



WOLPER
JEWISH HOSPITAL

— THE FIRST —
50 YEARS

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Wolper Jewish Hospital

It is an honour to be the fourth President of Wolper Jewish Hospital.

Over the span of 50 years the energy of my predecessors has turned a small cottage hospital into a thriving medical facility. This has been enhanced by the dedication and loyalty of our chief executive Harry Aizenberg and especially his staff, many of whom have been with us for two decades or more.

As a Jewish hospital we are committed to the traditional and religious principles that have been the hallmark of the Wolper label — these principles have enabled Wolper to maintain a tradition of outstanding care, at all times focused on the health, comfort and dignity of our patients.

We are proud of the achievements of our first 50 years and do not intend to mark time, but will continue to provide a service that meets the ongoing needs of the Jewish and wider community well into the 21st century.



Dr David Golovsky, President, August 2011

Presidents

- Sam Karpin OAM 1961-1986
- Lynette Davies AM 1986-1999
- Murray Landis 1999-2004
- Graham Einfeld OAM 2004-2009
- Dr David Golovsky 2009-

Chief Executive Officer

- Harry Aizenberg 1981-

Directors of Nursing

- Vi Falson 1961-1981
- Joan Birmingham 1983-1985
- Terry Schopf 1986-1994
- Jenny Coombs 1994-2011
- Penny King 2011-

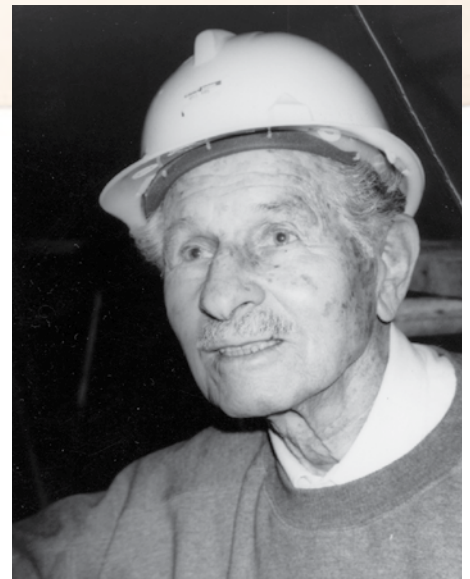
Foundations

Wolper Jewish Hospital celebrated its 50th anniversary on 21 August 2011. Wolper has evolved from the shared vision of many — to create an institution that would provide support for the wellbeing of the community.

The hospital first envisioned after World War II was one that would meet the needs of the Jewish residents of Sydney, but over time this vision has steadily evolved to encompass the wider community, irrespective of background.

This is the story of the committed community leaders, the organisations, the doctors and the staff who together conceived, created, developed and nourished Wolper Jewish Hospital through its first 50 years. It is their efforts and passion that have enabled Wolper Jewish Hospital to achieve the standards of excellence it provides, and to which it remains committed.

DEDICATED TO SAM KARPIN OAM IN TRIBUTE
TO HIS VISION, COURAGE AND LIFELONG
TENACITY IN FOUNDING THIS HOSPITAL, AND
TO HIS UNIQUE, SELFLESS DEDICATION IN
SERVING AS ITS PRESIDENT FOR 25 YEARS.



The beginnings

Wolper Jewish Hospital was opened in 1961 in Woollahra, Sydney, but it began its story under another name, at another time, and in another location.

The first move to establish a Jewish hospital in Sydney was made in 1947 by Professor A. Lippmann, a doctor who arrived in Sydney from Europe in 1938.¹ The NSW Jewish Hospital, the only Jewish hospital in Australia to this day, was subsequently established through the collaboration of several leading figures of the medical profession, the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), and the NSW Fellowship of Jewish Doctors.

The site for the hospital — the house named White Ivy, at 4 Wentworth Street, Point Piper — was adjacent to the headquarters of the YMHA. The Association, whilst primarily a social organisation, had been particularly active during and immediately after World War II raising funds to support war refugees through the Jewish Welfare Society.

The Chairman of the NSW Jewish Hospital was Mr Sam Karpin, then President of the YMHA. The Vice-President was Dr Fanny Reading MBE, representing the NCJW; her life would become closely bound up with that of the Hospital.

Upon the death of Professor Lippmann the Medical Board was chaired by recently returned military man Brigadier Dr Joe Steigrad CBE. Dr Hans Landecker was Secretary and Dr Lennie Greenberg was the Treasurer.

1940s

The official opening of the Hospital was attended by more than 400 people. In his dedication, Rabbi Falk said: "The establishment ... of a Jewish Hospital here in Sydney is a continuation of the Jewish tradition and in keeping with the highest concept of benevolence".²

"The NSW Jewish Hospital was a fairly grandiose building, a converted private home. It was a pseudo modern hospital in surroundings that were anything but modern. It was mainly medical but it was not an acute care hospital."

Dr Joachim Schneeweiss AM, who consulted at the NSW Jewish Hospital from 1952 and then at Wolper Jewish Hospital.



1.

1. White Ivy, first home of the NSW Jewish Hospital.

On 3 June 1948 the Hospital was incorporated. The founders' vision was to commence a major development, which included an operating theatre, a delivery room, an outpatients' department and nursing quarters. An appeal was made to the public for funds to support this development. The architectural representation reveals an extensive establishment — really quite ambitious — in a locality that was principally residential.

