

The War Veterans Home Myrtle Bank 1915-2005

by

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Introduction

This is the story of the War Veterans Home, Myrtle Bank, Adelaide. It has been told largely from the point of view of the promoters and managers of the Home. They searched out opportunities and reacted to new funding sources as they became available, and they busied themselves with the banal daily round of running the Home. Some of all that, however ordinary, is included in what follows.

Beyond that record, this story has a wider application: it is a case study in the delivery of care for the aged by a voluntary agency.² The War Veterans Home's struggle to fulfil its mission over ninety years illuminates several issues. One is the transformation of an 'old men's home' into a complex care facility for aged people unable to live in their own homes as a result now not of poverty but of physical decline. Another is the impact of Commonwealth government efforts to support aged care. A third is the way in which not-for-profit agencies have constantly to search for funding sponsors. The largest of these has been the Commonwealth government through its departments responsible for providing aged care. There have been great benefits for all involved in this support from the Commonwealth, but as well there has been a rising tide of regulation and demands for accountability which have had to be addressed, so that the Home like all the other aged care agencies operates within a highly structured industry with only limited options available to it.

In addition, the Home has been one of the agencies which has striven to offer support for the ex-servicemen, and later ex-service women, (now known generically as 'veterans') of Australia. That endeavour has evoked dedicated personal effort by many voluntary managers and helpers. They have always been motivated by a sense of obligation to those who have served Australia in wartime. This makes it a special sort of voluntary agency for the care of the aged. Its leaders are not just responding to a perceived community need for assistance to aged people generally. They, along with similar ex-service agencies such as Legacy and the RSL, are driven by a special ethical relationship with the aged

among the ex-service community.³ There is a duty of care which cannot be cast aside.

While there has always been a demand from the members of the ex-service community for the facilities provided by the War Veterans Home, it has never become a dominant provider of services in South Australia, in the manner say of Southern Cross Homes or Anglicare SA. It has remained a modest, even homely and intimate agency at Myrtle Bank. That is another of the special characteristics of the Home which brings us back from these larger issues the immediate setting of the Home itself.

Responses to the War, 1914-15

The outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 saw a rush of support for the cause in Australia. Men hurried to enlist in the AIF by their thousands. Non-combatant members of the community moved to give them practical support. Funds and organisations were developed in many towns and cities. The first concern was to provide practical aid to the troops, but there was also widespread support for the first civilian victims of the war in Belgium. Most prestigiously, state and national branches of the Red Cross were established under vice regal patronage around Australia.⁴

Alongside the prodigies of knitting, and the packaging of bandages, speciality foods and cigarettes, patriotic funds were soon being reported in the press, all anxious to snare the public's contributions for their varied causes. These funds were spontaneous expressions of commitment in a community which was only lightly reliant on government to act on behalf of all. Their range was astounding.⁵ The Soldiers' Fund, the largest of the funds in Adelaide as in the other capital cities, aimed to assist the families of dead and injured soldiers by paying weekly pensions and other benefits to maintain their living standards. Other funds were directed to the delivery of aid to special categories of victims of the war, such as the Belgian civilians. Much aid was aimed at the soldiers themselves – socks, gloves, cakes, comforters, razors and so on – in an effort to supplement the limited official resources they received. It was a furious flurry of effort in a community unused to supporting military effort and whose government was likewise unready for the cost and complexities of modern warfare.

The Soldiers' Home League, 1915-1919

Amidst all this activity a meeting was held, probably on Sunday 15 August 1915. It was convened by Mr and Mrs W. C. Wedler in their home in Dover Street, 'Malvern Extension'. Those present agreed to form a 'Peace Day League' which soon had 406 members.⁶ This fledgling organisation cooperated with other funds by selling badges for them in the street appeals run almost every Friday in the city and elsewhere as it laid plans for its own fundraising effort. In March 1916 their turn came for a city-wide Friday appeal. The promoters had meanwhile changed their name to 'The Soldiers' Home League' for reasons hinted at in the statement issued by the Honorary Organiser, Mrs Wedler:

We especially wish it to be known that the League has no connection whatever with any association opposing military service and advocating or striving for peace now and at any price. We only desire to see peace come with absolute victory to the Allied cause, and when Kaiserism is crushed. ... We call ourselves the Peace Day League because it is our intention to make a great appeal on the anniversary of peace day.⁷

Tensions were rising in the community as the war progressed. Any hope of fundraising success required such distancing from the efforts of critics of the war. So that same day the first 'brick and button day' went ahead for the 'Proposed Soldiers' Home':

The object for which the Peace Day League was formed some time ago is the establishment and maintenance of a Soldiers' Home, with special care to be directed to incurable cases.

Intending supporters were invited to purchase 'corner stones' by auction to be held from 5 pm on the day of the appeal, which would give the right to have the donor's name on the door of the Home. The Premier, Crawford Vaughan, spoke at the Bowman's Arcade gathering at 5pm.⁸ That day they raised £856. By the annual meeting £1263 had been raised and about £200 spent. They soon began a search for suitable sites for their soldiers' home, while they also submitted unavailing appeals for aid to the federal government.⁹ As we shall see, the government was meditating a vast and quite startling initiative to respond to the needs of servicemen and their families when war ended, and was not willing to entertain piecemeal responses such as this.

Mr Wedler, of German Lutheran forbears, conducted a city business making and selling umbrellas. A couple of streets away from the Wedlers' home, the Lutheran Concordia College fronted Winchester Street, Malvern. It was both a

seminary for ordinands for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Australia (ELSA), and a secondary school for boys, under the leadership of Professor C.F. Graebner. Like many others, the Lutherans of South Australia had launched a war relief fund whose purpose was 'to provide relief of any distress caused by war' and 'to show our sympathy with such as suffer through the war and also refute the baseless charges against Lutherans of not giving towards war funds'.¹⁰ By the summer of 1916 this fund, promoted by the leaders of ELSA, had garnered more than £2000.

Then, in September 1916 the secretary of the Soldiers' Home League, A. R. Fuller, wrote to Professor Graebner about merging the two funds. Mr Fuller noted that Mrs Wedler had opened conversations with Professor Graebner.¹¹ What we might reasonably infer is that Mrs Wedler asked Professor Graebner for his support in promoting the Soldiers' Home League. She may have worshipped with other Lutherans in the college chapel on Sundays. Professor Graebner might have explained to her the rising difficulties he and the other leaders of his Synod were experiencing in deploying the funds they had raised as community hostility against Germans of all stripes was whipped up into a frenzy. An arrangement appeared to be emerging that might allow the Lutherans to use their funds by supporting the Soldiers' Home League, as new legislative limitations in response to community anger restricted their capacity for independent action. Mr Fuller noted in a memorandum for his committee that:

It was understood by all that great care would be necessary owing to the strong feeling existing at present regarding Lutherans. We were soon convinced that the Lutherans as such are absolutely loyal to our Empire and genuine in their desire to help the soldiers who fought for them and us.'

