

South Campus

A History



By Nancy Blacklow



Copyright © Charles Sturt University 2015. (JB F4176)

ISBN 978-0-646-93251-4

All rights reserved. Except for private study, research, criticism or reviews, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission of the author.

This project was funded by the Division of Facilities Management, Charles Sturt University

First published in 2014 by CSU Print, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst and Wagga Wagga

Production: Division of Marketing and Communication

Editor: Monique Shephard

Layout & Design: Alexandra Chubb, Monique Shephard

Set in Helvetica Neue LT Std

SOUTH CAMPUS – A History

by Nancy Blacklow

Published by
CSU Print

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This story of South Campus owes much to a number of organisations and people. Charles Sturt University's Division of Facilities Management initiated the project and funded its development – thank you for their foresight in seeing the need to record the past of this iconic place.

Much of the material has come from the collections held in the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, with manager Wayne Doubleday—an ally and collaborator in the research and writing of the history—and staff members, Jillian Kohlhagen, Paul O'Donnell and June Dietrich, and Art Curator Tom Middlemost helping in the search and identification of much material.

I am grateful to have the support of former principal of Riverina College of Advanced Education and Charles Sturt University Vice-Chancellor, Professor C D Blake, in writing a foreword to the book.

Thanks to former students, including pioneer students of 1947, Kevin and Winifred Wilcox, and later students, Ray Petts and Irene Turner, for reminiscences and personal material.

Once again, *The Daily Advertiser* has allowed the use of its extensive photographic collection to add to the pictorial features.

Finally, thanks to Monique Shephard and her team at the University's Division of Marketing and Communication in bringing the project to print fruition.

The past spirits of South Campus acknowledge all these contributions to saving its history.

Nancy Blacklow

South Campus – A History was commissioned and funded by Charles Sturt University's (CSU) Division of Facilities Management (DFM). CSU has a strong commitment to its community and region. As the book reflects, South Campus has been an important asset to CSU in Wagga Wagga and the Riverina throughout the decades. Capturing a historical and anecdotal record was paramount when discussions about future plans for the site were raised. We would like to thank Nancy Blacklow for lending her research skills and expertise to create and compile the South Campus story. Extended thanks also go to all University colleagues, including staff at the CSU Regional Archives, involved in the development and production of this book.

Stephen Butt

Executive Director

Division of Facilities Management

CONTENTS

FOREWORD – SOUTH CAMPUS 5

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 6

CHAPTER TWO: WARTIME – THE RAAF HOSPITAL..... 9

CHAPTER THREE: PIONEERS AND A PRINCIPAL 1947-1958 13

CHAPTER FOUR: CONSOLIDATION AND CHANGE 1959-1971 25

CHAPTER FIVE: RIVERINA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION – THE EARLY DAYS 31

CHAPTER SIX: RIVERINA COLLEGE ON THE MOVE 37

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE QUIET CAMPUS..... 40

REFERENCES 42

BIBLIOGRAPHY 44

FOREWORD – SOUTH CAMPUS

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War there was an urgent need for additional teachers in New South Wales. The Government response was to establish two new teachers' colleges – one at Wagga Wagga in 1947 and the other in Bathurst in 1951. Both colleges were to be housed in former military establishments, to operate for a few years, after which teacher training would revert to the Sydney and Armidale teachers' colleges. Because the colleges were deemed temporary colleges, no capital—and few recurrent funds—were made available for conversion works. The shortage of teachers persisted into the 1950s, as did the colleges at Bathurst and Wagga Wagga. By the late 50s a new teaching block was built in Wagga Wagga comprising eight classrooms and associated staff offices, and residential accommodation for students was expanded.

In 1968 the recommendations of the Martin Committee were adopted by the Commonwealth Government and, as a result, a binary system of higher education was established with the advent of the Colleges of Advanced Education. Three such colleges were created in New South Wales: the New South Wales Institute of Technology at Broadway, Sydney; Mitchell College at Bathurst; and Riverina College of Advanced Education at Wagga Wagga, with Study Centres at Griffith and Albury. The last two colleges were to subsume, and be built upon, the campuses of the former teachers' colleges. Soon after these announcements were made and Commonwealth funds began to flow, the Government Architect designed a new brick library/student amenities building for Wagga, the construction of which was supervised by the Department of Public Works.

The official position was that the Wagga Teachers' College site be redeveloped as the site for the Riverina College of Advanced Education. In 1971 an Interim Council for the new College was formed. The Council soon realised that the site was far too restrictive given the ambitious plans being developed by the new Council. Plans to relocate the College were given forceful expression by the Chairman of the Interim Council, Mr Peter Hastie, and an elevated site to the north overlooking the City of Wagga Wagga, and contiguous with the Wagga Agricultural College soon emerged as the preferred permanent site for the new College. Relocation to that site commenced in 1973-74 and was accelerated with the incorporation of the Agricultural College into the Riverina College as a School of Agriculture in 1976.

The Riverina College continued to function on the Teachers' College site, albeit on a reducing scale, for some years. At the first year of its establishment in 1972, Riverina College had 780 students comprising 560 new or continuing students in the School of Teacher Education, and the balance were new students enrolled in the two additional schools of Business and Liberal Studies, and Applied Science. Existing buildings were renovated cheaply to provide accommodation for new programs in the Creative and Performing Arts, simple laboratories for classes in Physics, Chemistry and Biology, and offices for the increased number of academic and administrative staff. At first, most students lived on campus and were provided with their meals from a central cafeteria. Later, kitchens were built into the residential blocks to provide students with a self-catering alternative. As decanting proceeded, a model pre-school was established in a lecture block to provide practical training for students enrolled in the Early Childhood courses, a Conservatorium Centre was established in the Student Amenities building and the CSU Regional Archives was established in association with the Archives Authority of New South Wales in the now vacant Library building.

C D Blake AO

Foundation Principal, Riverina College of Advanced Education
Foundation Vice-Chancellor, Charles Sturt University

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The locals know it as ‘South Campus’ – a relatively open block of land just a few minutes’ drive from the heart of Wagga Wagga. It is quiet these days but the area holds a prominent place in the city’s development and the local history of education. At first regarded as being on the outskirts of Wagga, the rapid growth of the city from the 1960s means South Campus is now surrounded by housing, schools and other facilities.

Education has always been an important part of the city’s life. Today, Wagga boasts well over 20 schools—primary and secondary, public and private—as well as numerous pre-schools, a thriving technical education college and a university. A study in 2011 showed that more than a quarter of the city’s population at that time attended an educational institution.⁽¹⁾

Charles Sturt University’s South Campus, bounded by Urana Street, College Avenue, Hely Avenue and Fernleigh Road in the suburb of Turvey Park, has its own special history of more than 50 years as the site of tertiary education facilities. From 1947 to 1976 it bustled with students, first from the newly-established Wagga Teachers’ College and, from 1972, as the site of the early days of Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE), now grown to the Wagga Wagga Campus of Charles Sturt University. Hundreds of students lived, studied and played on the campus and some early staff also resided there. Locals flocked to enjoy theatre productions in the College Auditorium, tour the area during Open Days, or play weekend sport on the site’s expansive fields. Students from its earliest days as a teachers’ college have not forgotten the campus. A couple who met on the first day of Wagga Teachers’ College in 1947 have been together since then and will not forget South Campus – “Our footprint on the area was brief, but to us life-changing.”⁽²⁾

With the development of the Riverina College on larger grounds with more buildings and specialised facilities on the expansive site at Boorooma, north of the city, the ‘in-town’ site became known as South Campus. Until the end of 2013, university students still lived in the residential blocks on South Campus. The old weatherboard buildings are boarded up but activity goes on – today the campus maintains a strong university presence through the CSU Regional Archives, the Kay Hull Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the Riverina Conservatorium of Music.

The South Campus site is linked to some of Wagga Wagga’s earliest settlers. The town of Wagga began to develop around the Fitzmaurice Street area in the 1840s, and by 1860 was established as an important centre of the surrounding grazing and pastoral properties. But the South Campus site remained part of the so-called “waste lands of the Crown”⁽³⁾, with one of its earliest uses as a grazing area for cattle and sheep from the Best property at nearby “Flowerdale”.⁽⁴⁾

When the area was resumed in the late 1850s and broken into smaller portions, it was seen as a possible site for farming to meet the needs of the community with flour, vegetables and fruit. Noted local historian, Keith Swan says that although a number of portions in the area of the campus were sold, there is little evidence of them having been farmed and in fact these portions changed hands a number of times in the

late 19th Century.⁽⁵⁾ It should be noted that in this period the site lay within the Kyeamba Shire, with the boundary line between Wagga Wagga and Kyeamba Councils in the early part of the 20th Century running along Urana Street to the north of the land. In fact, the area remained in Kyeamba Shire until 1939 and it was to be quite a few more years before housing developments and some associated facilities—a nearby school, for example—heralded the growth of the southern area of the city.

