

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Clermont

The first ambulance service established in the Clermont area was at the coal mining town of Blair Athol and commenced in 1912. This service was conducted on an honorary basis under the control of the Rockhampton QATB Committee and continued in this manner until 1920 when an ambulance centre was opened at Clermont.

The Blair Athol Honorary Centre was operated by mining company employees who were designated as Honorary Bearers. Patients were transported by means of a hand litter. From 1918, the service used a 1917 model Chandler motor car converted to a rail car to transport patients to the Clermont Hospital from Blair Athol via the main rail line.

In June 1920 a public meeting was called by the Mayor (Dr John Higgins, Superintendent of the Clermont Hospital) for the purpose of establishing an ambulance brigade in Clermont. A committee was formed and in July it decided that a self-governing centre should be established.

In November 1920 an Overland Four Car was ordered (for £565) and this arrived in February 1921. Deputy Superintendent M.A. Whittington of the Bundaberg Centre was appointed Superintendent and Secretary and commenced duty in Clermont on 8 December 1920.

Members of the first QATB Committee were Dr J. Higgins (Chairperson), G. Gilbert, S Morris, A. Mowlam, E. Shandley, H. Slade and H. Von Alpen.

With the approval of the Blair Athol body, the local Honorary Centre came under the control of the Clermont Centre.

Quarters

One of the immediate tasks of the Brigade Committee was to procure a building from which to operate. Initially a house was rented from Mr I. Nasser for this purpose. This house was situated on the land later occupied by the Clermont Post Office.

In late 1923, with the loyal support of residents of the town and district, the Committee was able to purchase premises of its own on the corner of Capella and Douglas Streets.

As the population continued to grow the Committee decided to purchase land in a more central position and move the Centre building on to it. The site chosen was in Sirius Street where the present Centre is now situated.

In 1964 a new Centre building was constructed and this was officially opened by Mr J.A. Turner, President of the State Executive on 14 March of that year. In addition to the Centre building, a new Superintendent's residence was constructed and the combined cost of both buildings was £16,500. The funds to cover the cost were raised by a Committee which was formed to conduct Queen Competitions and Woolshed Dances throughout the district. The buildings were opened free of debt.

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Plant

The Centre operated with one vehicle until 1926 when a second was acquired. Early in the 1930s, a 30 hundredweight Chevrolet truck was purchased and fitted with an ambulance body. This vehicle was used to respond to calls from residents in outback areas and on station properties. During the rainy seasons this vehicle was often bogged and left out for days until the roads dried out. On one occasion, it was away from the Centre for two weeks due to flooded creeks and crossings.



First building

Development through Coal Mining

In 1968, vast development began in the coal industry at Goonyella, which had previously been a station property known by the same name. An extra vehicle was purchased and an additional officer was employed and stationed at the coal mine site in buildings supplied by the Utah Development Company. The funds required to purchase the vehicle and employ the additional officer were made available by the company.

In 1970, construction of the township of Moranbah commenced and a Sub-Centre commenced operations from a Utah Development Company building in Laver Street, Moranbah in 1971. An additional officer was employed and an extra vehicle purchased to operate the Sub-Centre. Funds for this were also supplied by the Utah Development Company.

In 1972, the Peak Downs Coal Mine commenced production and an additional officer and vehicle were made available and stationed at the Peak Downs Depot under a similar agreement with the Utah Development Company.

In 1973, two additional officers were employed and two extra vehicles were purchased to staff and operate a depot at Saraji mine site which was under construction with a workforce of 1100. Funds for the operation of this depot were also made available by the Utah Development Company but under a different agreement from the other depots.

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In 1974 the construction of the township of Dysart began and a Sub-Centre was put into operation in July 1974 working from a building supplied by the Utah Development Company in Shannon Crescent, Dysart. An additional officer and vehicle were supplied by the Committee to operate this Sub-Centre and the funds necessary were supplied by the Utah Company. During the period 1972 to 1974, an additional officer and vehicle were stationed at Moranbah Sub-Centre and an additional officer was stationed at the Clermont Centre.

The construction of the Norwich Park coal mine began in 1975. One officer and vehicle were transferred from the Saraji mine depot to the Norwich Park mine depot with an additional officer and vehicle being stationed there as well.

In 1977, ambulance services in the district were based at Clermont Centre (four officers and four vehicles), Moranbah (three officers and three vehicles) and Dysart (two officers and two vehicles) Sub-Centres, and Goonyella, Peak Downs, Saraji and Norwich Park mine site depots (one officer and one vehicle each).

In March 1977, a modern Sub-Centre building and residence for the Officer-in-Charge was opened at Griffin Street, Moranbah, free of debt, costing \$235 000 furnished and a Senior Officer's residence was constructed in Archer Drive, Moranbah, at a cost of \$50,000.

In October 1980 a modern Sub-Centre building with a separate residence for the Officer-in-Charge was opened at Queen Elizabeth Drive, Dysart free of debt, costing \$255,000.

Funds to cover costs of the two mentioned Sub-Centre buildings were obtained as follows:

Fundraising Committee	\$120,000
\$1 for \$1 subsidy by Utah Development Company	\$120,000
\$1 for \$1 subsidy by State Government	\$240,000
Interest from investments	\$60,000
TOTAL	\$540,000

A quarter-acre allotment of ground adjoining the Centre's grounds at Sirius Street, Clermont was purchased from the Bank of New South Wales in 1979 at a cost of \$5,000, to be held for future expansion of buildings if the occasion arises. Two officers and one vehicle were made available on site during the construction of Riverside and Blair Athol Coal Mines for the years 1982-1985.

Superintendents

In December 1925 Superintendent Whittington transferred to the Mossman Centre and Senior Ambulance Officer C.H. Hansen of the Mount Morgan Centre was appointed in his stead.

Other officers who have served in the positions of Superintendent and Secretary at the Clermont Centre are:

1931 – 1958	W. Mullaney
1959 – 1965	W. Jensen
1965 – 1973	A.N.R. Carson
Present occupant	
Superintendent	R.J. Tuttle



Superintendent W.P. Mullaney

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Chairpersons

Since the establishment of the self-governing Centre the following people have served in the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

1920 – 1922	Dr J. Higgins
1922 – 1935	C.H. North
1935 – 1937	V. Fittler
1937 – 1940	H. McLennan
1940 – 1941	W.H. Redmond
1941 – 1945	A.W. Butterfield
1945 – 1946	L.A. Wess
1946 – 1951	P.J. Cook
1951 – 1955	C.J. Smith
1955 – 1962	R. Wellington
1962 – 1986	E. Spring
Present occupant	
Chairperson	A.W. Humphreys