The funds would offered to the Soldiers' Home League be in return for a named wing or other building 'to contradict many false accusations' about the attitude of these Lutherans. In addition they were offered representation on the League committee.¹² The agreement with the Lutheran War Relief Fund was sealed on 26 October 1916. An immediate donation of £500 was made to the League's funds, together with a loan of another £2000, which would later become a donation.¹³

The funds contributed by the Lutheran Fund were approximately half the purchase price of £4050 for the homestead known as 'Myrtle Bank'. It was sited at the top of Ferguson Avenue in the suburb which took its name from the house and which had grown up around it as successive owners had subdivided the original farm land. On Saturday 24 March 1917 the first Soldiers Home League accommodation was officially opened in the homestead by Colonel Price Weir, who had commanded the Tenth Battalion, AIF, at Gallipoli. He was supported by a variety of important personages including the Premier, C. J. Vaughan. There were five wards of four beds, and three more on the verandah, with a potential for more to be housed in tents. Mrs C. Ashworth was appointed as matron.¹⁴

The decision to buy an existing villa was typical of such organisations wanting to provide accommodation. They could quickly employ existing facilities with minimal extra expense. Even better, this house stood in about three acres, the vestige of the original 134 acre survey. It had the much-approved rural character, thought to be best for people in need of recuperation, while the extra space could be used for future buildings. Over the next three years much effort was invested in establishing the Soldiers' Home. Funds were still being collected: the tally was £3252 by 1917.¹⁵ Professor Graebner occupied a seat on the management committee on behalf of the Lutheran Fund, a position he held until 1934.¹⁶

As former soldiers applied to become residents, the committee members had to decide their admission policy. They resolved that that when the income of a resident was greater than from the old age or similar pension and allowable earnings, he was to be given one month's notice to vacate.¹⁷ The organisers incorporated The Soldiers' Home League of South Australia in 1918, and issued a constitution.¹⁸ This permitted the development of house rules to control such matters as smoking in bed, excessive alcohol consumption and general tidiness of the residents. The committee celebrated the first anniversary of the opening by arranging for Col Weir to unveil a memorial to Lord Kitchener at the Home.

Gradually, the focus began to shift to such housekeeping issues as starting a sewing circle for the maintenance of sufficient linen, a task borne for many years by Mrs Muriel Bridgeland. The local Unley district connection was strengthened with gifts of money from the children of the Unley Public School,

first to erect a recreation hall which was opened on 15 December 1917 by Lady Galway, and later a new accommodation block named the Cater Ward in honour of a former head of the Unley School. The committee enunciated the goal of the League as promoting 'The welfare of our Empire's sons, who for our freedom are now incapacitated from earning a livelihood'.¹⁹

A Repatriation Commission hospital, 1919-1932

Alongside the patriotic funds, Australian governments state and federal grappled with the awful outcomes of the war. Increasingly the Commonwealth government, whether ALP and led by Andrew Fisher or later Nationalist and led by Billy Hughes, acknowledged a comprehensive responsibility towards the soldiers and their families. They were driven by political demand from the electorate expressing a widespread sense of obligation and fairness towards ex-servicemen. Parliamentary speeches and community organisation about the question were eventually followed by the creation by the Commonwealth government of the statutory Repatriation Commission in 1917. It would become a major and enduring expression of gratitude on the part of the community towards those who suffered in war. Attention was to be given to settling ex-servicemen on the land, to rehabilitating them, to caring for those who could not support themselves, paying pensions to incapacitated soldiers, and to the needs of widows and families of soldiers who had died.²⁰

Among the early projects suggested by Senator Millen, the responsible Minister in the Hughes Nationalist government, was the establishment of hostels or homes where inmates could be cared for when they were unable to care for themselves. In particular, the effect of that great wartime scourge, tuberculosis, was widely recognised. The causes of tuberculosis were not understood, but its effects were so awful, and its transmission to others so much feared, that many remedies were attempted. The prevailing solution to which the Senator referred was the sanatorium. Preferably these would be located in a rural environment, though within reach of urban services and family support. Patients would receive healthy food and quality nursing care, perhaps combined with long stints sitting or lying in the sunshine, for much faith was placed in its recuperative powers. At the least this was a protective regime that limited further infection and made the lives

of the sufferers comfortable while the disease ran its course, although many sufferers still died.²¹

In August 1919 the management committee of the Soldiers' Home League was invited to engage in discussions with the SA Deputy Comptroller of Repatriation about the 'future use and working of Soldiers' Home at Myrtle Bank'.²² The Principal Medical Officer of the Repatriation Department, addressed them in September about plans for the use of the Home.²³ The committee soon agreed to negotiate, recognising that their existence was part of the same general movement now led by the Repatriation Department, and that deploying the greater financial capacity of the Department could only be for the benefit of ex-soldiers. The committee of the Home asked the Commission for an annual rental of £350, roughly 5% on the capital invested in the property, which they hoped would be enough to pay for major maintenance and rates.²⁴ While keeping under review the farm concept promoted by the Repatriation Commission which targetted 'unemployables, alcoholics, convalescents', where work would be a 'mental therapy', the State office of the Department kept in touch with the League committee.²⁵ After some careful consideration in June 1920 the Management Committee commended the final proposal to a special general meeting, where it was approved. The transfer of occupancy occurred from 1 July 1920. The existing residents were asked to leave, and those unable to find work and a home were drafted to other Repatriation Department homes. They were replaced by bedridden tubercular cases, whose care would be the responsibility of the SA Hospital Department on behalf of the Repatriation Department, which quite sensibly made use of existing expertise.²⁶

For a little over a decade the Home housed these bedridden wartime victims of tuberculosis: typically twelve, then later over twenty as demand increased. An early addition to the site was a morgue, because, quite frankly, the Home accommodated men unlikely to recover from their infection. They came to the Home to die, and their belongings had to be fumigated after their death.²⁷ We know who they were, because from time to time lists of the inmates were submitted to head office, dutifully recording name, regimental number and

address of next of kin.²⁸ Proudly, the League regarded the Home to be ‘an inestimable boon’ as a sanatorium, especially as it was so accessible to relatives.²⁹

For the administrators there were daily difficulties. The cost of operations at Myrtle Bank compared with those at the new tuberculosis sanatorium at Bedford Park to the south of the city seemed unfavourable and needed defence, especially since this involved the SA Hospital Department as the service provider.³⁰ White ants made their unwelcome appearance early, and have continued to be a problem.³¹ Another long-standing problem gained attention when the Acting Works Director SA advised the Deputy Commissioner that dead rats and possums under the floorboards of the main building were the cause of the offensive odour about which the Matron had complained. In response thirteen access trapdoors were made, and other material removed. In 1929 the sputum incinerator was showing signs of wear.³²

More importantly, the Home had to be enlarged. The League executive took the opportunity to buy an adjacent property for £1650 and lease it to the Department. Its hand was forced by the Department of Defence, which insisted that those long-term tubercular patients being cared for in the Keswick General Hospital had to be moved out to provide space for more immediate needs. Defence was telling Repatriation it should address its responsibilities directly, rather continue to lean on the service department for support. So the capacity at Myrtle Bank was doubled to over twenty beds. At the same time the Repatriation Department took over the day to day conduct of the site from the SA Hospital Department because it had by now developed an Australia-wide staff to maintain its hospital facilities.³³

Not all the residents were totally bedridden. The large recreation room was equipped with a billiard table, card tables, a gramophone, and a library, together with a wireless and loud speaker. Gramophone records were bought for the residents. During a hot summer approval was grudgingly given for cordials to be supplied.³⁴ Some residents, with the support of their families, were permitted to take up to 42 days ‘leave’ a year. The residents were after all ‘free agents’.³⁵ They could be visited by public figures: the Red Cross advised that Lady Bridges,

the Governor's wife, would distribute Red Cross Christmas gifts to patients on 22 December 1925.³⁶

In September 1929 the Deputy Commissioner indicated that the Repatriation Commission did not wish to renew the lease on the cottage, since falling numbers of residents made its use unnecessary. This was a clue that the immediate pressure of care for tubercular patients was easing as they died off, and as Bedford Park soaked up the remainder. A year later the Commission advised the League it would vacate Myrtle Bank completely. By now the cost cutting campaigns of governments around were in full swing as they struggled to cope with drastically reduced income with the Great Depression sweeping across Australia. The small, intimate facility at Myrtle Bank could not be retained in this new and bleak environment.

