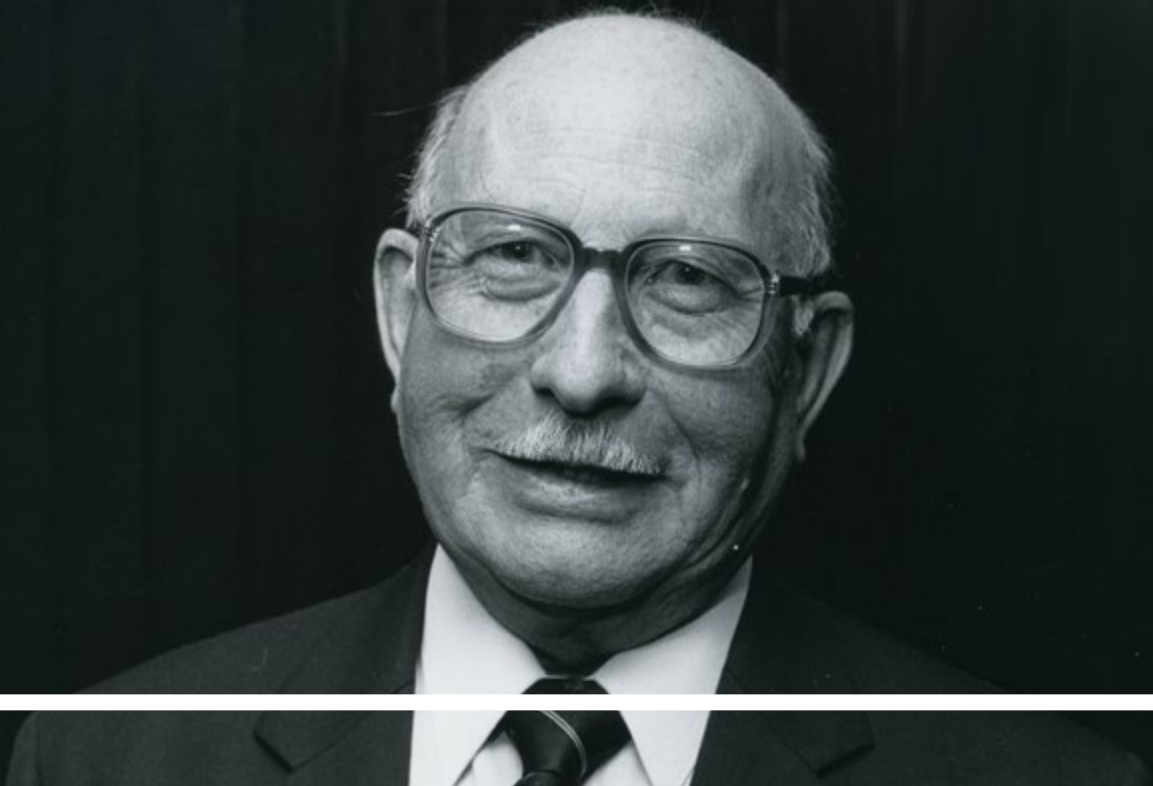




Charles Sturt
University

Butler Halls

By Lauren Carroll







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**Charles Sturt
University**

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Introduction

Butler Halls was built in a period of potential, growth and subsequent change that coincided with the Wagga Agricultural College's own identity crisis. That is why it is unsurprising that for many years prior to being named as Butler Halls, the 'New Residential Blocks' were known simply as A, B and C.

The dire need for an increased capacity in student accommodation was a major priority for the college, as it endeavoured to continue as a viable and competitive educational institute amidst the emergence of tertiary education programs such as The Riverina College of Advanced Education. The Wagga Agricultural College, though aware of the potential amalgamation with the Riverina College of Advanced Education, invested heavily in their capital works program from 1968 to 1972¹, knowing that the strength of the college's future rested not only in their rich tradition and college identity, but also in having modern and well-equipped facilities.

This major building project was largely funded by the Commonwealth Government, State Grants (Advance Education) Act 1966 and supported by the NSW Department of Agriculture.²

The major works included improvements to teaching facilities, laboratories, lecture theatres and farm machinery sheds, along with the establishment of a dairy. The other essential addition was a large new dining area and improved kitchen and servery facilities to provide a modern cafeteria system, which later became known as 'Atkins Hall'. The student Recreational Centre was also built alongside the final construction of the new accommodation blocks.

Today, Butler Halls, three separate yet almost identical buildings, stand in a prominent position at the centre of what was the Wagga Agriculture College. Nestled between the campus' featured amenities, the gymnasium, the pool, Beres Ellwood Oval and the student dining hall and cafeteria, Butler Halls represents a crucial element of Charles Sturt University's history. Namely, that to each governing body from the Wagga Experiment Farm, the Wagga Agricultural College, the Riverina College of Advanced Education and now Charles Sturt University, the student experience of college life has been paramount to planning and development.



Above: 1.0 The Wagga Agricultural College
New Residential Block later named Butler Halls.

