

## The State Primary School

James D. Bryan

The present Primary School at Taroona, number 311, situated just above the State High School, was opened on the 18th June 1960.

On the 4th August 1958 it is recorded in the Principal's Journal that permission had been granted for the then grade four pupils to remain in 1959 as grade five pending the opening of the new school. It is interesting, however, speaking to a pupil of that time, that she had memories of a few "older pupils", grade five or six, enrolled then.

At the beginning of 1959, 140 children were enrolled and accommodation at the old Coolamon Road School must have been stretched, although recorded as "sufficient"<sup>2</sup>.

A shortage of furniture for the number of children in the school was noted and the

"kinder" children were housed in the office.

A request was made for alterations to the wall to allow an exit for the "kinder" children through the cloakroom of an adjoining classroom. This was completed in February. The senior pupils, grades three, four and five, were in a class of fifty, taken by the Principal, Mr K. George. There were three other staff members.

On the 23rd July 1959 a report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, concerning the new primary school at Taroona, was presented and ordered to be printed<sup>3</sup>. It was stated that it was proposed to erect the new school on a portion of land then used for the Taroona State High School. Four acres of the approximately 22 acres were to be used for Primary School purposes, with a low wall or fence to act as a line of demarcation between the two school properties. The committee had been informed that the Primary School would have access to playing fields which were still to be provided for the



*The new school under construction, 1960.*

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## Education

### State High School.

On the 17th September the Principal, Mr K. George, recorded<sup>4</sup> that he had received notification of an approved tender for £40,600 to construct the new primary school. Work commenced on the 9th October, obviously too late to be ready for the start of the new school year; a fact pointed out in the Principal's Journal. Indeed, as the 1959 school year drew to a close, the Principal recorded strategies to cater for the number of children expected in 1960.

At the beginning of the 1960 school year there were 177 children enrolled at Coolamon Road. Twenty two of these were grade six children, enrolled for the first time at Tarooma.

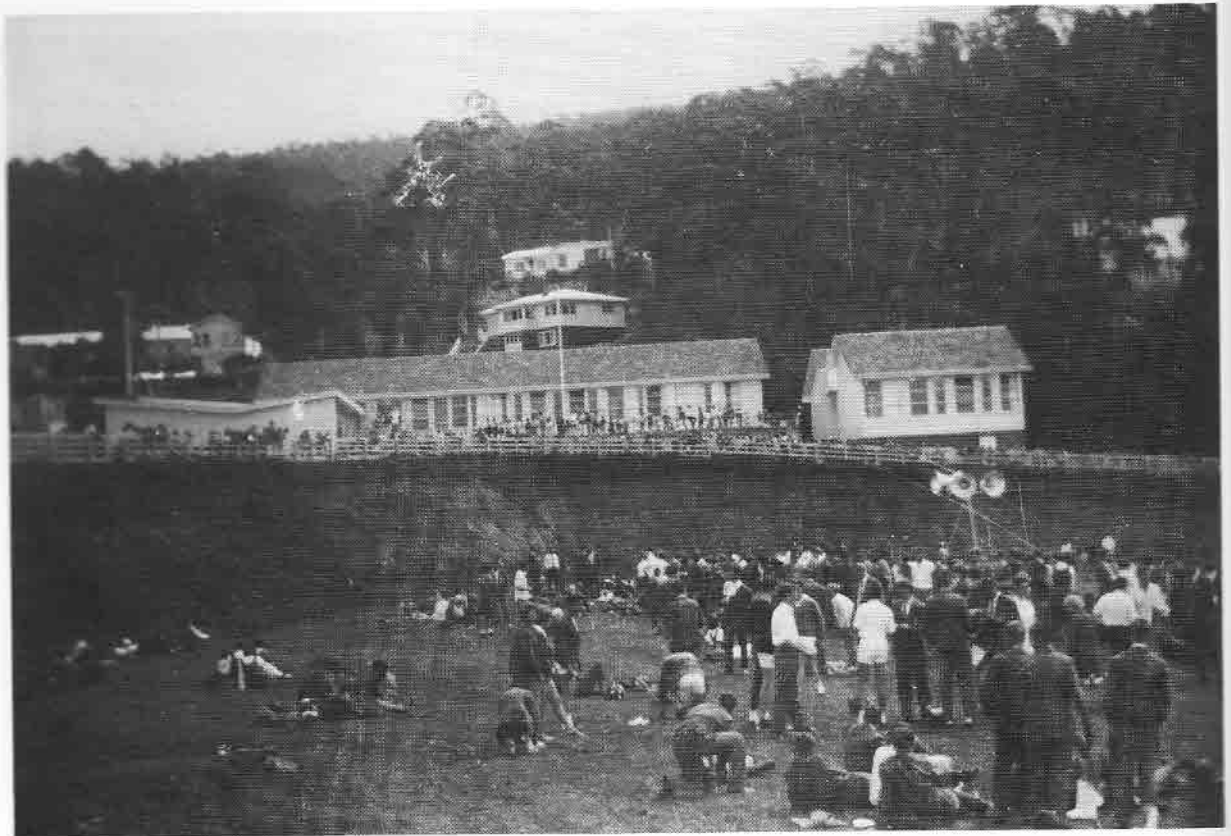
With accommodation stretched beyond the limit the grade two class was dispatched on the first day to the basement of the State High School. At the end of that first day, and after an inspection by the District Superintendent, Mr Overton, the Principal was instructed to

use the St. Luke's Church Hall for the grade three-four, a class of 51 children. This arrangement was to continue until the new school was ready for occupation.