Negotiations were therefore put in hand about the terms upon which the buildings would be returned to the League.³⁷ The League insisted in June 1931 that: 'It is our desire to carry out, so long as it may be necessary, and practicable, the ideals which led to the formation of the Soldiers' Home League'. They pointed out that:

unfortunately, there are many returned men who are either suffering from disabilities or are out of work and without a home and, in consequence, are liable to drift and become mere derelicts, and the Committee proposes, so far as it can, to step in and assist, at any rate, as many of this class of deserving cases as the buildings and equipment at their disposal will permit.³⁸

They were keen for the buildings on site which had been erected at the Commission's expense should be transferred as a donation to the League, suggesting that this would be cheaper than the alternative of removing them. The outcome was that the League handed over Commonwealth bonds with an effective value of about £350 in payment for the Commission's improvements and stock left behind. By the end of the year and aided by a six page list of the contents which noted every pot, spoon and bed, the League repossessed the Home.³⁹

An home for old soldiers, 1932-1954

For the next two decades the League once again conducted a residence for ex-servicemen who were unable to provide a home for themselves. By now the majority of the World War One men were in their forties and fifties, many showing increasing signs of the damage they had endured in that awful struggle. Some had served previously in the Boer War or one of the other imperial military expeditions around the globe. The prudent League leaders, including the actuarially competent William Rogers, now the Auditor General of South Australia, looked to provide adequately for what they predicted would be a finite and declining number of applicants. Consequently, through the 1930s they were little concerned that annual income usually failed to meet annual expenses. They began a phased and controlled program of realising bonds and stock to close the gap. As it were, they calculated that the last resident and the last bond would expire together at a future date somewhere in the 1950s.

While tolerating this annual deficit, the committee nevertheless canvassed possible sources of funds to cover the shortfall in the daily running costs of the Home. It was another phase in the ongoing process of finding appropriate supporting sponsors which has continued ever since. Sensibly they turned first to the South Australian branch of the Red Cross, which in the 1930s still held substantial funds donated during the war for the benefit of soldiers. For more than two decades the Red Cross generously responded to the annual requests of the League for subsidies, beginning in 1933 with a gift of £100. They were able to gain vice-regal patronage for an official opening on 28 October 1933, by His Excellency Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven, Governor of South Australia.⁴⁰

So the Soldiers' Home at Myrtle Bank became one of a small but growing number of residences around Adelaide aimed at providing modest accommodation for men of limited means, often with service backgrounds. The Church of England Men's Society was running a hostel in Wright Street in the city's west end for sixty to seventy men. The Port Adelaide Methodist Central Mission started a men's hostel in 1937 for a dozen or so locals. Sam Forsyth of the Adelaide Methodist Central Mission moved to create a retreat for alcoholic men in the Kuitpo Forest. There were also some slightly more substantial facilities for men and women being run by Methodist agencies at Leabrook, Payneham and North Adelaide, and probably there were more.⁴¹ They all

grappled with similar problems: finding adequate and reliable managers, who to admit as residents, how to promote reasonably civilised behaviour among them, how to minimise running costs, how to provide adequate activities and entertainment, what quality of accommodation to provide.

There were no references to the outbreak of World War Two in the minutes as the committee of the Soldiers' Home League, still led by J. H. Cooke, concentrated on housing the men of the First AIF in the early 1940s. The next plan was to approach the Red Cross for a capital grant to erect another ward for twenty men. Meanwhile picnics at Seacliff and gifts from RSL sub-branches were all part of the life of the Home. The Red Cross agreed to pay £2100 for the proposed ward, which was opened on 21 September 1940 by Lady Muriel Barclay-Harvey as President of SA Division of Red Cross with 500 supporters present. With this Red Cross Ward the Home could now accommodate 60 residents.⁴²

But the silence of 1939 was replaced by 1941 with the likelihood of a new generation of applicants coming forward after the end of the current hostilities. They therefore had to think more creatively about their reserves. The former model based on assumptions about the known demand from surviving World War One returned servicemen must plainly be discarded in the face of this potentially large flow from a new generation of applicants. On the supply side, funds came from a new World War Two Patriotic Fund distributed by the RSL. But the committee also had to grapple with such immediate issues as inadequate supervisors, rising food costs and the excessive drinking of some residents (and the white ants as ever). Then there was the death, in August 1943, of their long-serving President, J.H. Cooke: 'his lovable nature and earnestness and keenness in a work which was a labour of love to him, earned him the respect of all members of the League'. He was succeeded by W. H. McCann.⁴³

A four bed sick-bay was created for £267, paid for by the Red Cross. A married couple, Mrs and Mrs Robert Whittaker, were appointed to manage the Home, supported by a cook to replace the previous self-catering regime. The residents were becoming more dependent on the help of others. With war's end in

August 1945 thoughts turned even more firmly to expanding the Home and hence to finding new funds.⁴⁴

We have some descriptions reaching back to the 1950s of the conditions and style of the Home. Admittedly, the memories are from the 1990s, and they were spoken by the leaders of the next generation, who might, unconsciously, have wished to contrast the old days with the success of their own contribution to the Home. But the accounts they gave are consistent, and somewhat bleak.

Ron Hooper, who joined the Committee in the 1950s and still serves on the Board recalled:

1950, it was a terrible place, I must say. It wasn't really an old age persons home ... It was veterans from World War I who were getting on but they were – pretty well 'no hoppers'. The Superintendent at that time was a fellow named Captain Robert Whittaker, who I understand had been an officer in the Indian Army ... he was a disciplinarian and he used to line the blokes up and give them jobs to do ...⁴⁵

This could include gardening, or peeling the vegetables for the cook or clearing the dining room.⁴⁶ Ron Hooper reminds us that about half the men lived in the homestead, while others occupied the still-surviving Cater Ward or the Repatriation Ward. Most occupied in single rooms by then, 'but [they] were not too flash, and the accommodation was generally fairly poor. Because of that ... we got a fairly poor type of person who wanted to live in the place.'