Wagga Agricultural College

The Wagga Agricultural College was founded in 1949 on the site of the original Experiment Farm established by the NSW Department of Agriculture in 1892.¹

The Experiment Farm had the primary objective of providing research and instruction on effective and economical methods of farming to the state of NSW, as well as offering direct advice to the local farming community. Importantly, the farm delivered a two-year certificate course of instruction in agriculture for students.²

Contingent upon the ongoing success of the Wagga Experiment Farm as a formal provider of agricultural education, substantial improvements were to be made to student accommodation. Once the improvements were made with the construction of Centre Block in 1902, fitted with bedrooms, common room and dining room, student intake increased. By 1907, further accommodation was required and West Block was added. East Block was added by the beginning of 1912.³

The impact of the First World War was gravely felt by the Wagga Experiment Farm community. Of the 276 persons who enlisted

from the Farm, 45 men were killed and another 24 wounded, being medically discharged.⁴ Enrolments were at a low of 20 students at the start of 1919. The demand to provide places for returned soldiers as part of the government's Returned Soldiers' Settlement Scheme continually grew the student population to pre-war enrolments, despite having limited labour and resources on the Farm.⁵

At the onset of World War II, student training was discontinued. Immediately following the war, the Wagga Experiment Farm once again became a training centre for ex-servicemen, this time offering short eight-week refresher courses in agriculture to complement the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Scheme.⁶

The demand for further study and training for the ex-servicemen gave the experiment farm an opportunity to fill the gaps where the Hawkesbury Agricultural College was unable to accommodate all their applicants. The short courses conducted at Wagga were moved to the Yanco Experiment Farm and Wagga undertook the training of 32 first year students of the 1948 Diploma course from Hawkesbury College.⁷



Above: 2.0 The Wagga Experiment Farm student quarters, Centre Block (left) and West Block (right), circa 1910. Centre Block was demolished in 1969 to make way for the construction of Atkins Hall.

On the 3rd of March 1949, The Wagga Agricultural College and Experiment Station was founded and officially opened by the NSW Minister for Agriculture, The Hon. E.H. Graham. The college supplied a three-year course and on completion, students were awarded the Wagga Diploma in Agriculture. The course provided,

*“...practical and theoretical instruction in general agriculture and livestock and aims to train students to fit them for the management of farms, stations, dairies, orchards, vineyards, poultry and pig farms, or for positions on the field staff of the Department of Agriculture and Conservation, for teachers of agricultural subjects, or for positions with firms handling farm supplies or produce”.*⁸

This practical, hands-on training and education became a hallmark standard that the college built its identity around and derived pride and reputation from. The key figures in the Wagga Agricultural College history responsible for reinforcing this mandate were the college Principals:

- Bernard (Dick) Doman (1948–1962)
- Dr Frederick (Fred) Butler (1962–1965)
- Brian Atkins (1965–1975).⁹

During the college's 27-year history, many characters, both on staff and among the students, influenced the culture that was uniquely Wagga Agricultural College. This is highlighted in their fierce rivalry with the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College: the 'Aggies' versus the 'Chalkies'. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that talk of amalgamation with the newly established Riverina College of Advanced Education in 1972, which essentially absorbed what was the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College, was met with some resistance. Those who identified as belonging to the Wagga Agricultural College were at risk of losing a tradition that had been deliberately and proudly fought for.

In 1976, the Wagga Agricultural College was finally integrated into the Riverina College of Advanced Education.¹⁰ A concerted effort was instigated to retain the heritage of the college. Naming buildings after prominent members of the college's story was one way to honour the past and ensure its legacy continued. Nearly half a century later, Charles Sturt University's Wagga campus on the site of the Experiment Farm and Agricultural College echo the names of the past with buildings such as the Sutherland Laboratory, Joyes Hall, Graham Building, Atkins Hall, Doman Block and, of course, Butler Halls.



Above: 3.0 Wagga Agricultural College students in 1964, attending to their studies.

Dr Frederick (Fred) Charles Butler

1922–2008



Above: 4.0 Dr Fred Butler, honours student, scientist, college principal and senior agricultural administrator.

Right: 5.0 Fred Butler (front right) in the 1941 St. Andrew's College Cricket Team.



The distinguished Dr Frederick Butler has left a legacy of excellence, beginning as a formidable student and continuing throughout his career with the Department of Agriculture. Born on 15 December 1922, he was the eldest son of wheat farmers, Charles and Isabella Butler of 'Koorungal' Grong Grong, NSW.¹

He attended Bulloak Tank Public School and followed on to Yanco Agricultural High School, where he completed the Leaving Certificate in 1940, with Honours in Agriculture, Chemistry and History. He was awarded a government cadetship and the Granger Scholarship enabling him entry into the University of Sydney.²

The University of Sydney was a long way from home at Grong Grong. Fred's entry as a resident into the prestigious St Andrew's College was heavily dependent upon scholarships and bursaries due to the financial position of his farming parents. It had been a difficult three years on the farm due to drought and his father's total income for those three years was only £260. His father was also a returned soldier.³ Along with Fred's exceptional grades and sporting achievements, it was perhaps the endorsement of his local community that got him over the line and captured the attention of St Andrew's College principal Rev. Dr William Cumming Thom.