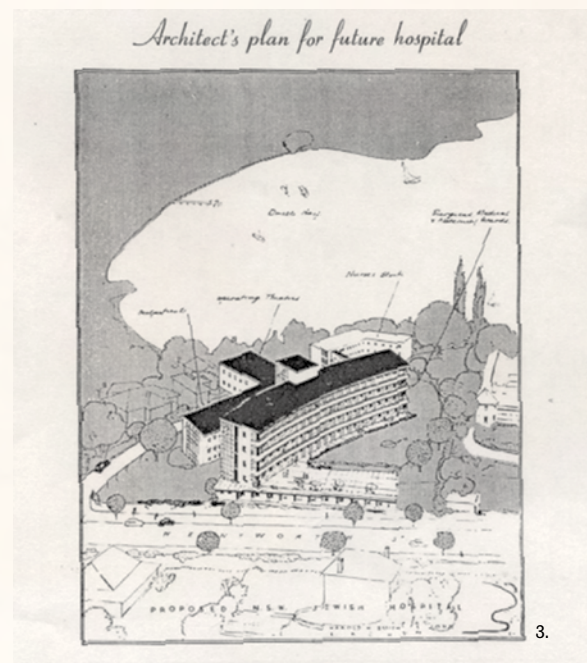
But these promising beginnings were short lived; the Hospital did not receive the injection of funding it required from the community. In the year 1953-54 only £1,876 was collected for the building fund, and Sam Karpin noted in the 6th Annual Report that “without some more permanent demonstration of regular public support and financial backing, the hospital could not expect to survive, let alone advance or expand”.³



2. The first Hospital Dinner of the NSW Jewish Hospital at the Trocadero, George Street, Sydney, 26 October 1948.

Sam Karpin is seated fourth from left at the main table; Dr Fanny Reading is on his right.

3. Plans showing the proposed hospital.



At the time the Hospital had considerable assets, with its two adjacent houses — White Ivy and Linlithgow — in an excellent location. Linlithgow was the first to be sold, in 1954, thereby reducing the bank overdraft to a manageable level;⁴ as a result the financial position of the Hospital was reasonably sound. Despite this, the lack of public financial support made it obvious the dream of an operating theatre and delivery room could not be realized. This meant that the vision for a major hospital was not viable, and it was decided that the Hospital would cease operations.⁵ It closed in June 1954 and the remaining property, White Ivy, was also sold.

The gift

In April 1953, a year before the NSW Jewish Hospital closed its doors, another institution caring for Jewish community members opened in Woollahra — the Wolper Convalescent House. Like the Hospital, it sprang from the desire to create a place for Jewish community members who were ill.

Its story begins with an act of kindness that was to have a far-reaching impact.

The NSW division of the NCJW had set up a Hospital Visiting Committee to visit sick community members in hospitals. In the course of her visits, Committee member Mrs Max (Becky) Lake came upon a Mrs Gertie Stone, who was not receiving adequate care. Becky Lake took Gertie Stone into her own home and nursed her.

When Gertie Stone died in 1949, she showed her gratitude by bequeathing her family home in Berwick Street, Coogee to the Hospital Visiting Committee of the NCJW in trust, with the request that it be used as a convalescent home or hospital for Jewish patients, and that it be known as the Aaron and Gertie Wolper Convalescent House. Aaron Wolper was Gertie Stone's first husband. The Residual of the Estate was to be divided between the NSW Jewish Hospital and the Convalescent House. If it was not possible to use the Coogee property as bequeathed, it was to be given to the NSW Jewish Hospital.⁶

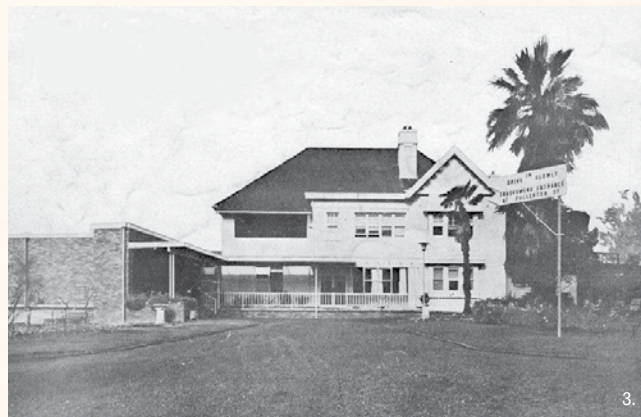


1. Gertie Shlom Wolper Stone (right) in 1925, aged c. 44, and her cousin Annie Friedland, in the town of Immigrant, South Africa. Gertie was born c. 1881 in Mitau, Russia.

Gertie Stone's house, a small cottage, was unsuitable for use as a convalescent home. Accordingly, the Trustees sold it and the proceeds helped to procure the current hospital site at 8 Trelawney Street, Woollahra.

The Wolper Convalescent House was opened in April 1953 by the Trustees of the Hospital Visiting Committee, Dr Fanny Reading, Mrs Max Lake and Mrs Ethel Zions,⁷ and commenced operations as a convalescent home.

Three years later, Wolper Convalescent House was experiencing trading difficulties and the Trustees noted that its financial position "caused great alarm to all concerned"; to address this, cost savings were instigated, including staff retrenchments, the renting out of the car port and a leasing agreement for the tennis court.⁸ The trading position deteriorated further, and by 1957 such high trading losses were incurred that the bank threatened foreclosure of the mortgage.



"The idea of a Jewish hospital in Sydney was for many years a dream and an inspiration with a small group of idealists whose objective was the establishment of "a modern Jewish hospital to serve the community in general, irrespective of creed, but especially to provide for Jewish patients facilities that are not available in any other hospital." Sam Karpin, *Wolper Jewish Hospital 20th Annual Report, 1981, p.3*

1950s

2. The original building at 8 Trelawney Street, Woollahra.
3. Wolper Jewish Hospital, 1961.



A transfusion of hope

It seemed logical for the NSW Jewish Hospital to work together with the NCJW to provide a hospital facility for the Jewish community.

In 1953 the possibility of an amalgamation of the NSW Jewish Hospital with the Wolper Convalescent House run by the NCJW was discussed for the first time.⁹

In February 1954, whilst agreement had been reached on the principles of amalgamation,¹⁰ a merger did not proceed at that time.

However, it became increasingly clear over the next few years that an amalgamation would provide the only possible solution for the survival of a Jewish hospital. The Hospital had a substantial amount of money invested, but no property or business to operate, and the convalescent home had property as an asset but was a business in difficulty, suffering trading deficits.

