

Albury's First Fire Station

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After several significant fires and three earlier attempts to establish a volunteer fire brigade in Albury, a meeting was held in January 1885 to form an Albury Fire Brigade. Walter Billson became the brigade's first captain.

Newspapers backed the idea "to form a band of good working men, such as bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers etc who have a thorough knowledge of buildings in general, into a salvage corps, and get a captain capable of giving them the necessary drill and keeping discipline."

However, without a reticulated water supply, no fire station and no firebell, fighting fires was a major challenge

There was plenty of work for the new brigade in its first year with several serious fires. Then in December 1885 the largest fire Albury had seen tested the new brigade. The fire started on the ground floor of the AMP building in Dean St, destroying that building then entering the third-floor window of the next-door *Albury Banner* office and worked its way to the ground floor. The brigade had to rely on water carts for delivering water from the river.

Albury's reticulated water supply was turned on in January 1886. In the same month the *Border Post* announced "the fire alarm bell purchased by the fire brigade has arrived." It weighed about 91 kg and could be heard for three miles. At this time the brigade operated out of a shed adjoining the Rose Hotel in Kiewa Street.



Albury's first fire station (semi-circular roof) with the fire bell tower behind can be seen in this 1900 photograph of a parade for Boer War troops.

It wasn't until 1888 that the council granted the brigade land to build a station. What they got was a galvanised iron shed, officially handed over to the brigade in February 1889. The station was in Market Square (which became Dean Square and much later QEII Square), next to the Mechanics Institute and fronting Dean Street. The *Border Post* reported "a banquet was given in the newly erected fire station to celebrate." Brigade Captain Thomas Chubb stated "for the first time the brigade has been placed on a sound footing."

By the early twentieth century, the Dean St station was proving inadequate. In 1910 it was described as "a two-storey barn of weatherboard and iron with earth flooring, and a disgrace to the principal street."

In 1916 the brigade moved into their new station in Kiewa St. The old Dean Street fire station building was handed over to Albury Town Band as their band hall and removed from Dean Square to the corner of Volt and AMP Lanes.

For more about the Albury Fire Brigade and early Albury fires go to <https://alburyhistory.org.au/resources/history-topics/>