But by the time the land that was to eventually become South Campus was taken up for Commonwealth use during World War II, it had three major owners: the Murrumbidgee Pastoral and Agricultural Association (MPAA) (Wagga Show Society) with about 40 acres; Mrs M A Scott of Sydney with nine acres and Holbrook farmer, J F Klimpsch, about six acres.⁽⁶⁾

The MPAA holding was to provide the major part of the early Teachers' College site, but in the early 20th Century it was used for parking during the annual Wagga Show. Not all showgoers were happy with this arrangement, however, as a letter to the editor of *The Daily Advertiser* in 1922 strongly criticised the organisation's decision to relocate vehicle parking. Said M J Hardiman of "Ashmont", Wagga:

Well, sir, I would submit to you the fact that the grandest advertisement as to the suitability of our district that the association ever possessed they have consigned to the backyard (so to speak). That is the magnificent array of motor vehicles, a show in themselves, which were previously parked on the N.E. side of the ring, and the value of which run into several thousand pounds, in a position where they must catch the eye, not only of the visitor as he gazed across the ring, but also the traveller by rail, who took in a bird's eye view as he passed. Have the committee ever considered what a relief these cars were to the congregated grandstand, what a haven of rest they were to the tired mothers with small children, who would take up their position in comfort, watch the whole ring events, and at the same time, cause no annoyance to anybody. But the committee have decided that all vehicles must go, and for that purpose have purchased, at considerable expense, an area of land adjacent to the showgrounds.⁽⁷⁾

Little changed in the area for the next two decades. But the Second World War was to herald a substantial difference in the use of the site.



ABOVE: Aerial photograph No.1 RAAF Hospital looking south, January 1945

CHAPTER TWO

WARTIME – THE RAAF HOSPITAL

The establishment of a Royal Australian Air Force hospital on the Turvey Park site was a fortuitous one for the site's future use as Wagga Teachers' College.

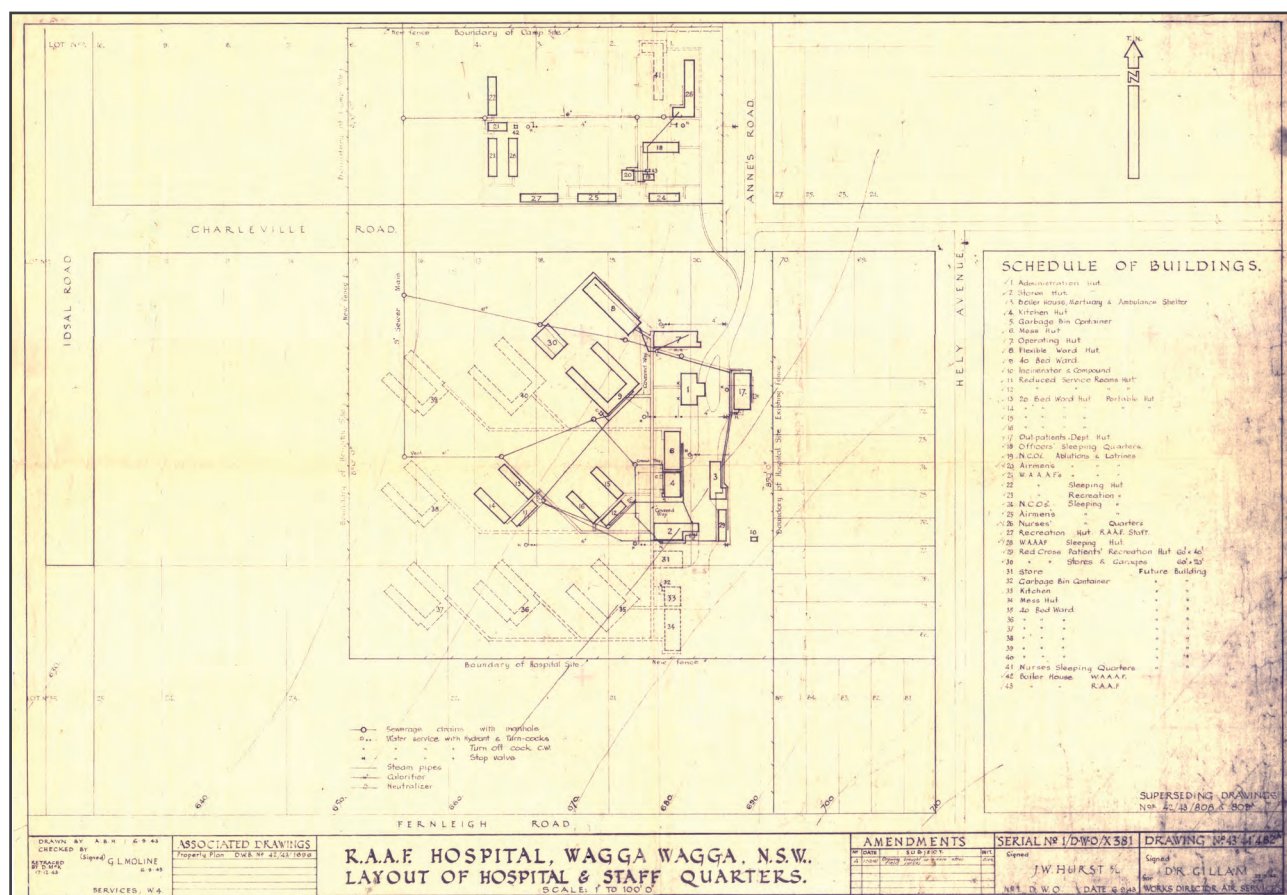
Described by historian Keith Swan as "The R.A.A.F. Interlude"⁽¹⁾, an extensive building program transformed the bare paddocks into a busy military hospital from 1944 to 1946. The No.1 RAAF Hospital was originally established at Laverton, Victoria, in September 1940, but in May 1942 was moved to the RAAF Base at Forest Hill, on the eastern outskirts of Wagga Wagga, with equipped beds totalling 55. The hospital was responsible for sick RAAF personnel and, from August 1942, it took over the treatment of all seriously ill and surgical cases among Army personnel in the area as well as outpatients consultations. By June 1943, the hospital at Forest Hill had 101 equipped beds but was finding it difficult to cope with the limited accommodation for its increased use.⁽²⁾

The Commonwealth Government had acquired the Turvey Park land owned by the Murrumbidgee Pastoral and Agricultural Association (MPAA) and Mrs M J Peacock at a cost of £2050 for military purposes under provisions of the National Security (General) Regulations⁽³⁾, with the land being earmarked for the possible development and future expansion of the RAAF, so the decision was made to build a new 150-bed RAAF hospital on the site.⁽⁴⁾

A six-months building program costing £67,797 saw the rise of a series of wooden buildings including an administration hut, stores hut, mortuary and ambulance shelter, kitchen and mess huts, an operating hut containing three operating theatres and associated facilities, an outpatients department and a number of ward huts. These ward huts were noted as being one flexible 32-bed hut, one 38-bed hut and four prefabricated portable ward huts, each accommodating 20 beds. As well, next to these portable huts were two huts for Ward Service Rooms. The site also provided staff quarters and ablution blocks.⁽⁵⁾ A newspaper report of the time pointed to the provision of sewerage, electricity and water connections on the site – no doubt another important factor in the future use of the area.⁽⁶⁾ Overall, it was an impressive and functional wartime development, changing the usage of the site from grazing and car parking to an area with the potential for more intensive use in the future.

On January 23 and 24 1944, the No.1 RAAF Hospital was transferred from Forest Hill to the new complex. The 150-bed hospital was given a staff establishment of more than 100 personnel, comprising 12 officers, 18 nurses, 10 sergeant and above ranks; and 74 corporals and ranks below. It was noted that in this last figure, 40 of the number could be women members of the forces. But, as a wartime installation, details are not known on the numbers of service personnel—RAAF and Army—treated through the Wagga-based hospital over its time on the Turvey Park site.

The hospital was well accepted by townspeople, with the Wagga branch of the Red Cross Society occupying a building within the complex to provide basic necessities and to prepare items for sending to other areas.



Plan of No.1 RAAF Hospital, December 1943

There were also regular reports of Red Cross members rostered as visitors to the RAAF hospital patients. The Red Cross efforts were discussed at its regular meetings; for example, at a meeting in June 1944, "Mrs James Brown handed in a letter of appreciation written by an inmate of the RAAF hospital. The Mayor said that it was very nice to receive these letters of appreciation."⁽⁷⁾

With the end of World War II in 1945, activities at No.1 RAAF Hospital were slowing down and, by early 1946, it was found that these could be carried out satisfactorily in the Sick Quarters of the RAAF's Group Training School at Forest Hill. So, on 18 February 1946, No.1 RAAF Hospital "closed the gates" on the Turvey Park site. In July 1946, it was noted that the RAAF had no further use for the hospital buildings and, on 8 July, the Minister for Air declared the assets there to be surplus to the requirements of the Department of Air. The Commonwealth Disposals Commission was advised of the assets for disposal – Building Services £39,819; Engineering Services £25,928; and acquired land £2050, all to a total of £67,797; the amount that had been outlaid to establish the hospital on the site in 1943-44.⁽⁸⁾

The site was unlikely to lie unused for very long. The early months of 1946 had been a time of discussion, agitation and negotiations by local leaders and parliamentarians, culminating in an announcement on 31 May 1946 of the decision to use the old RAAF hospital site and its buildings for the establishment of Wagga's teachers' college.⁽⁹⁾ Another phase in the history of the site was about to begin.



