



Strength in Numbers

TUH Health Fund
50th Anniversary Edition

2012-2022

Contents

Foreword	3
A decade of growth and change	5
Change as a constant	8
Commitment to caring	10
Member satisfaction	12
Service delivery and innovation	14
Stakeholder engagement	18
Board of Directors	22
The people of TUH	24
CEO message	26
TUH in 1972-2012	28



In 2012 Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund celebrated its 40th anniversary with an ambitious project — to document the history of the fund's first forty years. From humble beginnings in the turbulent 70s, through highs and lows, to recording its milestone of 25,000 members in late 2011, the inspiring story, by award winning journalist Matthew Fines Clinton, is a tale of vision, solidarity and determination. Ten years on, the story continues with this special 50th anniversary edition that provides an update of the fund's continued development and achievements over the past decade.

Foreword

The fiftieth anniversary of the Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund (TUH) is a milestone worthy of celebration, and an opportunity to highlight how far we've come. We have always enjoyed impressive growth, strong leadership, and innovative services, but the past few years have called on us to show what we're really made of.

In a world of uncertainty, TUH has succeeded in maintaining a sustainable, growing fund which has never lost sight of what is important: excellent service and value for money for our members.

The fact that over the past ten years we've grown from 25,000 members to 40,000 members speaks for itself, with 91 per cent of our members saying they are satisfied with their membership. That's the highest of any fund in the country, and well above the industry average of 69 per cent.

It's important for any service-based company to focus foremost on its members and the services provided. The fact that our members regard us as the most trustworthy health fund in the country, tells us we're succeeding.

As a non-profit organisation, our growth has surpassed most of the larger for-profit funds, but as a fund with a proud union heritage, our culture has always been one of working collectively in the interests of all our members.

That's why we were one of the only two health funds in Australia to cancel our premium increases during the COVID emergency, despite medical costs continuing to rise at a much greater rate than inflation. We've also frozen premiums this year until October. We've ensured we keep the 'human' in our fund, making ex gratia payments over and above members' entitlements when we see that there was acute need.

As we look towards the future and our next 50 years, I see several challenges, including pressure on smaller health funds to compete with larger organisations, rising medical costs and health insurance affordability for Australian families.

TUH faces that uncertainty with a determination to listen, innovate and serve our members for the long term, providing real comfort and support when they need it most. We don't take our high satisfaction ranking for granted, and we'll continue working for our members to ensure we keep our number one position.

