

HEALTH SERVICES

From the earliest times in Wedderburn, the sick were treated in small private hospitals, or if necessary, taken to Inglewood. The earliest record of a surgeon being on the Korong field was in 1861 - Dr. Richard B. Matthews. Other doctors early on the field were Doctors Crosland, Radcliffe and King. Dr. Malcolm McVean established a practice in the 1880's and Dr. Rinder was also in Wedderburn in the 1900's.

Dr. J.M.C. Philpott came to Wedderburn in 1932 and is still resident in the town (1975). He recalls that cars were few and that he drove the first hard-top - a Rugby Coupe. In the year 1932 there was a bad Diphtheria epidemic. The Doctor was instrumental in introducing immunization at the time when people believed it would cause death. Another feature of 1932 was the excessive rainfall of 27 inches. Much of the Doctor's work was involved in visiting patients on farms. One such nightmare journey through swollen creeks and over unsealed roads took six hours.

The Pratt sisters operated a private hospital in Reef Street in the World War I period. In 1922 Noonan's Hotel became a private hospital and was closed in 1938 when the Korong Bush Nursing Hospital was opened. This Hospital was opened on 6th August 1938 by Lord Huntingfield, Governor of Victoria.

The necessity for a Bush Nursing Hospital was seen as early as 1936. A meeting was held in the Mechanics Hall, Wedderburn on 5th June, 1936 to form an Association known as the Advancement League. Amongst the objectives of this league was the establishment of a hospital. A sub-committee was appointed to go into details of achieving this end and those appointed were Messrs. P.J. Graham, H.R. Tipping, Thomas Ball, W.P. James and Rev. W.S. Manzoney. The sub-committee decided that a hospital in Wedderburn was feasible and a Provisional Committee recommended the erection of a six-bed hospital at a cost of £2,000 plus reimbursement of £100 to the nurse in charge of the Private Hospital when it was closed.

The building was commenced on April 3rd, 1938, all the brick work was completed on April 14th, and the foundation stone was laid by Professor R. Marshall Allen, M.C., of Melbourne University.

Dental services were provided by chemists in the early 1900's. Robert Harvie, a Pharmaceutical Chemist at Wedderburn, offered - in his advertisement in the Wedderburn Express, to extract teeth with the least possible pain.