ABOVE: Nurses Corporal Mappey and AGU Cameron off duty



RIGHT: Lis Allshorn, Dr Deakin and Lis Hodgeson at the RAAF hospital in September 1944



ABOVE: The campus as left by the No.1 RAAF Hospital, 1946

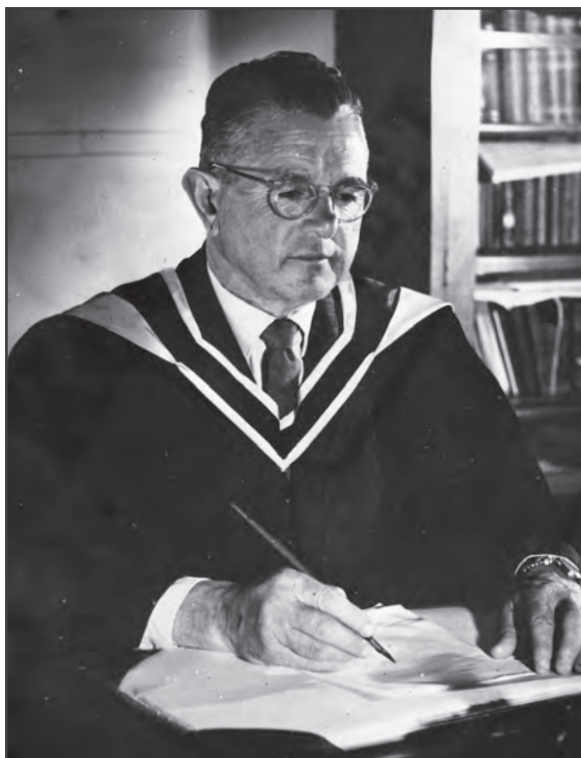
CHAPTER THREE

PIONEERS AND A PRINCIPAL 1947-1958

Early in June 1947 the first students arrived at the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College.

It was a typical Wagga winter; frost on the ground and freezing cold. On the College site, building improvements were still being carried out, and hot water and heating was non-existent. For the 146 students—72 men and 74 women—who walked through the gates of the new college, first impressions were of the cold and the almost primitive accommodation, with many wondering if they would last as pioneer students. Said one: “It wasn’t very much of a college...The accommodation was just Air Force barracks, but we had to survive and really, nothing was ready for us.”⁽¹⁾

In a special newspaper article on the 50th anniversary of the college opening, an unnamed pioneer mused that it had seemed as though the students weren’t expected or had arrived too early. “From the beginning, I can still see so clearly the cold brown (or was it green?) linoleum that covered the floors of our huts ... there were no wardrobes to hang our clothes in, no curtains or blinds on the windows, and no heating whatsoever.”⁽²⁾



At the time, the college’s inaugural principal, George Blakemore, was optimistic that improvements were forthcoming. A student who described the buildings as “old army and everything was in need of a good coat of paint”, confirmed Mr Blakemore’s outlook. “Every assembly, Mr Blakemore would impress upon us that ‘yes, things were going to get better.’”⁽³⁾ And indeed they did. After enduring spartan conditions in the first weeks, by the end of the first year shower blocks had been built and gas heaters installed in common rooms and corridors.

It is interesting to note that the pioneers’ reminiscences of their residences differ from a newspaper report of the time, which stated a tour of inspection had “emphasised the claims that it was the most modernly equipped in the State”, even favourably comparing the sleeping quarters to “the rooms of a first-class hotel with every modern convenience”.⁽⁴⁾

Despite the students’ less-than-enthusiastic first impression, they settled in well and took pride in being not only pioneers of a new teachers college, but of the fact that Wagga Teachers’ College was the first co-educational residential college. This was a situation that elicited an

oft-quoted directive from Mr Blakemore, himself a pioneer in this area. Alarmed by what boy-girl fraternisation might lead to, he called an assembly and announced to all, "There will be no more canoodling on the College Campus because I am responsible for the condition of 150 girls on this campus". He was reportedly baffled by the hoots of laughter from the assembled students.⁽⁵⁾

Despite the principal's concerns, the new college certainly was the scene of romance. In 2012, an oral history project recorded the reminiscences of a number of pioneer students, including a married couple who met on the first day at Wagga Teachers' College in June 1947. He asked her to a dance that night and, in their words, "have been going together ever since". Kevin and Winifred Wilcox became engaged in their second year at college, something that displeased Principal George Blakemore. Hearing the news late at night, he burst into Kevin's dormitory after midnight, telling him, "I do not want my college to be known as a matrimonial bureau". A number of pioneer students married after leaving college, unknown by the principal.⁽⁶⁾

The pioneers were a close-knit group a considerable distance from the main centre of Wagga in those days, and so they regarded themselves as being in "our own little village outside Wagga".⁽⁷⁾ In the early months of college life, students and staff went about the business of education surrounded by building activity, dodging wet cement as paths were laid, and smiling at the promise of the gardens being planted and lawns laid. Appointed to the new college early in 1947, George Blakemore later recalled the appearance of the campus at that time: "In the middle of a hot dry summer, with only one small patch of green in front of the administration building and all the remaining spaces covered with stunted lucerne, the site of the future college presented a deserted and desolate place."⁽⁸⁾

In 1948, the college boasted three blocks of women's dormitories, approximately 10 male dormitories, three lecture blocks, gym, assembly hall, administration block, dining room and common room. Most of the original dormitories still provided little relief from weather extremes, with students recalling that they "baked in summer and froze in winter". It was also noted that the men's and women's dormitories were well separated.⁽⁹⁾

In 1949, George Blakemore announced that the conversion of the RAAF hospital site into the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College had been completed.



ABOVE: Administration block, 1947



ABOVE: One of the women's bedrooms, 1950



ABOVE: *The pioneer students, 1947-1948*

BELOW: *Pioneer staff*





ABOVE: Repair staff, 1947



ABOVE: Conversion work, 1947

It is important to note that the site now known as South Campus had not been the original choice for a teachers' college way back when such colleges had been mooted for Bathurst and Wagga in the 1920s. In fact, it was not even in the first four possible sites suggested, researched and reported on from that time. The four possible sites outlined in June 1928 were Copland's "Hillside" estate of 79 acres (the home "Hillside" was situated on the rise in the eastern end of Coleman Street where the TAFE now stands); a site of 200 acres of Willans' Hill; a 16-acre site between Coleman Street and the railway line then owned by Hardy's Limited; and 40 acres known as McGarry's Slaughter Yards, adjoining the Hardy property. In September 1928, NSW Minister for Education, D H Drummond, chose the "Hillside" estate, which was bought for £8500 early the following year.⁽¹⁰⁾ As no moves were made in this period towards establishing a teachers' college, the Wagga Technical College was built on part of the Copland site and, in the 1940s, consideration was given to another site on Willans' Hill. But none of these were mentioned when, on 31 May 1946, the then Minister for Education, R J Heffron, and Member for Wagga Wagga, Eddie Graham, announced the RAAF hospital site and its buildings in Turvey Park would be used for the new Teachers' College.⁽¹¹⁾

Graham had been a strong supporter of this site to ensure an early start for the college, but the Murrumbidgee Pastoral and Agricultural Association opposed it, having used an area of its holding on the site for parking purposes during its annual show over many years. The MPAA had protested against the Commonwealth acquisition of the land when World War II ended and, according to Association officers, "despite a good case being made out for the retention of this land for the highly important purpose of agricultural showgrounds extension, the military authorities were not to be deterred and formally notified their intention to acquire the land and title."⁽¹²⁾ The MPAA suggested alternative sites, including the area where Mount Austin High School now stands, but the RAAF hospital site, with its buildings, plus sewerage and water facilities, presented a better place for a rapid start to the Teachers' College. Added to the hospital buildings was the transfer in 1948 of an assembly hall from the Temora RAAF base – a building to be used originally as a gymnasium, a hall for official functions and later as the auditorium, which was the scene of local theatrical productions right through to the 1980s.

With these announcements, negotiations and preparations behind them, on 9 June 1947 the new Wagga Teachers' College held its first assembly. A typed program from the day shows reference to the historic occasion, the pioneering staff and students, and the promise of "a great educational adventure". The final item on the page was the new college's motto 'Excel with Honour'.⁽¹³⁾



ABOVE: Assembly hall, 1948



ABOVE: Auditorium and tree-lined path, 1960s



VOL. I, No. 1

TALKABOUT

PRICE: ONE PENNY

Foreword By Principal

Many interesting things have happened since we opened on June 9, and I feel that the decision of the students to publish each week a record of our activities is a very important step in the development of the College. Every part of College life—cultural, professional, social—in the lecture room, in the school, in the playing field and in the community—can now be discussed freely by those most vitally concerned, the students themselves. The criticism of the students, provided it is genuinely, sincerely, and frankly expressed, may have an important bearing on future policy. But it is essential that the views expressed should be as representative as possible, so it is the duty of all students to contribute to their paper.

