

...year by the opposition spokesman on health, Dr Andrew Refshauge.

However, the accuracy of the survey was questioned last night by a spokesman for the Minister for Health, Mr Collins.

The survey, which covered 53 public hospitals in NSW, found that most of the closed beds would remain out of use for up to two months - which is thought to be about twice as long as in previous years.

It found that the hospitals worst affected by the permanent closures included:

- Bankstown (30 beds expected to be closed in the next few weeks).
- Canterbury (12 beds).
- Royal Prince Alfred (72 beds).
- Liverpool, Westmead and St Vincent's (each is expected to lose 45 beds).

Dr Refshauge said hospitals across NSW had been forced to close beds permanently or for long periods because of a State Government decision to cut administrative costs in hospitals by \$35 million this financial year.

The shut-down of large sections of the hospital system over Christmas was not uncommon, he said, but he expressed concern over the number of beds being closed permanently.

Such drastic cuts could put everybody's health at risk.

Dr Refshauge said the closures would also lengthen the already long list of public hospital patients waiting for elective surgery - by up to 18 months in some cases.

"The full extent of bed closures is likely to be much greater than these 563, as many hospitals refuse to reveal their figures," he said.

"But they are all affected by the Government's cuts and will have to take steps to prevent budget overruns."

The spokesman for Mr Collins admitted that some beds had been closed but said the number was "nowhere near" 563.

Bathurst	8	4 wks
Balmore	8	4 wks
Blacktown	35	Perm
Bonahoe	6	Perm
Bull	10	Perm
Canterbury	37	6 wks
	42	Perm
Coledale	20	4 wks
Cowra	35	6 wks
Gladesville/Rozelle	100	Perm
Hastings district	10	Perm
Hornsby	20	Perm
Lismore	29	3 mths
Liverpool	45	Perm
Macquarie	24	Perm
Maitland	38	1 year
Mona Vale	14	Indef
Narranderra	15	Perm
Port Kembla	54	6 wks
Prince Henry	120	4 wks
Prince of Wales	25	Indef
	80	4-5 wks
Royal Prince Alfred	72	Perm
Royal St Vincent	35	3 wks
Royal Women's	30	6 wks
St George	22	Perm
St Margaret's	28	2 wks
St Vincent's	45	Perm
Wallend	76	1-2 wks
Waverley Women's Memorial	12	2 wks
Western Suburbs	40	6 wks
Westmead	45	Perm
Wollongong	10	Perm
TOTAL	1,270	

He said each region had been told to make productivity savings of 1.5 per cent but this did not necessarily mean beds had to be closed permanently.

In some cases, beds had been closed down simply because of a shortage of staff, including nurses.

"Hospitals normally wind down during this time because patients waiting for elective surgery do not like going to hospital during the Christmas break," he said.

"And, like everyone else, doctors, nurses and other hospital staff like to spend Christmas with their families, which is not unusual."

Resident medical officers were not satisfied by the rate of progress at the Industrial Commission and resolved last night to undertake a work-to-rule campaign, until they consider their claims have been addressed.

At a 3½-hour meeting at the Public Service Association, the RMOs considered a report on yesterday's Industrial Commission hearing.

The RMO branch president of the PSA, Dr Julian Parmegiani, said after the meeting that the work-to-rule would not have much effect on hospital functions.

"But RMOs will claim payment for overtime. It will place greater financial strain on hospitals, because the RMOs have not been paid overtime," he said.

The Public Service Association general secretary, Ms Helen Twobell, said there had been no suggestion that some RMOs had lost confidence in the PSA.

(The Herald reported yesterday that some doctors had claimed they were ready to leave the PSA.)

Yesterday, the State's 2,400 RMOs were granted an interim pay rise of 2 to 5 per cent from January 2 by the NSW Industrial Commission.

The Full Bench of the commission approved the deal after warning that RMOs could not expect to keep the rise if they got the 4 to 6 per cent increase they are seeking.

The commission also rubber-stamped a new classification, securing an additional shift allowance of \$15 for each 12 hours that an RMO is left in charge of a hospital.

A single judge will continue hearing cases today to resolve outstanding claims.



Jenny and Hannah ... "I'm getting 'My Child'."

Nine Iranians on hunger strike

By WANDA JAMROK, Ethnic Affairs Reporter

Nine Iranian detainees at the Villawood Detention Centre have begun a hunger strike in protest at the Department of Immigration's failure to grant them permission to stay in Australia.

They claim that deportation to Iran would place them in danger of execution. Recent reports by Amnesty International have confirmed widespread torture and executions in Iran since the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

Six of the nine hunger strikers have been held at Villawood for periods ranging from five to 10 months after arriving at Sydney Airport without travel documents.

The other three, all women, joined their husbands in the detention centre last Friday after requesting an end to the separation of families. Previously they, and seven children, had been accommodated next door in the Westbridge Migrant Hostel.

On Saturday, the Iranians wrote to the manager of the detention centre, Mr Peter Logan, to inform him they were beginning a hunger strike.

Since then they have refused all solid food.

Copies of the letter were sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Immigration, Amnesty International, the United Nations and the Human Rights Commission.



Stephen and Daniel ... "They already know there's no Santa Claus."

By JOHN SAMPSON

When it comes to Christmas, there are two kinds of children - the poor and the rich.

Jenny Parkin, all flowers and dresses, is part of the rest. She's eight and she's playing on a computer with her sister, Hannah, 4, and talking of Christmas while her mother looks on tolerantly.

"I'm getting 'My Child'," Jenny says. "She's a special doll with beautiful silky hair. And I'm getting Roald Dahl books. He's a really funny man who writes funny poems and turns them into stories."