From one Presbyterian minister to another, Rev. John Marshall of St John's in Narrandera wrote to Rev. Dr Thom on 20 January 1941:

*"Dr, I can assure you that the lad is 100% and will not fail you. I know his spirit and I have watched him work for his Leaving (certificate)... I feel that here is a lad if given his chance will bring honour to all."*⁴

At the tender age of eighteen years, Fred displayed a maturity and humility that followed him into his professional life. In a letter he wrote to Dr Thom on the 22nd of February 1941 following his acceptance into St Andrews College, Butler wrote,

*"It has been my ambition since primary school days, to enter upon a university course – my dreams are gradually coming true as following news of the Grainger Scholarship for which I am greatly indebted to you, there came news later in the week that I had been awarded an exhibition. It seems almost too good to be true, but I assure you that when I do eventually arrive at the college I will do my best to uphold its traditions and act in a manner befitting a student of St Andrews College."*⁵

Butler was the definition of an honours student during his time at University of Sydney from 1941–1946, completing the Bachelor of Science (Agriculture). He obtained high

distinctions in the first two years and in the third year topped the Faculty of Agriculture examination lists and won the Dr W. L. Waterhouse prize for general proficiency. In his fourth year, Butler topped the faculty list again, leading him into the Honours course studying plant pathology, in which he attained the award First-Class Honours. He worked closely with the renowned academic and plant pathologist, Walter Lawry Waterhouse, during his Honours year.⁶ Additionally, Butler was the president of the University of Sydney Agricultural Society.⁷

Not only did Butler excel as an Honours student, but he was also a champion sportsman. At Yanco he gained a triple 'blue' for cricket, rugby and tennis. This is an award given to student-athletes who have achieved the highest level of sporting excellence in their chosen sport. In his first year at University of Sydney he made the First XI in Cricket and the First XV in Rugby, playing at St Andrews College. In later years in Wagga, he was a prominent member of cricket and rugby circles, both as a player and administrator.



Above: 6.0 The 1941 St. Andrew's College Rugby Team, with Fred Butler (front left).

After University, he became a Cereal Pathologist with the NSW Department of Agriculture, the start of a long-standing relationship with that department spanning decades across his career. He married his first wife, Joyce Emily Cotter, on 26 November 1947.⁸

He was awarded a Walter and Eliza Hall Research Fellowship in 1950 and proceeded to England to attend Cambridge University where he studied in close association with Dr Stephen Denis Garrett, a world authority on root rot fungi. He obtained a PhD in 1952, presenting a thesis in connection with his own research and expertise on cereal root rot fungi.⁹

In 1953, the NSW Minister for Agriculture, The Hon. E.H. Graham, announced the appointment of Dr Butler as Plant Pathologist at the new Wagga Agricultural Research Institute, located on the site of the Wagga Agricultural College. The Minister said that Dr Butler “was a brilliant young research worker”.¹⁰ There, Butler’s research focus were the various aspects of crop production and plant breeding programmes aimed at the development of disease-resisting varieties.¹¹

Dr Butler held the position of Senior Research Officer (Plant Pathology and Microbiology) and later became Deputy to the Director at the Research Institute, Dr Albert Pugsley,

until 1961¹². During his time with the Institute, he produced many scientific papers on cereal root rot fungi, many of which are still circulating in academic libraries today.



Breeding for disease resistance is an important part of research. Here Dr. F. C. Butler, Plant Pathologist at the New South Wales Agricultural Institute, examines wheat in the glasshouse.

Above: 7.0 A photograph of Dr Butler at work in the Agricultural Institute’s glasshouse at Wagga Wagga was published in the Agricultural Gazette in 1955.



Above: 8.0 Dr Butler (fourth from right) with colleagues at the Wagga Agricultural Research Institute, 1957.

In January 1962, Dr Butler commenced his appointment as Principal of the Wagga Agricultural College. Following in the tradition of wheat research on which the College was founded, Butler applied his excellence as a student and scientific researcher to the role of College Administrator. It is evident in the correspondence and the reports produced by Butler while Principal, that he was a disciplined character with a proficiency in communication. The *Principal Reports*¹³ during his tenure showcase detailed and thorough accounts of the years' activities and progress at the College. His reports were methodical, clear and articulate, confirming the type of scholar and scientist that he was and, perhaps, desired to see reflected in the students.

Dr Butler's influence as Principal at Wagga Agricultural College is noted in the changes he made to the curriculum and the introduction and discontinuation of many college practices. He insisted that applied aspects of Science and Biology receive more detailed consideration within the courses and that admittance was merit-based, with students having to complete a Leaving Certificate upon entry. He introduced a course in English Expression¹⁴ and reinforced, as much as possible, a code of conduct that was reminiscent of the era in which he conducted his studies at the prestigious University of Sydney and Cambridge University in England.

Perhaps the most contentious issue that Dr Butler faced as Principal was the question of students being allowed to drink alcohol. The signs of a changing era were recognised when the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College relaxed the rules permitting students who were over the age of 18 to frequent licenced premises. In response, Dr Butler conducted a survey to examine the attitude of parents and guardians on the matter and gained a consensus as to the need for moderation and regulation within reason. In 1966, the Department of Agriculture required the Hawkesbury and Wagga Agricultural Colleges reprint a re-focused and consolidated 'College Rules' book for each college.¹⁵

In 1964, Dr Butler presented papers in the United Kingdom to the *Seventh Commonwealth Conference on Plant Pathology* at Kew and the *Tenth International Botanical Congress* in Edinburgh. Whilst abroad, he collected ideas from colleges in England, Ireland and Scotland for the betterment of Wagga Agricultural College.¹⁶ No doubt, these observations and his dedication to agricultural education put him in good stead for future roles at the Department of Agriculture.

In 1965, Dr Butler was promoted to Assistant Deputy Director-General in the NSW Department of Agriculture. The following

year, he became the Deputy Director-General (Research and Education), a role that seemed more suitable for Butler's expertise and aptitude. Again, he was promoted within the Department of Agriculture to Senior Deputy Director-General in 1971. From 1977 to 1980, his career took a shift into the dairy industry where he was the Chairman of the Dairy

Industry Authority of NSW. Finally, he was the Director Special Studies, NSW Department of Agriculture, from 1981 to 1982 before retiring in 1983.¹⁷



Left: 9.0 Dr Butler (front row, centre) with the 1964 Wagga Agricultural College diplomates.