I know we are all happy to be members of the first wholly-residential College in New South Wales; I am sure we are all proud to be pioneers in a new field of education, and I am confident that every one of us is determined to play his part worthily in making the Teachers' College, Wagga Wagga, a great institution. Hence, the most helpful criticism of existing rules, regulations and general policy will be that which is constructive, and I am

Editorial

This, the first issue of "Talkabout," marks the beginning of a new epoch of student activities at Wagga Teachers' College. To date we, as individuals, have been primarily concerned with making new friends and with reconciling ourselves to a new environment which will be our home for some time to come. This initial phase has now been satisfactorily completed, thanks to the spirit of co-operation which has permeated the student body, and to the assistance of the principal, lecturers and domestic staff, whose untiring efforts to ameliorate our lot have been greatly appreciated.

The three months which have passed since the establishment of the College have seen the formation of a Students' Representative Council, elected by popular vote. In addition many clubs, devoted to the study of a particular academic subject, have also been formed. Whilst these clubs are autonomous in their internal administration, each elects a member to the parent body, the S.R.C. The need for a student publication to reflect current opinion, and to record the activities of the Students' Representative Council, is obvious.

It is hoped that not only will "Talkabout" provide a medium for expression of opinion and criticism within the

the assistance given me by June Scott, Charlie Chappell and Merv Whittaker in canvassing for advertising matter. Without their co-operation, and the generous support given by our advertisers, the publication of a student paper would have been impossible. May I commend these, our advertisers, to you, and ask that in your future purchases in Wagga you support them as liberally as they have supported your paper "Talkabout."

ALAN FRYER.

S.R.C. President's Benediction

As President of the S.R.C., it falls my welcome lot to wish the Wagga Teachers' College weekly paper, "Talkabout," every success in this, its first publication, and all future publications.

I am certain that this organ of the students' activities will work in unison with the S.R.C. in striving for students' rights, privileges and benefits. Whatever concerns the student body concerns the S.R.C. and now, in "Talkabout," we have a medium for making S.R.C. aims and activities known.

"Talkabout" will be a means for the student to air his views and should lead him to realise that he is a part of a democratic college community. In every

On 6 October 1947, the students brought out the first issue of their own regular newsletter 'Talkabout'. It opened with a foreword by the principal, noting the publication was important in the development of the college and in providing a forum for discussion of every part of college life by "those most vitally concerned, the students themselves".

Alongside Blakemore's notes was the first editorial by editor, Alan Fryer, noting "the spirit of co-operation which has permeated the student body" and thanking the assistance of the principal, lecturers and domestic staff "whose untiring efforts to ameliorate our lot have been greatly appreciated". In the first three months of the college operations, a Student Representative Council had been elected and a number of clubs formed.⁽¹⁴⁾



On Wednesday 29 September 1948, the College was officially opened by NSW Minister for Education, Mr R J Heffron. Following the ceremony, a tree was planted by retiring secretary of the Education Department, Mr N H Salmon (above). This tree, located between the auditorium and an accommodation block, (both buildings still on the site in 2014) stood for many years as a record of the college's early days until its size and condition led to its removal.

In May 1949, the 144 students of the pioneer session graduated in an impressive ceremony in the College's assembly hall (later used as an auditorium). In his address to the graduates, Principal George Blakemore said the spirit of adventure had been typical in the Wagga college. He told the graduates they had started with unique factors of co-education and of students living together in residence, conducive to the spirit of adventure. He urged them to continue as pioneers, "determined to blaze new trails in education". Wagga's Mayor, Alderman Les Barrand, also spoke of the importance of the first graduates, telling them: "This is your first milestone in the history of your college. It is also another milestone in the history of Wagga."⁽¹⁵⁾



ABOVE: Wagga Teachers' College from the air, 1953

Throughout the 1950s, the Wagga Teachers' College grew in numbers and buildings. In the early years, timber buildings that had formed the No.1 RAAF Hospital were converted to residential blocks, lecture rooms and other facilities. The grounds changed – lawns replaced lucerne paddocks, buildings were painted cream and a pagoda built with a rose garden, leading to a newspaper article to refer to the college site becoming “one of this city's outstanding beauty spots”.⁽¹⁶⁾ New brick buildings began to appear. In 1954 the first permanent brick building was a toilet and shower block. In February 1957, the first permanent brick residential block was occupied by 64 women students. By 1961, three other brick residential blocks had been built.



ABOVE: The Teachers' College's first Gilbert and Sullivan production, 'Trial by Jury', 1948

adjacent to a crepe myrtle tree. Clad in a flowing gown of ancient times and holding aloft a lamp, Myrtle for many years stood on a concrete plinth in the centre of the roundabout just inside the main gates and outside the early administration block. The drape of her gown meant a regular pastime was to polish exposed parts of her anatomy (so she had one very shiny breast); and on many occasions Myrtle would gain extra clothing and other draped items overnight, often after a social gathering of Teacher and Agricultural College students on the campus.

A smaller statue, 'Naied' by K Murray Jardine was given to the College by an anonymous donor. A small figure seated on a stone, Naied was placed in a pool in a calm pleasance area between buildings. The fate of this little statue when the Teachers' College closed is unknown.

In 1956 the band rotunda that had been a feature of the Town Hall Gardens in Morrow Street in central Wagga was moved to the Teachers' College as a donation from Wagga Wagga City Council. It brought a touch of Wagga's history to the site – it was believed that the curved top of the rotunda had come from an old gasometer. The rotunda was moved to the Charles Sturt University site in Boorooma and stands on the lawns above office buildings and lecture theatres on the campus. A plaque on the rotunda at its University site marks the official opening of Riverina College of Advanced Education on 29 May 1980. A sundial presented by the pioneer students of 1947-48 remains on the South Campus site near the CSU Regional Archives building.

Alongside the physical growth, the College became an important part of the Wagga Wagga community. Students fielded teams in a number of Wagga sporting competitions and, in 1948, the College presented Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* and *HMS Pinafore*, the first of many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and other plays, which would entertain audiences throughout the College's history. As well, staff members were involved in many local organisations.

The community reciprocated the goodwill and, in 1954, the Wagga Wagga Chamber of Commerce donated a bronze figure by 19th Century French sculptor Carrier to the College. The figure came to be known as 'Myrtle', perhaps because of its placement



ABOVE: Myrtle, 1950s



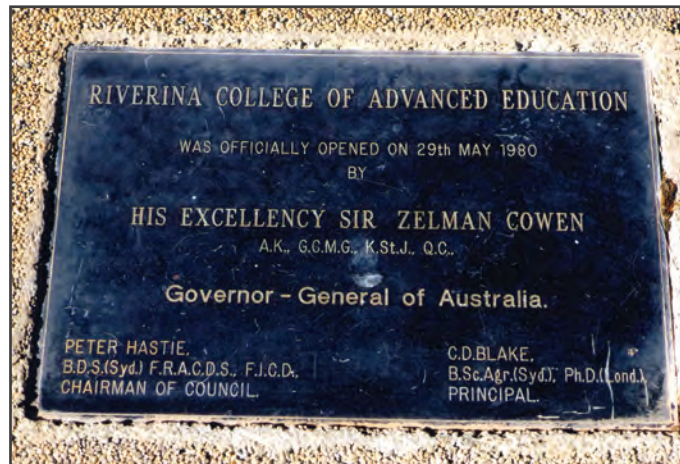
ABOVE: Naied



ABOVE: Moving the Rotunda onto College grounds at South Campus, 1956



ABOVE: The Rotunda at CSU, 2014



ABOVE: Plaque marking the opening of RCAE, 1980

As the College grew, it marked its links with its past. In 1956, the Dame Mary Gilmore gates were opened at the main College Street entrance as a gift of the 1955-56 student session.

The famous writer had maintained a correspondence with George Blakemore over the years, encouraging the College's growth and contributing a number of items. The inscription on the plaque read: "These gates are a memorial to Mary Gilmore DBE; Pupil (1875), - pupil-teacher and then assistant in the old Gurwood Street School of Wagga Wagga. Session 1956-57 gift." While Mary Gilmore was unable to attend the formal ceremony, she wrote to Blakemore thanking all involved in making the gates and the ceremony. She noted that her friend Mrs Dorothy Catts, who had deputised for her on the day said, "the whole place was beautiful with roses and distinguished by cap and gown".⁽¹⁷⁾

Two years later on 20 September 1958, tribute was paid to a man who had worked tirelessly towards the establishment of the College, the State Member for Wagga Wagga and Minister for Agriculture, Eddie Graham who had died in office the previous year.

These gates, a gift from students of the 1958-59 session, were placed at the entrance to the College playing fields (later the gates were moved to the Agricultural campus of Charles Sturt University at Boorooma, at the entrance to Graham Block – also named after the Minister). NSW Premier, J J Cahill, cut the ribbon to open the gates with Graham's daughter, Mrs Phyllis White. The principal of the College, George Blakemore, was unable to attend, having been admitted to hospital after suffering a coronary occlusion three days earlier.

