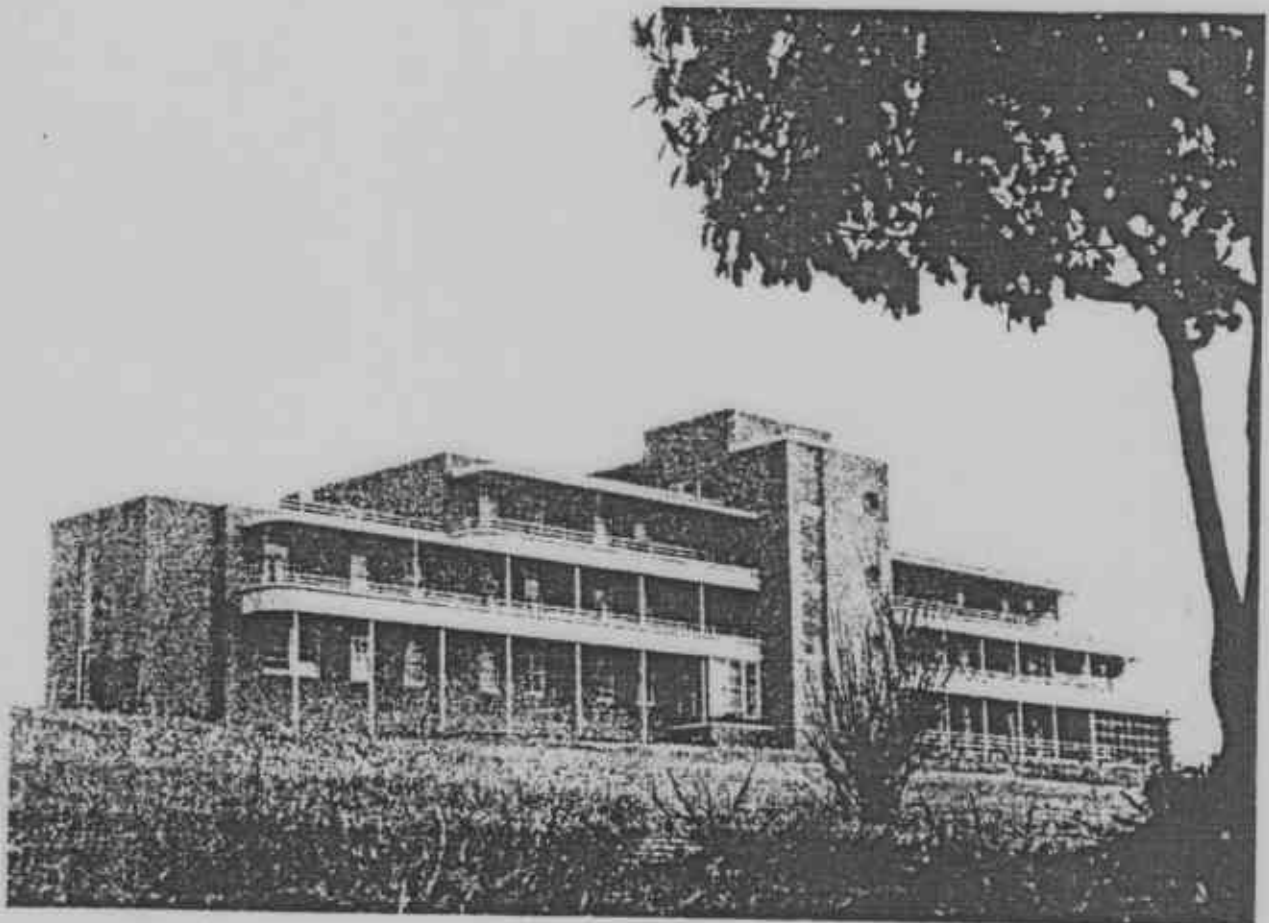


*Bega  
District  
Hospital*



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SERVICE



In 1989 Bega District Hospital celebrated 100 years of service to the people of the Far South Coast of New South Wales.

Celebrations included a Centenary Ball attended by the Minister for Health, a successful Hospital Fete, A staff gathering, and the striking of a commemorative medallion. As well, special fundraising initiated by Far South Coast communities provided special equipment for patient care areas.

