



## *Ninety Years of Excellence*

By Doreen Smallbone *M.B.E.*

The Kingaroy General Hospital was officially opened on 18 November 1914 by the Hon. M. J. Kirwan [minister of works]. The crowd who attended the opening ceremony was jubilant after their long wait for a hospital. People of the Kingaroy District had been subscribing to the hospital appeal for a number of years. It was an impressive sight on that mid-summer day in November, the new Hospital on the hillside overlooking the township of Kingaroy.

For many people it was a dream come true. The five acre site had been purchased from Mr Dan Carroll who generously donated the purchased price, which was subsidized by the Government on the condition that the land be surrendered to the Crown as a hospital reserve. It was considered as a suitable area for a hospital with visions of pleasant gardens, lawns, palm trees and a parkland setting.

After 90 years of excellent service now in the year 2004 the Kingaroy General Hospital is one of the most modern and best equipped country hospital in Queensland. The latest new equipment in 2003, at the Kingaroy Hospital will enable surgeons to perform complex keyhole surgery. The additional laproscopic equipment costing \$120,000 complements the hospital's existing equipment. It is state-of-art equipment and will be used by visiting surgeons from Hervey Bay, the Flying Obstetric and Gynaecology services and the visiting surgical service from Nambour.

Matron M Dowling was the first Matron appointed to the Kingaroy District Hospital and Dr J. W. Heaslip was the first medical officer in 1914. Matron Dowling's salary was eighty pounds per annum and Dr Heaslip received two hundred pounds per annum.

In 1915 Matron MacDiarmid succeeded Matron Dowling and dedicated her life to the nursing profession serving for 29 years until her retirement in 1944. During those early years there were important stages of progress in the history of the hospital. The hospital was called the Kingaroy District Hospital because of the fund raising and subscriptions from Kingaroy and the district.

It was about 1938 that the hospital came under the supervision of the government and was then known as the Kingaroy General Hospital. The Kingaroy Hospital Board was later called the South Burnett Hospitals Board and controls the hospitals in the South Burnett and is also known as the Base Hospital.

The opening of the nurses' quarters on 1 September 1919 was an early milestone in the history of the hospital. Twenty years later when the new hospital was built in 1939, the old nurses quarters was sold and removed to Doonkuna Street, Kingaroy. The building was converted into flats and named Ma-Jens, after the former owners Mary and Jens Swendson.

The new nurses quarters built in 1939 near the new hospital a handsome two storey building with all modern facilities was appreciated by the staff which had now increased with the addition of extra staff.

The old original hospital building on the hill [now Apex Park] was sold and removed to various places in the country.

The Isolation building which was attached to the old hospital by a long gangway was relocated to the new hospital grounds behind the nurses quarters and above the tennis court. At one time the building was made available for sleeping quarters for the night staff because of the quiet location.

Later in the 1940's it was again used as an isolation ward.

During the Diphtheria epidemic in the late 1920's the Isolation wards were crowded with very sick children and adults requiring constant care. The hospital grounds within the vicinity of the isolation wards was completely filled with tents housing the diphtheria carriers.

In the late 1930's the Isolation wards were once again opened up for diphtheria cases. In severe cases a tracheostomy was performed. Mass immunization since the late 1930's has made diphtheria extremely rare in developed countries.

An important milestone in the history of the hospital was the laying of the foundation stone for the new hospital on 22 October 1938 by Hon. E.M. Hanlon, M.L.A. [minister of Health & Home Affairs].

The new hospital was ready for occupancy in October 1939. The mammoth task of transferring patients and moving into the hospital was achieved with a minimum of trouble. The new modern hospital was a delight to both patients and staff. The domestic staff was also pleased with all the modern facilities.

A highlight of Matron MacDiarmid's career and her dedication to the nursing profession was her Silver Jubilee celebration in 1940.

One of the hospital public wards was named after Matron MacDiarmid in 1939. MacDiarmid Street, Kingaroy was also named after her. After her death in 1959 the Kingaroy Past & Present Nurses' Association arranged for a drinking fountain to be placed in Apex Park [old hospital grounds] in her memory.

During the World War II the hospital staff was reduced, rationing and other problems presented themselves. The hospital was expected to adhere to the war-time rules including blacking out all windows etc. Also air-raid alarms meant practicing the evacuation of all patients. Sometimes this was very difficult especially from the top floor of the maternity section. Seriously ill patients were exempt.

Several of the nursing staff joined the forces and served with the A.I.F. Sister Martha McNee and Sister Dorotheo Harrison both served with the A.I.F. overseas. Sister Eileen Short was sent to Malaya with the 8<sup>th</sup> Division A.I.F. and spent three and a half years in a prisoner-of-war camp. She returned home after the war.

Dr R.V. Richard who had been medical superintendent for six years at the hospital joined the Army. Captain Richard 2<sup>nd</sup> A.I.F. was given a citizens farewell at a public function on 18 September 1941.

Medical Superintendents prior to and after Dr Richard include Dr J.W. Heaslip, Dr F.G. Meade, Dr A.L. Caselberg, Dr R.V. Richard, Dr W.J. Saxton acting medical superintendent, Dr R.V. Richard, Dr Ponting, Dr Attone, Dr H.J. Winterbotham, Dr D.A. Mountford, Dr G.J. Costella, Dr M.J. Clutterbuck, Dr C.F. Allardyce, Dr T. Hanelt and Dr Jim Eadie. Dr Eadie was appointed in 1994.