On Sunday, 21 September 1958, George Blakemore, the man who had guided Wagga Teachers' College from its inception, died at the age of 58. His obituary hailed him as "a highly respected and well-loved member of the community" who had done much for the Wagga Teachers' College and for Wagga in general. Nearly 600 people attended his funeral, with 300 College students forming a guard of honour outside St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wagga, in tribute to the man who had led their college for almost 11 years.⁽¹⁸⁾



ABOVE: Mrs Dorothy Catts cuts the ribbon to open the Mary Gilmore gates.



ABOVE: Eddie Graham's daughter, Mrs Phyllis White, cuts the ribbon to open the gates, watched by Premier, J J Cahill.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSOLIDATION AND CHANGE 1959-1971

The first 10 years of the Wagga Teachers' College had firmly established it as an important site in the growing city. The area was landscaped, sporting fields were well established and an ongoing building program had added substantially to the residential and teaching area. Much more was to come through the late 1950s and 1960s. The passing of the College's inaugural principal and guiding force in its development meant a change in leadership but did not slow the building program, alongside expansions in training programs.



ABOVE: George Muir

George Muir, who had been vice-principal to Blakemore and acting principal since his death, was appointed to the position of principal from the beginning of 1959. This same year saw completion of another new dormitory block for women, and the provision of new gates and lighting at the Hely Avenue entrance. The following year, the first permanent hall of residence for men was opened, accommodating 64 students.

In December 1960 George Muir transferred to the position of principal of Armidale Teachers' College. Maurice Hale, formerly vice-principal of Bathurst Teachers' College, took up duties as principal at Wagga on 20 February 1961. He was the College's final principal, guiding its change into Riverina College of Advanced Education 10 years later.⁽¹⁾

In 1961, Wagga Teachers' College was aiming towards a long-range plan to replace all the temporary wartime buildings of the RAAF hospital with permanent brick buildings. Plans were underway for two more women's residential blocks and another men's block. Alongside these projects was the construction of lecture blocks containing staff offices, lecture rooms and recreation areas for students. Also included was the construction of a new library, formally named the George Blakemore Memorial Library in honour of the first principal, with Education Minister E Wetherell unveiling a plaque on the library in May 1961.⁽²⁾

At the same time, Principal Maurice Hale forecast growth in the range of teacher training programs. In a newspaper feature late in 1961, he was quoted as saying if the Teachers' College should ever become a university college, or if the demands of service meant an increase in the students from 400, another site would have to be found.⁽³⁾ It was a prescient thought.



ABOVE: Maurice Hale

Principal Hale had strong views on the standards expected of his students and, at an assembly in March 1962, referred to the “fine tradition for the quality of training it [the college] has given its students in regard to practical teaching”. He suggested that in addition to regular study hours, students should consider using the hours between lectures for their tertiary experiences – either reading or preparing assignments, or discussing intelligent problems. At the same time, Mr Hale appealed to students to “avoid vulgarity”. He told the students: “I have heard students calling out across lawns, or among the dormitories. The effort to shout coarsens the voice. A much more dignified method is to be patient and wait till you are within normal earshot before communicating”.⁽⁴⁾

It would seem the principal was less than enamoured with other student “out-of-hours” activities. As noted in the previous chapter, the lifesize figure of Myrtle was a prominent feature in the grounds of the Teachers’ College, however there is some confusion over whether Myrtle may have moved from her central position some time in late 1961 or early 1962. Archival photographs show an undated plinth, believed to be that on which Myrtle stood in the centre of a roundabout outside the administration block and, in a March 1962 edition of the college student magazine ‘Talkabout’, a photograph appeared of a student laying flowers on an empty plinth with the accompanying rather cryptic inscription ‘In remembrance of one departed’.



ABOVE: Grounds 1960s



ABOVE: In memory of Myrtle



Some students of the time don't remember her disappearance, but others say Myrtle was removed on the instructions of the principal, Maurice Hale – either because of the constant attention to her anatomy ("it was ruining the patina", was one phrase quoted) or that the sun caught the bronze, shining directly into the adjacent administration block, which included the principal's office. Where Myrtle was moved to at the time remains a mystery but, given her height and weight, it was not something that could be hidden away easily.

Myrtle now stands on the lawns north of the library on Charles Sturt University's Boorooma campus, sheltered by a large tree. A plaque at her feet perpetuates her arrival at the Teachers' College.

*"Myrtle"
Carrier – Belleuse, France.
Donated to Wagga Wagga Teachers' College
by the Wagga Wagga Chamber
of Commerce in 1954.
She graced the lawn in
front of the principal's office next to a large
crepe myrtle bush, hence the name*

The early 1960s were a sometimes turbulent time in the history of the College. Principal Maurice Hale was strict in adherence to rules, some of which irked the young adults studying at the college. In May 1962, more than 300 students marched through Wagga streets, chanting "Down with Hale, we want a new principal". The students noted various complaints but in particular claimed the residential rules at Wagga Teachers' College were "probably the harshest in the State" and protested against what they referred to as "childish treatment".⁽⁵⁾ A month later, a further newspaper report said rules relating to students drinking or leaving the college on study nights had been relaxed.⁽⁶⁾

Staff also received reminders to abide by College rules. In a memo to all wardens on 11 June 1971, Mr Hale noted that the College gates had been left unlocked on a number of occasions, even though they had been officially locked by the caretaker. Said the memo:

Gate keys are issued to staff and wardens who live on campus on the understanding that the gates will be kept locked at all times when the caretaker or watchman are not on duty. It would therefore be appreciated if you would ensure that the gates are locked when bringing your vehicle in or out of the College grounds.⁽⁷⁾

But growth in the physical presence of the area was also a factor of the 1960s college on South Campus. College records show not only construction work but also the removal of old buildings and, in 1968, the resiting of buildings adjacent to the administration block (an original building from the RAAF hospital) to make way for the construction of a double-storey library with adjacent student union facilities. (This building is now the site of CSU Regional Archives and the Riverina Conservatorium of Music). The construction was carried out through 1969-1970. Two old buildings were removed and apparently transported to San Isidore, at that time a new settlement being developed by the Catholic Church on the western outskirts of Wagga. In November 1969 the construction work featured a 24-hour continuous concrete pour for the first floor of the building. Overall it was a major undertaking and a photographic record of the period bears the title of "Campus Chaos".⁽⁸⁾

While this building was rising to be a dominant feature on the Teachers' College campus, bigger changes were on the way. It had been known since 1968 that, on the recommendations of the Martin Report,⁽⁹⁾ Wagga was to be the site of one of three new Colleges of Advanced Education established in New South Wales, alongside one at Bathurst and one in Sydney. In September 1968, the Wagga Teachers' College site was named for development of Riverina College of Advanced Education, and Maurice Hale was quoted as saying he was strongly in favour of a college of advanced education as an educational institution and an aid to providing background training for teachers.⁽¹⁰⁾

Several months later, local State member, Wal Fife, confirmed the site following acquisition of land for expansion – an area of 14 acres adjoining the Show Society carpark and a further 34 acres on the southern side of Fernleigh Road would provide much of the space needed to set up the College of Advanced Education, according to Mr Fife.⁽¹¹⁾

In October 1969, the members of the Riverina College's Interim Council held their first meeting at the Teachers' College. Chaired by local dentist Peter Hastie, the Interim Council was to establish the future of the new college. The growth of the Teachers' College over 20 years had provided a strong, even ready-made base. One of the foundation schools was to be the School of Teacher Education, alongside a School of Applied Science, and a School of Business and Liberal Studies. Building priorities for the new Council centred on a site development plan, land acquisition and student residential accommodation.⁽¹²⁾ The Interim Council met regularly on South Campus, even as they were turning their eyes towards a more expansive site to cope with the rise in student numbers when the RCAE emerged. As it would take some time to develop the alternative site, conditions were going to be crowded on the Teachers' College site in the early years.

CAMPUS CHAOS



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Demolishing old RAAF buildings



ABOVE: Moving buildings to San Isidore



ABOVE: Foundations of the College Library (now housing the Riverina Conservatorium of Music and CSU Regional Archives)



LEFT: 24-hour concrete pour

In December 1971, Wagga Teachers' College students and staff marked the end of an era. The final graduating students received their diplomas, and students and staff said farewell to their college. Local member, Wal Fife, in his graduation address, praised the contribution of the Teachers' College to Wagga, the Riverina and New South Wales over the past 25 years. "We, who reside in the Riverina, are very thankful for having the Wagga Teachers College", he said, while welcoming the changeover to the Riverina College.⁽¹³⁾

Then, staff and students bid their college a fond farewell. The college flag was taken down by the president and secretary of the Student Representative Council and carefully folded; then staff, wearing academic dress, walked slowly out through the College gates for the last time, symbolically closing the gates behind them. A new era in education was soon to begin on the site.