The new school was situated on what was previously Dixon's farm.

On the 15th June the grade three-four class vacated St. Luke's Church Hall and moved into the new building. The whole school was moved the next day, with the exception of the kindergarten, as there was no provision for a kindergarten at the new site. Coolamon Road was to become a separate kindergarten.

The official opening of the new school was held on the 18th June 1960. The ceremony was performed by the Hon. Minister for Education W.A. Neilson. Guests included several Members of Parliament, the Director of Education, Mr Tribolet, and a large gathering of parents. A fair and art union held on the same day raised £210, which increased the equipment fund to approximately £780.



*The school with the addition of the bottom block on the right, c 1962.*

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In the new school, the power for the floor heating had not yet been connected. It was winter term and six kerosene heaters were supplied to heat the rooms. On the 7th July the Hydro Electric Commission was able to supply power for half of the floor heating, with rooms to alternate daily. This was to continue for some time.

The new school grounds required considerable attention and much effort was spent on this. During July the grade six pupils planted roses in the front of the school. Unfortunately none of those remain today.

At the annual visit by the District Superintendent, Mr Overton, on the 8th August 1960 it is recorded that,

This lovely new school in lovely surroundings is an asset to the district. The classrooms are attractive and the pupils are proud of their school. Garden development has commenced<sup>5</sup>.

Through support of parents over many years the above statement remains true today. Carpeted and well equipped rooms, a well stocked library and attractive play grounds are

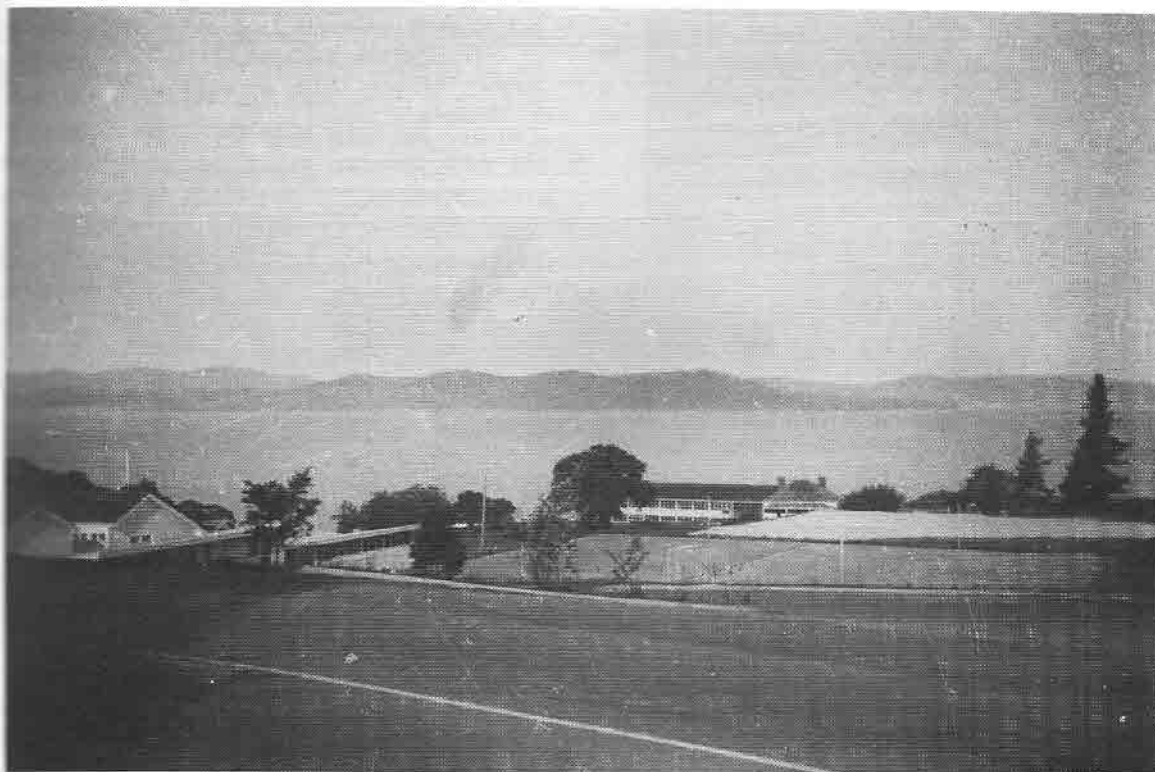
the result of parent hard work and effort.

As can be seen from the accompanying table of enrolment figures, the number of children at the School grew steadily during these early years. To accommodate this growing number of children there was a need for new rooms. During 1962 two more rooms were opened and shortly after another two were added. These four rooms became known as "the bottom block", and later as "the middle block", when a new classroom was erected in 1978.

