

In October, 1949 the Hospitals and Charities Commission conferred with hospital representatives regarding the establishment of an independent "School of Nursing" in the Northern Region of Victoria.

Nine hospitals were to participate - the Base Hospitals of Bendigo and Mildura and the District Hospitals of Castlemaine, Echuca, Swan Hill, St. Arnaud, Kyneton, Ouyen and Dunnolly - the last 4 mentioned were later discontinued as general nurse training hospitals.

In December, 1949 - "Lister House", 37 Rowan Street Bendigo was purchased by the Hospitals and Charities Commission and the building was adapted for use as School Headquarters. The first School of 39 students commenced training on 23rd March, 1950 and the Official Opening was performed on 21st April, 1950 by the Minister for Health.

In January 1950 - "Euralla", 247 View Street, was purchased for a nurses' hostel and was used as such until its sale in 1970. A block of 4 flats at 99 Wattle Street was purchased and converted into a students' hostel. It is now four flats for teaching staff.

"Mayfort", 148 Wattle Street, was also purchased and used as a Students' hostel. In 1970 it was demolished and the land is now used as an "off Street" car park for students and staff. Each hostel contained a bed-sitting room for a staff member who acted as home supervisor.

The Dean of the School, Miss Nancy Long and Miss. Margery Scott were the original teaching staff, faced with the mammoth task of undertaking a new venture. It is through their continued and untiring efforts that the School has overcome uncountable obstacles in becoming established and in playing a major role in the education of nurses throughout Northern Victoria.

This was the first <sup>Independent</sup> School of Nursing to be established in the Southern Hemisphere. Later in February, 1951 the Melbourne School of Nursing was officially opened, the associated hospitals being the Royal Melbourne, Queen Vic. Hospital, Royal Womens Hospital and the Royal Childrens Hospital. In 1954 the Queen Vic. Hospital withdrew from the scheme and the name was changed to the Royal Melbourne Hospital and Associated Hospitals School of Nursing. This closed on 19th September, 1963; a total of 1,327 nurses graduated from the school.

In August, 1951 the Nurses' Board approved the Northern District School of Nursing as a Training School in conjunction with the ~~8~~ (9) associated hospitals. The School became the training authority responsible to the Board for matters relating to nursing education, enrolment, examination, selection of students, records, termination of training and movement of nurses between the hospitals and the School for the required clinical experience and theoretical instruction. The period 1951 - 56 were difficult years in implementing the terms of approval as set out in the regulations of 29th August, 1951.

Bendigo and Mildura Hospitals were advised that they were approved as nurse training hospitals for the three year general nursing course (Group A. Hospitals) District Hospitals were approved as 2 year training hospitals (Group B. Hospitals) in association with the Northern District School of Nursing. Students from district hospitals were to spend 12 months at a Base Hospital gaining specialist experience and tuition.

In October, 1951 the Nursing Aide School in Toorak, Melbourne was opened and a 12 months Nursing Aide programme commenced. Many district Hospitals were registered and given affiliation with Nursing Aide Training Schools - amongst these were Kyneton, St. Arnaud and Ouyen.

From 1951 to 1956 there was general discord and ill feeling regarding the Circular training scheme in which students from District Hospitals transferred to a Base Hospital for a period of 12 months, as soon as possible after the first year of training. Students from Base Hospitals transferred to a District Hospital for a minimum of 3 months or maximum period of 12 months. Base Hospitals were required to provide experience in specialised areas for students from District Hospitals.

Following many meetings between Hospitals' Management, V.N.C. and School, circular training was phased out from July 1962. Hospitals were at this stage biding time as rumours of a proposed new curriculum were circulating.

Over the years the N.D.S.N. has been accepted by Hospital Authorities and the community as the Nurse Training Authority in the Northern Region of Victoria, and through the support of the Hospital and Charities Commission and the V.N.C. the School has generally been accepted as a Nurse Education Centre.

In 1955 the home behind the School was purchased and until December, 1969 was used as the Deans Flat and Students' Residence. In 1959 the Dining Room and Kitchen Block was built. McInireys was demolished to make way for the Nurses' Residence, the first occupants being the P.T.S. of 1970, School 74 and the official opening took place on 16th July. This building relieved teaching staff of supervisory responsibilities after school hours.

In 1964 - 65 structural alterations were made to Lister House with the addition of 3 new classrooms, students' and staff toilet facilities, students' recreation room, nurse educators' offices and administrative block, and the official opening took place in March, 1965.

Responsible authorities recognized that nurses, like other professional groups, require education as well as training on the job. In this Northern area, traditions and known methods of nurse training dominated the attitude of many participating hospitals. Service needs were considered more important than educational needs and hospitals still wished to keep their own identity as Nursing Training Schools.

The School Committee stepped up efforts to prevent the N.D.S.N. following the footsteps of the Melbourne School. In 1965 more qualified staff were employed and Directors were appointed to plan the educational program for each of the three years. Routine hospital visits were established to Bendigo Base Hospital 1/2 day per week, Mildura Base Hospital one day per month and District Hospitals one day per fortnight. A School car was purchased in 1966 and this eliminated the need for Tutors to use public transport, which was time consuming and costly, for these visits.

Programmes were established so that all hospitals taught the same subjects to avoid repetition of material given in Study Blocks. Nurse Educators were employed in all hospitals and students were given lectures, although mostly in their own time. Gradually progress was made towards lectures being included in duty time, eventually being established as half or whole Study Days per week (or fortnight).

In February 1971 a member of Staff (Peg Donohoe) was appointed Director in charge of curriculum planning, development and co-ordination. The new curriculum of 1600 hours teaching time during the three year training period was released in August 1971 by the V.N.C. after Government approval on 14th January, 1971. This new curriculum was to be phased in before the end of 1972 and introduced entirely from P.T.S. 80. Phase 1 was fully implemented for this Block. (P33) Government agreed that regulations be made in 1971 and come into operation on 30th June, 1974.