By Centenary Day, 18th April 1989, a History of Bega District Hospital was finished and is assembled here for future and further interest. It does not purport to be a complete History and so corrections, photographs, and additions would be very welcome.

In 1989 the Hospital and the Celebrations were a tribute to all those past and present who established, developed, served and supported the Hospital. The need to continue all these efforts remains.

R.F. Kearns  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

History compiled and written by Mr Charles Day.  
Research by Mr Bob Westmacott and Mr John Rheinberger.  
Sources: Mitchell Library and Bega District News.

*Bega  
District  
Hospital*



THE BEGINNING OF A  
DISTRICT HOSPITAL

1876 - 1910



*The original hospital building*



*Rear view of the original hospital, built 1889*

**T**HE original moves to provide a public hospital in the district commenced in 1876, but due to a lack of enthusiasm quickly died away due to a lack of unanimity among the people of the day. The need was there for such an institution and efforts continued to be made by some members of the original committee over the intervening years with little success.

One problem, which caused the divisions was the proposed location of the structure as some wanted it here, others there, this spot suited, that spot didn't. The Committee members tired of the arguing and faded away. All the time, however, people suffering from accidents within the district had to rely on the charity of others or the forbearance of hoteliers in Bega where the only doctors resided.

The movement revived in 1883 temporarily but again flagged when a decision could not be reached as to obtaining a Government grant of land or buying same.

The Governor by proclamation in April, 1886 set aside five acres of the Bega Permanent Common for the purposes of a hospital. The papers of the day when reporting this action stated that the site was quite useless, too far from the town and years would elapse before a building was erected there.

This lack of decisiveness on the part of the locals could well have continued had Bega not had the good fortune of having Leslie McArthur appointed as Acting Police Magistrate. Mr. McArthur had had previous experience in country hospitals and prevailed upon the Mayor, Mr. Rawlinson, to convene a public meeting to get the ball rolling. This was called for 12th June, 1886. Mr. McArthur also wrote a most informative letter to the local press of the day setting out how such an institution could be commenced and funded.

The public meeting was held and well attended and some members of the original committee got their noses out of joint at this "Johnnie come lately upstart". However, for the sake of the district it was fortunate

that the meeting overcame any pettiness and achieved the formation of an active committee to commence fund raising. Mr. McArthur also laid before the public meeting the rules of his extensive search into the formation, construction and operation of a number of country public hospitals.

The public meeting resolved upon several important matters:—

"That the site shall be the land upon the permanent Common, resumed by the Government for that purpose.

"That the difficulty of the site being over, the hospital should be started with as little delay as possible and that no little obstructions be allowed to interfere.

"That the building be erected at a cost not to exceed £1,200.

"That a committee be formed to make arrangements for collecting subscriptions, to obtain plans and specifications and to take all steps preparatory to the erection of the building.

"That the committee consist of 12, five to form a quorum.

"That this meeting solicits the co-operation of the surrounding districts and requests that committees may be formed in the several townships to act in conjunction with the Bega committee."

The meeting concluded with hearty thanks to Mr. McArthur for his efforts — he having been elected Secretary at the meeting.

Over the ensuing months, the committee commenced fund raising. Collectors were appointed for areas within the district and the town of Bega was divided into sections allocated to two members of the committee per section. A grand ball was held to raise funds in Bega, at Cobargo minstrels performed and at Candelo and Kameruka functions provided additional funds.



*A good attendance at an early hospital function*

The committee also actively pursued the question of design of the hospital and Dr. Evershed provided a sketch of a building housing two wards each of eight beds, committee and waiting room, warders and matrons room, storeroom, dispensary, kitchen, laundry, mortuary, bathroom and offices. The estimated cost was £1,000 in wood and £1,500 in brick. The committee decided to seek further plans also better access to the site.

A Government grant of £750 was sought and details of the funds raised was requested by the Government as the grant was on a £ for £ basis

As the project was, by August, developing to the stage where a report could be furnished to subscribers, they were reminded that under the Public Hospitals Act it was necessary for a subscriber to be paid up to the tune of £1.

