Purpose
To apply preservation treatments, including digitisation, to a high value and vulnerable Historical collection of items held in the Darwin and Alice Springs libraries so that the items may be accessed without causing further damage to the original items and provide accessibility for stakeholders.

Reference and Research Disclaimer
Please note: this document is part of the Historical Collection and the information contained within may be out of date.
10 October 1990

Honourable Steve Hatton M.L.A.
Minister for Health
and Community Services
GPO Box 3146
DARWIN NT 0801

Re: Hospital Management Board Annual Report

My Dear Minister

I am pleased to forward the Tennant Creek Hospital Management Board Annual Report for 1989/90.

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of the report.

Yours sincerely

Dr. John Kiss
CHAIRMAN
On behalf of the Tennant Creek Hospital Management Board I am pleased to present to you the 1989/90 Annual Report.

The Board of Management, comprising the members listed at Attachment A, enjoyed good attendance during 1989/90.

Sadly, Chairperson Chris Afianos resigned her position as Chairperson following the completion of her second consecutive term with the Board.

Dr. Kiss was nominated and selected as Chairman of the Board in April 1990. Similarly Mr Fillmore was nominated and selected as Deputy Chairman also in April 1990.

**HOSPITAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The major functional event of the 1989/90 Tennant Creek Calendar was without doubt the completion of the Paediatric Ward which opened its doors in March 1990.

Over recent years there were several complaints from inpatients, their relatives, staff and the private practitioner about excessive noise generated by paediatric patients being nursed co-jointly with adults in the General Ward. There were also a number of complaints about the odour caused by gastro patients, being mainly paediatric patients.

These complaints were directed to Hospital Administration Staff as well as the Patient Care Committee and the Hospital Management Board.

In an effort to alleviate some of the problems caused by nursing children in the same ward as adults and to stop overcrowding, building alterations were affected through the 1987/88 Minor New Works Programme. A doorway was constructed to give direct access from the General Ward to an under utilized section of the Hospital known as "overflow". It was planned to designate and use this area for paediatrics.

Unfortunately, due to the high number of inpatients and lack of nursing resources it was difficult to allocate staff to a specific function and hence it was not possible to implement the proposed strategy. That is, staff numbers were insufficient to permanently man a separate paediatric ward for 24 hours a day without adversely affecting other areas of the Hospital.
High staff turnover, the amount of sick leave and overtime could be partially attributed to the additional workload resulting from occupancy rates consistently in excess of the 85% level. Recruiting suitable staff to Tennant Creek is difficult, expensive, time consuming and sometimes an impossible task.

So, to allow safe standard of nursing care of paediatric patients it was proposed to increase the number of hospital beds by two and move the existing four paediatric beds into a special unit. It was considered this environment would be more conducive to patient care, offer a reduced risk of cross infection and reduce staff turnover, sick leave and overtime. Additional nursing positions were also sought to staff the unit.

Much to everyone’s delight the proposed initiative became an approved project and this news was imparted to Hospital staff by the Secretary for Health and Community Services, Mr Ray Norman in October 1989.

The conversion of the area was funded through the Minor New Works Programme. Other modifications were able to be funded through unprogrammable works funding at a total cost of $30 000. Operational funding made available as part of the Initiative enabled the purchase of beds, general equipment, medical and play equipment.

The Hospital Auxiliary appointed the talents of the renowned local artist Judith Church to commission three murals in the ward and also assisted with the purchase of other furniture and fittings.

Following the appointment of three additional nursing staff the Paediatric Ward finally opened in March of this year much to the delight of all hospital staff and parents of children using the facility.

**HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

A number of areas within the hospital were also improved through the Capital Equipment Program totalling $124 000. Vertical blinds were fitted throughout the hospital buildings. Staff facilities were also improved with the purchase of furniture and fittings. The upgrading of staff facilities at Tennant Creek Hospital is a priority aimed at attracting and retaining staff for the hospital.
Other significant purchases through the Capital Equipment Program included hospital beds, humidicribs, a colposcope, an isoflurane vaporizer, physiotherapy equipment, a blood fridge and a 12 lead ECG machine.

