

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Ipswich

Ambulance services commenced in Ipswich on 4 November 1901, when the Brisbane Centre Committee opened a Sub-Centre there. Deputy Superintendent W.C. Tomkins was placed in charge and he was assisted by Bearer W. Armstrong and seven Honorary Bearers. The weekly wages paid to Officers Tomkins and Armstrong were £2,10s and £1,16s respectively.

The Ambulance premises were situated in Down Street and the plant consisted of two Ashford litters (one kindly lent by the Ipswich Hospital Committee) and one collapsible stretcher. In 1902 a horse and sulky were added to the plant.

The steadily increasing number of calls (161 from 28 November 1901 to December 1902) made it imperative that extended accommodation for staff and plant be provided. The Brisbane Committee decided to adopt the recommendation of its Superintendent that included the leasing for two years of the whole allotment at a rental of 19 shillings weekly with an option to purchase at any time for £435. The property would then include the existing Centre together with an adjoining cottage with four rooms as Superintendent's Quarters, the space between the two buildings to be covered in to serve as a plant room.

In 1904 the lease of the Down Street premises expired and the Brisbane Committee deemed it prudent and economical to take advantage of an existing purchasing clause in the lease and secure the title. This was done and a saving of at least £25 annually was effected.

At its meeting on 16 September 1904, the Brisbane Centre Committee resolved that measures should soon be taken to encourage the residents of Ipswich to form a local committee with a view to the establishment of an independent Centre.



First Superintendent W.C. Tomkins

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Premises 1902

After working for five years under the governance of the Brisbane Centre, the Ipswich Sub-Centre was converted into a self-governing Branch Centre in November 1906 and Deputy Superintendent W.C. Tomkins was appointed Superintendent and Secretary. The paid staff included the Superintendent, two bearers, a collector (who also acted as a Relieving Bearer) and six Honorary Bearers. At the time, the plant consisted of a sulky and horse (with harness and necessary gear for a speedy exit), three Ashford litters, one collapsible stretcher with shoulder straps, and fumigating and disinfecting appliances. The first Committee comprised M. Bowers (Chairperson), G. Williams (Hon Treasurer), W. Betts, R.P. Watson, P.W. Cameron, H.M. Scott and J.H. Hooper. Mr M. Bowers was appointed to represent the Centre on the State Executive Committee.

An Honorary Centre was established at Toogoolawah in 1906 with Honorary Bearer J.J. Tomkins in charge, and in 1908 further Honorary Centres were established at Harrisville and Esk.

In 1909 Honorary Centres were opened at Laidley (Honorary Bearer A.E.W. Maxwell in charge) and at Lowood (Honorary Bearer W.H. Brown in charge). During the same year, a litter was sent to Esk and a collapsible stretcher to Gatton for the use of the public.

In consequence of increased demands made upon the Brigade, premises that had met the requirements of the staff in the past were now considered to be too small. In 1910 the Committee purchased new premises at the corner of Down and Flint Streets at a very satisfactory price. The premises were renovated and enlarged to make a comfortable and convenient Centre.

The new premises were further renovated in 1911 and a plant room measuring 40 feet long by 24 feet wide was added. In that year the Committee purchased a four-wheeled wagon fitted with rubber tyres for country calls and attending accidents at the various local mines. In expounding upon the value of this wagon the Chairperson in his annual report stated, 'it is fitted with hood, roller blinds at the sides (which can be drawn during wet weather), thoroughly ventilated, pole and shafts for one or two horses, is capable of carrying two patients on stretchers, or seven persons in sitting position on movable seats'.

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The first mines rescue station of its kind established in the Commonwealth was built on the Brigade's property in Flint Street and commenced operations in 1912. It was formed for the benefit of coal mines in case of fire or other dangers in the mines, such as poisonous gases, black damp etc., where men were overcome or entombed.



Second premises

This brick building contained an air-tight chamber at the rear. This compartment was charged with fumes once or twice weekly for practice purposes. The tender price for the erection of the Rescue Station was £196 and the Mines Department met half the cost and the fitting up. In addition, the Department agreed to provide apparatus at a cost of approximately £300. Also, the Government contributed £40 a year as salary to the instructor.

The instructor was Mr T.W. Smith who was succeeded in 1914 by Ambulance Officer George Turner with Senior Bearer C.W.H. Scriven as his assistant. The trainees were all practical miners.

The station was governed by the Ambulance Committee assisted by an Advisory Committee, which represented the Mines Department, Colliery Proprietors' Association, Ambulance Brigade, Queensland Colliery Employees' Union and Trainees.

