

Albury's First Hospital

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In the 1850s, Albury people were obliged to go to Beechworth if requiring hospitalisation. In 1858 there were calls for an Albury hospital. The *Border Post* asked "if our citizens will not bestir themselves to found a hospital of their own, they must be content to see the money taken out of the district."

Later that year, it was reported that "a piece of land had been granted by the Government for the erection of a hospital at Albury" and a promise £1000 if Albury could raise the same amount by subscription.

Tenders were called in January 1860 and the foundation stone laid in July. The hospital was built next to Albury Gaol by Thomas Allan for £2100 and the first patients admitted in October 1861.

The hospital was admitting 15 to 20 patients per week, but several times in the first few years, the hospital turned away patients due to lack of funds. After the hospital had temporarily closed in May 1865, Albury & Wodonga Dramatic Society, supported by Albury Volunteer Band performed "Black-Eyed Susan" to raise funds.



The old Albury District Hospital on the western side of Thurgoona Street, c1861. A verandah was later added between the gabled ends

An unusual case was reported in 1865: "a patient had both his feet turn black and drop off below the knee joint. Even the bone has rotted away. Four Melbourne and three Sydney surgeons have seen the patient, but none have seen or heard of a similar case."

After over fifty years of operation, a new hospital was required. Land was set aside in Wodonga Place and the new hospital opened in February 1918.

But what to do with the old hospital. One suggestion was that it be used as a home for returned soldiers. During the influenza epidemic of 1919, the old hospital was reopened for patients convalescing.

In 1920, the old hospital building became the first home of Albury High School. After the school moved to their Kiewa Street site in 1928, the building became a home for local unemployed. In November 1933, the 40 occupants received notice to vacate within one month. The building was demolished in 1935 and public housing built on the site.