

# *HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance*

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## *Establishment of the Principal Body of Management and its Officers*

*I*n August 1900, the Secretary of the Committee of the City Ambulance and Transport Brigade, Hospital (CATBH) Brisbane was instructed to prepare a report upon the prospects and advisability of extending the Brigade to the larger centres of population in Queensland.

Visits to Townsville and Charters Towers resulted in Branch Centres being formed in each town in December 1900. Rockhampton Branch Centre was opened in August 1901 and Warwick Centre that began independently of CATBH accepted the offer of affiliation made by the Brisbane Committee in November 1901. Also in 1901 a Sub-Centre was established at Ipswich.

The establishment of Branch and Sub-Centres created a new phase in Brigade history. There was no provision in the existing rules of the CATBH Brisbane for their governance, and it was quickly realised that amendments and additional clauses to provide for the opening, maintenance and representation of these centres should be framed and submitted for approval. In order that all branches should remain in close touch with the parent centre it was suggested that an Executive Committee (consisting of the President, the members of the parent centre committee and a representative from each branch centre) should be elected and meet quarterly to oversee the conduct of Brigade affairs. It was also suggested that the title should be changed to something of a wider significance than one that was purely parochial. Because branches were in operation in northern, central and southern Queensland, the title 'Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade Hospital' seemed most acceptable. The amended rules were adopted by the committees of the parent and branch centres. They were confirmed at the Annual Meeting of Contributors held in the boardroom of the parent Centre on 6 February 1902 and gazetted on 19 March 1902.

This ended the first period in the history of the Brigade. From being an organisation established only in the capital city it had entered on the second stage of development becoming one of statewide activity. The funds for the use of the newly-formed Executive Committee were provided by a levy on the Government subsidy paid to each centre. The Superintendent/Secretary of the Brisbane parent centre acted as General Secretary. Included in his duties was the making of an inspection of the various centres.

By 1911 the increasing amount of work performed by the Superintendent of the Brisbane Centre made necessary the appointment of another person to take over the duties of Secretary from the Superintendent and also to act as General Secretary of the Executive Committee. The first person to fill the post was Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Harris.

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When war broke out in 1914, Colonel Harris volunteered together with a number of ambulance officers. By his death on Gallipoli while in command of the Fifth Light Horse Regiment in August 1915, the country lost the service of a gallant and faithful soldier, and the Queensland Ambulance a faithful servant.

Mr R.B. Barrett was appointed to the vacant positions of Secretary to the Brisbane Centre Committee and General Secretary.

In 1916 an arrangement was made with the St John Ambulance Association whereby the Brisbane Committee should act as the Committee for the Queensland Centre of the Association.

With the resignation of Mr Barrett in 1918, the third stage of the Brigade's history began. Mr W.C. Wilson was appointed General Secretary to the Executive Committee, to have no other Brigade duties except the Honorary Secretaryship of the St John Ambulance Association. The Superintendent of the Brisbane Centre would act as Secretary to the Brisbane Committee, as had been found a satisfactory arrangement at other centres.

For some time prior to 1918, the constitution of the Executive Committee had prompted criticism from centre committees, who were entitled to only one representative each, while the parent Centre was entitled to have each member of their committee on the Executive Committee. New rules were finalised in 1918, giving every centre one representative on the Executive Committee.

At the beginning of 1919 there were 29 self-governing centres and during that year Captain E.R.B. Pike was appointed General Secretary, a position he occupied for 30 years until his death in September 1949. After serving in the position for 15 years he was created a Knight of Grace of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Despite the duties that the general secretaryship of the QATB entailed, Captain Pike was identified with many Queensland organisations, in which he was always keenly interested. He was organiser for YMCA appeals, Honorary Secretary of the St John Ambulance Association from 1918 and of the Public Health Association (1921-26), Secretary of the Queensland Cancer Trust (1927-45), Trustee, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary of the Soldiers' Church of England Help Association, Treasurer of the Queensland Nutrition Council, President of the New Settlers' League of Queensland and of the Empire Marketing Board, Vice Chairperson of the Boy Scouts Association, Chairperson of the Social Service League and of the Regional Committee of UNNRA, State Controller of the Voluntary Aid Detachment in Queensland and State President of the Royal Society of St George.

In November 1949, Mr F.W. Cash, Superintendent of the Chinchilla Centre, succeeded Captain Pike as General Secretary. As in the case of his predecessor Mr Cash acted as Honorary Secretary of the St John Ambulance Association and for his valuable work on behalf of the organisation from 1949 to 1962 he was created a Serving Brother of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Following the election of Office Bearers of the St John Ambulance Association in 1962, the office of that body was relocated from QATB Headquarters because the President and General Secretary of the QATB Executive Committee did not retain their positions as President and Honorary Secretary of the Queensland Division of the St John organisation.