Fortunately all parties came to agree on the terms of a merger, and in 1959 Mrs Ena Rychter, one of the Trustees,

stated that "our institution has amalgamated with the NSW Jewish Hospital and in the future will be known as the Wolper and NSW Jewish Hospital".¹¹ The Executive was to be made up of the three Trustees of the Hospital Visiting Committee, with Sam Karpin and Maurice Allen as the representatives of the NSW Jewish Hospital.

Interestingly, a condition of the merger was that the £9250 mortgage of Wolper Convalescent House was to be reduced by its existing funds, totalling £1750,¹² after which the balance was to be paid out by the NSW Jewish Hospital.

Long though it was in coming, the amalgamation was to result in the birth of a healthy Jewish hospital. The Wolper Jewish Hospital was opened by the NSW Minister for Health The Hon. Billie Sheahan on 20 August 1961, "in the presence of dignitaries representing every sphere of social and welfare influence in this city".¹³



1.



2.

1. Guests at the official opening of Wolper Jewish Hospital, 1961.

2. At the opening, left to right: Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, Mrs Becky Lake, unknown nurse, Dr Fanny Reading MBE, The Hon. Syd Einfeld MLA.

1960s

Open for business

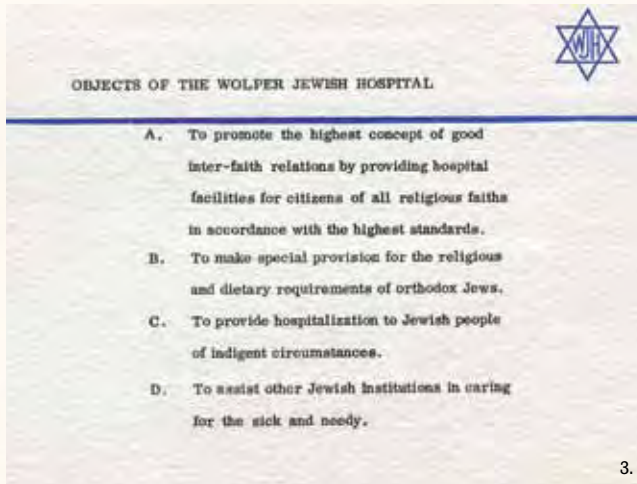
The Hospital grew in strength. In his role as president, Sam Karpin acknowledged the ongoing contributions of the National Council: "We are particularly gratified by the continuous support of the National Council of Jewish Women and the NCJW Hospital Committee which is regularly organising fund-raising functions on our behalf and bringing our work before the notice of a wider circle in the Jewish community".¹⁴

Plans were prepared for the building of an operating theatre and a new surgical wing, to be named after Dr Fanny Reading.

The new facilities were completed in 1966. At the opening ceremony, Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, Chief Rabbi of The Great Synagogue, presided at the dedication of the Fanny Reading Surgical Wing.



4.



3.



5.

3. Adapted from Wolper Jewish Hospital, Memorandum and Articles of Association, 1961.

4. Mr Ludi Adler and Dr Bruce Reading affixing the mezuzah in 1966 to bless the new building. As demonstrated by the ceremony, Jewish traditions have been observed at Wolper since its beginnings. "Jewish patients enjoy a sense of 'yiddishkeit' at Wolper, whether it's walking into their rooms with a mezuzah on the door, the taste of their kosher meals or the lighting of Shabbat candles." *Rabbi Mendel Kastel, CEO, Jewish House*

5. Sam Karpin unveils the plaque at the opening of the Fanny Reading Surgical Wing.

A new era

This significant expansion of capabilities in 1966 launched a new era for the Hospital.

The most recently completed stage of the long-held building plan delivered the new surgical wing comprising 12 single rooms as well as many new and modern hospital amenities and service facilities. This meant the Hospital could now offer 37 beds and one long-awaited operating theatre. The Hospital now had the facilities for providing a vital new service.



Accommodation at Wolper Jewish Hospital is rated amongst the finest in the State.



1. From the Wolper Jewish Hospital 6th Annual Report, 1967.
2. Nurse at work in the Wolper Jewish Hospital's operating theatre.

Dr Fanny Reading MBE

Fanny Reading, a Russian migrant, qualified as a doctor in 1922 and her life was dedicated to improving the health and social welfare of the community. She worked in general practice with her brother Abraham, and as an honorary medical officer at three hospitals including Wolper. In 1923 she founded the Council of Jewish Women of New South Wales, and was its President from 1923-31.

Through her influence, branches opened in other States, and when the National Council of Jewish Women was formed in 1929 she became its Life President. The War Memorial Fanny Reading Council House, Woollahra, was opened in 1961, the year in which she was appointed an MBE. In her later years she resided at Wolper as a patient, and died there in 1974.

“She was always known as a wonderful woman – a woman of vision”

Phyllis Glasser & Lilli Bergman, Members of the National Council of Jewish Women.



3. Dr Fanny Reading MBE.

4. Left to right: Sam Karpin OAM, Fanny Adler, Dr Fanny Reading MBE (seated), Vera Cohen MBE, Victor Greenberg, Vi Falson (matron), Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth Dr Israel Brody (seated).

Hand in hand

The Hospital prospered through the 1960s and 1970s with strong support from the membership of the NSW Fellowship of Jewish Doctors. Later plans were made for an expansion to 51 beds, and an update of the operating theatre. This involved the building of an additional floor above the Fanny Reading Surgical Wing with a connection to the existing second floor.

The cost of the works made a bank loan necessary, but the Hospital was unable to offer the necessary security — the title deed for the land was still in the name of the Trustees of the Hospital Visiting Committee of the NCJW. However, the Trustees graciously transferred the title of the land to Wolper Jewish Hospital on 14 May 1982, thereby enabling bank funding to be secured.

In recognition of the role played by the NCJW, the Hospital agreed to meet these requirements:

- i) 3 members of the NCJW to be appointed to the Board of Wolper*
- ii) The three members not be required to be elected at each general meeting but appointed by the NCJW*
- iii) A plaque to be placed to recognise the contribution of the Late Gertie Stone and the Hospital Visiting Committee*
- iv) A substantial area of the Hospital be named in honour of the NCJW*
- v) A communal function to be held to celebrate the transfer.¹⁶*



1. Signing of the transfer of the title from the Trustees of the Hospital Visiting Committee of the NCJW to Wolper Jewish Hospital. Left to right: Hymie Don, Bill Berman, David Freeman, Sam Karpin, Estelle Gold, Maxwell Einfeld (seated), Lynne Davies, Phyllis Glasser, Anne Einfeld, Ena Rychter, Lilli Bergman.