John Battams

Chair

A decade of growth and change

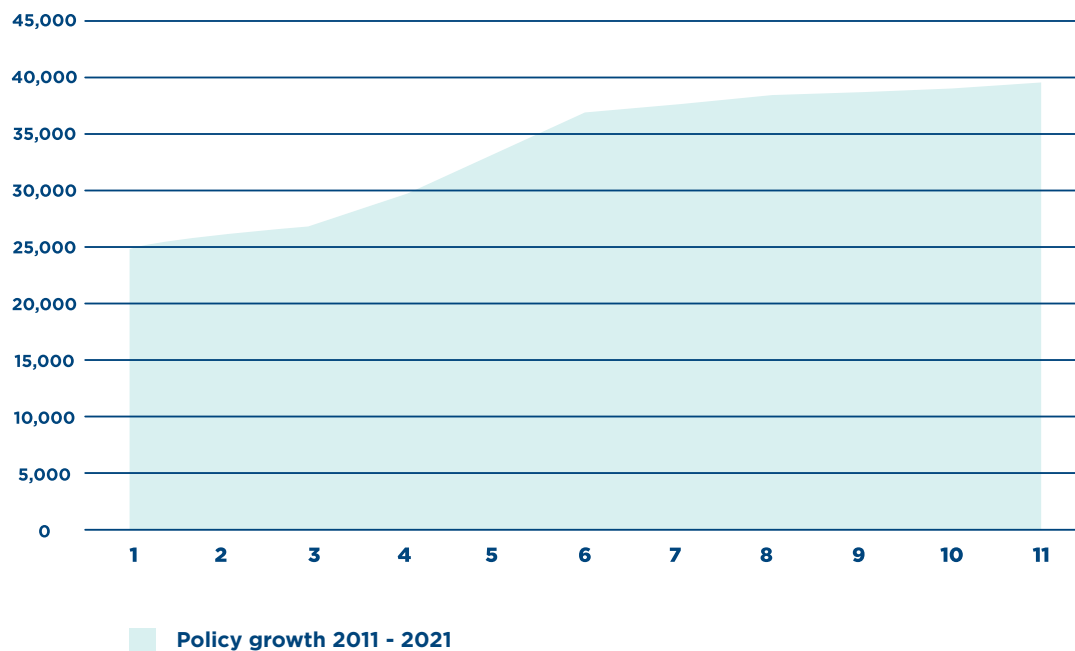
2012-2022

TUH has achieved much over the last 10 years, with strong growth and excellent customer service results. Members continue to be the fund's main focus and a number of initiatives developed and introduced over the years have made TUH the outstanding health fund it is today.

Member growth

One of the fund's main strategies at the beginning of the decade was membership growth. Being in an excellent financial position, with adequate capital to support a growth strategy, TUH has grown by 60% over the last ten years, an average of 6% a year. In comparison, some large funds experienced no growth or very low growth over the last decade.

Policy growth 2011 - 2021



Contributing to this growth was the decision in 2014 to expand membership eligibility to cover all union members in Australia. On the back of the expansion, TUH launched a new brand - Union Health - which helped clearly differentiate the market, with TUH staying true to its education sector and Union Health marketing to the broader union community.



The Union Health brand provided opportunities to foster relationships with the wider union community.

union health



Change as a constant

The Federal Government announced the means testing of the 30% Private Health Insurance rebate from 1 July 2012, and in 2013 removed the rebate from any Lifetime Health Cover loading payable by late joiners to health insurance. Additional changes limiting the rebate to CPI increases followed from 2014, gradually reducing the base rebate from 30% to 26.08% by 2021.

Affordability of private health insurance became a major concern of consumers and it became more important than ever to demonstrate the value of belonging to a not-for-profit fund that emphasised service to members rather than profits to shareholders. In 2015 TUH joined 19 other not-for-profit funds in forming the Members Own Health Funds alliance to promote the value provided by not-for-profit health funds.



Members Own has since joined forces with Members Health Fund Alliance (formerly hirmaa) to further promote the interests of 27 not-for-profit member-owned health funds.



From 2016-2017, TUH developed a sustainability focus making some changes to products and prepayment rules in response to financial and industry trends and challenges. During the same year TUH's claims audit team (established in 2014) hit a landmark of \$1million saved in claims leakage and fraud prevention initiatives - a major contribution towards improving affordability for all TUH members. In most cases, savings were made by ensuring hospital, medical and allied health billing practices were in accordance with fund rules.



Throughout the next few years, the government introduced a series of industry reforms designed to make things easier and more affordable for consumers, including:

- introducing industry-wide standards of Gold, Silver and Bronze for hospital covers to help members understand their policies better;
- allowing funds to offer aged-based discounts to encourage younger members to join;
- providing greater access to hospital psychiatric services by introducing a once-in-a-lifetime waiver for waiting periods if people need to upgrade to be covered for mental health.

TUH has supported these reforms designed to make our world class health system more affordable and accessible.

2020 was very challenging for many businesses and the health industry faced upheaval with the impact of COVID-19. Some allied health services closed down and hospitals temporarily suspended elective surgeries. TUH was one of only two health funds to cancel premium increases for 2020, and still managed to deliver a below industry average increase in 2021.

At the beginning of 2022, the TUH board again put members first by freezing the 1 April premium increase for six months due to the ongoing impact of COVID.



Commitment to caring

TUH continues its commitment to caring through providing ex-gratia payments to members for additional treatments such as cancer therapies or additional treatments that wouldn't normally be covered by health insurance.