Right: 10.0 Dr Butler inspecting a wheat crop with J.P. Cass and I.A. Watson, October 1971.



In his capacity as a reputable research scientist, administrator, college principal and published author of many scientific papers, Dr Butler was at the forefront of many boards and councils, cultivating the direction of agriculture in NSW. These positions included:

- Chairman, NSW Committee on Wheat Production and Marketing, 1966–1976
- Chairman, Commonwealth Extension Services Grant Review Committee, 1967–1975
- Member, Australian Wheat Industry Research Council, 1968–1976
- Member, NSW Wheat Industry Research Committee, 1968–1976
- Member, Murray and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Research and Extension Committee, 1968–1975
- Member, NSW Public Service Board Scientific Advisory Committee, 1969–1972
- Chairman, Dairy Industry Authority, 1977–1980
- Chairman, Dairy Industry Artificial Breeding Advisory Board, 1977–1980
- Chairman, NSW Milk Publicity Council, 1977–1978
- Member, NSW Dairy Products Board, 1977
- Member, Australian and New Zealand Conference of Dairy Industry Authorities and Milk Boards, 1977–1980
- Chairman, NSW Dairy Farming Stabilisation Scheme Committee, 1977–1979
- Honorary Governor and Member of Council, Dairy Husbandry Research Foundation at the University of Sydney, 1980+
- Member, NSW Committee of Advice on the Development of Advanced Education, 1966
- Member, Advanced Education Board, 1972–1974
- Member, Department of TAFE Education Advisory Council, 1966–1976
- Chairman, NSW Committee of Advice on Rural Studies, 1967–1974
- Foundation Chairman, NSW Institute of Rural Studies, 1974–1976
- Chairman, Orange Agricultural College Development Committee, 1971–1976
- Member, Advisory Council, Orange Agricultural College, 1977–1983
- Member, Council of Riverina College of Advanced Education, 1970–1974
- Member, Council of Hawkesbury Agricultural College, 1975–1986
- Deputy Chairman, Council of Hawkesbury Agricultural College, 1978–1985¹⁸



Above: 11.O Dr Butler (on right in foreground) inspecting the building works at Orange Agricultural College, c. 1972.

Most deservedly, Dr Butler was recognised for his work and contributions to agriculture through the various honours bestowed upon him. These honours included the naming of the Butler Halls residential buildings at the Riverina College of Advanced Education in 1976 and the Fred Butler Dairy at Hawkesbury Agricultural College in 1986. He became a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science in 1986. He received the University of Western Sydney Centenary Medal of Honour in 1991 and was awarded a Doctorate of Applied Science (honoris causa) from Charles Sturt University in 1994.¹⁹

Butler married a second time in 1958 to Sybil Ethel Sainty in Wagga Wagga. He died in North Ryde, Sydney, on 11 March 2008 at the age of 85 years, survived by Sybil and his children.²⁰

Dr Frederick Charles Butler demonstrated a continuous pursuit of excellence throughout his entire life and Charles Sturt University is proud of its association with such an intelligent and respectable character.



Left: 12.0
Chancellor David Asimus presenting Dr Butler with an Honorary Doctorate of Applied Science from Charles Sturt University in 1994.

Building the new blocks

In the mid-1960s, the Australian Government hastened to establish Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education as a means of providing greater access to tertiary education. A 1964 report of the *Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia* recommended that a new type of educational institution to supplement universities be established on the foundations of existing further education institutes.²¹ These existing colleges, including the Wagga Agricultural College, had to adopt an expansion mindset to cater for the increase in student enrolments. Both the Wagga and Hawkesbury Agricultural Colleges were officially declared Colleges of Advanced Education in November 1971.²²

In an article printed in *The Daily Advertiser* on 25 January 1966, the NSW Minister for Agriculture, Mr Chaffey, said there were more than 600 applicants for enrolment in the Hawkesbury and Wagga Agricultural Colleges' three-year diploma courses; however, there were only 120 vacancies. Student numbers were unable to be increased because there wasn't adequate accommodation, teaching facilities were insufficient and there was a lack of specialist staff available to train students. These factors greatly restricted plans for growth.²³

As recommended by the *Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia*, Commonwealth funds were made available for capital expenditure to these colleges of advanced education. Under the *State Grants (Advanced Education) Act 1966*, provision was given to Wagga Agricultural College for the erection of residential accommodation, extensions to the dining room and kitchen, erection of the animal husbandry centre, equipment and other works and services.²⁴ The college was afforded \$300,000 to be spent in the 1967–1969 triennium.

Under the leadership of the College's new Principal, Brian Atkins, plans were made for the new residential accommodation. Considerations for the design were largely practical and very mindful of the limited budget. The priority was acquiring increased capacity of up to 120 single bedrooms, fit for the purpose of sleep and study. Atkins felt that the Doman accommodation was "too rambling" and had in mind a very simple design, with rooms being no larger than necessary. Each room would be fitted with in-built furniture, including bed, desk and shelving. This would aid in keeping the rooms clean and tidy. The new halls would also include two small common rooms, their smallness being key to

lessening the opportunity for horseplay and therefore reduce wear and tear to the building.²⁵ Planning for the social side of college life was being directed toward communal facilities, such as the yet-to-be-built new dining hall, student union and recreation centre.

