



Recognised: Jane Choy, Associate Professor Sitharthan Thisagarajan and Project Manager Frances Chua.

Farewell to a father

By Isabell Petrinic

WESTMEAD Hospital said farewell to one of its founding fathers, Dr Bernard John Amos, at a memorial service.

Former prime minister Gough Whitlam and his wife Margaret were among the many dignitaries who attended the service.

Dr Amos, or Bernie as he preferred to be called, was Westmead Hospital's first chief executive officer.

He died on May 9 aged 70 after a long illness and leaves behind his wife Helen and four children.

He played a key role in the establishment of the hospital before taking on the role of general superintendent (now known as CEO) from 1977 to 1986.

Bernie stood side by side with the hospital planners, architects and builders and watched "his" hospital grow from an old trotting track located near his childhood home to a fully established \$108 million health facility.

Premier Neville Wran opened Westmead Hospital in November 1978.

The hospital's oval and clubhouse are named in his honour.

Dr Amos left Westmead Hospital to become director-general of the Health Department of NSW, a position he held until 1993.

He was president of the NSW Medical Board for four years from 1985.

The chief executive officer of the Sydney West Area Health Services, Steven Boyages, said at the service on June 30: "In Bernie Amos we have lost a revered and caring colleague and mentor."

Cutting down

By Kim Chappell

A WESTMEAD-based project to reduce excessive drinking in NSW has been commended as a finalist in the National Drug and Alcohol Awards.

Alcohol misuse contributes to about 2000 deaths and economic costs of \$4.5 billion per year.

Associate Professor Sitharthan Thiagarajan and his team at Westmead's Australian Centre for Addiction Research have come up with a novel solution to the problem.

Rather than ask patients to come to them, people who are concerned about their alcohol intake can register with the Initiating Controlled Drinking by Correspondence program.

Funded by the NSW Department of Health, almost 1000 people have

enrolled so far. Information is mailed to participants fortnightly, with tips and ideas about reducing and controlling alcohol consumption.

There is also advice on how to change behaviour patterns that lead to alcohol abuse.

So far, the program is a success with most participants reporting a significant reduction in consumption.

"Rather than expecting participants on our doorstep, we take the treatment to them," said Associate Professor Thiagarajan. "We have a higher rate of female participants and we've reached people from remote areas who have limited services."

People have maintained improved drinking habits even a year after completing the program."

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