Improvement to the hospital through the Minor New Works Program totalling $55,000 have included the conversion of a parking bay to a storage area, providing carparks for departmental vehicles, upgrading benches and shelving in Accident and Emergency and modifying one of the labour rooms to a more ‘user friendly’, area in line with the National Women’s Health Policy. The improvements to the labour room include the purchase of furniture and fittings, commissioning of two paintings by a local artist and the removal of large overhead operating lights. The enhancements all serve to make the labour room less sterile and more comfortable for the client.

Repairs and Maintenance funding totalling $74,000 contributed to the upgrading of departmental accommodation. Four off-campus flats, badly damaged in the earthquake tremors of 1988, were repaired under the auspices of this program. Further improvements were also made with the purchase of furniture and fittings and general equipment and machines.

Through the Commonwealth’s 1989/90 Hospital Enhancement Program new X-ray equipment was ordered. The new equipment will allow a significantly improved radiography service, not least due to downtime from equipment failure being greatly reduced. Patient examinations will be quicker and the increased range of tube movements allows examinations to be more complete while at the same time reducing the need to move the injured patient.

Increased visiting specialist services from Alice Springs and Darwin has significantly improved the range of services offered through the hospital.

- Surgeon
- Physician
- Ophthalmologist
- Dermatologist
- Paediatrician
- ENT
- Gynaecologist
- Orthopaedic
Hospital waiting time for surgical procedures has significantly reduced with regular visits from the specialists.

A typing service for visiting specialists was also introduced.

**ACCOMMODATION**

All five (5) departmental on campus homes underwent major improvements including an internal and external paint, new floor coverings and purchase of furniture and fittings.

The upgrading of accommodation facilities at Tennant Creek is a priority of the Board aimed at attracting and retaining hospital staff.

The bedsitter type accommodation available on campus is not considered suitable for the reasons furnished in previous reports. The recommendation made in the 1987/88 and 1988/89 Annual Reports is strongly reinforced by the Board who remain concerned of the low Departmental priority this has received. This is despite the fact the Board has recommended the conversion of twelve bedsitters to one bedroom flats over a three to four year period, through the Capital Works Program.

**DONATION**

Mr John Stewart from Beecroft in N.S.W. was so impressed with the service he received from the nursing and medical staff at Tennant Creek Hospital he donated $600 in appreciation. Mr Stewart, a retired gentlemen, was travelling around the Territory on a 'shoe-string' budget. The nursing staff of the hospital elected to purchase equipment for the Medical Ward with the donation.

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

From April 1 the Hospital Catering Service commenced provision of meals to Police detainees.
STAFFING

Turnover of medical staff during the year remained high. The hospital was often left with an inadequate number of doctors to adequately cover constantly high occupancy rates. The shortage of medical staff places an unacceptable burden on existing staff expected to cover after hours rosters and emergencies. The use of locum agencies was sought to alleviate the shortage of medical staff, often without success. The Board acknowledges that this places a strain on the recruitment budget. The Board acknowledges the efforts and time spent by existing hospital staff in attempting to recruit and retain medical officers. Again, the Board suggests that consideration be given to shortages of medical staff by other hospitals in the Region.

EXPENDITURE

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MAXIMUM STAFFING LEVEL AT 30 JUNE 1990 = 81
APPONTEED MEMBERS OF THE TENNANT CREEK
HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

JUNE 1990

DR. J KISS CHAIRMAN
MR A FILLMORE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
MR R STOW MEMBER
MR K HERZOG MEMBER

DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES

MR M TYRRELL REGIONAL DIRECTOR
DR. H CARNEY AG. MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT
DR. S CROSDALE AG. MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT
DR. R MAHARAJ AG. MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT
MS. P EVANS DIRECTOR OF NURSING

COMMENCEMENTS 1989/90

DR. J KISS MEMBER
MR K HERZOG MEMBER

RESIGNATIONS 1989/90

MRS C APIANOS CHAIRPERSON

REMOVALS

MS. C GEORGE MEMBER

ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS

There were nine (9) meetings and attendance was as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>MRS C APIANOS</td>
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<td>MS. C GEORGE</td>
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