Given that the Wagga Agricultural College was under the direction of the NSW Department of Agriculture, oversight of the building project belonged to the NSW Department of Public Works, with its regional office in Cootamundra. On 11 December 1967, the architect's sketch plans and estimates were submitted to the Head Office of the Department of Public Works for review. The architect who supplied the primary plans for the residential blocks was G.T. Walker and the district engineer was K.P. King.²⁶

The initial contract focused on A Block with 48 single bedrooms and B Block with a further 24 bedrooms. C Block would be built at a later stage. Local builders, Siebels Bros Pty Ltd of Chaston Street, Wagga Wagga, submitted to tender for the contract on 28 January 1969 for \$373,650 and were accepted on 4 March 1969. The contract indicated a 50-week completion date.²⁷

FOR SELECTIVE TENDERING USE ONLY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, N.S.W.

LUMP SUM TENDER FORM

NOTE: Envelopes containing tenders are to be marked and addressed "Tender for (Name of Work), (Address of work) (Name of work)" and addressed to the President of the Tender Board, Department of Public Works, State Office Block, Phillip Street, Sydney.

Name of tenderer, firm, company or individual: **SIEBELS BROS. PTY. LTD.**

Address: **of 28-30 CHASTON STREET, WAGGA WAGGA - 2650**

hereby Tender(s) to provide the materials and perform the various works required for **NEW DORMITORY BLOCKS AT WAGGA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**

(Contract No. **154/68**) agreeably to the Plan(s), Specification, Schedule(s) to Specification and General Conditions, which have been inspected, for the lump sum of **THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THREE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS** (\$**373,650.00**) and to complete the same within the time stated in the said Specification or General Conditions; and it is hereby agreed that any additions to or deductions from the said works shall be paid or allowed for, as the case may be, at the rates or prices ascertained in the manner provided in the General Conditions; and the tenderer hereby undertakes that, within fourteen days from the date of notification of the acceptance of this tender, the security required by the said General Conditions shall be provided and that a valid legal Contract with Her Majesty the Queen will be executed and delivered to the Minister for Public Works; and further, it is agreed that this tender is made subject to the Tender Board Regulations printed on the back hereof by which the tenderer agrees to be bound.

DATED this **Twenty-eighth** day of **January**, 19 **69**.

SIEBELS BROS. PTY. LIMITED
MASTER BUILDERS - WAGGA
Signature of Tenderer

This is the Tender marked " " referred to in the annexed Agreement with Her Majesty the Queen, dated the **19** day of **January**, 19 **69**.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND NECESSARY ACTION

District Engineer: **COOTAMUNDRA**

Contractor's Signature

Above: 13.0 Siebels Bros.' Lump Sum Tender Form to the Department of Public Works, dated 1969

Initial wet weather in March and again in June of 1969 delayed ground excavation works. Siebels were permitted a 10-week extension with a new completion date expected to be on 28 April 1970. While this was an unavoidable setback, there was concern throughout the College that the delay could greatly affect enrolment.²⁸

As part of the contract constructing the 72 bedrooms, 25 old bedrooms in Centre Block would be demolished. In a letter dated 13 August 1969, Principal Atkins wrote to the contractors requesting the demolition of the 12 remaining bedrooms be held off until the completion of at least 48 new bedrooms, to ensure that student numbers would not be offset by the temporary reduction in accommodation. The priority was to have at least one section of the new residential block ready before the start of term in February 1970.²⁹

However, progress was slowed further due to a delay in the delivery of bricks from Bowral Brickworks. A letter dated 27 October 1969 instructed the remaining bricks being used on the residential blocks be redirected for use on the kitchen and dining room. The contractors were given an eight-week extension to 23 June 1970 to offset the delays. The final inspection and handover were due to be

conducted on 19 June 1970.³⁰ It is presumed that the students moved in shortly after.

Sub-contractors for the build were Jim Jaggard Plumbing and Heating Engineer of Dobney Ave, Wagga Wagga. Electrical works were supplied by K & M Duff Pty Ltd and Thos Clarke and Son Pty Ltd supplied the mechanical works.³¹

A separate contract for the completion of C Block and the new Student Union building was awarded to C. Warburton Pty Ltd on 2 February 1971. They were given 41 weeks to complete the works.³² Amongst the list of changes to the design of C Block compared to the earlier 72 bedrooms, there were a few notable requests. The panels of plain glass in the doors were to be replaced with Georgian wire cast glass as the doors had been deemed too dangerous after a serious injury to one student. Another adjustment was to the length of the in-built beds to accommodate taller students, the new ones to measure 6 feet 7 inches.³³

C Block was eventually united with the first two residential blocks, along with the nearby student union and dining hall. Construction on the entire project had finally come to an end, approximately six years after the initial demand for additional accommodation was recognised.