In 1944 Matron A.E.Farr was appointed to the position of Matron of the Kingaroy General Hospital. Matron devoted her life to the nursing profession serving until 1972 when she retired. During her 28 years as Matron there were many changes and many challenges.

The Poliomyelitis outbreak in 1951 was so severe that the ground floor [male ward] was converted into a polio ward. [Poliomyelitis once known as Infantile Paralysis is now called Polio]

Since the development of effective vaccines in the 1950's polio has virtually been eliminated from most developed countries

A young girl who was one of the worst patients was placed in an Iron Lung and because she required special treatment she was transferred to a Brisbane Hospital in the Iron Lung. A furniture vane was used as a conveyance. It was a night-mare trip for Sister Ellen Findlay and Nurse Lucy Kopot and the hospital Orderly who bravely set out on the long journey taking 12 hours to reach their destination. The patient was admitted to hospital and the trio returned home. Sadly sometime later the young woman succumbed to the dreaded Polio

In 1947 Matron Farr was responsible for the introduction of the employment of male orderlies on the hospital staff. The medical orderlies were promoted to male assistant nurse and Registered Male Nurses' were introduced some time later.

The first Graduation Ceremony for Nurses' completing their General Training was held in 1956. It is interesting to note that it was in March 1922 that the Hospital first became a training school for General Nursing.

Later the new curriculum adopted introduced Regional training in country hospitals. Although Kingaroy General Hospital was still on the register in 1980 as a general training school on the Regional programme, no student nurses had commenced training since 1975. Matron Beverley Hay instigated nurses' aides training in 1975

In 1971 Matron Farr was awarded an M.B.E for her distinguished and long service in the nursing profession. She retired in 1972 and was given a public farewell in the Kingaroy Town Hall. After her passing away in August 1981 the Kingaroy Past & Present Nurses' Association designed a garden and fountain in front of the hospital as a memorial garden. The memorial garden was dedicated in her memory on 23 March 1985

Matron MacDiarmid and Matron Farr, M.B.E were the two longest serving Matrons at the hospital. From 1972 the Matrons include Matron Beverley Hay, Sister Hazel Knopke, Nursing Superintendent, Sister Dawn Cavanagh Nursing Superintendent, Sister Wendy Collins Nursing Superintendent, Mr Brian Sedgman., Director of Nursing, D.O.N. Sister Rosemary Hood, D.O.N. and Mr Jeff Potter D.O.N.

A milestone in 1961 was the opening of the 30 bed Geriatric Annex and named "Farrhome" after Matron Farr. A street in Kingaroy has also been named Farr Street. Thirty years later in 1991, Farrhome patients were moved into the ex-maternity building [Kingaroy Mothers' Hospital]

Farrhome is maintained and has consulting rooms. A feature of the building is the Auxiliary Canteen officially opened in 1992 and convened by Mrs Nora James. The Kingaroy Hospital Auxiliary has been active for many years working for the welfare of the hospital.

The Kingaroy Mothers Hospital was officially opened by the Hon.H.W. Noble M.B.B.S. M.L.A. [minister of health] in 1981. Twenty years later in 1991 the building is now called Farrhome Residential Care.

Renovations in the main building in the 1980's were carried out. Major renovations to be undertaken in the near future were planned including a new X-ray, pathology and physiotherapy departments and outpatients. During the next 20 years the hospital and departments have been upgraded to a high standard.

An important milestone in the history of the Kingaroy General Hospital was the official opening of the \$1.2 million upgrade and renovations of the new Hospital opened by the Minister of Health Wendy Edmonds M.P on 16 July 1999.

The Administration building [former nurses quarters] is a very busy place with many offices.

The Departments include Executive Services. [6 ] Nursing Services [12 ] Medical Services [10 ] Community Health [22], Allied Health [10 ] Dental [2] Administration [7] Hotel Services. Maintenance. Quality Management

July. 1990 Cabinet approved the replacement of Queensland's 59 Hospital Boards with 13 Regional Health Authorities.

October 1990 A new hospital wing was opened also the Ward Block and Birthing Suites.

May 1991 New consulting rooms completed .In July Farrhome patients moved into former Maternity building,

October 1993 A Medical Records Administrator appointed

December 1995 Major redevelopment of X- Ray service and facilities opened

November 1997 Dental Services upgrade and extensions completed

November 2002 Funding received for an extra Dentist

April 2001 Mr Les Stevenson resigned after over 20 years of excellent service to South Burnett Health services. Congratulations to Mr Stevenson on a job well done.

October 2001 Mrs Rosemary Hood was appointed Director Manager.

January 2002 Mr Jeff Potter appointed as Director of Nursing Services

In 2008 Medical and specialists services now include—

Accident & emergency Inpatient care including Birthing and surgery.  
Pharmacy, Medical Imaging. Radiologist Procedural services Pathology  
General and Specialist. Outpatient Services.

Allied Health Services General Surgeons, Obstetricians.

Antenatal care and education

Gynaecologists.

Physicians

Paediatricians

Palliative Care Specialist, Diabetes Specialist

Neurologist,

Hearing Services.

Psychologist.

Cardiac Stressing. ECG Testing

Pacemaker clinic

Mental Health Services

Home Care Social Work including drug and alcohol. Community Nursing

