

The Drysdale and District Bush Nursing Association which became Drysdale Community Health and eventually Bellarine Community Health.

Bush Nursing in Victoria was commenced after the arrival of Lord Dudley and his wife to Victoria in 1908, where he was Governor for many years. Lady Dudley was very interested in the hospitals but realised that in the country areas there were no services available to the people for midwifery, accidents etc., as the distance to travel to the nearest hospital was usually many miles by horse and jinker.

Some of the larger towns such as Sale had a hospital which was opened in 1868. She decided with the help of some interested people to organise a bank of dedicated nurses to go out to the country and help the people.

In 1911 the first B.N.C was established at Beech Forest and so the Victorian Bush Nursing Association was founded and continues today assisting many people in the outlying areas of the state.

In 1922 the Drysdale Progress Association invited some reputable citizens to a meeting to see if a Centre could be opened in Drysdale, and the principles of Bush Nursing could be explained to them by Sn. Cameron of the V.B.N.A. All present were very enthusiastic to see a Centre commenced and sufficient guarantors were secured to be responsible for the Sisters' salary. A nurse was applied for and in Nov. 1922 Sr. D.A. Whycross was appointed and the service commenced from her home on the corner of Wyndham Street and Barrands Lane on December 14th 1922. During the first 6 months, 928 visits were made by Sr. Whycross.

The first committee consisted of Messrs. Frank Armytage J.P. owner of "Spray Farm" President; Mrs Jim Bennett, Tom Maetley (later M.P.) Vice Presidents; Hon. Secretary George Lunn and Hon. Treasurer Horace Gallop. Other committee members were Madams J. Anderson, G. Tilbray, Curtain, Messrs. S. Rodgers, L. Peel, G. Tau and Mrs G. Lunn as Secretary. Hon. Auditors: - Rev. A.H. Westley and E.A. Edmonds.

Copy of first Annual Report to 30th June, 1923.

The service continued to run successfully from various home in the town and by quite a succession of nurses usually working under the direction of a doctor. Sister Whycross and her sister (Sr. Jackson) eventually sold their home in Drysdale and went to Geelong where they took over a Private Hospital in Pakington Street, known as "Cambray" which conducted for many years. Today the building is known as a reception parlour.

Fund raising for the Centre was mainly a Baby & Flower Show held every spring. The Sister was now operating from a room at the front of Mr. & Mrs. Reg Knightsbury's home 21 Princess Street.

In 1939 Councillor George Wisbey very generously donated the block of land at 15 Princess St and a disused farm house was purchased from the Ibbotson family in Port – Queenscliff Road.

The house was repaired, painted etc. and was moved onto the block. This provided accommodation for the Sister and the front room was used as the surgery. This building is where the B.N.C. was conducted until the present time.

* (In 1987 B.N. changed over to a C.H. Centre as the Health Department

decided the area with all the development had outgrown the title and work of Bush Nursing, and we would not be able to get any funds for a new building unless the changeover was made). * In 1965 – 66 the Committee decided to add 2 rooms to the building:- a surgery and waiting room which we still use as such today. More fund raising efforts were taken on and we were able to get the "manning" of the Show Gates and with the help of the Fire Brigade Members and many other locals, we are still doing this great effort after 20 odd years. In 19... we were able to purchase two blocks of land at the corner of Elgin & Eversley Streets with the view of building the new Bush Nursing Centre but with the change to C.H. this did not happen. Of course D.B.N.C was one of the earliest centres to operate and the V.B.N.A. were very disappointed to see us change. The Committee and members voted overwhelmingly for the change, mainly because the H.D. advised us that no many would be made available to build a B.N.C. in this developing area.

Verna McClland