Throughout the decade, a number of natural disasters, from floods, fires and cyclones impacted TUH members, including the 2013 Bundaberg floods in the wake of Cyclone Oswald, Cyclone Debbie in 2017, and the disastrous 2019-2020 bushfire season, followed closely by floods in the South East. TUH supported those members most impacted through a number of fee relief measures and incentives to help members get back on their feet.



Images from a flash storm that hit the TUH premises in 2014.

After the summer of 2019-20, nobody could have predicted the worst was yet to come as the scale of the COVID-19 global pandemic became apparent. TUH was very focussed on looking after its members during this time and introduced some important initiatives in addition to freezing rate increases. These included:

- Delivering a multi-million dollar COVID relief package.
- Paying benefits for telehealth services.
- Calling vulnerable members to check on their wellbeing,
- Giving a free massage to Queensland teaching members, and
- Introducing work-from-home arrangements for employees and safeguarding the health and welfare of customer-facing teams to continue a seamless member experience including in the Health Hub.

My favourite hospital benefits company. I love you and since I transferred from NIB – same coverage – monthly savings. Thanks for the friendly online service.

Alison - Melbourne VIC
Member since 2016

I would like to thank you for these initiatives to help the TUH members through such difficult times. I have been a member for many, many years and still remember the support and assistance you gave my husband when his health was going downhill. You are a wonderful Health Fund.

Joyce - Clear Island Waters QLD
Member since 1990

You have always looked after me so well in the past and your announcement of a range of initiatives to help in the coming months is great. I am particularly very pleased about the extra financial help with massage. I have really missed massage – it helps me so much with side effects of medication that I am on for breast cancer recovery. I am sure all your members are going to be so happy with your help in these unprecedented times. Thank you again and stay safe.

Julie - Hawthorne VIC
Member since 2016

Member satisfaction

Not surprisingly, this commitment to caring has had a positive impact on member satisfaction scores. TUH has continued to survey members through the Discovery Research Member Satisfaction Survey every two years, and also implemented regular Net Promoter Scoring at various member touchpoints, which has consistently received high satisfaction scores with members saying they would willingly recommend the fund and Health Hub services.

The value for money through TUH is exceptional. I was able to get more benefits and pay less each pay cycle than with my other insurance provider. I found TUH helpful and friendly and they didn't try to oversell me products I didn't want or need. It was friendlier experience overall than I had with my previous insurer.

Sarah (32) - Pinnaroo SA
via NPS survey

The 2021 Member Satisfaction Survey delivered excellent results, with a host of service measures receiving the highest satisfaction scores since the survey began in 2006.

Members noted stronger appreciation of TUH's benefits, price competitiveness and value for money. Personal service, friendliness, member focus and staff attentiveness recorded their best results since the survey began in 2006. Both telephone and written service also recorded their highest levels of satisfaction, as did speed of claim payment.



Personal service



Member focus



Friendly & attentive staff



Telephone service



Written service



Speedy claims payment

In 2021, TUH members gave their health fund top marks in a recent nation-wide survey undertaken by Ipsos Public Affairs, one of Australia's leading independent customer research agencies. The results put member-owned funds well ahead of larger competitors that are run for profit and TUH in the top three when it comes to customer service, trustworthiness, and quality products.

TUH's excellent record of service and satisfaction also means that when members join, they stick with TUH for life. At publication date, there were still 226 members who joined within TUH's first year of operations, and over four thousand who joined in the first five years. What an extraordinary achievement!

TUH gives fantastic value for money and the staff are invariably polite, respectful, knowledgeable and helpful. I wouldn't - indeed couldn't - be without TUH. I "sing its praises" and hope that my daughter and son-in-law will take my advice and join this excellent fund.

Gabrielle E.
Member for >20 years

All the bills were paid promptly .With my health card, the bill was paid straight away. The hospital one was a lot of money and I did not have to do anything. Thanks!

Laila T.
Member for >20 years

After hospitalization, the care and attention one receives is just amazing. The personnel who attend to this vitally important service are so dedicated, sincere and courteous. I can't speak highly enough of these people.

