

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Southport

The QATB service at Southport was established on 18 November 1919 after a public meeting called by the Mayor on behalf of the Town Council, appointed a Provisional Committee. The Provisional Committee comprised W. Waters (Chairperson), H. Saltmarshe (Hon Treasurer), G.D. Savage, G. Andrews and Doctors R.S. Berry and W.W. Green.

The first Superintendent was Mr Percy Raby who had occupied the position of Chief Officer at the Brisbane Centre. Superintendent Raby operated the ambulance service from a residence in Rawlins Street. This residence was leased by the Committee with the option of purchase.

A Ford car belonging to the Brisbane Centre was rented at a cost of £1 per week, with an option of purchase for the sum of £180. Because of the state of the roads outside the town area this vehicle proved to be unsuitable and the Committee decided to purchase a Hupmobile car complete with ambulance body for the sum of £595.

In addition to the car, the plant consisted of one rubber-tyred litter, one rigid and two collapsible stretchers and all necessary first aid material. The litter had been handed over by the Ambulance Society which disbanded following the establishment of the QATB Service in the town.

The Lands Department in 1921 made a grant of land situated in the main street. The Committee then set about raising funds to finance the construction of a new building. Through the zealous work of the Ladies Committee and the support accorded by all classes of the community sufficient funds were raised to enable the committee to arrange the preparation of plans and the calling of tenders. The successful tenderer was Mr G.A. Carter, a local builder; the tender price was £4,332. The building was officially opened on 2 December 1922, by the President of the Brigade (Colonel A.J. Thynne) before a large representative gathering.



Centre building opened 1922

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Due to the increased work load the Committee decided in 1923 to appoint a second permanent officer. The appointee was Mr A.J. Wingate formerly of the Cairns Centre. In 1926 Arthur Wingate became the first Superintendent of the Tully Centre.

From the year 1921 a permanent officer was stationed at Burleigh Heads during holiday periods. In 1955 the Southport Committee decided to accede to the request of the Burleigh Heads Progress Association by establishing a permanent Sub-Centre at Burleigh Heads. The building was officially declared open on 9 April 1955. Superintendent Tipper of the Biloela Centre was appointed to the position of Officer-in-Charge.

On 1 July 1957 Burleigh Heads became a self-governing Centre and Tom Tipper was appointed Superintendent/Secretary.

In 1961, after guiding the destinies of the QATB Service in Southport for a period of 41 years, Superintendent Percy Raby retired. He had been in the Brigade for 50 years.

Deputy Superintendent Donald Young of the Cairns Centre was appointed to the vacant position. The Chairperson (Mr A.J. Oxenford) and members of the Southport Committee travelled many miles interviewing applicants prior to their selection of Mr Young.

In June 1965 Deputy, Superintendent Cliff Coddington of Southport was one of 21 QATB officers selected to attend the New South Wales Ambulance Training School in Sydney. Upon his return a comprehensive course on modern ambulance techniques was instituted for local staff. Officers attended on a voluntary basis, examinations were conducted, and the results were very satisfying. The Southport Centre was the first in Queensland to have such a course.



First Superintendent P. Raby

When the State Council established an Ambulance Training School in Brisbane in June 1970, Cliff Coddington, who at the time was Assistant State Secretary, was appointed as the first Supervisor of Training. In 1973 Mr Coddington was appointed Chief Training Officer of the New South Wales Ambulance Training School. For health reasons he relinquished the position in 1981.

The Triennial State Conference of the QATB was held at the Broadbeach Hotel in April 1968. The Southport Committee was honoured to act as host on such an important occasion as this was the first State Conference conducted by the newly-formed State Council of the QATB.

To keep pace with the ever-increasing population and workload and the consequential increase in the size of the plant it became necessary for the Committee to acquire land as a site for larger premises. In 1980 the present premises in Southport West were constructed and then stations were opened at Runaway Bay in 1985 and at Coral Garden Waterways in 1987.

Superintendent Donald Young retired in 1988 and was succeeded by his Deputy Superintendent Mr Syd Cross.

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Since the establishment of the Southport Centre the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

H. Waters

J.R. Brown

W. Lather

E.M. Walsh

N.S. Woodroffe

E.L. Hutcheon

Dr C. Barnes

J.A. Allison

R.N. Thames

Dr W. Mackey

A.J. Oxenford BEM