History of the Maleny Hospital

The Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital celebrated a century of serving the community in October 2021.

The original hospital was built during 1919 by Paul Tesch of Witta on the southern side of Bean Street. It was the dream of six men, Messers Cooke, Hunt, Aplin, Dunning, Gay & Trow who recognised the need for a hospital. One and a half acres (0.6ha) was purchased from Mr I Watson, the money was raised by public subscription by bazaars, dances, concerts and other functions.

A doctor's residence was built adjacent to the hospital before the hospital was built and the first medical superintendent was Dr Anderson. The hospital was built as a tribute to those men and women from the area who had served during WW1.

The building was initially opened on 1 August 1919 as a private hospital, but was later officially opened in October 1920 when it became a General Hospital. The first baby to be born in the newly opened hospital was Sydney Thomas Ricketts on the 12 August 1920. The Beerburrum Hospital was added in 1923 and became the maternity wing and staff quarters. The hospital was extended several times over the years and an operating theatre was added and x-ray equipment.

The roof blew off during a cyclone in 1963 when almost 200mm of rain fell overnight. Matron O'Laherty (later Mrs Jack Ahern of Conondale) described the night as "rather frightening" and a "turbulent night".

The original hospital served the community for 67 years. It was declared a fire hazard and a new hospital was built opposite and opened in 1987.   The old hospital was removed in 1989 and the Maleny Ambulance Station was constructed on the site.

One of the most respected and longest serving doctors in the history of Maleny was Dr Tony Parer. He was Maleny's only doctor between 1934 to 1952 and he treated patients in Maleny, Kenilworth and Caloundra.   Hundreds of babies were delivered by Dr Parer, including my triplet brothers, Tom, Dick and Harry Neilen in 1945. A park is dedicated to his memory adjacent to the Ambulance Station.

Adjacent to the hospital is a Walk of Remembrance, dedicated to the service and sacrifice of the Australian servicemen and women in WW1.

How blessed are we to have such a great little country hospital, a Memorial Hospital, a rural facility providing services, including accident & emergency 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week.

Congratulations to all the doctors, staff, members of the auxiliary and community who have kept our hospital operational for over a century.

Desley Malone