Elaine C.
Member for >10 years

The personalised care and support which I received during a very long hospital stay with phone calls offering moral support and encouragement, followed by the reimbursement of post hospital nursing fees has been immensely helpful. The staff have been truly wonderful.....a morale booster when really needed.

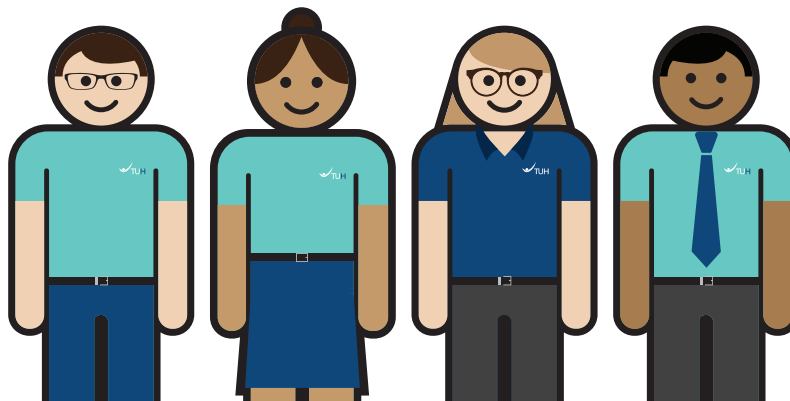
Glenda P.
Member for >20 years

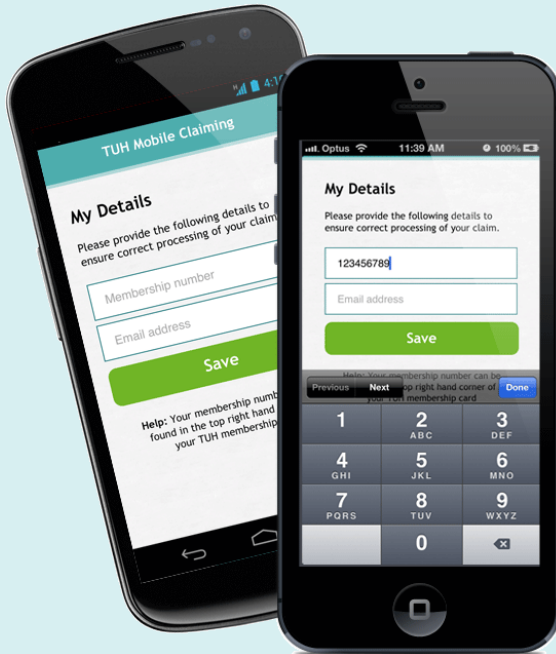
Service delivery and innovation

TUH has been recognised as Australia's most trusted fund, most recommended fund, and has earned the highest customer satisfaction out of all the health funds. Over several years CHOICE Health Insurance Review recommended TUH Total Care Hospital product as one of the best value products on the market.



As a small health fund, TUH has been agile enough to develop and implement many service innovations that some much larger health funds have been unable to pull off. The TUH mobile claiming app, released in 2013, was the first of its kind in Australia. Many funds have since copied this model but TUH continued to innovate and, in 2020-2021, developed an improved version that enables members to interact with their fund on many more levels.





2013



2021

Other significant service improvements of the decade included:

- 2012 - Introducing Chronic Disease Management services designed to help members manage their conditions and reduce their need for hospital admission.
- 2015 - Launching two new Extras products. Family Extras designed for families looking for a comprehensive level of cover and Healthy Options 60% Extras provided members with certainty about the benefits they would receive from TUH.
- 2016 - Rebranding Health Care Centre in Fortitude Valley as the Health Hub to provide the widest range of services to members of any health fund in Australia.
- 2018 - Adding Care Co-ordination services to TUH's Chronic Disease Management services under the newly formed TUH Health Care Services division.
- 2019 - Adding Everyday Extras to the product mix, bringing the total number of Extras options to six.
- 2020 - Introducing Wellbeing Benefits to provide members with everyday tangible value from their cover which includes partners like Frankie4, Adrift and 99 Bikes.