The lounge on the first floor was named for the National Council of Jewish Women. A communal function was held at the NCJW offices in Woollahra to mark the transfer of the title into the name of the Hospital. At that event, the plans for the 1982 rebuilding were displayed.

“The surgical facility was very good. There was a camaraderie, unique. I still associate with some of the people I worked with in the late 60s. The theatre staff atmosphere was just phenomenal.”

Dr Paul Lendvay, surgeon, who operated at Wolper from 1968 to 2002.



2. Evidence of support: plaque commemorating Hospital benefactors; left to right Ludi Adler, Sam Karpin.
3. This appeal advertisement was designed to gain support for Wolper Jewish Hospital; it appeared in the *Australian Jewish Times* on 10 December 1981.

OUR (ONLY) JEWISH HOSPITAL MUST GROW TO SURVIVE!

Give now and secure this vital facility

A ONCE-ONLY COMMUNITY APPEAL

Wolper Jewish Hospital must increase its capacity by 50 percent and upgrade its entire theatre and ancillary facilities to survive.

This isn't just economics. Wolper has always been a first-rate hospital, but now we're faced with an entirely new "ballgame". Accreditation by the Australian Council on Hospital Standards must be achieved by ALL hospitals in the near future to ensure viability.

And for Wolper that means expansion and refurbishing. It will also mean increasing our capacity to serve the community on a new level of excellence in the health-care field. The Jewish community deserves no less!

The development project which is to be carried out in 1982 will also enable Wolper to provide home nursing, kosher meals on wheels and other vital health services.

Wolper has always been well supported, and through good management has been able to accumulate some funds against the contingency which has now arisen.

MAJOR PROJECT

But it's a major project and we need to raise another \$500,000 to complete the task.

Remember, Wolper Hospital provides excellent cuisine in strict accordance with Jewish dietary requirements, as well as modern, up-to-date surgical and medical facilities in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere and is conveniently situated in the Eastern Suburbs.

And now the hospital must grow to survive. Help make that growth possible through YOUR *meaningful* contribution.

Architect's drawing of Wolper Hospital Stage 3 Building Development.

ENDOWMENTS

*Endowments can be made for:

- 10-Room Crisis Ward
- Recovery Room
- Advanced Room: from \$15,000

To Memorial Plaque \$10,000
To Endow a Room \$10,000
To Endow a Bed \$5,000
To Furnish a Room \$2,000

*Some endowments are already made

GIFTS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

All contributions to the Wolper Jewish Hospital Capital Appeal (authorised by the ACA Planning Committee) are deductible for income tax purposes. Please bear this in mind when making your gift.

All contributions will be acknowledged and special arrangements are available for the personal recognition of major donations and endowments.

*FOR FURTHER INFORMATION see Home Assembly, Chief Executive Officer, Wolper Jewish Hospital, 8 Trevelyan Street, Woollahra NSW 1585. Telephone: 338 9871.

WOLPER JEWISH HOSPITAL

\$500,000 Capital Appeal*

for Stage 3 Building Development

*Authorised by Jewish Communal Appeal Planning Committee

The Australian Jewish Times, Times, December 10, 1981 — 7

3.

1980s

Coming of age

At the start of its third decade, Wolper was flourishing. With the title to the land now transferred it was possible to move to the next stage in its development.

Building commenced in 1982, and the works were so extensive that it was decided to close the Hospital for 18 months. In August 1983 it reopened, with 51 beds and a new operating theatre.

The direction of the Hospital continued to evolve with the establishment of a Medical Board and by-laws to govern the accreditation of medical practitioners, infection control, and licences for use of the operating theatre even though State requirements for accreditation were not to come into force until the end of the decade. In the words of its Vice-President, David Freeman AM, it was to be "instrumental in increasing the high standards of medical and surgical treatment".¹⁷ Dr Victor Bear AM was the first elected Chairman of the Medical Board.



"I would be pleased if you would convey to the members of your staff my appreciation of the kindness, courtesy and consideration extended to me during my stay in Wolper." *Rt Hon Sir William McKell, 1980s.*

It was a combination of the accreditation process and the building works that marked the coming of age of the Hospital. The Wolper Jewish Hospital could now offer acute medical care and a surgical service. It had travelled a long way from its beginnings as a cottage hospital.



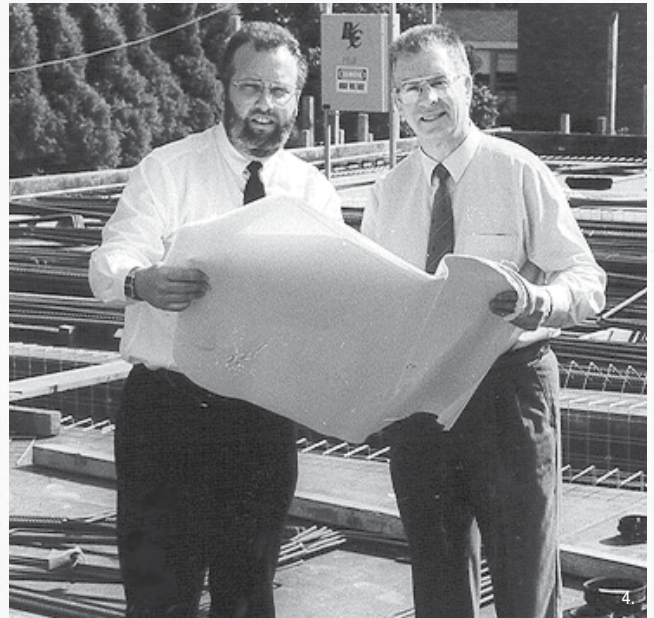
1,2. Construction and completion of the 1983 building program.