Not that the residents lived cut off from their families. They were frequently visited and comforted by sons and daughters, for as the managers often pointed out, the Home was very accessible to Adelaide residents. Just occasionally there were tales of men who did cut themselves off from their families, only to be reconciled as they contemplated their end.⁴⁷

Commonwealth funding for aged persons homes, 1954-63

The story has been told with variations many times: Prime Minister Robert Menzies and his wife were attending the opening of an Adelaide old folks home (the site varies with the teller) prior to the 1953 elections. Mrs Menzies, so the story goes, urged her husband to provide Commonwealth government subsidies in aid of the capital requirements of these worthy charities that provided such valuable aid to old people. Menzies knew an election winner when it was thrust

under his nose and promptly announced such a scheme. In fact the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and its minister, Billy McMahon, had been looking at such a subsidy for some time. The bureaucrats were well ahead of the politicians, as was their duty. But the outcome, *the Aged Persons Homes Act 1954*, was clear and generous. Capital subsidies would be available for non-government charities on a two for one, later three for one basis, towards the capital cost of erecting new aged persons accommodation. The reciprocal of the Commonwealth's generosity was that the new legislation could mobilise the charitable sector through these conditional subsidies and so engage a large and important community group in the delivery of aged care. There were many volunteers and a great deal of money that would be drawn in. This would be far cheaper and less politically controversial than any direct action by the Commonwealth.⁴⁸

As a result, agencies around Australia submitted their applications, together with evidence that they could provide their proportion of the estimated capital costs involved. The Soldiers' Home League soon set about developing its plans. The committee initially thought of a £25 000 scheme yielding improvements and twenty new beds. Soon their ambitions vaulted: fifty new beds? An enlarged dining room? A ten bed sick bay? The estimated cost soon doubled. But this would need a mighty fund-raising effort to find a contribution of say £15 000. Perhaps if the League could raise £5000, the Red Cross would contribute £10 000? The Services Welfare Fund, controlled by the RSL, when approached, agreed to contribute another £15 000.⁴⁹ The Home had found another sponsor in the RSL, whose support dominated the affairs of the Home for the next thirty five years, alongside the series of negotiations for subsidy with the Commonwealth Government.⁵⁰

Eventually the public appeal was launched, with the leadership somewhat cautious about how much they could hope for. Brigadier K. A. Wills led the campaign during 1957, and it was completely successful, raising over £26 000. These were prosperous times, and the community was generous, somewhat to the surprise of the League's leaders⁵¹ So at long last the application for subsidy funding could be submitted. They aimed to erect two new wings, to alter the main building, the cook's quarters, the billiard room and the Red Cross Wing, all at an

estimated cost of over £80 000. The scheme would yield fifty five new beds. In fact by the end of the year the projected cost was over £100 000. To mark this new departure there was a name change: the organisation and the facility were now to be known as 'The War Veterans Home, Myrtle Bank'.⁵² The first foundation stone was laid on 13 February 1958 by the Governor, Sir Robert George, and the first new wing was completed on 20 August 1958, with the remainder becoming available later that year.⁵³

Administrative practices began to change too. The rates charged started to move up more regularly in line with shifts in the rates set for service and aged pensions, to £3 15s 0d per week in early 1959 for example. The superintendent continued to control admissions, and of course had more places to offer. As far as we can tell, his decisions were influenced by family circumstances, and probably some recognition of who promoted the interests of these old men, still mainly World War One ex-servicemen, now mostly ex-service or aged pensioners.⁵⁴

From this point and for the next thirty years, the Home was a regular applicant for subsidy grants under the often amended Commonwealth funding legislation. Another South Australian welfare administrator, the Rev. George Martin, head of the Port Adelaide Central Mission, described the 1960s and 1970s as a golden era 'distinguished by a freewheeling approach to service provision that was most exhilarating'.⁵⁵ The War Veterans Home leadership did their best to keep up. In the process the character of the Home gradually changed, partly because like all other aged care facilities it was hedged about with a growing tide of government regulations, while at the same time its previous role as a sort of alms house for deserving ex-servicemen was caught up with rising community expectations for the provision of hostel and nursing home care for the aged.

So Cater and Repat, those old and flimsy, white ant ridden building, were pulled down under the supervision of Department of Works officials. Gallipoli and Pozieres erected: residential accommodation with prescribed room sizes, access ramps, windows and toilets all included. Soon Gaza Wing with thirty four beds followed. By the end of 1961 the Home accommodated around a hundred men. The process of negotiating with capital donors such as the South Australian state branch of the RSL along with raising funds directly by button days and the

like continued, so that the Home, like all the other agencies delivering aged care accommodation could respond to each new government initiative.

Expansion of nursing home care, 1963-69

The next opportunity focussed on changes in funding for bed-bound residents. A new Commonwealth nursing home benefit was extended to residents of approved 'infirmaries'. The Home moved quickly when it found its existing sick bay did not meet the required standards, seeking donations from its sponsors and subsidy from the Commonwealth to erect an infirmary under the new rules. The plan involved a gift from the Cheer Up fund of around £5000 along with the two for one federal government subsidy and some negotiations to get the extension for fifteen beds approved during 1962. This brought Mrs Vera Searle to the Home as Matron of the Infirmary from March 1963. She was a former army nurse. The State government was successfully approached for funds towards the fit-out costs for the Infirmary and Premier Tom Playford officially opened it on 19 March 1964.⁵⁶

A new and long-lived support group emerged in 1966 from discussions with the RSL. The Alexandra Group of sub-branches⁵⁷, adopted the Home as their special fund-raising project. From 1966 to 1991 this group conducted an annual Golf Week at Victor Harbor in aid of the Home. From \$1500 in 1966, their imaginative fundraising yielded up to \$37 000 per annum in the last years, until rising hire costs and falling attendance forced the cessation of their efforts. Combining the Golf Day with the widely distributed RSL car raffle, over these 26 years the Group gave about \$500 000 to the Home. Their donations were the principal source of RSL financial support to the Home in this period, once the war-time funds had been expended. These gifts were crucial in attracting Commonwealth subsidy funding for capital works. Their relevance gradually declined in the later 1980s as the scale of expenditure grew, and as direct Commonwealth funding became the principal source of running costs and capital works funding.

One such project was a further ten beds for the infirmary, now registered as a private hospital under *the National Health Act* and attracting the important £1 a day per bed subsidy. The old days of self-help in the garden were fading as

rising community standards imposed new demands on the Home. Fees had to rise. Worse, the condition of men nominally living in the hostel rooms was increasingly demanding nursing-home standards of care. The Executive was beginning to grapple with that transformation common to all such agencies in this period, from an 'old folks homes' to aged care facilities offering substantial medical and other supports for residents unable completely to care for themselves, but whose lives were plainly prolonged by their residence at the Home.

Maintaining the Home in the 1970s

With the Home's swift growth to house about 135 men came two new challenges. From the mid 1960s to the late 1980s running costs seemed every year about to overwhelm the leadership of the Home. There were many shifts as they grappled to keep the Home going. Within the Home, much more had to be done to maintain adequate living conditions and a choice of activities. Again, as we will see, this involved a variety of outside groups sharing with the men in the daily life of the Home.

But a Home it must remain, as Sir Arthur Lee as President 1967-1991 insisted. For much of that time Arthur Lee was also State President of the RSL, so his role at the Home symbolised the continuing close relationship it had with the RSL in these years. The grounds were improved, and flower beds and lawns replaced vegetable gardens. An Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Home was inaugurated in the late 1960s to which the neighbours were invited. The Alexandra Group held an annual barbecue at the Home, when their fund-raising donation would be presented amid great rejoicing.

The largest project to improve the recreational facilities at the Home was the creation of the bowling rink below the Gaza Wing and behind the homestead, roughly in the middle of the site. It took much effort by residents and friends, with the proper lawn being installed, along with edges and gutters, and then a series of comfortable gazebos around it where watchers could encourage the bowlers and enjoy their refreshments.