The Health Hub opened its doors with a new name and new look in 2016.



Praise for TUH Health Care Services

Please accept our sincerest thanks to TUH for the extraordinary support during John's illness. He is making great progress . We don't take for granted that his progress is a result of exceptional medical care which in turn is the result of the fabulous TUH support. He has also had wonderful Physio support at home from TUH.

Thank you so much. John hasn't required TUH support in previous years. However, when he did need it this year TUH was AMAZING. Sincerest thanks, God bless

Cecily C. - Chermside, Brisbane QLD
via Contact Centre

Thanks for your email. Total Hip Replacements don't come cheap!
A special thanks for the support offered through Tabitha and your care Service division. It was greatly appreciated and the 10 days at Mater Rehab as well as home physio made a significant contribution to my early recovery as well as the Angels - in- Aprons support helped me to survive the first weeks at home.

With Sincere Thanks

Ann-Marie S. - Chermside, Brisbane QLD
via Contact Centre

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a pillar of TUH's success, and in particular this is demonstrated by the popular stakeholder breakfasts that were first held in 2011 and celebrated their 10th milestone in 2021. The breakfasts were conceived by Executive Manager, Member Experience Cathy McGuane as a way to acknowledge valued stakeholders, for their long and loyal support and are a testament to Cathy's determination and perseverance in attracting high quality speakers and venues.

This remarkable line-up has included:

- Former Australian rugby union captain and Queenslanders of the Year, John Eales (our first speaker)
- The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce, former Governor-General of Australia
- Olympic swimming champions Jodie Henry and Susie O'Neill
- Leading researcher and immunologist, Queenslanders and Australian of the Year, Professor Ian Frazer
- Iconic Australian football coach, Wayne Bennett
- Pioneering yachtswoman and Young Australian of the Year, Jessica Watson
- Founders of Orange Sky and Young Australians of the Year, Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett
- Champion boxer and Sport Australia Hall of Fame Award recipient, Jeff Horn
- Inspirational celebrity chef, Matt Golinski, and
- Respected journalist Kerry O'Brien



2013 - Wayne Bennett and long-time event MC, Pat Welsh.



2014 - Professor Ian Frazer and CEO Rob Seljak.



2015 - Dame Quentin Bryce and former TUH director, Samantha Pidgeon.



2021 - Kerry O'Brien with TUH managers and staff (with MC Ben Davis at the rear)

Other stakeholder engagement activities included:

- Support for the Queensland Labour Day activities, including cheering on the Labour Day March and supporting the Emma Miller Awards.
- Workplace visits to hundreds of schools across Queensland, guest speaking appearances at conferences, seminars and professional development days
- Sponsorship of the Queensland College of Teachers Excellence in Beginning to Teach awards since their inception in 2009
- Supporting the Salvation Army's Youth Outreach Service education program by providing two scholarships annually to students dealing with difficult issues in their lives
- Hosting the TUH Touch Footy Day for members of Brisbane Catholic Education and their families. The 2021 event was expanded to include all Queensland education, but was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Introducing the TUH Future of Teaching Bursary for TUH members who are also members of the Independent Education Union.
- Participating in the Fortitude Valley and Brisbane Central State School reading programs.
- Partnering with Life Education for their school visits program.



The TUH team and Crunchy the apple mascot - Labour Day 2013



Labour Day 2016 marches past the Health Hub



TUH Touch Footy Day 2013



Labour Day 2018 - one of the new character mascots



Labour Day 2021 - Executive Manager Member Experience, Cathy McGuane with TUH Chairman, John Battams.



Life Education partnership launch 2015 - Rob Seljak with Michael Fawsitt, CEO of Life Education Queensland

Board of Directors

In 2015, Darcy Edwards announced his retirement from the TUH Board of Directors after eleven years on the board and the past five years as Chairman. He was ably replaced the following year by John Battams, who has held this position since.