1990s

In 1991, early in Wolper's fourth decade, the house adjoining the Hospital in Fullerton Street was acquired to allow for yet further expansion of the Hospital to accommodate a palliative care centre and support team. This initiative was an expression of Wolper's mission to serve the community spiritually as well as physically. The building extension would facilitate the provision of palliative care within the general acute Medical Ward, thereby enabling Wolper to meet the requirements of Halacha (Jewish law) that the terminally ill should not be separated from the general community. This helped those patients to remain active and productive members of society for as long as possible, offering hope and support to their families.¹⁸ From the outset, the service was also offered to the wider community.

Application was made to the Department of Health for 20 beds to accommodate palliative care services and further demand for the Hospital's services generally. Twelve beds were granted, and eight more were purchased.

Construction began to replace the existing operating theatre with an operating theatre suite of two theatres and a six-bed recovery ward, all to be located on a new third level. Building was done while the remainder of the Hospital functioned, albeit with a reduced number of beds. In 1993, with the construction completed, the Hospital had 71 beds with two operating theatres and was the only Jewish hospital outside Israel offering palliative care services.



3. The Hospital building in the 1980s.

4. Harry Aizenberg, CEO since 1981, with Dr Peter Arnold, chairman of the Building Committee, 1992 "The building works that started in 1982 were a conscious effort to change the structure of the Hospital and the way it was perceived." Harry Aizenberg, 2011.

A major private hospital

More expansion followed. In 1998 the Hospital negotiated with the Scottish Hospital in Paddington, which had decided to close, and as a result the ENT surgeons and Rehabilitation Unit of the Scottish Hospital were transferred to Wolper. It was an exciting time for the Hospital and, although there was no intensive care unit available, the calibre of the surgery performed needed a high dependency ward. Arrangements were also made with a group of orthopaedic surgeons but this initiative never really came to fruition.

In the words of President Lynne Davies, “the takeover stamps Wolper as a major private hospital in the eastern suburbs”.¹⁹ It was a significant step. “With the acquisition of services and staff from the Scottish

“When Scottish Hospital closed, a number of surgeons and physicians came to Wolper. The work that was done by some of them was at the forefront, including skull base surgery.”

Dr Victor Bear AM, surgeon, who began working at Wolper soon after its opening in 1961.

Hospital, Wolper has created new high-dependency and rehabilitation units”.²⁰

To make provision for the Rehabilitation Unit, five beds were set aside for a physiotherapy room and dining/occupational health area. In 2002 the Rehabilitation Unit expanded with the construction of a hydrotherapy pool, a purpose built physiotherapy room on the ground floor and a new dining/occupational health area. This addition returned the Hospital's capacity to 71 beds.

As the Hospital was increasing its capacity and its range of services, it was at the same time laying the foundations for an ongoing program of support for the community beyond its gates.



1990s

1. NSW Minister for Health The Hon. Peter Collins and Wolper President Lynne Davies unveil a stained glass window with the logo at a ceremony in 1998 to mark the acquisition of the Scottish Hospital.

Reaching out

In 1987 the Hospital developed its Surgical Subsidy Scheme, which assisted indigent patients without health insurance by significantly reducing the fee charged for surgical admissions. The Scheme was later developed to include medical patients.

On 1 September 1988, the Wolper Outreach program established a project jointly with the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the objective of which was to “provide support for frail, disabled and isolated people, enabling them to continue living independently”.²¹ From the outset the program employed an outreach worker and provided and maintained a vehicle. In September 1992 a further outreach worker and vehicle were added to the program.



2.



3.

“I can’t call it a hospital. I can call it a home away from home. You are cared for and you leave here feeling whole.”

Myrna Kangisser, patient, 2011

2. Lynne Davies, President, handing over the keys to Norman Whitmont, President of Australian Jewish Welfare Society, for a bus donated in Sam Karpin's honour (the “Sam Bus”)

3. Front page news, *Sunday News*, New Zealand, 22 March 1987, reporting groundbreaking surgery by Dr Lyon Robinson.

A community focus

In May 1995, Wolper introduced the first community-wide genetic screening program in Australia. This was the Tay-Sachs Disease Prevention Program, launched at Central Synagogue in Bondi with ongoing funding from the Hospital and seed funding from the NSW Jewish Communal Appeal.²² The program was available at no charge to students in Years 11 and 12 in the Jewish High Schools and consisted of an education program followed by a blood test to identify carriers of the Tay-Sachs disease mutation. A clinic for testing couples intending marriage was established at the Hospital.

The Tay-Sachs Disease Prevention Program initiative has been widely recognised. It was a district winner in the 1995 *Sydney Morning Herald* Australia Day Awards for Community Service, in which it was acknowledged as one of the top 10 communal initiatives in NSW.

In 1996 permission was received from the NSW Department of School Education for a two year trial in selected State High Schools to test all students for three genetically inherited diseases. By 2011, carrier testing became available for an additional four diseases for all Year 11 students in the Jewish High Schools, funded by the Hospital and NSW Health.

Wolper's community relations program commenced on 26 February 1999 with the aim of promoting "a patient subsidy scheme, an outreach scheme in conjunction with Jewish Community Services, a discharge planner... and an accredited palliative care service".²³ The Hospital invited the public to an open day with lectures, ward visits, advice on Wolper's services, stalls run by health

Tay-Sachs testing at state schools

Sharon Labi

JEWISH students in six state high schools are being tested for Tay-Sachs disease in a joint venture between Westmead Hospital and the Wolper Jewish Hospital.

The Sydney Tay-Sachs Disease Program has begun offering students at Sydney Boys High, Sydney Girls High, North Sydney Girls High, North Sydney Boys High, Killara High and Vaucluse High the opportunity to be tested for the disease, which occurs most commonly in Ashkenazi Jews and people of French-Canadian background.

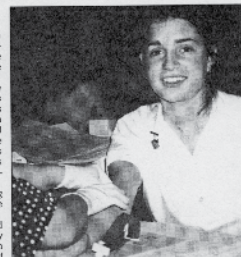
Testing of Jewish students is being funded by Wolper Hospital and the Jewish Communal Appeal.