Meanwhile costs continued to rise, driven by the need for more staff, and staff with skills beyond those of handyman or cleaner. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, national pay rates for such people were significantly increased to reflect

changing community standards: most famously the notion that men and women should be paid the same rates for the same work, but also to reflect the level of skills required to care for aged people. Even workers compensation insurance began to attract attention.⁵⁸ Heaters were installed throughout the rooms. The nursing staff was expanded to deliver twenty-four hour support, as was required to receive the nursing home benefits. Fire protection became an issue in the late 1960s. It was tempting to manage on the cheap until sanity prevailed and systems were brought up to best available standards: even the portable electric heaters had to go because of the fire danger threat which they posed.

The Commonwealth government responded from time to time with improved maintenance subsidies. In 1969 a \$5 per week subsidy for residents over eighty was introduced under the *Aged Persons Hostels Act*, bringing in some \$6500 in its first year. In 1972 the daily rate of Commonwealth payments for sick bay residents rose to \$1.50, and other rates were extended too. Under the Whitlam government's *Nursing Homes Assistance Act 1974* non-profit organisations like the War Veterans Home could move from the complex regime of subsidies towards running costs to one where the Commonwealth would refund the approved annual deficit, exclusive of contributions from patients. It was a massive gain, and a great relief, even if it brought with it a mass of forms and an decrease in independence.⁵⁹

Review and Upgrade in the 1980s

Attention was turned in the early 1980s to the character of future demand. Why, the Department of Health asked, was the infirmary not full? The Committee learnt that they could admit applicants directly to the nursing home, and that they could have done so since 1972. In practice the flow of frail hostel residents kept the nursing home full enough. But the Committee consulted the Department of Veterans Affairs, as it was now known, about demographic data to guide their thinking about the future.⁶⁰

It was these prompts from Commonwealth departments which drove the Committee's decision-making. The Department of Social Security was moving in the early 1980s to a more regionalised view of the availability of aged care beds. The days of unlimited expansion were over. The Home might even have to reduce

the number of residents as it responded to calls for improved standards of care. The new daily subsidies that were introduced in 1983 were welcome, but they meant careful and extensive review of the site to improve safety and the level and effectiveness of the services provided. Call systems and hand rails in the hallways were evidence of this new regime.⁶¹

In 1984 another opportunity to upgrade the buildings was detected. Wynne Lake, a board member and architect, pointed to the Commonwealth Employment Program (CEP), designed to expand employment and benefit not-for-profit organisations. While the scheme offered substantial funds (up to seventy per cent of the total cost), it required the Home to commit substantial amounts of money and to provide direct supervision of the project. The major contractor was replaced by the Home itself, which had to bear these costs out of its own resources. This was largely done on a voluntary by Wynne Lake and others. But the prospect of a major redevelopment of the Home was too good to miss.⁶²

The building work under the CEP scheme caused much grief. Wynne Lake told of workers who made it plain that they wanted the job to last as long as possible, a reasonable enough view for them but a bleak prospect for the Home.⁶³ Eventually the subsidy money ran out, but with the support of the RSL (and especially the Alexandra Group) and some very committed replacement tradesmen the job was finished, but all involved swore off CEP schemes for life. It was, says Lake, a great pity because the intention of the schemes was good. The outcome was the handover of the rebuilt Red Cross building in April 1985 and the new Tobruk building in September.⁶⁴

The next task was to rebuild the Gaza Wing to bring it up to the new standards of room size and facility. This went ahead through 1988, in part funded for the first time by resident capital contributions, a step that caused some heart flutters among the Home's leadership, since it seemed to breach its charitable foundations. But no-one complained, for everyone accepted that a reasonable contribution was a fair thing. Once again the contributions from the Alexandra Group were crucial. The upgrade reduced the number of beds to 108 for which recurrent funding was available, but everyone was pleased with the improved quality of accommodation.

Despite some preliminary discussions with the Ex-Servicewomen's Association, the Home remained for men only. There had never been much discussion of the single-sex character of the Home. After all, virtually all the potential residents would be ex-service *men*, while the few qualified women were rarely thought of as in need of such charity as was available at the Home. Like the RSL, the Home was for long a male place. But times were changing, as this first tentative discussion suggested. More women qualified for and needed accommodation, while exclusive male services were under increasing community scrutiny generally⁶⁵

Attention then shifted back to the nursing home. It was now limited to a maximum of 26 beds as a result of the redistribution of such licences by the Department of Health in line with the population of the regions of metropolitan Adelaide. But the upgrade contemplated in 1989 was still going to be expensive. An original estimate of \$400 000 quickly blew out to well over \$700 000, with an eventual Commonwealth government contribution of about \$410 000. The extensions were opened amid great rejoicing at the end of 1990.⁶⁶

This was the last stage of the piecemeal upgrading of the 1980s. The buildings had been improved around the 1950s footprints, now dominated by the bowling rink in the centre and the Alexandra Park facing Ferguson Avenue, with the nursing Home on the high ground to the east of the site. Even some of the new hostel buildings were only moderately satisfactory, largely a result of their provenance in the unemployment relief schemes.

Management issues in the early 1990s

As the 1990s opened the Home was facing pressures of cost containment and rising standards of care. It began to receive visits from government monitoring teams applying new outcome standards. Subsidy funding looked likely to disappear, to be replaced by even larger contributions from residents. The Home learnt in 1991 that they would lose control of admissions, which would now be managed by Geriatric Assessment Teams operating under the Commonwealth Aged Care Assessment Program.⁶⁷ This program was a nation-wide move by the Commonwealth government to introduce greater equity of access to aged care, and to ensure that medical and social needs were given priority above any notion of ability to pay or private influence. For the Home little changed, for there was

always a waiting list driven by frailty and declining health. It continued to be able to give preference to war veterans.

Prompted by new Board member Neil Paramour, a retired army brigadier, the Board began to reflect on its management responsibilities. Driven in part by government regulations about the role of the Director of Nursing, it invited Mrs Inara Kourakis, who had succeeded Matron Searle some years earlier, to become Director of Administration and Nursing. She thus became the chief executive officer of the Home, replacing a long line of male superintendents.⁶⁸ Her appointment recognised that all the residents needed close and careful management of their medical and personal circumstances. She led the way in ensuring the Home's staff reached and maintained the standards now required for continued operation under the many government regulations which now surrounded such facilities.

Soon the Board was receiving advice on a variety of efficiency issues. Mrs Kourakis convinced the Board to ban smoking in all buildings: the fire risk was too great. She remarked on the withdrawal of residents from gardening as so many of them became frailer, in part a product of the new admissions regime that kept fitter aged people in their own homes with a degree of support. She was also advising the Board that a growing number of residents were suffering from what was now diagnosed 'dementia': that distressing loss of control over the processes of thought and reason accompanied by continuing reasonable physical health. There were also moves to improve the efficiency of cooking and cleaning services by using outside contractors.⁶⁹

Full-scale rebuilding 1995-2005

The Board began canvassing another round of expansion during 1995. For them the issue was that they believed the Home needed an increased cash flow from a larger number of daily bed subsidies. But they found that the Department of Human Services and Health (the department responsible for aged care from the mid-1980s) had no intention of granting any more licences to the Home, although they were advised that they could purchase them in the market place. Needing to decide what to do about the future began to obsess the Board members. Sensibly, they turned to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) as it soon became known,

the lineal descendant of the Repatriation Commission. This was the government agency that was most responsive to the special character of the Home and its mission to serve the needs of ex-servicemen (or ‘veterans’). This turn to DVA represented the adoption of yet another patron capable of supplying significant funds and providing guidance within the changing government funding and regulatory environment of the decade. In the first instance, and after private discussions, the Board asked DVA to pay for a consultancy report to aid in planning the next five or more years at the Home.⁷⁰

With funding available from mid-1995 for them, the consultants suggested a course of action to the Board in June 1996.⁷¹ As the Board continued to discuss the future in terms of gaining more bed licences there was a sense of crisis management about their deliberations through late 1995 and early 1996. The Commonwealth officials and the minister were adamant: no new bed licences would be forthcoming. Indeed, the consultation actually proposed a reduced number of bed licences, set within a substantially upgraded facility.⁷² The report urged widening the range of services the Home offered to include home-based services, perhaps by way of partnerships with other service providers. It also proposed broadening the client base by including carers, ex-service women and partners of service people. The carers could be offered respite care, the ex-service women could join the men as residents. The partners could join spouses in independent living units. Further, the report reinforced the suggestion that the Home focus on creating a specific unit to care for people affected by dementia, as well as exploring the possibility of a day care therapy unit, and a range of other possible new services. These were challenging suggestions that went far beyond the long-established rationale of the Home. They were based on some bleak data projections and some realistic appreciation of the government policy environment.