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In 1963 the QATB Executive Committee decided to issue QATB certificates to people who attended classes conducted on behalf of QATB Committees and who were successful in passing examinations in first aid and allied subjects.

With the pending retirement of Mr Cash, applications were invited for the position of Assistant General Secretary. Superintendent E.C. Bradley of the Nanango Centre was the successful applicant and commenced duty in June 1963. Upon the retirement of Mr Cash in June 1965, Mr Bradley was appointed to the position of General Secretary.

At this time, there were 101 independent centres and the committees of 89 of these were represented on the State Executive Committee.

In 1967 the Ambulance Services Act was passed by Parliament. The Act provided sweeping changes with regard to the status of the QATB, the most significant being the establishment of a new state body, known as the State Council of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade.

The Council consisted of 25 members:

- thirteen Zonal Representatives of the 99 Committees;
- four representatives of the Ambulance Superintendent's Association and Bearer's Union
- three representatives of the St John Ambulance Association and Brigade;
- four people appointed by the Governor-in-Council; and
- the Superintendent of the Brisbane Centre.

Some of the duties of the State Council were:

- to advise the Minister in relation to the administration of the Ambulance Services Act;
- to advise the Minister with respect to Ambulance Services generally;
- to ensure that every Ambulance Committee complied with the provisions of the Act; and
- to co-ordinate the services of Committees.

The Act was proclaimed on 22 June 1967, and came into operation on 24 June 1967.

Members of the Council assumed office on 1 October 1967 and the Chief Officers were President Sir Douglas Fraser ISO, Vice President Dr A.D.D. Pye CBE and Secretary Mr E.C. Bradley.

All employees of the Executive Committee became employees of the State Council.

Two significant achievements of the State Council were the establishment of a Superannuation Scheme for Ambulance employees and the establishment of a Staff Training School.

QATB committees and staffs had been discussing the implementation of a superannuation scheme since the early 1920s. However, it was not until 1969 that a scheme was adopted and approved by the Government.

The idea of an ambulance training school was first mooted in 1959 and from the early 1960s representations were made to the Minister of Health to obtain government approval for such a school. The school for the training of ambulance officers employed by committees commenced in June 1970.

In recognition of the need for the continuation of a first-class ambulance service, the Government commissioned a review of the QATB service. A report on the review was presented to Parliament in March 1981. QATB representatives on this committee were Sir Douglas Fraser, Mr W.J. Loch (Chairperson of the QATB Emerald Committee) and Mr E.C. Bradley.

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In 1986 the Government decided to restructure the State Council. It considered that the existing body was too large and unwieldy for effective and efficient management and that it should operate through a system of Council Committees.

The State Council was replaced with the Queensland Ambulance Services Board that comprised nine members instead of the 25 on the State Council. It was felt that the smaller board would streamline proceedings and would be in a far better position to effectively and efficiently manage statewide ambulance services.

Mr Gerald Moore, a former member of the State Council, was appointed Chairperson of the Board.

The amendment to the Act provided for the appointment of a Manager to the Board. This new position was warranted considering that the estimated Government contribution to the ambulance service in that financial year would be in excess of \$20 million. Mr A.I. Boddice was appointed to the position.

It was decided to employ the former Secretary of the State Council in another capacity as an employee of the Board.

At its first meeting, the Board appointed the former Secretary (Mr E.C. Bradley) to the positions of Senior Administration Officer and Inspector of Committees.

On 21 March 1990, the Queensland Parliament appointed a Parliamentary Select Committee to inquire into and report on the state of Queensland's Ambulance Services. The Committee's Report was laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly and ordered to be printed in December 1990.

On 1 July 1991, the Queensland Government disbanded the Queensland Ambulance Services Board and created a single statewide service. Instead of 96 independent centres under one name and managed by 672 committee members, QATB centres were amalgamated to form the Queensland Ambulance Service. The Ambulance Service is now a division of the Bureau of Emergency Services.

The State has been divided into six ambulance regions, with headquarters at Cairns, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Brisbane, Beenleigh and Toowoomba. The boundaries of these regions are closely aligned with those of the Police, Fire and Hospital services.

Mr Noel Gillard, formerly Director of Ambulance Services for the ACT, was appointed Queensland's first Commissioner of Ambulance Services.