The schools were chosen based on recommendations by Academy RJE as being the six state high schools with the largest number of Jewish students outside the diaspora.

About one in 25 Ashkenazi Jews in Sydney are carriers of the gene which causes Tay-Sachs. Carriers themselves are healthy, but if two carriers have children, there is a one-in-four chance that the baby will be born with the disease.

A baby born with Tay-Sachs usually develops normally for the first six months of life. The infant then suffers severe degeneration of the brain and nerve cells and usually dies by the age of five.

Year 11 and 12 students at North Sydney



North Sydney Girls High student Talia Perry has a blood sample taken to test for Tay-Sachs.

Wolper chief executive officer Harry Altshuler.

The test is conducted by taking a small blood sample. Results can be obtained at any time or students can request a pin number. When they meet a potential partner with whom they wish to have children, the two pin numbers — assuming he too has been tested — can be checked to ascertain whether the couple is at risk.

the US and Canada resulted in a 90 percent reduction in the rate of babies born with Tay-Sachs. At the rate we are picking up 'at risk' couples, we will parallel that.

The program recently tested its 1000th client, with the state school program under way, the 1500 mark is fast approaching.

The expansion into the state system has been a cooperative effort by many organisations. Professor Burnett said, "Academy RJE recommended the schools, the NSW Department of School Education director-general approved the program, Rabbi Moshe Gutnick approved the testing and counselling protocols, NSW Genetics Education Program director Dr Kris Barlow-Stewart is presenting the educational sessions, and Anne Frost, laboratory manager in molecular genetics within the Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research at Westmead, is organising the blood collection and lab analyses."

Testing takes place at Wolper Hospital in Woolloomooloo each Sunday.



Professor Laila Burnett tests Carmel and David Burger.

and medical organisations, and information on genetic diseases.

In May 2000, the first of a number of medical conferences sponsored by Wolper was held, focusing on health and the Jewish community. This was the first conference focusing on Jewish health issues held in Australia.

The role of community development officer was introduced in 2002, with the brief to generate further activities to support the health of the community. As a result, sponsorships of other communal activities and programs steadily increased.

Wolper's Wellbeing Program was created in 2002 as a community education program to "expand the services of the Hospital beyond its gates".²⁴ The Wellbeing

1. Report of the trial in selected State High Schools of the expanded genetic testing program, *Australian Jewish News*, March 2007.

Program encompasses an ongoing calendar of seminars covering a broad range of health issues significant to diverse sectors of the community, addressing such topics as suicide prevention, organ donation, lifestyle, sexuality and wellbeing, diabetes, sleep problems and arthritis, as well as heart, stroke and vascular health.

In August 2006, Gift of Life Australia was launched with the aim of encouraging community members to be tested as potential donors for the Australian Stem Cell & Bone Marrow Donor Registry and it continues to be sponsored by the Hospital. The program has saved lives by matching donors to recipients both nationally and internationally, and owes its success to the energies of Shula Endrey-Walder OAM and her team of volunteers.

Other sponsorships by Wolper included Hatzolah, a medical emergency response organisation; Camp Sababah, a summer camp for children with disabilities;

the Jewish Alliance Against Family Violence; the Cancer Genetics Program, providing education and support in the areas of breast and ovarian cancer; and the NCJW's Mum for Mum program, which gives support to new mothers.

In 2011 the NSW branch of the Australasian Jewish Medical Federation, formerly the NSW Fellowship of Jewish Doctors, was invited to make the Hospital its base for future clinical meetings.

I will always remember the understanding, warmth and so many kindnesses extended to me that turned hopelessness into a properly cautious optimism.

Patient, name withheld, 1989



2. Harry Aizenberg, CEO, presenting the Hatzolah vehicle to Rabbi Mendy Litzman.

3. Shula Endrey-Walder OAM, The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, Michael Faust (a transplant recipient) and Rabbi Dovid Slavin at the launching of the Gift of Life bus provided by Wolper.

Closing and opening doors

By 2000 the Hospital's trading position had deteriorated. Deficits were increasing, and in March 2000 a discussion paper was presented to the Board identifying that the losses were stemming from the operating theatres. While the number of surgical admissions increased, the increase was primarily in short-term surgical admissions, and as a result average surgical occupancy was declining, adversely impacting the profitability of the Hospital.²⁵ Operating theatre utilisation between July 1999 and March 2000 was on average only 66.8%.²⁶

Further, the surgical patient mix had shifted; utilisation of the service by the Jewish population had halved from 28% in 1991 to 14% in 1999. Attempts to solve the problem, including strategic planning sessions with other communal organisations and doctors, were unsuccessful.

The Hospital had to face the reality that it was incurring a loss exceeding \$360 on every theatre case; with such



1. The Lewin Family Physiotherapy Centre.

a low percentage of use by Jewish patients, this called into question the role of surgical services at Wolper Jewish Hospital in relation to its core mission to meet the health needs of the Jewish community.²⁷ The operating theatres were clearly not fulfilling a community need. Consultation with other communal organisations confirmed this.²⁸

In September 2002 it was announced that the operating theatres would close in three months. "It was no easy decision. It required a readjustment and a leap of faith that we could make the hospital work. We had to work towards the real needs the community had of us".²⁹

The theatres were then leased to the Vision Group, trading as Sydney Eastern Eye Centre, which operated an Ophthalmic Day Surgery at Wolper until 2008.

The closure of the operating theatres enabled the Hospital to refocus its activities. The Hospital further developed its Rehabilitation Unit, and in September 2003 day rehabilitation programs began in two converted three-bed wards. Palliative care and medical admissions increased, and the proportion of Jewish patients admitted to the Hospital doubled.

Demand for rehabilitation services grew and it became apparent that the Hospital would need to provide more space to service this growing community need. Further, it also became clear that in-patients preferred individual, self-contained rooms, and this factor was incorporated into the pending refurbishment plans. In 2005 a Development Application was approved by Woollahra Municipal Council, but it was put on hold while a proposal from Montefiore Home, to move Wolper to the

2000s

proposed new Montefiore Home site in Randwick, was investigated. The latter proposal did not go ahead, and a major rebuilding program commenced in 2008 at Wolper.