CHAPTER FIVE

RIVERINA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION – THE EARLY DAYS



ABOVE: South Campus, 29 September 1971

The year 1971 was a strange year on South Campus. As students continued their training under the banner of the Wagga Teachers' College, those who were not in their final year were set to become students in the School of Teacher Education when Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE) formally began on 1 January 1972. Teachers' College staff was discussing staff changes, moves to RCAE and other choices,⁽¹⁾ and the topic of RCAE was a touchy issue in staff meetings if a note on an August 1971 meeting was any indication:

Agenda Item H - Riverina College of Advanced Education: The principal asked whether any members had anything that they wished to say urgently on this matter (great laughter erupted from the floor). No recordable comment was forthcoming.⁽²⁾

While Maurice Hale remained as principal through much of 1971, correspondence in the latter part of the year shows he had moved on to the position of coordinator of Teacher Education with the Department of Education in Sydney. Ray Wade continued to the end of 1971 as acting principal of the Teachers' College.⁽³⁾



ABOVE: Clifford Blake

At the same time, Clifford Douglas Blake was appointed foundation principal of Riverina College of Advanced Education, had taken up residence in Wagga and was wasting no time in working with the RCAE Interim Council to have everything in place for the new college's first days. It was a case of dual occupancy and dual leadership.

Change was inevitable and was happening well before the site became known as Riverina College of Advanced Education from the first days of 1972. Funding of more than \$3.5 million was set aside through a 1970-72 allocation from New South Wales and Commonwealth grants, and proposals for academic and administrative structure for the new college were well in hand.⁽⁴⁾ The Interim Council's chairman, Peter Hastie, was already suggesting an alternative site, adjacent to the Wagga Agricultural College where he believed a large area of rural land might be bought at a reasonable price. He believed the Council should consider "the rural side of development" as this not only complemented Wagga's predominantly rural environment, but would provide ample room for future expansion. While there would be inconvenience in the early stages of the development, the facilities at the Teachers' College should be used while a new site was developed.⁽⁵⁾

The South Campus buildings and facilities were a major point of discussion for the Interim Council through 1971. RCAE's principal Cliff Blake and early staff were working between the campus at Turvey Park and an office in a Baylis Street building, but Dr Blake was keen to have new academic staff accommodated at the Teachers' College campus to allow interaction with current Teachers' College staff. In a letter dated September 1971 he said it would be advantageous if the Teachers' College principal could take up his new position [with the Department of Education in Sydney] soon, giving greater responsibility to RCAE. The reply was circumspect and non-committal.⁽⁶⁾



ABOVE: Boorooma campus site, 1974

On 1 January 1972, Riverina College of Advanced Education assumed responsibility of the South Campus site. An inauguration ceremony on 3 March featured a church service, mayoral welcome and academic procession to the Civic Theatre. The college continued teaching with a total now of 750 students, placing enormous pressure on both teaching and accommodation facilities in a college previously built to cater for 420 students.

Early in 1972, the RCAE Council approved renovations to South Campus facilities totalling \$130,000. These were to cover renovations of a conference room, an arts and crafts building, provision of a cafeteria service and repairs to the kitchen-dining room, plus providing an executive dining room and a vehicle compound. Included in the 1972-73 capital works program was an amount towards site survey and acquisitions in the proposed north campus development area.

A map and detailed guide, believed to be from 1974, shows the extent of usage of the South Campus buildings, and a need to bring in additional accommodation. It details a mix of brick, fibro and weatherboard buildings, as well as a number of transportable homes added to provide offices and lecture rooms. The map bears out the concerns of the new college's leaders – that the site was unlikely to accommodate the growth of the college, even in the short term.

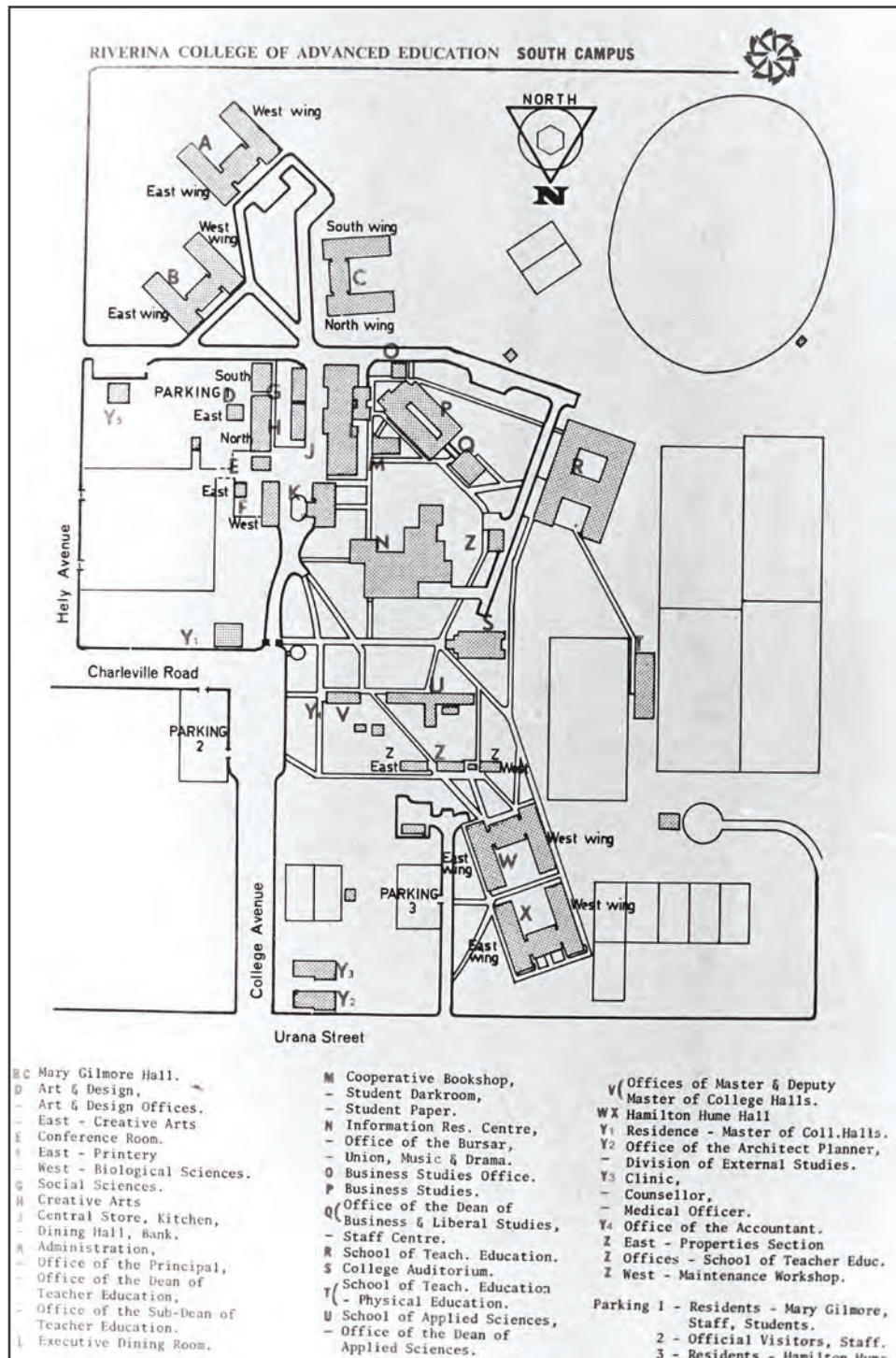
For the first new staff of RCAE, arrival in Wagga in 1972 was something of a culture shock. In a special publication honouring C D Blake on his retirement as Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University in 2001, Fred Goldsworthy, lecturer in English, described his first day on the campus:

Wagga Wagga 24 January 1972 about 11.30a.m. A blistering hot day under a pitiless blue sky; a cumbersome two-tone green Morris J van turned out of Hely Avenue through a brick and wrought iron gateway and rolled to a stop under a sparsely leafed eucalypt in a corrugated gravel car park. I'd probably arrived at Riverina College of Advanced Education. The contrast with the green shadiness of the ANU could not have been more stark.

To the left, behind and stretching down the hill were some long, low, brick buildings that declared themselves dormitories – not my immediate destination. Ahead and to the right was a collection of largish, iron-roofed, weatherboard buildings silently baking in the sun. Somewhere in that collection I might find information I needed.

I got out and started down the bitumen road, realising for the first time that I didn't own a hat.⁽⁷⁾

Another new arrival in January 1972 was Don Affleck, appointed to RCAE under what he described as “the amazing title, Master of College Halls”. He recalled a “whirlwind introduction to campus. ‘You can work from here,’ said Fred Wylie, the Property Officer. ‘It used to be the morgue in the old RAAF Hospital days. At least it's opposite the dining room and the Admin Building. Let me know what furniture you'll need.’ Exit Fred”. Affleck noted that names of the on campus housing were changed from titles like Buna and Marinyah to A, B, C and W, X Blocks and the name ‘warden’ was replaced by ‘resident tutor’.⁽⁸⁾



ABOVE: Riverina College of Advanced Education map of building sites and their early 1970s functions

In the city of Wagga itself, there was some resentment at first at what was perceived as a ‘takeover’ of their Teachers’ College, but the new principal worked hard to establish good relations with residents. Having brought Colin Anderson to the college as a drama lecturer, he cemented the College in locals’ hearts and minds with Anderson’s first College Revue in 1972. Drinks and food were served on the lawns outside the College Auditorium in the early summer evening before the show, and locals then settled down to laugh at the college and their own community. In particular, they responded to a sketch that clearly showed a figure in academic dress pacing the stage with a man in overalls and carrying a tool box stopping regularly to measure something.⁽⁹⁾ The sketch echoed the principal’s determination to upgrade and build around the campus in the early days of RCAE.

