

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AWCH 1973-2009

1973

- The *Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital* established after Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists identifies psychological and emotional damage to young children from hospital neglect of nonmedical needs.
- Volunteer speakers to Community Groups program established by AWCH.

1975

- *Health Care Policy Relating to Children and their Families* declared official policy of NSW Health Commission
- AWCH Library established to provide specialised information for parents, professionals, tertiary students and community groups.
- AWCH funded through the Federal Government Community Health Program for the establishment of a national office to act as an information and resource centre and a coordinating facility for work throughout Australia.

1976

- Australian Nurses Journal devotes entire October issue to proceedings of National Seminar *Play in Hospital*.
- AWCH Library opened to public.

1977

- AWCH policies receive international acclaim, 'The most humane; most comprehensive policy yet published....a charter for hospitalised children!' International Journal of Early Childhood.
- National Health & Medical Research Council backs AWCH proposal for a national health care policy for Australia.
- First National Conference – *Emotional Needs of Infants and Children* - the implications for policy and practice within health care, legal and political systems

1978

- *Health Care Policy Relating to Children and their Families* declared official policy of Capital Territory Health Commission.
- NB: David Bennett, current AWCH President, attended AWCH AGM to discuss the setting up of the first Adolescent Medical Unit at RAHC in Sydney.
- First National Council Meeting. **First National President: Quentin Bryce** Queensland; first National Secretary: Shirley Crowe; First National Treasurer: Dr Graham Bench.
- Car sticker produced by 'Perth Group' – *Lesson the fears reduce the tears*.
- Branches in Murray, Riverina and Hunter areas of NSW and NSW Metropolitan, Tasmania (1977), South Australia, Queensland, ACT, WA, Victoria (Melbourne, Barwon).
- Study day for AWCH Volunteer Speaker.
- *Selected Program of Films* at National Headquarters.
- Isolated Patients' Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme commenced.
- Dolls for hospitals project.

1979

- International Year of the Child sees the first National Children in Hospital Week. AWCH's 'Children in Hospital Week', under the patronage of Lady Cowan, hosts Dr David Morris, consulting paediatrician, British Hospital for Mothers & Babies and Professor Frederic Brimblecombe for an Australian tour, talking at seminars, public meetings, TV and radio interviews.



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- Powerful documentary on hospitalisation of three young children, produced by Film Australia with funds provided by AWCH.
- Branch New England area of NSW; Albany and Esperance in WA.
- Barwon Branch develops posters *Is your child to be hospitalised? How would you explain to him?*
- National Council established 1 July.
- AWCH WA President presents paper 'The Emotional Needs of the Hospitalised Child/The Parent's View' at the 24th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australian College of Paediatrics in Canberra.
- *Please Don't Leave Me* (film) released November.
- Telephone Advisory Service AWCH WA.
- Lismore community raised \$300 000 for a new children's ward.
- SA initiative: Hospital Play Kits

1980

- Tasmania's Health Services Department endorses the principles contained in AWCH Health Care Policy.
- AWCH supports parents at coronial inquest after tragic death of 5 year old boy following a tonsillectomy. Appeal set up to defray legal costs.
- Grant from Childhood Services Council for 2 years for AWCH SA to produce/distribute *Hospital Play Kits*, employ part time coordinator and part time secretary, administrative costs and an electric typewriter
- Dial a granny scheme Memorial Hospital, Adelaide, SA
- *Your child in hospital* brochure translated into Arabic, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Servo-Croatian, Spanish and Turkish. Available from NSW Health Commission.
- Limited accommodation for parents at Adelaide Children's Hospital
- Interface becomes the National Journal of AWCH
- 1st National President's (Quentin Bryce) Report
- *Doctors and Nurses* video made by AWCH
- Submission to the Commission of Enquiry into the *Efficiency and Administration of Hospitals*.
- AWCH NSW membership fees raised to \$5.50 with \$1.50 levy for other branches to cover cost of newsletter subscription.