By August 1997, in anticipation of the passing of the new *Aged Care Act* in October, decisions were emerging, based on accommodating a mix of ‘high care’ (formerly nursing home) residents, and ‘low care’ (formerly hostel) residents, including those with dementia. Among them all, forty per cent would, as the new government legislation required, be ‘concessional’, that is charged as pensioners, while the remainder would be charged at means-tested higher rates for

their maintenance. Under the new legislation accommodation bonds would be paid by new residents in low care towards the capital costs of the Home. These bonds were designed to yield interest for the Home. A regulated proportion would be retained when the resident left or died, and the bulk returned. Many in the industry regretted that a similar bond would not be required of entrants to high care accommodation, as this deprived agencies of a ready capital flow for rebuilding. This new funding regime introduced by the Howard government placed a great deal more dependence on the capacity of agencies to raise their own capital funds to build and upgrade their facilities. How would the Home cope?

The key for the Home was the willingness of DVA to make a substantial capital contribution to the Home's rebuilding budget.⁷³ This was not a grant under the Aged Persons Homes or Hostels Acts, but a gift from DVA to one of its longstanding clients serving the veterans of Australia. There were calculations of political advantage in such arrangements, but the veterans community and the War Veterans Home at Myrtle Bank were not about to look a gift horse in the mouth. The Home was moving from the RSL as its principal source of discretionary funds to reliance on the DVA for access to major contributions towards its rebuilding programs.

Sensibly enough the independent living units were treated as a separate exercise, since they would be resident-funded. Over the next few years six handsome two- and three-bedroom villas were built on the corner of Ferguson Avenue and Urrbrae Avenue, replacing much of the former rose garden and the flagstaff that had for so long marked the front entrance to the Home.⁷⁴

Stages one and two of the proposed scheme were now costed at nearly \$5M. They named the rebuilt nursing home 'Bangka Wing' after consulting the Returned Sisters RSL Sub-Branch.⁷⁵ The proposal that the dementia wing as a free standing building should front Ferguson Avenue was not welcomed by Unley Council. Local residents shared the widespread community distaste for viewing dementia-affected residents. So Ron Hooper and the Wynne Lake proposed a two story dementia and hostel unit on the site of the bowling green. The advantages of this proposal were the preservation of the Ferguson Avenue park, and that the

new wing could exploit the fall of the land on the site. It would also cost less. The loss of the bowling rink seemed a reasonable price as its use was declining along with the increasing frailty of so many of the residents. Very quickly Wynne Lake worked out a building design concept that exploited the possibilities of connecting the proposed new buildings, linking to the high care wing at the top and replacing the Gaza and Red Cross Wings as well.⁷⁶

Through these protracted discussions DVA was becoming increasingly impatient, for its officials had the imperatives of annual budget accountability to meet. They offered \$2.9M for the first stage, with the promise of more to come if the Board could agree on what it intended. A series of special meetings at the end of April 1998 the Board developed a response. It adopted the plan to erect a two story building to contain twenty dementia rooms and fifteen low-care rooms, while sixty beds elsewhere would be upgraded, making a total of ninety-five high and low care licences (together with nine independent living units) on which to base budget plans.⁷⁷

Once tenders were let it was the turn of the builders during 1999 and 2000. Great yellow machines moved through the heart of the site destroying the wings so lovingly erected from the 1950s to the 1980s, and with them the bowling rink and much beside. Plans for opening stage I in February 2000, including naming it Kapyong Wing, were worked out, while plans for stages II, III and IV went ahead as well. These plans included refurbishing Pozieres and renaming it Long Tan, as well as reworking Tobruk Wing and the renamed Bangka Wing. Gradually the completions were noted, certificates issued and the residents were moved back from their temporary accommodation. It was all very stressful for residents, staff and Board alike, compounded by the standards accreditation process for the next three years which was being carried out at the same time.⁷⁸

Even more notable for some was the arrival of the first women residents of the Home in April 2000. Beatrice Murray, Annie Aplin and Merle Beal moved into various parts of the Home. Beatrice, 81, went with her husband to occupy one of the units for married couples in Kapyong Wing. Annie and Merle both entered as low care residents. Annie, 95, was a war widow, while Merle, 82, saw service with the Red Cross in North Queensland. For them, like the men before them, this

was ‘their’ home, preferred because of its ex-service links set over so many years.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The buildings at the Home in 2005 meet current community standards, but at the same time honour the founders’ intentions. The hundred or so residents are all ex-service people, or their spouses. The days of an old men’s hostel have long gone. The residents all meet the requirements laid down for admission by the assessment teams. Some make substantial contributions to their accommodation, others are admitted with just their service or aged pensions. The Commonwealth government, in fulfilling its role as principal funder of aged care facilities in Australia, makes substantial payments towards the daily maintenance of the low- and high-care residents, and in return expects adherence to the standards laid down by the now-independent Standards and Accreditation Agency. These are for the time being not difficult to meet, so careful and comprehensive has been the recent upgrade. Most of the residents these days are fairly frail, even in the low care units, because current practice supports most aged people in their own homes, and the days of long-term poverty which denied men the capacity to accumulate the means to buy a home or even establish a family, have passed. So the bowling rink has been replaced by a dementia unit. The high care unit contains state of the art aids to care for frail, bed bound old people. There are doctors’ rooms for consultations with residents, and a variety of additional largely indoor recreational facilities. The halls and lounge rooms sparkle, with pianos and fine furniture scattered about, the gifts of grateful residents and families.

But the Home will no doubt go through further agonies of self-examination, planning and rebuilding. Its present buildings can only have a limited life, like all its previous facilities. Late in 2004 the Home purchased the property in Urrbrae Avenue adjacent to the Long Tan Wing. Planning approval has been granted for the erection of five more resident funded units. These units will probably be ready for occupation at the end of 2005. Planning is also underway to demolish the old homestead and replace it with a two storey building. The ground floor will include a new kitchen, library, physiotherapy facilities, a salon for a hairdresser and podiatrist, small meeting rooms and an office, together with a large area which can be used flexibly for various sized

meetings. The second storey will be made up of nine serviced units, with most meals to be provided from the kitchen below. Once again, the apartments will be resident funded, but the Home will fund the remaining lower level component.