The building work proceeded smoothly with less than anticipated disruption to occupancy levels. Final changes included a new roof, and improvements to the car park and landscaping. All work was completed in July 2010.

In line with patient preferences, the rebuilding program saw the Hospital extensively refurbished, with all rooms converted to private rooms with full ensuite facilities, the latest entertainment, internet facilities and nurse call technology. A new enlarged physiotherapy centre was created, the Rehabilitation Unit was enlarged to 32 beds on the first floor, and the Medical Ward was reduced to 22 beds, located on the ground floor.

“Wolper provides the highest level of care and people feel truly nurtured here in all aspects of the hospital setting. Spiritually, patients feel there is that Jewish ambience and environment. Added to this is the sensitivity of the staff to the Jewish needs and culture of the hospital. The palliative care nurses are beautiful, sensitive, like angels.” *Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins, visiting patients at Wolper since 1989.*



2.

2. The Sam Karpin hydrotherapy pool.

A new beginning

In August 2010 the newly refurbished Hospital was officially launched by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales, in the presence of many leaders of the community. The Hospital was re-dedicated and a plaque highlighting the role of the NCJW was unveiled in the foyer against a backdrop of the vivid fused glass panels created by Marc Grunseit, titled 'Bereshis' – 'In the beginning'.

A tour of the Hospital on the opening day showcased the Medical Ward's new rooms with the latest facilities, the enlarged Rehabilitation Unit, and the state of the art, expansive physiotherapy centre for day patients and in-patients incorporating the new, enlarged hydrotherapy pool.

Along with the physical changes, this was a time for renewal and development of the Hospital's public face.

This occasion was marked by the unveiling of Wolper's new corporate logo, to be utilised throughout the Hospital, in signage, on staff uniforms, in all advertising and throughout an extensive suite of new marketing collateral.

The new logo symbolised the beginning of a new era for the Hospital whilst at the same time acknowledging the Hospital's past. "The new logo reflects the colour and vibrancy of the new Wolper, represented in a contemporary representation of The Tree of Life, symbolic almost universally of nourishment, succour, life, and the interconnectedness of the human spirit, the forces of nature and the spiritual world. It is particularly



pertinent to both our location in leafy Woollahra and the caring environment of Wolper".³⁰

In the words of Dr David Golovsky, President of Wolper from 2009, "Life is paramount, and this branched robust tree is vibrant and alive with blue leaves on white, an obvious Jewish motif and the green representing healing. 'Eytz Chaim' — truly a tree of life. We fully intend to uphold these values and maintain our reputation for delivering the highest standard of medical care to the community."³¹

1. Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of NSW, with Dr David Golovsky, President, at the launch of the refurbished Hospital in 2010, receiving a gift of the new Wolper logo stylised in fused glass.

The year 2011 marks the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Wolper Jewish Hospital.

Wolper Jewish Hospital today offers a vibrant healthcare facility for everyone, continuing its tradition of outstanding care focused on patients' health, comfort and dignity. The three key areas of care — the Medical Ward, Palliative Care and the Rehabilitation Unit — continue to grow in response to community demand. The outpatient rehabilitation program answers the needs of patients discharged from major hospitals following their surgery and has achieved an excellent reputation. The Wellbeing Program continues to be highly successful, running well attended public health meetings, and the Hospital continues to support and grow its other outreach activities.

Most importantly, over its five decades Wolper has been able to maintain a loyal and compassionate staff who provide a high standard of care. This is, and will continue to be, Wolper Jewish Hospital's hallmark.

“The Board has the energy and dynamism to continue provision of the highest quality medical care for the next 50 years.”

Dr David Golovsky, President



2. North wing of the Hospital, 2011.

Wolper leadership

Board Presidents



Sam Karpin OAM 1961–1986

Wolper was a special passion of Sam's for nearly 50 years. He served as President from its conception and led the Board through three decades of change and growth, culminating in the rebuilding of the Hospital in 1982. Sam saw the Hospital turn into a financially independent organisation and was an original Trustee of the Jewish Communal Appeal when it formed in 1967. His vision and dedication laid the foundations for the Hospital as it is today.



Lynne Davies AM 1986–1999

Lynne Davies was President of the National Council of Jewish Women at the time of the transfer to Wolper Jewish Hospital of the title to the land. She became Wolper's President, and served with professionalism and dignity. She was a leading community figure, with a career in the welfare sector and a high level of involvement in community activities. In 1999 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the Jewish community, particularly through the National Council of Jewish Women and the Wolper Jewish Hospital.



Murray Landis 1999–2004

Murray Landis served on the Hospital Board for 31 years, from 1979 to 2010. On his election as President, Murray instituted a process of determining what the role of the Hospital should be in the community. There was a two year period of strategic meetings with the Board, and with community representatives and doctors. As a result, Murray was able to lead the Board through the difficult decision of closing the operating theatres, thereby changing the direction of the Hospital. He has been Vice-President for 10 years, President for 5 years and Immediate Past President for 5 years. In 2009 he was appointed Life Governor in honour of his dedication and commitment to the Hospital.



Graham Einfeld OAM 2004–2009

Graham Einfeld, Immediate Past President of Wolper Jewish Hospital since 2009, was inspired to join the Hospital Board by the example of his uncle, Sam Karpin. He has served the Hospital as Honorary Treasurer, was President during the planning of the 2008-2010 building program, and served on the Building Committee during construction. In 2011 Graham was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) to honour his services to the Jewish community, especially Moriah College and Wolper Jewish Hospital.



Dr David Golovksy 2009–

Dr Golovsky was appointed to the Medical Board of the Hospital in 1985 and served as its Chairman from December 1994 to December 2003. He was also elected to the Board of Management in 1994, and in 1997 was elected Vice-President. On the closure of the Scottish Hospital he presided over the transfer of its Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Unit together with all the senior surgeons to Wolper, where an ENT centre of excellence was established. In 2009 he was elected President, and launched the refurbished Hospital in August 2010.