1981

- International Year of Disabled Persons - Handicapped children and adolescents invited to voice feelings and reactions to hospital experience.
- AWCH formulates "Strategies for Change" after distinguished consultants speak out on 'Psychological Implications of Handicap Problems in Ward, Theatre & Outpatient Management'.
- Preparation of a recommended policy on maternity services.
- 2nd National Council Meeting; **2nd National President: Pat Reynolds**
- 2nd National Conference – *The Special Needs of Handicapped Children in Hospital*
- NAWCH (UK) posters about children in hospital available state branches of AWCH

1982

- Western Australia Minister for Health accepts AWCH health care policy with modifications for W.A.
- Research conducted by AWCH into tonsillectomy operations.
- AWCH and Doctors' Reform Society Seminar drafts recommendations on unnecessary surgical procedures on young children.
- The idea of national hospital accreditation for admission of young children to hospital initiated by AWCH.
- AWCH promotes wide - reaching professional seminars:

- ✿ Causes of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Children and Adolescents
- ✿ Anaesthesia & Children
- ✿ Lessening Emotional Trauma for Children and Parents
- ✿ NSW Health Commission becomes the NSW Health Department
- ✿ Submission into Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare Enquiry into *Children and Youth under Institutional Care*

1983

- 10th anniversary of AWCH – 15 February
- 5th National Council Meeting
- *AWCH NSW Recommended Policy on Maternity Services* was endorsed as the national policy.
- AWCH NSW issues:
 - ✿ parent accommodation
 - ✿ presence of parents during induction of and recovery from anaesthesia
 - ✿ provision of play leaders and play facilities
 - ✿ preparation programs
 - ✿ standards of paediatric care
 - ✿ geographically isolated children
 - ✿ parents accompanying their children in air ambulance
- AWCH NSW Membership fees \$7.

1984

- Visiting Granny Scheme initiated in Tasmania.
- 6th National Council Meeting. **3rd National President Kerry Johnson** (Tas)
- Queensland government refused to endorse AWCH Health Care Policy.
- Dramatic drop in elective surgical procedures.
- Lismore children's ward opened.
- First patient representative at Royal North Shore Hospital NSW.
- AWCH NSW Newsletter becomes *Children in Hospital*.
- NSW Health Department approval of AWCH NSW School Educator's Program.
- Voluntary play program at Orange Hospital.

1985

- Proposal for a national survey of children's wards paediatric policies.
- 7th National Council Meeting priorities set for coming year:
 - ✿ National survey of paediatric wards
 - ✿ Finalisation of policies related to disability, education and play
 - ✿ Planning for a national conference in 1988
 - ✿ Guidelines on children's ward design
 - ✿ Campaign against health budget cutbacks effecting paediatric facilities
 - ✿ Review and evaluation of AWCH aims and objectives
 - ✿ Preparation and publication of an article for a popular magazine about maintenance of facilities for parents
 - ✿ Aboriginal child health
 - ✿ Child safety
 - ✿ Lobbying for adequate paediatric content and experience in new college of nursing curricula
 - ✿ The unaccompanied child in hospital
 - ✿ Establishment AWCH Paediatric Volunteer Service at Royal Hobart Tasmania

1986

- Preparation of a *Recommended Policy Relating to the Provision of Play in Hospital*.
- Preparation of a *Recommended Policy Relating to the Care of the Child with Long Term Disability in Hospital*.
- Granny Scheme commences in N.S.W. at Camperdown Children's Hospital.
- Research projects shelved as economic down-turn causes annual federal funding to be slashed by \$40,000.
- 8th National Council Meeting. Priorities set for coming year:
 - ✿ Bicentennial conference
 - ✿ National research survey
 - ✿ Campaign to highlight need for paediatrics as a priority in the national health system
 - ✿ Printing and distribution of policy documents
 - ✿ National/state initiatives in aboriginal health
 - ✿ Publicity campaign focusing on paediatric accreditation guidelines
 - ✿ Continuation and lobbying for Iptaas reform
 - ✿ Development and publication of AWCH brochure
 - ✿ Research on the needs of unaccompanied children
 - ✿ Policy docs – Preparing children for hospitalisation/educating young children in hospital
 - ✿ Brochure for parents of children in neo natal intensive care units
- WA Hospital Familiarisation Program continues.
- AWCH NSW sets up a telephone advisory service.
- Marion Steele Senior AWCH Librarian in charge; Eva Langley, AWCH Librarian founder retires.

1987

- Copies of AWCH health care policies sent to every public hospital in Australia with over 5 paediatric beds.
- Further reduction in annual funding of \$60,000 for AWCH creates financial crisis - staff laid off.
- Nepean College of Advanced Education provides free accommodation for AWCH Library and National Office.
- **4th National President: Irene Hancock** (NSW)

1988

- Fund AWCH established to raise \$1 million
- AWCH presents a skills seminar on *Working with Children and Teenagers with Cancer and their Families*.