In the current funding climate the Home's leaders have opted to turn to their own support base, the veterans themselves, for a substantial portion of the cost of these new plans, through the regulated resident funded procedure. They know that they can now expect little outside grant money from such agencies as DVA or the Department of Health and Ageing. It is yet another turn of the screw in the constant search for major funding. But the risks of obsolescence and financial collapse always remain.⁸⁰ That is why the relationship with DVA is so crucial. The Home continues to meet the needs of the veterans, as it has done since 1915. Of course, its hundred plus places do not do this completely, for now the RSL, for example, conducts its own aged care facility in the northern suburbs. Nor do all veterans or war widows expect to be housed at Myrtle Bank or anywhere else except their family homes. But the sense of ownership of the Home remains strong.

The War Veterans Home continues to honour those original commitments imagined by Mrs Wedler and her friends as they set about so energetically gathering funds for the Soldiers Home. Unless the Home is overwhelmed by outside forces such as massive cost increases or unforeseen changes in government policy, it will plainly continue to serve its chosen constituency on the present site for years to come.

Endnotes

¹ Brian Dickey holds status as an associate professor at Flinders University, where he taught history for many years. This essay, based on a commissioned history for the War Veterans Home, continues his studies of social welfare services in South Australia. The War Veterans Home provided access to its records, mainly minute books of the governing body. Other sources used are apparent from the notes which follow.

² Some South Australian examples of such studies include Brian Dickey, *Giving a Hand. A history of Anglicare since 1860*, Anglicare SA, Adelaide, 2003, part 4, Brian Dickey and Elaine Martin, *Building Community. A history of the Port Adelaide Central Mission*, Port Adelaide Wesley Centre, Port Adelaide, 1999, chs 7, 10, 11; Rob Linn, *Resthaven: the first sixty years*, Resthaven, Adelaide, 1996; Brian Chalmers, 'Need not creed'. A history of the Adelaide Central Mission 1900-1952, Flinders University, MA thesis, 1986; Pauline Payne, *Helping Hand Aged Care 1953-2003: A history*, Helping Hand Aged Care, North Adelaide, 2003. The standard surveys of Commonwealth activity for long were Tom Kewley, *Social Security in Australia, 1900-1972*, Sydney, 1973, 2nd ed, and his follow-up volume, *Australian Social Security Today. Major developments from 1900 to 1978*, Sydney, 1980. An influential survey from the 1980s was House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure,

In a home or at home. Accommodation and home care for the aged, Canberra, 1982, especially chs 2 & 6. Since then little has been published. A useful recent overview is Brian Fleming, 'National Funding for aged care and accommodation: a view from the South Australian office of the Commonwealth', in Brian Dickey (ed), *Developing Aged Care in South Australia, 1952-2002: Conference Proceedings*, Adelaide, 2002, 7-28.

³ Brian Dickey, *A Generation of Legacy Service. South Australia and Broken Hill since 1945*, Legacy Adelaide, Adelaide, 1997. There are several studies of the RSL, all of which underline this same ethical underpinning to the activities of the League, its branches and sub-branches.

⁴ M. Oppenheimer, '“The Best PM for the Empire in War?” Helen Munro Ferguson and the Australian Red Cross Society, 1914-1920', *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 119, April 2002, pp.108-124. Martin Woods, *Towards a civil society: voluntary community service and womanhood in South Australia 1836-1936*, Flinders University, PhD thesis, 2000, discusses Lady Galway's leadership in the establishment of the SA branch of the Red Cross.

⁵ For example on Tuesday 17 August 1915 the *Adelaide Advertiser*, under the heading 'War Funds' reported that the SA Soldiers' Fund had reached £173 370, while collections continued for the YMCA Tent Restoration Fund, the Belgian Relief Fund, the Red Cross Fund, and the Comforts for Soldiers Fund. The Starving Belgians Appeal appeared on the 18th, the Hospital Comforts Fund for Wounded Soldiers on the 20th.

⁶ Soldiers' Home League[hereafter SHL], *First Annual Report* (to 31 Oct 1916).[Hereafter, AR] Printed. Copy held in War Veterans Home [WVH] records. Most subsequent annual reports are typed and embedded in the minute books of the SHL, later WVH.

⁷ *Advertiser*, 18 March 1916.

⁸ *Advertiser*, 16 March 1916:

⁹ AR, 1916.

¹⁰ Pamphlet in German and English dated 18 June 1915, copy in folder held in the Lutheran Archives, Brompton, 'Lutheran War Relief Fund of SA [LWRFS]/1'. It is plain that this stray folder is the creation of Dr Graebner.

¹¹ Lutheran Archives, LWRFS4(2).

¹² LWRFS4/3.

¹³ LWRFS4/5.

¹⁴ *Advertiser* 26 March 1916.

¹⁵ Audited financial statement for SHL to 30 Sep 1917. Copy in first (#2) minute book, WVH. All subsequent financial statements are interleaved at the relevant date in the minute books until separately printed. A fundraising pamphlet was produced in 1917 or 1918 to promote the new Home

¹⁶ LWRFS4/12.

¹⁷ Executive Committee, Minutes, 7 May 1918. Minute book #2 and following from 1918 to the present day are held by WVH. Searches were carried out in the 1930s to recover the first minute book maintained by A. R. Fuller, but to no avail.

¹⁸ *Rules of the Soldiers' Home League of SA, Inc*, 18 June 1918. Copy including amendments with authorised signatures held by WVH.

¹⁹ AR, 1918.

²⁰ Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees, *The Last Shilling. A history of repatriation in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p.80.

²¹ F. B. Smith, *The Retreat of Tuberculosis, 1850-1950*, London, Croom Helm, 1988 provides context.

²² Management Committee, minutes, 15 Aug 1919.

²³ Management Committee, minutes, 21 Sep 1919.

²⁴ Management Committee, minutes of special meeting, 30 Sep 1919.

²⁵ National Archives of Australia [NAA], G734, pt4, Comptroller to Deputy Comptroller SA, 18 Oct 1919. During 1920 the state office duly canvassed real estate agents about possible sites for such a farm, and received a raft of site offers including the land soon after snapped up by Minda Home at Craighburn Farm, Blackwood. By early 1921 this proposal had lapsed for SA. NAA, Memo 6 Jan 1921, G734 pt4.

²⁶ Minutes, 7 May, 1 Jun, 16 Jun 1920. The vote was thirty seven in favour, and eight against.

²⁷ NAA: Matron Mehennet to Deputy Commissioner 27 Jul 1925 G 864 pt 15.

²⁸ For example NAA, G 763 Part 1, 16 Jan 1926. I have not reproduced these lists for obvious ethical reasons.

²⁹ SHL, AR, 1922.

³⁰ NAA, G734 pt4, 9 Jun 1922, 14 May 1923. During the 1920s the State and Commonwealth governments had cooperated to establish a hospital for tuberculosis patients open to the whole community at Bedford Park, south of Adelaide (and now the site of Flinders University and Flinders Medical Centre).

³¹ AR, 1922; Matron Pritchard, Memo, 26 Jan 1928, NAA G 864 pt 9.

³² NAA, G 864 pt 3, 5 Aug 1926. Matron to Deputy Commissioner, 8 Jul 1929, 23 Jul 1930, G864 pt15.

³³ SHL, Annual Meeting, October 1924; NAA: Chair, Repatriation Commission to Deputy Commissioner, SA, 6 Nov 1924, 2 Jan, 12, 27 Mar 1925; Deputy Commissioner to Chair, 16 Dec 1924; Deputy Commissioner to Inspector General of Hospitals, SA, 19 Jan 1925, G 864 Pt 7; *Advertiser* 16 May 1925.

