

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Hervey Bay

After two years ground work by interested citizens, permission was received on the 21 October 1948, to establish a provisional QATB Service at Hervey Bay and a tent was erected on Mr Jack Barron's property at the corner of the Esplanade and Frank Street, Scarness.

Operations commenced on 24 December 1948 on a voluntary basis under the control of Mr Peter Knudsen (former Superintendent of Theodore) who was assisted by J. Barron, F. Marshall, L.E. Pearce, R. Parke, W. Parke and W.S. Brown.

In March 1949 Hervey Bay was gazetted by the Government as a self-governing QATB Centre. The first Superintendent was Superintendent R.A. Sealey formerly of the Biggenden Centre and he commenced duty at Hervey Bay on 2 May 1949.



First Superintendent R. Sealey (Rt) and 2nd Chairperson J. Barron

Reg Sealey and his wife were installed in a rented house at No 8 Esplanade, Scarness, and the tent that was being used as a casualty room, was transferred to this address.

The erection by voluntary labour of a 20 foot by 10 foot shed a short time later to replace the tent must have been most welcome.

Two months after the gazettal of the Centre and in pursuance of the provisions of the Hospital Act it was necessary to call nominations for a Committee consisting of seven members. There were 14 candidates and following a postal ballot the following people were elected: W.B. Brown, J. Barron, G.H. Cooper, P. Knudsen, G.F.W. Anson, F. Marshall and Miss P.M. Brind. The elected members then appointed Mr Brown to the position of Chairperson and Mr Cooper to that of Honorary Treasurer.

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Mr Cooper was the Committee's first representative on the State Executive. After ten years' service on that body he was succeeded by Mr Jack Barron.

The first problem for the Committee to overcome was that of transport. The Studebaker Ambulance that had been loaned (with the option of purchase) by the Gympie Committee required a complete overhaul. The Bundaberg Committee came to the Committee's aid with the loan of a vehicle pending the purchase of a new vehicle.

Early in the new financial year, with the co-operation of a new Committee member (Mr R. Parke), a building at the corner of the Esplanade and Zephyr Street was purchased and converted into an Ambulance Centre and residence for the Superintendent.



Centre building 1950

In 1951 Superintendent Sealey was awarded a badge to mark his 30 years' service to the QATB and in 1971 he was presented with a Bar and Certificate for 50 years' service. His dedication to duty, co-operation with the medical fraternity, nursing fraternity, fellow members of the staff and the public generally, will long be remembered.

In 1969 Mr Sealey brought to the notice of the Committee the inconvenience of having the Centre situated on what had become a dangerous corner, particularly at holiday time when the traffic was heavy and it was necessary for the ambulance vehicles to be driven across the roadway to be reversed into the building. Subsequently a suitable site at the corner of Torquay Road and Down Street, Scarness was purchased.

A sub-committee was formed to draw up preliminary plans for new premises and these were constructed and officially opened on 16 March 1975, by Sir Douglas Fraser, President of the QATB State Council.

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In 1973 Superintendent Sealey retired from the service and Superintendent Roy Smith of the Childers Centre was appointed in his stead.

Superintendent Smith passed away in 1975 and Superintendent Bob Warnock was appointed to the vacant position. Superintendent Warnock retired in 1991.

Since the gazettal of the Hervey Bay Centre four people have filled the position of Chairperson:

1949 – 1956	W.S. Brown
1956 – 1982	J. Barron
1982 – 1984	L. Wilkin
Present occupant Chairperson	Mr H. Baldwin