By October 1886 the committee had in hand £350/7/9 and it was recommended to the meeting of subscribers that a Government grant of £1,000 be applied for and that the Government be requested to resume land on the western side of the site for access.

The meeting was also advised that the plans prepared by Messrs. Bolster and Justilius, Architects, of Sydney had been adopted and subsequently approved by the Inspector of Public Charities. The proposed construction was to be of brick for the administration and kitchen with the wards to be of wood lath and plaster lined.

The committee also submitted to a subsequent meeting of subscribers a set of rules for the conduct of the hospital. These were the predecessors of the hospital's current by-laws.

By December, 1886 matters had progressed to the stage where trustees were required to be appointed. Messrs. H. Wren, T. Rawlinson, J. D'Arcy, P. H. Wood, G. P. Kerrison and W. Scott were subsequently elected, the latter as Treasurer.

A committee of management to oversight plans, call for tenders, etc., was also formed.

The raising of the necessary funds was a slow task and by the end of January, 1887 only £500 was to hand. Much more had been promised but had not come to light due to a downturn in the economy of the area.

By the 4th June, 1887 the approved plans had come to hand and the Government grant was being actively pursued. Subsequently the Principal Under Secretary for Health advised that a grant of £1,000 would be made available on a £ for £ basis. As a consequence of this advice, tenders were called for the construction of the building on the basis of the approved plans. In addition further steps were taken to receive promised funds from around the district as well as seeking additional funds. The committee appointed a collector to call on persons who had promised funds to collect same.



*A view of the entrance to the old hospital*

Following closure of tenders, Mr. Malcom's tender of £1,675 was accepted on 2nd November 1887. The local funds in hand at that time were £570.

The need for the hospital was quite evident at that time with many cases of illness, some terminating in death, which it was believed could have been avoided by proper hospital care.

By early February 1888 work was progressing well on the construction by Mr. Malcolm and total local funds to hand amounted to £668/8/1.

The Government came good in May 1888 and funded the £ for £ grant being £668/8/1.

However, on 24th July the committee was advised that the Government had passed a special vote of £500 in aid of the hospital.

By January 1889 the contractor (Mr. Malcolm) advised that the building would be completed that week and requested a representative to attend and assume responsibility for taking over the structure. He subsequently advised (19th January) that the work was completed and submitted a claim for £238/8/- as extras. The committee referred the claim to its building sub-committee and appointed Mr. McCaffery as temporary caretaker. Following review of the claim for extras the claim was reduced to £77/13/4 which was accepted by Mr. Malcolm.

The new caretaker did not last long and by the 9th February had been fired to be replaced in early March by Mr. and Mrs. Clarke.

Fundraising was still in full swing and a further ball was organised, the fourth to this time. As Mr. R. L.

Tooth (of Kameruka fame, etc.) had donated £100, by far the largest donation, he was asked to open the structure on Thursday, 18th April, 1889.

The official opening took place as arranged with Mr. Tooth officiating and giving a further donation of £50, making £150 in all. The official opening took place during Bega Show Week and was recognised by a community picnic.

The structure itself was in three parts, the main section of brick and two wooden wings. There were two outbuildings — infection ward and mortuary. It was described in the press of the day as "a neat comfortable-looking edifice and has the appearance of a villa except for the square boxes at each of the four corners." It is complete in every detail and on too expensive a scale, the latter being the fault of the Government authorities who would insist on the plans of the Taree Hospital being adhered to.

The final cost of the complex, including extras and furnishings, was £1,775. The committee having raised from all sources (grants, subscriptions and donations) £2,041/17/8. After deducting the cost of the building, plans, etc. (£81/11/-), incidentals (£87/11/2), they were left with £97/15/6 in the kitty. As there were outstanding liabilities of £316 and outstanding Government subsidy of £151, there was an urgent need to raise a further £150 for urgent necessities.

The committee rallied to the hospital's support and by way of donations of cash, linen, vegetables, flowers, preserves and placing of milking cows (changing from time to time etc.), the institution carried on. One major and quite wonderfully successful fund raising function





*Hospital in its heyday showing completed extensions*

was a garden party held on 9th November 1889 in the home gardens of Mr. Gowing at Jellat Jellat. The gardens were quite magnificent from the press reports and comments made by the estimated 400 people who attended with total receipts in the order of £75, a princely sum for those days.