³⁴ NAA, Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner, 16 Mar 1925, G864 pt7; Matron to Deputy Commissioner, 11 May 1925, G864 pt11, 24, 26 Oct 1927, G864 pt11; Deputy Commissioner to Matron, 15 Sep 1927, G 864 pt11.

³⁵ NAA, Deputy Commissioner to Inspector General of Hospitals [IGH], 21 Nov 1925, G 864 pt 2.

³⁶ NAA, IGH to Deputy Commissioner, 4 Dec 1925 G 864 Pt 3.

³⁷ NAA, Deputy Commissioner, memo 21 Sep 1929, G864 pt15.

³⁸ NAA, Secretary, SHL, to Deputy Commissioner, SA, Repatriation Commission, 10 Jun 1931, G 958.

³⁹ NAA, Deputy Commissioner to Commission, 12 Jun 1931; Commission to Deputy Commissioner, 29 Jun 1931; Secretary, SHL to Deputy Commissioner, 22 Oct 1931; Commission to Deputy Commissioner, 11 Nov 1931, G 958. The leading members of the committee at this point were the Hon J. H. Cook, MLC chairman; T. S. O'Halloran, KC; W. E. Rogers Auditor General SA, Treasurer; C. K. J. Thomas of the Hospitals Dept, Secretary.

⁴⁰ Annual Meeting, 1932,1934; Executive Committee, minutes, 10 Feb 1933.

⁴¹ Brian Dickey, *Giving a Hand. A history of Anglicare since 1860*, Anglicare SA, Adelaide, 2003, 182-5; Brian Dickey and Elaine Martin, *Building Community. A history of the Port Adelaide Central Mission*, Port Adelaide Wesley Centre, Port Adelaide, 1999, p.93.; Rob Linn, *Resthaven: the first sixty years*, Resthaven, Adelaide, 1996; Brian Chalmers, 'Need not creed'. A history of the Adelaide Central Mission 1900-1952, Flinders University, MA thesis, 1986; Pauline Payne, *Helping Hand Aged Care 1953-2003: A history*, Helping Hand Aged Care, North Adelaide, 2003.

⁴² AR, 1939, 1940; Executive Committee, minutes, 1 Dec 1939

⁴³ AR, 1941, 1942, 1943; Executive Committee, minutes, 27 Aug 1943. Bill McCann was a 10Bn AIF veteran. He briefly held acting command of the battalion at the end of the War. He was awarded the DSO and an MC. He was a legal practitioner and a Commonwealth public servant, retiring as Commonwealth Deputy Commissioner of Prices for SA and an OBE.

⁴⁴ AR, 1944, 1945. Mr & Mrs R Whittaker were appointed at £6 per week plus board for both of them.

⁴⁵ Rob Linn, interview with Ron Hooper, 2 Jul 1996, p.15. Full transcript held by WVH. These interviews were commissioned by WVH.

⁴⁶ Rob Linn, interview with Mrs Vera Searle (former Matron), 1Jul 1996, p.93

⁴⁷ Searle interview, p. 100.

⁴⁸ Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short history of social welfare in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987, 193-4.

⁴⁹ AR, 1954, 1955, 1956; Executive Committee, minutes, 23 Jan, 7 Aug 1955, 11 April, 17 Sep, 21 Oct 1956.

⁵⁰ Executive Committee, minutes, 13 Dec 1956; Special General Meeting, 30 April 1957. There was also a short period when State government subsidy funds were on offer at 1:1, but these were quickly overtaken by the Commonwealth scheme. Hooper, interview, p. 17.

⁵¹ Executive Committee, minutes, 10 Sep 1957.

⁵² Executive Committee, minutes, 25 Jan, 15 Aug, 10 Sep 1957; AR, 1957, 1960; I am grateful to Dr Brian Fleming of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing for providing me with a copy of this docket, drawn from a ring-binder file of such records currently in his care.

⁵³ AR, 1958.

⁵⁴ Executive Committee, minutes, 15 Jan, 22 Feb 1959.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Brian Dickey & Elaine Martin, *Building Community*, p.159.

⁵⁶ Executive Committee, minutes, 5 Apr 1962, 31 May 1964; AR, 1963 (the contract cost was £45 520); Searle interview.

⁵⁷ Broadly focused on southern Adelaide and the Fleurieu Peninsula.

⁵⁸ For example, the executive noted a significant rise in nurses' pay rates 17 Dec 1969, and again in 1972 (AR).

⁵⁹ Executive Committee, minutes, 19 Oct 1969, 25 Nov 1973; AR, 1972, 1975. The annual running costs for the Home had risen to around \$275 000.

⁶⁰ Executive Committee, minutes, 18 Oct, 20 Dec 1982.

⁶¹ Executive Committee, minutes, 21 Feb, 18 Apr, 31 Oct, 12 Dec 1983

⁶² Executive Committee, minutes, 9 Mar, 4 May 1984. The Home eventually had to find about \$400 000 of a proposed total cost of over \$1 100 000.

⁶³ Lake interview, Executive Committee, minutes, 10 Dec 1984.

⁶⁴ Executive Committee, minutes, 17 Jun, 12 Aug 1985, AR, 1985.

⁶⁵ AR, 1986, 1987; Executive Committee, minutes, 14 Apr, 9 Dec 1986, 13 Apr, 5 Jun 1987, 31 Oct 1988. The upgrade cost \$378 000.

⁶⁶ Executive Committee, minutes, 13 Feb, 19 Jun, 2 Oct 1989, 10 Dec 1990; AR, 1989.

⁶⁷ Executive Committee, minutes, 10 Dec 1990, 11 Feb 1991

⁶⁸ Board, minutes, 30 Aug 1993.

⁶⁹ Board, minutes, 21 Oct 1993, 11 Apr, 12 Dec 1994.

⁷⁰ Board, minutes, 13 Feb, 10 Apr 1995.

⁷¹ Board, minutes, 19 Jun 22 Aug 1995; *War Veterans' Home, Myrtle Bank Future Directions*, prepared by Kate Barnett and Associates, Droghmuller Pudney & Drew Pty Ltd, KPMG, May 1996.

⁷² Board, minutes, 19 Oct, 16 Nov 1995, 20 Aug, 15 Oct 1996.

⁷³ The availability of a DVA grant was first mooted at the Board on 18 Feb 1997.

⁷⁴ Board, minutes, 4 Nov 1997

⁷⁵ Bangka Strait was the site of the worst massacre of Australian nursing sisters in World War Two.

⁷⁶ Board, minutes, 7 Apr 1998, conversation with Ron Hooper 1 Apr 2004 (BD).

⁷⁷ Board, minutes, 7, 21, 28, 29, 30 Apr, 1, 12 May 1998. In all, it was planned to cost around \$8M and actually cost \$10.5M including the villas. Three more were to be built on the land that ran through to Auburn Ave.

⁷⁸ Board, minutes, 15 Dec 1998, 15 Jun, 18 Nov 1999; 5 Dec 2000, 21 Aug, 15 Nov 2001, 19 Feb 2002; AR, 2000.

⁷⁹ *Advertiser*, 13 Apr 2000.

⁸⁰ According to Warren Hogan, *Review of Pricing Arrangements in Residential Aged Care*, Canberra, 2004, smaller agencies will be unable to raise the necessary capital to maintain standards.