Jenny goes to Birchgrove Public. "I like it. I don't want to go into third grade." She plays with balls and jumps on the trampolines and the beanbags. She goes to ballet, and has recorder lessons.

Jenny and Hannah live with their parents in a four-bedroom home in Birchgrove. If it's hot, they go for a swim in their pool. This Christmas, they are going to their auntie's for lunch.

Stephen and Daniel are not so lucky. Stephen wants a BMX bike for Christmas. He won't get it.

That might sound a bit cruel, but his father said: "They already know there's no Santa Claus, so there's no need to hide anything from them."

Stephen is admiring his new sneakers in the room of the Smith Family. "They're really comfortable, dad."

Stephen, 10, is lively and eager to please. He and brother Daniel, 8, live with their father, Ken, in a two-bedroom Housing Commission home in Sydney's south-east. Ken, 32, (he prefers anonymity as "well-off kids can be very cruel"), is on the pension and a full-time father. They haven't lived with their mother in quite a long time.

The way Stephen and Daniel bounce around, it's hard to imagine they know they are among the 302,064 children living in poverty in NSW. "Dad's only got two cents in the bank," says Daniel.

The boys play cricket in the park with the other children in the area. But they are really in training for football. They go to the local school where Stephen says, with relief, he is fighting all the time and just Ken says he doesn't know what they're doing for Christmas just yet.

The two boys are happy. They've got two bags full of shorts and shirts and things, and a Christmas hamper.

"There are heaps of families worse off than us," Ken says. "Heaps of them."

PAGE 17: Suffer little children.

War trials may start soon

CANBERRA: Controversial war crimes trials could start within the next six months with the anticipated passage of the Federal Government's war crimes legislation through Parliament today.

Last night, the Senate passed the War Crimes Amendment Bill 1987 by 38 votes to 33.

The legislation will be discussed during a special sitting of the House of Representatives today and Government sources said it would be passed.

Passage of the legislation paves the way to prosecute people suspected of committing war crimes in Europe between September 1, 1939, and May 8, 1945, now living in Australia.

The special unit set up to investigate allegations of Nazi war criminals living in Australia has already looked at more than 550 cases and is believed ready to recommend its first prosecution.

Last night, six Australian Democrats and NSW Independent Senator Irina Dunn joined the Government to pass the bill.

The Opposition Justice spokesman, Senator Robert Hill, said the Opposition had always supported the thrust of the bill - that war criminals should be prosecuted.

"But they should be prosecuted under a bill that is fair and just," he said in his third reading speech.

Day and night, they're always in the news

By ROBIN OLIVER

What do television companies do with newsmen once their fortunes start to fade?

They have them for breakfast. Consider, for instance, Richard Zachariah, now holidaying in Fiji. Only last month he was flashing a smile at the camera and Ann Sanders as the presenter of the news on Channel 7 to the second largest news audience in Sydney.

Now he is embroiled in something rather pointedly called "negotiations", talking himself into - or maybe out of - the miserable prospect of getting out of bed every morning at 5.30 in order to read the news on TV-AM.

Lonely? Maybe he should consult Tim Webster, who used to smile at the camera from the Eyewitness News studios at Channel 10, but was dumped from that job and given general hosting duties on Good Morning Australia. Until, that is, Mike Gibson came along in a fit of self-imposed exile from the sports desk at Nine's news.

This then is Eric Walters, who used to read the main news at Ten, but now presents cheerful, face and discreet bicoals in the news bits on the early morning Today show from Channel 9.

So what gives a newswoman staying power? The daddy of them all is Brian Henderson, who has been with Nine since it opened in 1956 and became newswoman the next year.

Hendo's is special. Obviously under contract never to grow a day older, he is a recipient of Nine's standard issue elixir of youth.

NEWSREADERS: WE HAVE THEM FOR BREAKFAST

Brian Henderson: started 1957. Reading for 14 years on Nine.	Roger Climpson: read the news at 7 for 13 years from 1968 to 1981. Taking over from Richard Zachariah in January with Ann Sanders.	Steve Liebmann and Geraldine Daagans: reading for one year on Ten.	Richard Horworts: Principle newswoman for six years on the ABC.	Mary Kestelblat: reading for eight months on SBS.

People casually hit of hair transplants and other unmentionables, but the man still lives and breathes, has a great sense of humour, an intelligence to sustain and a grasp of the news that surprises many people.

You can actually touch him, shake hands with him; he doesn't melt. Good for another six years at least. Chance of renewal.

So what of Roger Climpson, who now gets his job back at Seven? Climpson is too old, says Sam Chisholm, top man at Nine and a television executive second to none. He says it with just the faintest suggestion that he hopes to God he may be right; Seven is not exactly grand.

nudging Nine in the news hour ratings - the most important time slot - but it is getting there.

Can Climo do the trick? He's done it before.

Too old? He should be so lucky - he's only 56. He is also a man, and, according to one senior commercial television executive who presided (in part) over the long and glorious reign of Jim Dibble on ABC (peak ratings of 35 in 1962, equal to Hendo now), it still takes a man to be a newswoman.

That may be the key to Henderson's success. That and two facts; he has no partner to read with him and as Sam Chisholm knows, he has been doing it for so long that the years just fall away.

Not only that, the people who write the bulletins Henderson reads are well aware that it appeals to a majority of viewers between the age of 25 and 39.

And where does that leave Ann Sanders. She's so pretty, and, of course, far too young, Maggie Tabberer, a simply marvellous TV face and self-confessed coosier of Mr Zachariah, with whom she's holidays in Fiji, let it be known from recent interview in Woman's Day that she could not help hoping that Miss Sanders would grow warts on her nose.

Ain't love and TV newswomen grand?

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by MOVADO

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