The first patient at the hospital was Janet Clarke and the first death occurred in early July, 1889 being James Whelan, the second being Mrs. Ross, of

Wolumla, in September 1889. This lady had been ailing for quite some time before coming to the hospital.

It is interesting to note that around this time (September 1889) Mr. Thompson, Land Valuer to the Works Department, arrived in Bega to report on the Eden-Bega Railway.

In April 1890 tenders were called for the position of



*Extensive gardens of the old hospital*

Secretary. This saw Mr. J. M. Lee appointed at £25 per annum.

The hospital went from strength to strength as the old ideas opposing the hospital faded and the institution was accepted and well used. Many donations of furnishings were given by the community. In 1904 extensions and outdoor toilets were provided by replacing the wooden western wing with new brick extensions at a cost of £1,094/7/6. After paying for these there was still £525/9/- in kitty a big advance on 1889.

Similar progress occurred between 1905 and 1908 and in the latter a new wing was commenced in place of the existing white ant ridden wooden eastern wing and providing a larger brick extension. The total cost of this was £1,500 and a special Government grant of £600 was received for this. In addition a 15,000 gallon underground water tank was provided.

The problems with transport arrangements at the time can be appreciated when comments were made about the non-arrival of furniture owing to the rough seas preventing the "Eden" from unloading cargo at Tathra. The standard of treatment was also described in the press of the day as such "that no mother could have given better."

Mr. J. M. Lee severed his connection with the hospital in 1910. His services as Secretary had

commenced in 1890 on acceptance of his tender for the position.

The common thread throughout these early years was the support from throughout the district, not the least Candelo, Bemboka and Cobargo and smaller villages. As indicated earlier it came in cash and kind including towels and pillow slips prepared by the schoolchildren. R. L. Tooth also again deserves mention for in 1897 he gave a further £100 making a total donation of £250, a generous sum from admittedly a wealthy man.

The total sum spent on the now revised and fully brick structure was £4,369 in original capital costs. To close this chapter of the hospital's development it would be fitting to quote the words of the Hospital President of the day, Mr. J. J. Ritchie:—

*"The generosity of the people of the district and their wholehearted support of our hospital is much appreciated by your committee, from whose shoulders a heavy load of responsibility, as regards the finance of the institution, has been lifted, owing to the splendid support so liberally given. The main building is now complete in every respect and should meet the demands of the district for some years to come. The detached fever ward, which has done excellent service, will, as it is now inadequate and badly eaten by white ants, require replacement as soon as finances permit."*

#### **AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

I have avoided listing the majority of people involved in the development of the hospital in this historical summary as while some individuals shine as leaders and have, in some historical articles been given considerable credit, the research I have made clearly illustrates that a team effort was required right from the outset and it was this absence of a united team effort that for so long delayed the commencement of the hospital. Thus only a few names appear in the article because of their unique contribution, the great majority have been omitted because to list some and explain their contribution would not do justice to the article or to those who contributed subsequently and yet were omitted.

C. S. DAY.



# Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the Bega District Hospital

FOR 12 months from 1st JANUARY to 31st DECEMBER, 1900.

THE HONORARY TREASURER in account with the Bega District Hospital.