On the 16th December 1971 Mr K.H. George retired as Principal of Tarooma State Primary School, after what he recorded as "14 happy and I hope successful years"<sup>6</sup>.

On the 1st September 1974 the Coolamon Road buildings were destroyed by fire. This was probably the work of an arsonist who had lit fires in rooms of the Primary School on the 11th August<sup>7</sup>. As a result the "kinder" and prep. classes were established in terrapin buildings which were erected in the Primary School grounds. The school had once again become a kindergarten through to grade six.

A new brick kinder-prep. classroom block



General view with the State Primary School on the left, Mr George Dixon's house to the right and "A" and "B" blocks of the State High School in the background.

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## Education

was opened on the 6th December 1976.

By 1978 the school consisted of four classroom buildings and had reached its peak in numbers. From about that time requests for a much needed extension to the library and provision of a multi-purpose room for assemblies, music and physical education were made. To date this has not yet been realised. During 1986 the original administration area, built in 1960, was demolished and a new brick veneer one built. This included a number of offices, staff work rooms and a medical-sick room. It has provided a very attractive and functional addition to the school.

A history of a school should not just include numbers and information concerning buildings. However, it is worth recording that since the new school was opened in June 1960, 2330 children have been enrolled.

There are children now enrolled whose parents were original pupils at the new school in 1960.

### Summary of Enrolments: 1960-1986

1960	181	1969	241	1978	347
1961	219	1970	225	1979	321
1962	235	1971	226	1980	306
1963	244	1972	237	1981	303
1964	254	1973	226	1982	301
1965	254	1974	290	1983	261
1966	255	1975	295	1984	254
1967	244	1976	352	1985	254
1968	249	1977	342	1986	253

### Explanatory Notes

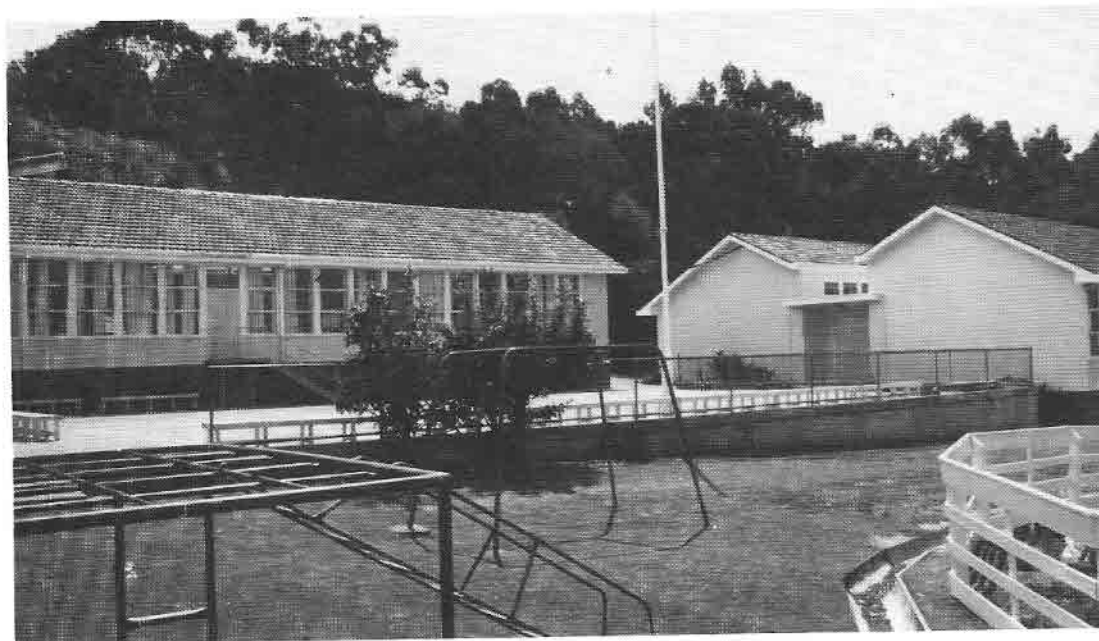
1. Enrolment figures 1955-72 are the Average Yearly Attendance from the School Admission Register rounded to the nearest unit.
2. Enrolment figures 1973-87 are the annual school census figures.
3. Enrolment figures from 1960 include grade six.
4. Kindergarten children: with no kindergarten facilities at the new school the figures for 1961 to 1973 inclusive do not include kindergarten children.

### References

1. Principal's Journals: 1956-1986, Tarooma Primary School.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 23rd July 1959.
4. Principal's Journals: 1956-1986, Tarooma Primary School.
5. Inspector's Annual Reports: 1945-1971, Tarooma Primary School.
6. School Admission Registers, 1955-1971, AOT.
7. *Mercury*, 2nd Sept. 1974.

### Other Sources of Information

School Admission Registers: 9.9.52 to 19.7.54 and 1971 onwards, Tarooma Primary School.  
School History File, compiled by Mrs Ann Woolley.



*The eastern side of the State Primary School, 1986.*

PHOTO ANDREW LORD.