

HISTORY OF EDUCATION  
\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Bryce Ross, assisted by his wife, commenced a Church of England School at Wedderburn on 1st July, 1857. There is uncertainty as to where the school was sited, but there was an attendance of about fifty children at that time. The school received the number 350 in 1863 and closed on 30th June 1865.

School No. 655 was a National School, established on 1st December 1861. Mr. Bryce Ross was again the initiator, and he was Headmaster until 31st March 1865. The School had a total of thirty-three children on the roll in 1862, and was sited near the present A.N.Z. Bank in High Street. The building was 22 feet long by 14 feet wide by 8 feet high. It was a wooden structure with a zinc roof and an earthen floor.

The School was closed on 31st March, 1865 when State Aid was withdrawn.

Common School No. 794 was opened at the Wesleyan Chapel on 1st July, 1865. Joseph Lockhart was Headmaster, with his wife assisting as Work Mistress. As it was obvious that the building would be unsuitable for future needs, the present site at the corner of Wilson and Chapel Streets was reserved in 1866. The first building was erected at the present site in August 1868, but substantial alterations and new brick buildings were opened on 17th June, 1908 by Mr. Frank Tate, the then Director of Education.

Local requests for a wider curriculum for senior students in the primary school were followed by the erection in 1940 of a separate room equipped for teaching cookery, needlecraft, home management and woodwork, and in that year these subjects were offered by a teacher who also worked part-time at Charlton and Inglewood.

There was considerable local pressure, particularly through the Progress Association, and in May 1945 Forms 1, 2 and 3 were established as central classes. Two buses brought students from Borung, Korong Vale, Wedderburn Junction, Wehla, Fenton's Creek, and Kurraca areas to the central classes.

Although a Fourth Form operated from 1946, the school was not declared a Higher Elementary School until 1948.

Rural school buildings moved to S.S.794 Wedderburn were S.S.1773 Salisbury West; S.S.1942 Yeungroon; S.S.2160 Yarraberb and S.S.2040 Richmond Plains. As well, another weatherboard room was built on the site to serve originally as the Cookery Centre.

Wedderburn High School was finally completed in 1961. The land had been obtained partly from Mr. P.J. Richmond and partly from the old Showgrounds. The first Headmaster was Mr. B.R. Astbury, B.Comm., B.Ed., and the first President of the Advisory Council was Mr. Keith Turnbull, M.L.A.

Other schools in the area have included -

1. School No. 1573 at Kurraca, which was opened on 17th June, 1875 and closed on 7th June, 1895.

2. School No. 1894 at Barakee (Buchrabanyule), which was opened on 26th August, 1877 and closed on 14th August, 1923. The first Head Teacher was Daniel O'Doherty.

3. School No. 2299 Kinypanial South was opened on 2nd October, 1880 and closed on 27th January, 1944. Miss Jessie Cox was the first Head Teacher.

4. School No. 2739 at Kurvaca South was opened on 25th May, 1886 in conjunction with School No. 320, Wehla. The school was closed on 31st December, 1905 and the building moved to Wehla.

5. School No. 2789 was opened at Korong (about 2 miles east of Wedderburn Junction) on 1st December, 1886 and was closed on 18th May, 1892. Miss Jane Wetherell was the first Head Teacher.

6. School No. 1525 Bocca Flat was opened on 15th March, 1875 and closed on 21st June, 1893. The first Head Teacher was James S. Lowe. It later became a children's home. This home was known as the Clifton Home and was later taken over by the Try Boys Society.