not keeping up with demand.

Problems arise when there is a backlog of patients and no available beds on the wards.

When patients are waiting for beds and nurses have to look after

a dozen or more patients including several in the corridor, Dr Roberts said, the emergency department becomes an unhappy place to work.

He said it was important for people to have a relationship with their GP.

"If they come to emergency on a quiet day they can get into the habit of coming back," he said.

Mid-North Coast Area Health

Service chief executive officer Terry Clout added the pressure on the emergency department increases in winter.

"We encourage people only to use the emergency department for true emergencies and not to use it for a substitute for seeing their GP," he said. "In winter it's very difficult for emergency departments."

Emergency staff treat the most urgent cases first.



□ Andrew Stoner MP

Wauchope hospital needs help, pleads MP

OXLEY MP Andrew Stoner is pushing for better resources at Wauchope District Memorial Hospital's emergency department.

Mr Stoner has been advised the Wauchope emergency department was to operate at level two.

"Concern was raised by nursing staff that some services were being provided at the Wauchope emergency department above level two, prompting a review of services at that location," Mr Stoner said.

"Apparently this has resulted in a decision not to admit children with anything other than a minor ailment to Wauchope hospital."

Mr Stoner said time was critical in any emergency and many patients could not wait a further 20 minutes to be taken to Port Macquarie.

North Haven man escapes

A NORTH Haven man escaped uninjured from an six-vehicle crash on the Pacific Highway on Monday where one person was killed.

Investigators are still trying to determine the cause of the multiple-vehicle crash, north of the township of Tyndale, near Grafton.

One man was killed and 11 other people suffered a range of injuries in the pile-up.

Among them was the North Haven man, who escaped the crash uninjured.

Port Macquarie News

turns 123 this week

THE Port Macquarie News will be 123-years-old tomorrow.

The first issue of the News appeared on Saturday, July 8, 1882.

The newspaper was launched by Alfred Edward Pountney, aged 25, the son of a Rollands Plains farming and grazing couple.

Each letter of that newspaper and many that followed was set by the laborious process of individual selection in what was known as hand-set type.

After World War I control of the paper was transferred to Pountney brothers, Bert and Rupert, before the newspaper was sold to Charles Uptin in 1945.

In 1982, the newspaper was then sold to Newcastle Newspapers Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of John Fairfax and Sons. The latest change in ownership occurred in 1987 when the News was bought by Rural Press Limited.

The News is now a successful tri-weekly and part of a stable of publications from along the Mid-North Coast and wider afield produced at the Milton Circuit premises.

Rural Press has again confirmed its commitment to the region and is presently upgrading its printing press equipment at its Milton Crt site.

The pressroom is being extended to cater for a new press.

The Port Macquarie site general manager is Janine Buesnel.



□ On a mission: Pilots Shane Moore and Sarah Kilvert will fly a patient to Sydney on Sunday. Pic: PETER GLEESON

Angels with wings

PILOTS Shane Moore and Sarah Kilvert will fly to Sydney with some very special cargo this Sunday.

They will take a local 11-year-old girl back to Sydney for further medical treatment after she spends a weekend at home with her family.

And they're doing it as Angel Flight pilots.

Angel Flight light aircraft pilots donate their flying skills and the expenses of each flight to help patients who need non-emergency medical treatment.

They can also transport family members who need to be with their loved ones.

This will be Shane and Sarah's first Angel Flight mission.

Shane Moore, a pharmacist at Flynns Beach Pharmacy, said he was looking forward to mak-

ing a small difference in people's lives.

"It really does make you realise how lucky you are," he said.

"This will give her a chance to catch up with her father and brother for the weekend."

Commerical pilot Sarah Kilvert said she felt good about helping a patient who was so young.

"Growing up, my brother had leukemia so I understand the pressure of constant treatment," Sarah said.

Having had surgery for a brain tumour, the 11-year-old is now receiving radiotherapy at Sydney's Prince of Wales Hospital.

Angel Flight will bring her home to Port Macquarie on Friday afternoon and return her to Sydney late Sunday afternoon.

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