In 1923 a new rescue Station and Instructor's residence were erected at Booval and subsequently the governance of this service was transferred from the Ambulance Brigade.

Further Honorary Centres were opened at Yarraman Creek and Mount Marrow in 1912 and at Rosewood and Cressbrook in 1913.

In 1916 the Committee purchased its first motor ambulance vehicle, a six-cylinder Studebaker. In July of that year the Honorary Centre at Laidley was opened as a Sub-Centre and Bearer C.W.H. Scriven

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Officer-in-Charge with the rank of Deputy Superintendent. This Sub-Centre became a self-governing Centre in 1921.

By special request of the residents a Sub-Centre was opened at Redbank on 4 December 1917 and Senior Bearer G. Turner placed in charge. In 1927 the Ipswich Committee decided to close this Sub-Centre and it was confident that a better service could be given from Ipswich seeing that the roads were very good. The Sub-Centre was re-opened in 1969 as an Ambulance Station and new premises were erected.

In 1919 a Sub-Centre was opened at Yarraman with Deputy Superintendent J. Grimstead in charge. Yarraman became an independent Centre in 1921.

From 1915 the Committee had considered the construction of a more modern building for Brigade requirements, but the stress of war and other conditions delayed such a project. A new brick building was eventually opened in 1919.

In August 1922, a Sub-Centre was formed at Lowood with Senior Bearer C. Gambling in charge. For several years, there had been an Honorary Centre, with Mr W.J. Walters in charge, who did good service in working the Centre up, together with the local Advisory Committee. Lowood became a self-governing centre in 1927. However, in 1934 it ceased to be an independent Centre and transferred back to the Ipswich Centre as a Sub-Centre. During the 1936-37 financial year, the Ipswich Committee found it advisable to close the Sub-Centre and render a service to the Lowood area from Ipswich as the roads were so much improved. A Sub-Centre was re-established in 1990 and the newly-constructed premises were officially opened on 1 September of that year by the Hon Terry Mackenroth, Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The Honorary Centre at Toogoolawah was taken over by the Local Committee in 1925 and a self-governing Centre was established by Order in Council dated 14 June 1923.

Superintendent W.C. Tomkins passed away in 1934 and his Deputy Superintendent Mr D. Miller was appointed to the vacant positions of Superintendent and Secretary.

At a public meeting held in Rosewood on 25 February 1951, it was resolved that application should be made to the Ipswich Committee to declare the new Ambulance building as a Centre and that Rosewood become self-governing. In May 1951 applications were invited for the dual position of Superintendent and Secretary at Rosewood and Mr Les Coleman was appointed. Mr Coleman of the Ipswich staff had been sent to Rosewood to operate the Sub-Centre pending the gazettal of the independent Centre.

Superintendent Miller retired in 1951 and he was succeeded by Superintendent Coleman. After serving the Committee as its Superintendent and Secretary for a period of ten years Mr Coleman retired and Superintendent R.F. Bartlett of Charters Towers was appointed in his stead.

Superintendent Bob Bartlett retired on 20 June 1970 and Superintendent J.L. McMaster of Toogoolawah Centre was appointed to the vacant position. Superintendent John McMaster served the Committee until his retirement in 1979 when he was succeeded by Superintendent M.C. McDonald of the Gatton Centre.

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Two of Ipswich's most major developments occurred in 1986. The first was the introduction of pre-hospital coronary care mobile units. Ipswich was the second Queensland Centre after Brisbane to commence this life-saving programme. In October 14 officers, including the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, completed an intensive course in the use of a cardiac monitor defibrillator, as well as clinical and theoretical aspects of coronary care procedures and protocols. To retain their coronary care skills, officers undergo skills assessments by the Training Officers and recertification by Queensland Ambulance Service medical officers.

The second major event was the completion of renovations and extensions to the Centre building at a cost of \$350,000.

In 1991 Superintendent Malcolm McDonald OAM was appointed Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Region.

The District Superintendent based at Ipswich is Mr Reg Andrew.

Since the establishment of Ipswich as a self-governing Centre the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

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| 1906 – 1918 | M. Bower |
| 1918 – 1924 | P.W. Cameron |
| 1924 – 1936 | R.P. Watson |
| 1936 – 1939 | Dr E.E. Brown |
| 1939 – 1961 | F.J. Elson |
| 1961 – 1970 | L.A. Thomas |
| 1970 – 1982 | W.J. Llewellyn |
| Present occupant Chairperson | J.J. Cushing |