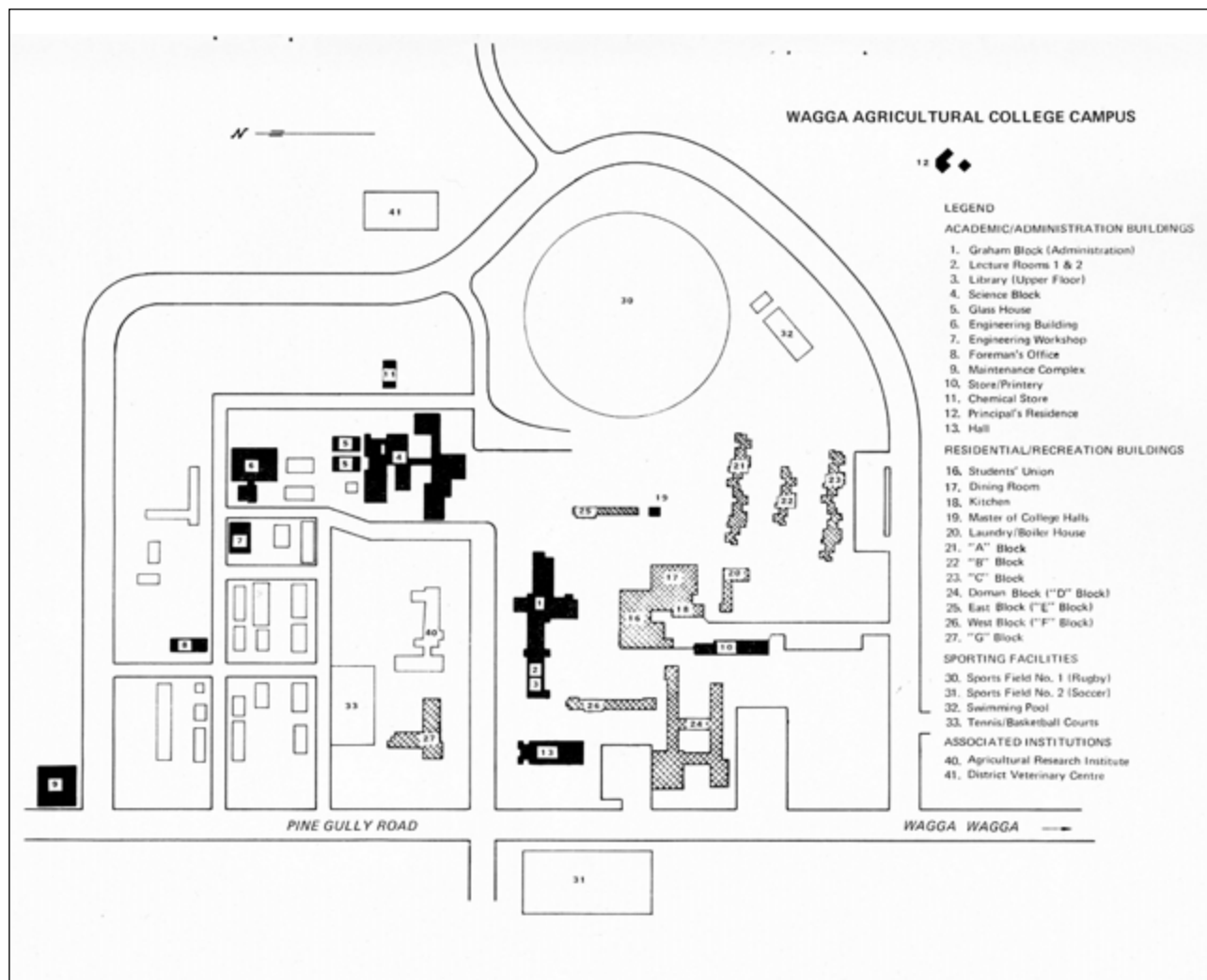
Above: 14.0 The new residential accommodation (A Block and B Block) under construction in 1969.



Above: 15.0 B Block, built, furnished, but not yet landscaped.



Above: 16.0 The Student Union and Dining Hall, completed as part of the same project as C Block.



Above: 17.0 A, B and C Blocks were positioned on the southern edge of the College's residential area, between the swimming pool and the dining room.

Official naming of Butler Halls

There was no fanfare or grand opening for the new residential blocks. Much like the design brief given by Principal Atkins, these buildings comprising of 120 single bedrooms, were simple in form and function; they served the very practical purpose of providing students with a place to sleep and study. Even their designation as A, B and C Blocks demonstrates the lack of interest the College administration had in giving the new buildings character.

In 1972, the Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE) absorbed the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in Turvey Park and from 1973 executed development plans on the new site in Boorooma Street, located on the other side of the hill from the Wagga Agricultural College.³⁴ Then, just a few years later in 1976, separated only by a hill (Bald Hill) and a proud history dating back to 1892, the Wagga Agricultural College was formally amalgamated into the nascent Riverina College of Advanced Education.

Grappling with the changing landscape of Wagga's three tertiary education campuses, it became apparent that the naming of buildings and roads required some attention. Clear signage was absolutely necessary for

students and visitors navigating the now extensive campus. A sub-committee to the Buildings and Grounds Committee was formed to advise on road names and terminology for the different access ways. In their April 1976 meeting, a report was given with a list of suggested road names and walkways, including Cobb Drive, Pugsley Place, Cowabbie Drive and Walla Way, to name a few.³⁵

A proposal for the development of a signage system was prepared by architect and planner R. Pratt in January 1976. This proposal stressed the need for an ultimate rationalised system for the naming and identification of all buildings across the three campuses, highlighting the need for continuity and reflecting the unification of the college.³⁶

A special meeting of the Buildings and Grounds Committee was held on 1 June 1977 to consider the names of the three Wagga campus sites. They concluded that 'South Campus' should remain as the name of the previous Teachers' College site and that 'Agricultural Campus' be the name given to the former Wagga Agricultural College site. The teaching facilities built especially for the Riverina College of Advanced Education on the eastern side of the hill were to be named

‘Boorooma Campus.’ The recommendations were resolved by the Committee and submitted to the College Council.³⁷

Adding to the discussions around the naming and identification of the college buildings was representation from the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union (WACOBUE) in the form of correspondence from President A.J. Wright and Secretary B.J. Scott. The Union wrote to the Principal, Dr Cliff Blake, in July 1975, suggesting that the College could perpetuate persons who have been associated with agriculture, particularly at the Wagga Agricultural College, by naming some physical locations after them. Dr Blake welcomed their initiative and suggested some possible buildings on campus.