The College had also attracted royal attention, with a visit to the campus by the Duke of Edinburgh, 30 October 1973. The Duke was taken on a walking tour of the campus and even met with some students.



ABOVE: The Duke of Edinburgh walks through South Campus grounds with RCAE staff and officials



ABOVE: A barefoot student chats with the royal visitor

It was evident from the earliest days of RCAE that the Teachers’ College site was not going to be able to accommodate a growing college. Almost from its formation, the College Council had developed ambitious plans to relocate the institution to the elevated site north of the city adjacent to the Wagga Agricultural College, which had opened in 1949. The Council had realised early in its discussions that an area of at least 200 acres would be needed for the new college and planning began towards purchases of land in the preferred northern area, as well as setting a timetable for construction of buildings in that area from January 1973.⁽¹⁰⁾

But while the move to the northern site was the major objective for the RCAE Council, the town site of the former Teachers’ College maintained an important role in the future of the new college. Most lectures were held there in the early years and its accommodation units were vital to RCAE’s students. The two-storey library complex, opened in 1971, was an integral part of the college’s education process. Associated with the library was the CSU Regional Archives, established in 1978 with the strong support of Principal Cliff Blake.

As noted earlier, records of the early RCAE Council meetings show that the limitations of the Teachers’ College area were recognised even before RCAE took over from the Teachers’ College. As early as 30 July 1970, the Interim Council had recommended in principle “that the location of the Riverina College of Advanced Education should be moved in close proximity to the Agricultural College for reasons of developing as fully as possible, every educational opportunity for a regional college of advanced education in a rural area”.⁽¹¹⁾

The Council recognised the Teachers' College site was still a long-term need, particularly noting land on the corner of Charleville Road and College Avenue for use as a parking area.

The College Bursar, E P Thomas, in a letter to the Riverina Area director of the Department of Education in December 1971, said this would continue for as long as Riverina College used accommodation on the site. Present indications were that this need could continue for at least 10 years!⁽¹²⁾

In more general terms, an undated and unsigned paper, believed to have been written in the early 1970s, discussed a number of proposals for future use of the Wagga Teachers' College campus. It noted several ideas that had been "conversationally mentioned" and said early discussions should be limited to a small group of interested parties. The focus was on several different types of schools, with the writer suggesting that "acceleration of funding for site development (on the North Wagga site) might result from a decision to move rapidly on an alternative use of the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College area".⁽¹³⁾

South Campus's days as the focal point of tertiary education in Wagga were numbered.

CHAPTER SIX

RIVERINA COLLEGE ON THE MOVE

While the 'pioneer' staff and students of Riverina College of Advanced Education continued the business of education in the buildings of the former Teachers' College, the development of the newly-acquired northern site was moving along steadily. The College's annual report of 1972 included a detailed outline of progress:

The site had been surveyed and action was initiated for the transfer of approximately 57 hectares from the Wagga Agricultural College. At the end of the year only formalities remained to complete this transfer, and action was initiated for the acquisition of an additional privately owned adjacent 40 hectares, essential to the overall development.⁽¹⁾



ABOVE: Wal Fife commences works at the Boorooma campus

On 11 December 1972, an explosion and a plaque unveiling ceremoniously marked the start of construction work on RCAE's north campus. The Member for Wagga Wagga, Wal Fife, detonated a charge on a rocky outcrop on the site, and then pledged support for continuing funding of the development of the area to ensure that South Campus was vacated not later than 1980. Alongside this commitment he emphasised the need to respect the government requirement that the old teachers' college site be utilised.⁽²⁾ No further details of this requirement were given.

At the same time, Wagga Agricultural College principal, Brian Atkins, noted that negotiations would continue towards a formal affiliation between the Agricultural College and RCAE.⁽³⁾ These negotiations were to continue for some considerable time until the Agricultural College became the School of Agriculture in RCAE from 1 January 1976.

The northern site was a hive of building activity from 1973 with various reports referring to construction of laboratories, lecture units and offices for staff of the various schools. As early as December 1972, the College Council had also approved plans for a computer centre, and work was underway on construction of a general services complex and vehicle compound.⁽⁴⁾ The building projects continued at a fast pace throughout 1973 and 1974 with some classes now being held on the new campus.⁽⁵⁾

On South Campus, repairs were being made to residential blocks and some painting carried out.⁽⁶⁾ At the same time the old Teachers' College area was becoming the site of new initiatives and new occupants.

From early 1973, discussions had been held on the establishment of a campus pre-school, originally linked to the training of pre-school teachers in the RCAE's School of Education. Funding was approved in March 1974 and the pre-school opened in February 1975 with placements for 25 children in the first semester and increased to 50 in the second semester.⁽⁷⁾ The pre-school continued on the South Campus site until the end of 2013.

The library, student union and a staff amenities building continued to operate on the site through the 1970s. In 1980 the library stacks and operations were moved to the north campus, now known as Boorooma campus. The library at that campus was formally named the William Merrylees Library in honour of the man who headed the Riverine University League, working tirelessly for higher education facilities in the Riverina. The South Campus building became the home of the CSU Regional Archives – now the third largest university archives in Australia and a special interest of Principal C D Blake, and Keith Swan, Teachers' College and RCAE lecturer and local historian. Established as the Riverina Special Collection in 1973 as part of the RCAE Library, the Archives became autonomous in 1978, and its collections and reader facilities now cover the two storeys of the former library building; with the Riverina Conservatorium of Music located in the connecting building (originally a Teachers' College student union facility).



ABOVE: The shelves of the CSU Regional Archives lined with volumes from the past.

The playing fields, used by both college and community sporting teams, were maintained by the College until well into the 1980s. Also, in November 1980, a note from RCAE principal, Cliff Blake, referred to improvements to be made to the auditorium the following year with upgraded seating, an improved bio-box and foyer improvements.⁽⁸⁾

In November 1976, the newly formed Riverina Trucking Company (later called the Riverina Theatre Company) was given permission to use the auditorium for its first show, *Hamlet on Ice*. Over the following years, the Company occupied various rooms in South Campus buildings as office and rehearsal space and even presented many shows in its own theatre in P Block, site of Business Studies in the early Riverina College. In its final years of operation, the Riverina Theatre Company (RTC) operated out of a building near the Hely Avenue entrance.

As more buildings were completed on the Boorooma campus and extensive landscaping took shape, a rapid transfer of students and staff from South Campus was underway. With the integration of the Agricultural College on 1 January 1976, that same date became the unofficial starting point of the RCAE campus and heralded a lesser role for the old Teachers' College site.

In July 1975, referring to these coming changes, Principal C D Blake, sent out a memo stating:

I wish the term "North Campus" to be dropped from common parlance. Instead I would hope that the phrase "the campus of Riverina College" would be used to describe collectively the present North and Wagga Agricultural College campuses, and that the present South Campus would be referred to as "the South Campus Annexe". These terms will in future be used officially within the College.⁽⁹⁾



ABOVE: Boorooma and Agriculture campuses, 1979

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE QUIET CAMPUS

A Land Inventory in 1988 listed South Campus as a residential campus and carpark.⁽¹⁾ It had been that way for quite a few years, inevitable after the move of teaching and administration of Riverina College of Advanced Education to the campus north of the city from the mid-1970s.



ABOVE: Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowan with RCAE Chairman, Peter Hastie, heading the academic procession at the official opening ceremony

In May 1980, pomp and ceremony prevailed as then Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowen, officially opened RCAE's Boorooma campus, thriving after a \$10 million building and expansion program over the previous decade. There was general acknowledgment from speakers on the day that the future of RCAE lay on this site rather than its early days on the former Teachers' College site at Turvey Park.⁽²⁾ The northern site allowed the growth from college to Riverina-Murray Institute of Education in 1985 and, finally, the Charles Sturt University Act was proclaimed in July 1989, fulfilling the long-held dreams of many local people and organisations that Wagga Wagga was ideally situated to become a university city.