1989

- University of Western Sydney, Nepean, takes over AWCH Library to be maintained as a special collection and supports AWCH National Office by supplying rent free accommodation.
- NSW State Government grants funds to AWCH National Office for initial period of one year and Federal Government grants a final amount to be used primarily for fundraising.
- \$1 million capital fund raising goal set to reduce dependency on government funding.
- AWCH Constitution developed
- Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital – SA Branch received funding support from Medtel Australia Datex to produce/distribute for Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital (AWCH) Brochures/; Anaesthesia and your child/.

1992

- National Survey Report into the Psychosocial Care of Children (and their families) in Hospital.
http://www.awch.org.au/1992_AWCH_National_Survey_Report.htm
- New state branches re-established: ACT, Victoria, Queensland

1993

- AWCH changed its name from Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital to *Association for the Welfare of Child Health*.
- Paediatric Support Link (PSL), a database of support groups, launched
<http://www.awch.org.au/PSL.htm> .
- National Conference *Embracing the Future*.
- 20 year anniversary.
- Current goals:
 - ✿ Raising awareness about the implications of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to paediatric care
 - ✿ Implementation of article 31 on all paediatric wards (the child's right to play and recreation)
 - ✿ Implementation of article 9 (parental care and separation from parents including the child's right to have the support of a parent/carer during the induction of anaesthesia and in the recovery room)
 - ✿ Support for the establishment of an Office for Children headed by a Commissioner for Children
 - ✿ Promoting and supporting family-centred care
 - ✿ Raising awareness of the needs of minority groups
 - ✿ Development of the paediatric support group database
 - ✿ Support and development of the Ward Grandparent Scheme
 - ✿ Support and development of hospital familiarisation programs
 - ✿ Support for working parents to make appropriate arrangements for the care of ill or convalescing children
- New version of AWCH NSW *About Children in Hospital* brochure
- Diane Dunbar retires as Ward Grandparent Scheme Coordinator.

1994

- National Conference *Facing the Challenge*.
- Video produced on *Parental Involvement in Their Child's Anaesthesia* .
- Areas of focus:
 - ✿ Revitalisation of branches in SA/Tasmania
 - ✿ Production of an AWCH video on *Parental Involvement in Their Child's Anaesthesia*
 - ✿ Finalisation of Ward Grandparent Scheme Guidelines
 - ✿ Development of posters on ward grandparent scheme and on the rights of the child in hospital
 - ✿ Formulation of an AWCH volunteer play scheme
 - ✿ Development of an AWCH accreditation system for paediatric units
- Advocacy relating to financial costs of petrol/accommodation for drought effected families to transport children for health care visits.

1995

- National Conference *Making a Difference - Challenges and Changes in Adolescent and Child Health*.
- Launch of the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme* <http://www.awch.org.au/policies.htm>
- Launch of the video *Parental Involvement in Their Child's Anaesthetic*.
- AWCH Patron, Dr John Yu

1996

- National Conference *Before and After the Hospitalisation of Children - Who Cares?*
- AWCH Submission & National President gave evidence to *NSW Parliament's Standing Committee on Social Issues enquiry into children's advocacy.*
- Focus Areas:
 - Increased communication and branch input via bi-monthly telephone link up, circulation of information, enquiries streamlining
 - Redesign of AWCH publications
 - Launch of anaesthesia video in each state
 - Follow up research of the 1992 survey
 - Revitalisation of SA branch and beginning of Northern Territory branch
 - AWCH Paediatric Accreditation
 - AWCH Conference
- AWCH WA Cultural Resource Volunteer Scheme receives funding for a pilot program

1997

- National Conference *Getting Better Together.*

1998

- National Conference *Ourselves in Their Shoes.*
- Launch of the Australian Council of Health Care Standards (ACHS) and AWCH *Guidelines for Child and Adolescent Hospital-based Health Care.*
- 25th anniversary dinner held at NSW Government House.
- Launch new newsletter *Child and Adolescent Health Care*
<http://www.awch.org.au/newsletter.html#CAHealthCareNewsletter>

1999

- National Conference *Through the Looking Glass: Lessons from the Past for the Future of Children's Health Care.* http://www.awch.org.au/conf_1999.html
- Launch of AWCH first website.
- Bachelor of Health Sciences Play Specialty course which is a world-first commences.
- Revised AWCH Health Care Policy <http://www.awch.org.au/policies.htm>
- AWCH Ward Grandparent Coordinator position trialed within National Office

2001

- National Conference *Children on the Margin.*
- Post Graduate Diploma in Play Specialty course commences.
- Fund AWCH raises \$33 000

2002

- National Conference *Healthy Justice for Children and Young People.*
- Launch of AWCH 2nd website <http://www.awch.org.au/>
- Revised AWCH Play Policy <http://www.awch.org.au/policies.htm>
- Advocacy relating to co-location of children and adults in the same hospital ward
http://www.awch.org.au/pdfs/Children_&_Adults_Being_Nursed_on_the_Same_Hospital_Ward.pdf

2003

- AWCH Library loses funding and resources are given back to the Association with the exception of VHS video collection, which remains with University of Western Sydney.

