

HISTORY OF THE *Queensland Ambulance*

Dirranbandi

The idea of establishing an ambulance centre in Dirranbandi was the brainchild of Henry Watt, the Manager of the Bank of New South Wales in 1951. As the area was covered for ambulance service by the St George Centre the committee of that Centre was approached to establish a Sub-Centre in Dirranbandi. Henry Watt, Syd Cole, Gerry Armstrong and Jack McCarthy formed a committee and held a public meeting with members of the St George Committee in attendance. It was decided to build a Sub-Centre in Dirranbandi. Representation was made by the St. George Committee, through Mr J.R. Taylor MLA to the Minister for Lands, Mr Thos Foley to have land set aside for this purpose. In November 1953, this aim was achieved. An amendment was made in 1954 extending the land to its present size.

The Centre was subsequently established and continued as a Sub-Centre of St George, with officer Vic Green in charge. The venture was so successful that they decided to become an independent centre after five years. Three or four committee members travelled to St George each month for their monthly meeting and two were members of the St George Committee. Members of the original committee were G. Armstrong (Chairperson), S.M. Cole, J.W. McCarthy, E.J. Hammond, J.G. Hile, W.H. Brettell and W. Crumblin. When the Centre became self-governing in April 1958, six of the original committee remained, the seventh being Mr J. Guest. Mr G. Armstrong was Chairperson for 19 years. One member of the original committee, Mr Jack McCarthy, served on the committee for over 30 years. Mr H.C. Kemp, chairperson of St. George Committee, in his annual report in 1958, said that the Dirranbandi Ambulance Centre began with a credit balance of £1,557,7s 9d, a good house, office, garage and a car, in addition to the usual ambulance equipment. The building and other brigade property was handed over completely free of debt.

Officer Ed Turner was the second Officer-in-Charge and became the first Superintendent in 1958 when the Centre became self-governing. He was followed by T.J. Knight who was appointed when Ed Turner became Superintendent of St George Centre. Tom Knight continued until 1966 and was succeeded by Brian Moore who remained until 1970. He was replaced by Roy Turner who stayed until 1976. In that year Kevin Gaedtke took up his appointment. The whole district was saddened by the deaths of both Superintendent Gaedtke and his Honorary Officer W.G. (Dick) Rodwell on 19 June 1980. Dick had been an Honorary Officer for 26 years from the time he obtained his First Aid Certificate in 1954.

Pat Denham came to Dirranbandi as Superintendent in 1980 and was followed in August 1983 by Ian Halliwell who remained until 1986 when Superintendent S. Allen was appointed. The present Superintendent is Mr Robert Arthy.

A ladies Benefit Committee was formed to raise funds for the Centre and May Crumblin was the first President for two years. May Brokenborough took over the role for six months to be followed by her sister Hannah Rodwell who held that position for 14 years. She is still on the committee, serving for 30 years and having been President many times. Other ladies to complete 20 years are Clare Stevens and Nestor Mason.

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Over the years many fundraising events were held and former residents will no doubt remember Miegunyah Ball, Bonnie Doon Sports, Nelyambo Sports, Flower and Wool Shows, Motorkanas, Gymkana, Car Art Unions, Dog Shows, Golf Days, Easter Monday Sports for Children, Boxing Day Sports, Film Evenings and, more recently, Christmas and Easter Carnivals and Nee Nee Sports. Catering has been a feature of their work, including catering for the Diggers Ball, Bachelor and Spinster Ball and many street stalls and sales on properties.



Centre building

The original Ford ambulance was replaced in 1959 with a new Holden station wagon. A second ambulance was purchased in 1964. The Sir Edwin Marsden Tooth Estate donation of \$2,000 enabled the Centre to purchase a Valiant Ambulance. A Ford Falcon was added in 1977 and in 1979 the Lions Club of District 201 bought a Toyota 4WD vehicle from the sale of Christmas cakes. This vehicle was used primarily for the evacuation of patients and was much-valued during floods and when roads are in bad condition.

Residents who have served on the committee over the years are as follows:

Dr B.G. Downs
B. Jeffrey
K. Cope
Dr J. Lockwood
Dr Perkins
Dr P.N. Davis
G. Dwyer
G. Tydd
T.W. Walker
G. Betts
K. Telford
A. Hess
Mrs J. Stewart
J. Ryan
J.W. McCarthy
G.W. Hill

L. Woods
D. Burton
R. Cussen
S. Pollard
Dr Handy G. Bennet
W. Woody
H. Crothers
J. Tracey
Dr K.S. Carthew
G. Gillespie
R. Wills
L. Bowen
P. Allen
T. Farry
M.J.P. Stephens
T. Taylor

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B. Fox

The current Committee comprises:

H. Crothers (Chairperson)

L. Pola (Deputy Chairperson)

E. Williams

H. Johnson

G. Cousins

J. Hammond

F. Fry

Dr Donohue

Honorary Officers who have provided much valued service are:

W.G. Rodwell

B. Lee

P. Mosses

L. Clyne

K. Cuskelly

Fr F. Yound

G. McIntosh

Mrs K. Bendall

B. Stephens

W. Brokenborough

S. Raleigh

W.J. Bendall

M. Allen

A. Rodwell

B. Rankin

L. Hillard

R. Weaver

B. Adams

C. McWhir

G. Stephens

E. Hoath

P. Gaedtke

G. Grant

C. Sivell

K. Blunden