But as the fledgling College of Advanced Education was being built in the early 1970s, thoughts were turning also to future uses of the South Campus site. In September 1973, RCAE principal, Dr C D Blake, noted an increasing cost in maintaining the South Campus and encouraged a speedy move of most staff to the new northern campus. "Ideally, the College would like to commence gradually to divest itself of responsibilities for the management, maintenance and operation on the South Campus as from the beginning of 1975." He outlined a number of possible future uses including schools—primary or secondary—a residential technical college, and experimental Laboratory School to work with the Department of Education and the College's School of Education; even a geriatric hospital was mooted. Dr Blake cautioned that,

regardless of future purpose, "it is unlikely that this college would be in a position to vacate the residences before the end of the decade at the earliest".⁽³⁾

An undated and unsigned paper titled "Future Utilisation - Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Campus" outlined what might be seen as an extension of the principal's summary. This paper also specified possible uses focused strongly on schools – a residential high school; senior school for the final two years of schooling, even two senior high schools; special purpose school; and the laboratory school associated with RCAE's School of Education.⁽⁴⁾

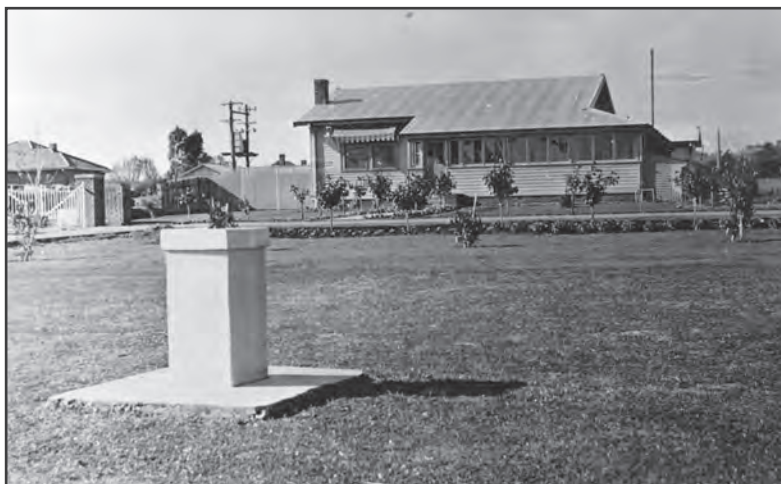
None of the suggestions came to fruition, but the South Campus site has retained a number of functions within the university structure. In 2012, the cleaning and maintenance staff of Charles Sturt University were moved to the main campus at Boorooma. At the end of 2013 many of these weatherboard and fibro buildings from the earliest days of Wagga Teachers' College were closed, and buildings throughout the campus boarded up, facing demolition.

University functions still operating on South Campus at the end of 2014 are connected strongly to the local Wagga community. Still standing tall in the campus are the CSU Regional Archives and the Riverina Conservatorium of Music in the two-storey building opened in 1971. Facing Urana Street is one of the newer additions to Charles Sturt University's strengths – the Kay Hull Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Perhaps these remaining activities on South Campus retain the echoes of earlier days—the No.1 RAAF Hospital, Wagga Wagga Teachers' College, early Riverina College of Advanced Education—all, in their way, pioneers in the history of the site and the lives of those who forged the various institutions.

When the pioneer students of Wagga Teachers' College graduated in 1949, Principal George Blakemore sent them out with a personal message of education as a great adventure. He might have been speaking of the history of South Campus itself:

The spirit of adventure surely had been typical in this college. The unique atmosphere constructed and developed on the site of a RAAF Hospital, with its unique factors of co-education and of students living together in residence: all these things were conducive to this spirit of adventure. You were not only the first students of this college, but don't you feel today that you are the real spirit of pioneers determined to blaze new trails in education? Go out then with this spirit of adventure ...⁽⁶⁾



ABOVE: Principal's residence and sundial – in earlier days. The sundial in that position was replaced by a rose garden, but now remains on the campus adjacent to the CSU Regional Archives building.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1. Wagga Wagga City Council website www.wagga.nsw.gov.au
2. Winifred and Kevin Wilcox, personal correspondence, September 2014
3. Keith J Swan, *Wagga Teachers' College: Its Site and Establishment*. Wagga Wagga: 1968 p.17
4. Ibid. p.17
5. Ibid. pp.19-20
6. Ibid. p.21
7. *The Daily Advertiser*, 1 September 1922

CHAPTER TWO WARTIME – THE RAAF HOSPITAL

1. Keith J Swan, *Wagga Teachers' College: Its Site and Establishment*. Wagga Wagga: 1968 p.22
2. CSU Regional Archives SA1/3, Brief History of No.1 RAAF Hospital
3. Ibid.
4. Swan, op.cit. p.22
5. Ibid.
6. *The Daily Advertiser*, 21 January 1944
7. *The Daily Advertiser*, 3 June 1944
8. CSU Regional Archives SA1/3
9. Swan, op.cit. p.13

CHAPTER THREE PIONEERS AND A PRINCIPAL 1947-1958

1. CSU Regional Archives CSU3054 Pioneer Oral Histories
2. *The Daily Advertiser*, 14 June 1997
3. CSU3054 Pioneer oral histories
4. CSU Regional Archives SA1/257; *The Daily Advertiser*, 16 June 1947
5. Dr Nick Bricknell, quoted in www.csu.edu.au/alumni
6. CSU3054 Pioneer Oral Histories
7. CSU3054 Pioneer Oral Histories
8. CSU Regional Archives SA1/258 Graduation Address 1953
9. 'Excel with Honour: Memories of Wagga's Teachers' College' – www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/museum/collections/excel-with-honour
10. Keith J Swan, *Wagga Teachers' College: Its Site and Establishment*. Wagga Wagga: 1968 p.11
11. Ibid. pp.12-13
12. *The Daily Advertiser*, 26 January 1946
13. CSU Regional Archives SA1/257
14. Ibid.
15. *The Daily Advertiser*, 5 May 1949
16. CSU Regional Archives SA1/257; *The Daily Advertiser*, 4 March 1953
17. CSU Regional Archives SA1/46
18. *The Daily Advertiser*, 22 September 1958; 25 September 1958

CHAPTER FOUR CONSOLIDATION AND CHANGE 1959-1971

1. CSU Regional Archives SA1/1 College Chronicle
2. *The Daily Advertiser*, 5 May 1961; CSU Regional Archives SA1/259 – *The Daily Advertiser*, 7 December 1961
3. CSU Regional Archives SA1/259 – *The Daily Advertiser*, 7 December 1961
4. CSU Regional Archives Wagga Wagga Teachers' College: The 1960-1962 Sessions
5. *The Daily Advertiser*, 4 May, 5 May, 16 May 1962
6. *The Daily Advertiser*, 26 June 1962
7. CSU Regional Archives SA1/16
8. CSU Regional Archives SA1/322
9. CSU Regional Archives SA1/9
10. CSU Regional Archives SA1/261; *The Daily Advertiser*, 19 September 1968
11. CSU Regional Archives SA1/262; *The Daily Advertiser*, 15 July 1969
12. CSU Regional Archives CSU1785/1
13. *The Daily Advertiser*, 13 December 1971

CHAPTER FIVE RIVERINA COLLEGE OF ADVANCE EDUCATION – THE EARLY DAYS

1. CSU Regional Archives SA1/152 Staff meeting minutes
2. Ibid.
3. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/16; SA1/262; *The Daily Advertiser*, 13 December 1971
4. CSU Regional Archives SA1/262; *The Daily Advertiser*, 28 July 1970
5. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268 – RCAE Interim Council minutes
6. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/16 – correspondence 9 September 1971, 16 October 1971
7. Fred Goldsworthy, 'Beginnings: Riverina College of Advanced Education' in *CDB: A Tribute from the Faculty of Arts*, 2001, p.3
8. Don Affleck, in 'Talkabout', July 2003
9. Goldsworthy, op.cit. p.19
10. CSU Regional Archives CSU1785/1 and 1785/2 Interim Council notes
11. CSU Regional Archives CSU1785/1
12. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/7
13. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/8

CHAPTER SIX RIVERINA COLLEGE ON THE MOVE

1. CSU Regional Archives CSU2243/1
2. *The Daily Advertiser*, 12 December 1972
3. Ibid.
4. CSU Regional Archives CSU2243 annual report 1972
5. CSU Regional Archives CSU2243/1 – 1973 and 1974 annual reports
6. CSU Regional Archives CSU1785/3 RCAE Council records
7. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/6 Establishment of Campus Pre-School
8. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/7
9. CSU Regional Archives CSU1785/3

CHAPTER SEVEN THE QUIET CAMPUS

1. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268
2. *The Daily Advertiser*, 30 May 1980
3. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/8 "Future Use of South Campus", 27 September 1973
4. CSU Regional Archives CSU2268/7
5. *The Daily Advertiser*, 5 May 1949

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

CSU Regional Archives

Wagga Wagga Teachers' College – SA1

Wagga Teachers' College Pioneers Oral Histories – CSU3054

Central Records – Riverina College of Advanced, Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education, Charles Sturt University – CSU2268

Riverina College of Advanced Education Interim Council And Council meeting minutes and correspondence – CSU1785

Riverina College of Advanced Education Annual Reports – CSU2243

Riverina College of Advanced Education Photographic Collection – CSU2620

Photographs: SA1/ 317 to 334

CSU2620 Albums 6 to 10

CSU2769 Photographs from 1990 to 2006

NEWSPAPERS

The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga

BOOKS

Blacklow, Nancy, *The Accidental Politician: Edgar Hugh Graham* fourW Press: Wagga Wagga. 2005.

Blacklow, Nancy; Boadle, Donald; Goldsworthy, Fred, *CDB: A Tribute from the Faculty of Arts Charles Sturt University:* Wagga Wagga. 2001

Morris, Sherry, *Wagga Wagga: A History*. Council of the City of Wagga Wagga. 1999.

Swan, Keith, *A History of Wagga Wagga*. City of Wagga Wagga. 1970.

ARTICLES

Swan, K.J. "Wagga Teachers' College: Its Site and Establishment". Wagga Wagga: 1968.



South Campus - A History is a publication of
Charles Sturt University 2014