- 30 year anniversary.
- AWCH presents at The Children's Hospitals Australasia Conference
http://www.awch.org.au/pdfs/Quality_Care_&_Protection_in_Children%27s_Wards.pdf
- Irene Hancock retires as National President

2004

- National Office relocated to Woollooware/Greystanes.
- AWCH Library re-located to Woollooware.
- Funding for librarian position ceases.
- AWCH Review undertaken
- Advocacy relating to refugee children in immigration detention centres
http://www.awch.org.au/pdfs/AWCH_Urges_Release_of_Children_in_Detention_by_10_June_04.pdf
http://www.awch.org.au/pdfs/Media_Release_Children_in_Immigration_Detention_Centres.pdf
- Undergraduate play specialty course suspended from UWS courses.
- Post graduate course continues.
- **5th National President: Professor David Bennett AO**

2005

- National Conference *Healthy Solutions for Children Making the Right Choice*
http://www.awch.org.au/conf_2005.html
- Inaugural AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme Awards
http://www.awch.org.au/2005%20con/AWCH_Hospital_Ward_Grandparent_Scheme_Awards.pdf
- Launch of the 2005 AWCH National Survey into the Psychosocial Care of Children and Their Families in Healthcare
http://www.awch.org.au/2005_AWCH_National_Survey_Report.htm
- Development of new constitution
- Post Graduate Diploma in Play Specialty course ceases

2006

- AWCH becomes a company limited by guarantee with retained non-profit status.
- New board established.
- First AWCH Youth Representative, Harry Whelan, joins the board
- State branches cease except for AWCH WA.
- AWCH Library relocated to The Children's Hospital at Westmead.
- AWCH presents at the Royal Australian College of Physicians Congress
<http://www.awch.org.au/publications.html>
- Membership fee \$55; introduction of organization membership \$110; non working \$27.50

2007

- AWCH Librarian starts temporary/part time at The Children's Hospital at Westmead.
- AWCH Library Journal & Book Indexes goes online
<http://www.awch.org.au/library.htm>
- Collaboration with Royal Australian College of Physicians, Children's Hospital Australasia, Australian Confederation of Paediatric and Child Health Nurses, Australian Medical Association, Rural Doctors Association and the Australian Council of Healthcare Standards relating to co-location of children and adults in the same hospital ward.
- AWCH Emergency Department Waiting Room Project development
- AWCH Youth Advisory Group established
- AWCH Ward Grandparent Scheme: 11 NSW hospitals; 1 ACT; 1 Tasmania

- AWCH Office re-locates to Gladesville Hospital, Sydney
- Launch new name and logo; renewal of AWCH commitment to child and adolescent healthcare
- Fundraising Consultant, Nikki Brown, commences duties at AWCH

2008

- AWCH 35th anniversary
- AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme launched at Campbelltown Hospital in Sydney in March
- AWCH Emergency Department Waiting Area Survey undertaken in April
- AWCH/CHA Conference, Healthcare for Kids: the people, the map and the measure, held in November www.kidsconference.org.au
- Launch of the *Standards for the Care of Children and Adolescents in Health Services* at the Healthcare for Kids Conference in November
<http://www.awch.org.au/about.html>
- Standards available for download on RACP website
<http://www.racp.edu.au/index.cfm?objectid=94150BA4-ACD1-3AA9-A6711B196ABAB1A2>
- Professor David Bennett speaking about children and adults sharing wards and the development of the Standards on ABC Radio National's Life matters
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2008/2421496.htm>
- Article in the Australian on Tuesday 18 November relating to the launch of the Standards <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24667290-23289,00.html>

2009

- Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, becomes Patron
- AWCH wins award for the Ward Grandparent Scheme
<http://www.awch.org.au/about.html>
- AWCH helps parent advocate for the right to have her child cared for in a paediatric ward <http://www.awch.org.au/about.html>
- Joanna Holt becomes AWCH President http://www.awch.org.au/J_Holt.htm