	£	s	d		£	s	d
<b>RECEIPTS.</b>							
<b>DR.</b>							
Subscriptions .....	143	9	6				
Donations .....	86	2	2	228	11	8	
Patient's fees .....	46	17	8				
Government subsidy .....	294	5	10				
Interest on invested funds .....	9	0	0				
Interest on Mr Tooth's endowment .....	3	0	0				
Saving's Bank withdrawals .....	320	0	0				
Refund Ohlsen's steamer fare .....	2	12	0	517	16	6	
				£746	7	2	
Balance from 1899 .....				2	7	8	
				£775	14	10	
<b>OUTS ANDING CHEQUES :—Miss Ricketts, £5 8s 4d; Evans for lounge, £5; balance s.s per cash book, £4 19s. Balance per pass book, £15 7s 4d.</b>							
<b>DEBIT RECEIPT ACC UNT.</b>							
To Balance from 1899 .....	£300	0	0				
By Fixed deposits in the A.J.S. Bank, Ltd., .....							
<b>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT IN GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.</b>							
To Balance from 1899 .....	£350	0	0				
By Interest added .....	21	11	7				
By Transfer from current a/c .....	250	0	0				
By Balance on 31st Dec., 1900 .....				491	11	7	
				£900	0	0	
<b>EXPENDITURE.</b>							
Salaries, wages and labour .....	147	0	4				
Doctor's salary .....	80	0	0				
Bonus to Honorary Secretary .....	12	12	0				
Maintenance .....	162	4	0				
Hon. Secretary, petty cash (stamps, etc.) .....	5	11	7				
Travelling expenses of employees .....	9	1	0				
Rent of telephone .....	7	0	0				
Drugs and instruments, etc. .....	30	15	1				
Durol fees .....	12	0	0				
Repairs .....	24	15	6				
Printing and adve tising .....	13	19	3				
Fire insurance .....	8	4	6				
Furniture, lounge for patients .....	5	0	0				
Stationery .....	0	18	3				
Rubber stamp .....	0	12	0				
Deposits in Savings Bank .....	250	0	0				
Exchange on cheques .....	0	6	0				
Stamped cheque book .....	0	8	4				
Bank's charge for account .....	0	10	0				
				770	15	10	
Balance to 1901 .....				£770	15	10	
				4	19	0	
				£775	14	10	

WM. SCOTT,  
Hon. Treasurer.

Examined and found correct,  
F. J. FILMFB,  
FRED. F. COWDROY, } Auditors.

29th January, 1901.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

The usual statement is herewith appended for comparison with the work of previous years :—

Year	Patients	Deaths	Revenue			Improvements, Repairs, Furniture, etc.			Total expenditure including 10 per cent of repairs			Cost per head		
			£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1889	14	2	619	14	1	477	4	8	341	12	4	24	8	0
1890	28	Nil	683	17	1	59	14	4	382	16	5	13	9	2
1891	38	Nil	519	12	7	19	13	6	453	1	5	11	18	5
1892	35	Nil	567	0	6	39	16	6	435	11	7	12	8	10
1893	35	1	424	7	7	93	11	8	397	3	1	11	6	11
1894	52	5	569	15	0	25	18	3	594	11	10	11	8	8
1895	47	1	629	9	3	9	5	6	434	5	6	9	4	8
1896	54	6	572	13	9	10	17	6	495	13	3	9	2	3
1897	38	6	641	10	1	221	2	6	412	6	1	10	10	3
1898	86	4	606	9	5	10	9	0	478	0	0	5	9	9

Year.	Patients treated in-door.	Patients outdoor.	Deaths.	Days in residence.	Average daily attendance.	Total Revenue.			Ordinary Expenditure.			Expenditure permanent additions and outdoor relief			Average annual cost per patient apart from expenditure Permanent works, and outdoor relief			Average daily cost of treatment per patient.		
						£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1899	59	—	5	1388	3.8	534	1	6	530	18	0	—	139	14	2½	0	7	7½		
1900	68	—	5	2117	5.8	526	7	2	482	4	10	—	83	2	11	0	4	6¾		
1901	97	10	4	1904	5.2	760	3	10	541	18	11	69	10	—	104	4	5	0	5	8½
1902	93	9	9	2316	6.3	888	11	3	592	5	1	72	0	—	94	0	2	0	5	1½
1903	96	11	8	2357	6.417	582	3	9	598	10	9	8	16	9	93	5	4	0	5	0½
1904	143	15	9	3151	8.632	1246	3	10	680	6	0	1094	7	6	78	16	2½	0	4	4
1905	167	31	13	3526	9.660	919	7	7	780	9	8	59	0	6	80	15	10	0	4	5
1906	185	37	13	3841	10.550	919	6	11	741	6	0	10	0	0	70	5	3	0	3	10
1907	187	25	9	4271	11.700	1104	13	11	811	8	7	12	10	0	70	0	5	0	3	9¼
1908	199	135	13	3918	10.734	1084	7	2	817	18	1	335	0	0	76	3	0	0	4	2