Harry Aizenberg CEO 1981–

Harry Aizenberg joined the Hospital in 1981 as CEO. As the only employee during the 1982 rebuilding while the Hospital closed he planned and implemented the organisational and structural changes of the “new” Wolper. He has been involved in all of the innovations and developments of the Hospital since that time. In 1995, together with Professor Leslie Burnett, Harry planned and organised the Tay-Sachs Disease Prevention Program, which continues to run in 2011 as the Genetic Screening Program. *“Wolper's vision has remained the same as it was when I came here 30 years ago ... to look at what services are needed, to evaluate the changing demand for those services, and to determine how the Hospital can adapt to those demands”.*³²

“Absolutely superlative in every way”

Wolper may have evolved its service focus and its facilities over the years, but the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff have remained a constant.

Many have been employed at Wolper for more than 20 years, and are still on the staff.

Just a sample of the many patients who have acknowledged the high standard of Wolper care over the years:

“G-D knows what my life would have been like without your kindness, thoughtfulness and generosity!”

Z. Davies, 1980

“Your hospital is surely one of the top medical institutions in the State – if not elsewhere – and is absolutely superlative in every way, AND, where else would you get such delicious food!!”

Miss Norma Grimshaw, 2007

“The clinical care was excellent, the linkage between the medical and the rehabilitation service ensured that I received coordinated and well-managed attention and all the support staff were so positive in ensuring that I, as a patient, had all my needs attended to.”

Dr Ian Jacobi, 2008

“My confidence and faith has been restored in the Medical and Nursing profession for the care I have received from everyone involved at Wolper Hospital.”

Antonia Torchia, 2007

“Through your care I can feel my soul and my heart healing at the same time as my body. I feel that I am healing on multiple levels.”

Chaiya Milner, long-term rehabilitation patient, 2010

“I am immensely grateful for the superb care I received at Wolper. The rehabilitation program played an essential part in ensuring that I was soon back on my feet.”

Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, 2011



1. Jenny Coombs (centre), jumping for joy on International Nurse's Day, retired in 2011 as Director of Nursing after 28 years.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Take Heart Again: The Story of a Fellowship of Jewish Doctors*, Suzanne D. Rutland, November 1983, p. 56; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 July 1950.
- ² *Sydney Jewish News*, 25 May 1951.
- ³ S. Karpin in NSW Jewish Hospital 6th Annual Report, 1953/1954.
- ⁴ NSW Jewish Hospital, Minutes of Board Meeting, 15 February 1954.
- ⁵ NSW Jewish Hospital, Minutes of Board Meeting, 21 June 1954.
- ⁶ Gertie Stone, *Last Will & Testament*, 13 April 1949, clauses 19, 21.
- ⁷ The Wolper Convalescent House, Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting, 13 April 1953.
- ⁸ Trustees of NCJW Hospital and Social Services Committee, Minutes of Meeting, 27 November 1956.
- ⁹ NSW Jewish Hospital, Minutes of Board Meeting, 9 November 1953.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ National Council of Jewish Women minutes, June 1959.
- ¹² Trustees of the Hospital Visiting Committee of the National Council of Jewish Women, Minutes of Meeting, 17 August 1959.
- ¹³ S. Karpin in Wolper Jewish Hospital Annual Report 1981, p. 3.
- ¹⁴ Wolper Jewish Hospital, 2nd Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1963, p. 2.
- ¹⁵ S. Karpin, Wolper Jewish Hospital 20th Annual Report 1981, p. 3.
- ¹⁶ Deed between the Trustees and Wolper Jewish Hospital on transfer of the land, 14 May, 1982.
- ¹⁷ 1983.
- ¹⁸ L. Davies in *Australian Jewish Times*, 18 May 1990.
- ¹⁹ 'Community Notebook', *Australian Jewish News*, 16 June 1998.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ *Australian Jewish Times*, 23 September 1988, p. 3.
- ²² *Journal of Medical Genetics*, 2003.
- ²³ *Australian Jewish News*, 28 February 1999.
- ²⁴ H. Aizenberg, Interview, 2002.
- ²⁵ H. Aizenberg, Discussion paper on the future of Wolper Jewish Hospital, Woollahra, March 2000.
- ²⁶ KPMG Consulting, Review of Future Direction of the Wolper Jewish Hospital, Sydney, January 2001.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ M. Landis, *Australian Jewish News*, 2002.
- ²⁹ M. Landis, President, Interview, September 2011.
- ³⁰ R. Glass, *Wolper Report*, December 2010, p. 1.
- ³¹ *Wolper Report*, December 2010, p. 1.
- ³² H. Aizenberg, Interview, September 2011.

References

Archives of Australian Judaica, Fisher Library, Sydney University.

Rutland, S., *Take Heart Again: The Story of a Fellowship of Jewish Doctors*, Fellowship of Jewish Doctors of New South Wales, 1993.

Interviews, conducted in Sydney, Australia, September 2011.

While every care has been taken to trace and acknowledge copyright, Wolper Jewish Hospital tenders its apologies for any accidental infringement where copyright has proved untraceable.

©Wolper Jewish Hospital 2011
8Trelawney Street
Woollahra NSW 2025
www.wolper.com.au

Project Leader: Richard Glass
Contributing writers: Dr David Golovsky, Harry Aizenberg
Editor: Avril Janks
Designed by Boheem Design in conjunction with
John Holland Marketing

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Murray Landis, Life Governor and former President. This history is based on his text, "The Origins of Wolper Jewish Hospital", produced in April 2000.

The authors also thank Marianne Dacy of the Archive of Australian Judaica, Fisher Library, University of Sydney, for her kind assistance.

Wolper Jewish Hospital
8 Trelawney Street
Woollahra NSW 2025

PO Box 844
Woollahra NSW 1350

Phone: 02 9328 6077

Fax: 02 9327 5973

info@wolper.com.au

www.wolper.com.au



WOLPER
JEWISH HOSPITAL