The suggestions made by the Old Boys Union were:

- The Science Complex be named after John Sutherland, former Deputy Principal.
- The new halls of residence be named after Dr Fred Butler, former Principal.
- The auditorium be named after Don Joyes, Liaison Officer.
- The Student Union/Dining room be named after Principal Brian Atkins.³⁸

On 20 February 1976, the recommendations were approved by the College Council upon concurrence from the persons

whose names the buildings would bear. A letter from Dr Fred Butler, who was Senior Deputy Director-General of the Department of Agriculture at the time, stated:

“The proposal to acknowledge in this way such contributions as I have been able to make to the development of Riverina College and its newly incorporated School of Agriculture and in furthering the cause of agricultural education generally is, I assure you, very much appreciated.

“I am pleased in all humility to agree to my name being associated in this way with the college...”³⁹

Mr Joyes and Mr Sutherland also gladly accepted the honour. It was agreed that the Council would reserve the name ‘Atkins Hall’ until Mr Atkins was no longer serving on the College Council.⁴⁰

The public announcement of the decision to honour these men and to have the building names officially changed took place on 24 April 1976 at the annual reunion dinner of the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union.⁴¹ The buildings from that day on were known as ‘Sutherland Laboratories’, ‘Joyes Hall’ and ‘Butler Halls’.



Above: 18.0 An aerial view of the new Riverina College of Advanced Education teaching facilities in 1978 with the more established campus of the former Wagga Agricultural College over the hill.



Sydney

25th March, 1976.

Dr. C.D. Blake,
Principal,
Riverina College of Advanced Education,
P.O. Box 588,
WAGGA WAGGA, N.S.W. 2650.

Dear Dr. Blake,

Thank you for your letter dated 22nd March, 1976, advising of the decision of the Council of Riverina College of Advanced Education, acting on the advice of the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys' Union, to give the name of "Butler Halls" to the recently constructed blocks of student residences on the College's north campus.

The proposal to acknowledge in this way such contributions as I have been able to make to the development of Riverina College and its newly incorporated School of Agriculture and in furthering the cause of agricultural education generally is, I assure you, very much appreciated.

I am pleased in all humility to agree to my name being associated in this way with the College and would ask that you convey my thanks to the College Council as well as to the Old Boys' Union of Wagga Agricultural College for the thoughts behind the proposal to honour me in this manner.

I note that it is intended that a public announcement on the matter will be made on the occasion of the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys' Reunion Dinner on the evening of 24th April, 1976. Because of other commitments about that time an invitation to Mrs. Butler and myself to attend this Dinner had been declined. I will now endeavour to rearrange my programme with a view to attending if at all possible the function under reference.

Yours sincerely,

F.C. Butler
F.C. BUTLER,
Senior Deputy Director-General.

Left: 19.0 Dr Butler's 1976 letter of acceptance in relation to the proposed naming of the halls of residence.

Conclusion

Dr Frederick Charles Butler exemplified a lifelong commitment to excellence. His scientific and disciplined approach to his work led to significant contributions during his tenure as Principal of the Wagga Agricultural College and as a senior officer in the NSW Department of Agriculture, earning him numerous accolades.

Among these, the most conspicuous tribute was the naming of the Butler Halls on Charles Sturt University's Wagga Wagga Campus. The recognition of Dr Butler's influence on the College, through the united efforts of the Riverina College of Advanced Education and the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union, is commendable.

Constructed to address an accommodation crisis, Butler Halls, with its no-nonsense, practical design, served that purpose to great effect for just over 50 years. Its position on the Agricultural Campus has meant it played a central role, both physically and metaphorically, in the life of its students. Surrounded by essential amenities, such as the dining hall, gym, pool and shop, Butler Halls provided a place to call home for thousands of students from the 1970s to the 2020s. It was a space to create memories,

form lifelong friendships and for many, to live away from home for the very first time.

Over the years, no significant renovations were undertaken on Butler Halls, leading to the natural aging of the buildings. In 2021, Facilities Management decided to close Butler Halls as the buildings no longer met the university's standards for on-campus accommodation. The corridors of Butler Halls echoed with the presence of university students for the last time in 2021.

It is anticipated that Butler Halls will be demolished and removed in 2025.









Endnotes

Introduction

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- ² Wagga Agricultural College. (1969). File 759A Commonwealth State Grant [Advanced Education] 1969 Triennium- General Policy. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA31/155.

Wagga Agricultural College

- ¹ Department of Agriculture. (1968). Prospectus of Wagga Agricultural College. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA1166.
- ² The Riverina College of Advanced Education. (1976). A College of Advanced Education Handbook 1975-1976. The College in Perspective. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives RW272.
- ³ Sutherland, J. (1996) From Farm Boys to PhD's: Agricultural Education at Wagga Wagga 1896 – 1996. Charles Sturt University.
- ⁴ Daily Advertiser. (1919, January 1st). Wagga Experiment Farm Unveiling of Honour Board.
- ⁵ Sutherland, J. (1996) From Farm Boys to PhD's: Agricultural Education at Wagga Wagga 1896 – 1996. Charles Sturt University.
- ⁶ The Riverina College of Advanced Education. (1976). A College of Advanced Education Handbook 1975-1976. The College in Perspective. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives RW272.
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- ^{8,9} Wagga Agricultural College and Experiment Station. (1949). Programme: Official Opening of the College, 16th September 1949. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives RW272.
- ¹⁰ Sutherland, J. (1996) From Farm Boys to PhD's: Agricultural Education at Wagga Wagga 1896 – 1996. Charles Sturt University.
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- ¹ Narrandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser. (1946, May 7th). Grong Grong Boy's Brilliant Success: First Class Honours in University Studies.
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- ⁴ ibid
- ⁵ Frederick Charles Butler. (1941). 'Acceptance Letter'. St Andrews College Archives.
- ⁶ ibid
- ⁷ ibid
- ⁸ Murrumbidgee Irrigator. (1947, December 12th). Butler – Cotter.
- ⁹ Narrandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser. (1953, August 24th). Grong Grong Boy's Appointment: Dr F. C Butler is Plant Pathologist at Wagga.
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- ¹² Charles Sturt University. (1994, April 20th). Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Applied Science (honoris causa).
- ¹³ Wagga Agricultural College. (1963). Diploma Day File – Principals Report Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA469/31/49/192.
- ¹⁴ ibid
- ¹⁵ Wagga Agricultural College. (1964). 'College Rules': Correspondence and Survey's. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA469/31/45.
- ¹⁶ Wagga Agricultural College. (1964). 'College Motto': Correspondence between Dr Butler and Mr Baldwin 22nd May 1964. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA31/112.
- ¹⁷ Charles Sturt University. (1994, April 20th). Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Applied Science (honoris causa).
- ¹⁸ ibid
- ¹⁹ ibid
- ²⁰ Daily Advertiser. (2008, March 14th). Dr Fred Butler Dies in Sydney.

The new residential block

- ²¹ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. (1969). Commonwealth Payments to or for the States https://archive.budget.gov.au/1969-70/downloads/1969-70_commonwealth_payments_to_states.pdf pages 23-24.
- ²² Daily Advertiser. (1971, November 15th). College now advanced education centre.
- ²³ Daily Advertiser. (1966, January 25th). Agricultural Schools Needed.
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- ²⁵ Wagga Agricultural College. (1969). File 759B Erection of New Residential Block. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA31/157.
- ²⁶ NSW Department of Public Works. (1969). Wagga Agricultural College Residential Blocks A & B Dormitories. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA292.
- ²⁷ *ibid*
- ²⁸ *ibid*
- ²⁹ *ibid*
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- ³² NSW Department of Public Works. (1971). Wagga Agricultural College, Erection and Completion of New Dormitory Block C & Student Union. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA292.
- ³³ Wagga Agricultural College. (1970). Commonwealth State Grants [Advanced Education] 1970-1971 Triennium - 881i Erection of Student Accommodation Block. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA31/203.

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- ³⁵ Riverina College of Advanced Education. (1975–1976). Buildings and Grounds Committee Minutes and Agenda Papers 1975 and 1976. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives. CSU1832.
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- ³⁹ Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union (WACOBU). (1976). B.J Scott Correspondence Files – Acceptance Letters to Building Names Proposal. Charles Sturt University Archives RW1566.
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- ⁴¹ Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union (WACOBU). (1976). B.J Scott Correspondence Files – Acceptance Letters to Building Names Proposal. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives RW1566.

Photographs

- Image 1.0 The Wagga Agricultural College Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, SA31/54.
- Image 2.0 Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, unknown source.
- Image 3.0 The Wagga Agricultural College Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, SA1634.
- Image 4.0 The Charles Sturt University Photograph Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, CSU2620/2714.
- Image 5.0 St Andrew's College Archives, Sporting Photos, P:17
- Image 6.0 St Andrew's College Archives, Sporting Photos, P:17
- Image 7.0 The Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales, September 1955, page 482.
- Image 8.0 Pictorial History of Agricultural Research at Wagga Wagga 1893-1985, compiled by Frank Tome, page 112.
- Image 9.0 The Wagga Agricultural College Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, SA31/487.
- Image 10.0 Pictorial History of Agricultural Research at Wagga Wagga 1893-1985, compiled by Frank Tome, page 108.
- Image 11.0 Division of Marketing and Communication Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, CSU3391/29.
- Image 12.0 The Charles Sturt University Photograph Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, CSU2620/2888.
- Image 13.0 NSW Department of Public Works Collection, Wagga Agricultural College Residential Blocks A & B Dormitories, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives SA292/10.
- Image 14.0 The Wagga Agricultural College Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, SA988/21.
- Image 15.0 The Wagga Agricultural College Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, SA988/21.

- Image 16.0 The Charles Sturt University Photograph Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, CSU2620/1449.
- Image 17.0 Wagga Agricultural College Handbook, 1975. Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, SA272/27.
- Image 18.0 The Charles Sturt University Photograph Collection, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, CSU2620/1420.
- Image 19.0 Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union (WACOBUE) Collection. B.J. Scott Correspondence Files – Acceptance Letters to Building Names Proposal. Charles Sturt University Archives RW1566/8.