TUH Board of Directors 2012-2022	
Darcy Edwards	2004 - 2015
Terence Burke	1996 - present
Kevin Brasch	1976 - 2014
Christine Cooper	1997 - 2016
Teresa Hamilton	2004 - 2015
Stewart Jones	2006 - 2021
John Merrell	2004 - 2018
Samantha Pidgeon	2001 - 2018
Charmaine Twomey	2009- present
John Battams	1990-1997 2004-2008 2011 - present
Graham Moloney	1997 - 2003 2014 - 2019
Peta Irvine	2015 - present
Michael Cottier	2015 - present
Rebecca Sisson	2017 - present
Mark Anghel	2019 - present
Anne Fuchs	2019 - present
Leah Mertens	2019 - present
Thalia Edmonds	2021 - present



Terence Burke



Charmaine Twomey



John Battams



Peta Irvine



Michael Cottier



Rebecca Sisson



Mark Anghel



Anne Fuchs



Leah Mertens



Thalia Edmonds

The people of TUH

TUH is not just proud of its member retention rate. Its employees contribute to the family feeling and many stay for the long haul. At the time of publication TUH had **22** employees who had been with the company for over 10 years, and **10** who had served over 20.

Throughout the decade, many long service awards were celebrated.

Key to this success has been a number of employee initiatives including:

- Receiving White Ribbon Accreditation for our training and initiatives in the prevention of domestic violence. TUH is used as best practice for other businesses to attain and retain accreditation.
- The landmark introduction of 20 days domestic and family violence leave..
- Implementing a flexible work policy.
- Introducing a range of initiatives during COVID-19 to care for the welfare of our employees and keep them working in the business even during the worst of the lockdown period, including providing each employee with a Queensland Holidays travel voucher in lieu of the cancelled 2020 Christmas celebrations.



TUH's longest still-serving employee, Rhonda Andersen (Finance) celebrating 30 years of service in 2015. In 2021 she reached the milestone of 37 years.



Vivienne Bidaud (Health Hub) was recognised for 10 years service in 2017. With Joseph Le-Kim, Dental Manager.



Cassie Robinson (Health Hub Reception) celebrated 25 years in 2018. With Executive Manager, Health Services, Rowena English.



Joseph Le-Kim (Health Hub) received his 10 year award from CEO, Rob Seljak in 2018.



Sue Bernoth (Contact Centre) celebrated 10 years in 2013.



Angela Patterson (Health Hub) celebrates 20 years with other long term team members Kelli Jones and Julie Suss in 2014.

CEO message

Rob Seljak

As we reach this important milestone of our 50th anniversary, I think it's important to reflect on what we've achieved as a community over the past decade.

Our members continue to be at the heart of everything we do. We have achieved strong growth and excellent customer service results and have introduced initiatives to make us the great health fund we are today.

I hope this update to our 40th anniversary booklet, highlighting our achievements over the last 10 years demonstrates the milestones we have achieved in our proud 50 year history.

Without a doubt, the last couple of years were very challenging for many businesses. The health industry faced upheaval with the impact of COVID-19 and we should acknowledge our frontline workers, including our own staff in the TUH Health Hub, who showed courage in delivering services during a global pandemic. Our entire team pulled together at TUH to ensure members continued to receive the great products, benefits and services that they know and love.

COVID-19, while challenging, also created opportunities to be there when members need us most. We have been here for half a century, and we will stand with them in their health journey for many years to come.

It has been my privilege to lead this organisation over the last 17 years. It is a great health fund with a strong purpose and a strong membership support base. We are excited about our future, and we will never lose sight of the fact that we exist because of our members: we are here to serve them.





STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund

1972-2012

Contents

CHAPTER I. <i>Beginnings: Jack Ross and Christopher Columbus</i>	4
CHAPTER II. <i>The roaring Seventies... and punching above your weight</i>	12
CHAPTER III. <i>The Eighties: Medicare and the dawn of expansion</i>	18
CHAPTER IV. <i>1990-95: How's your health?</i>	26
CHAPTER V. <i>High-wire act: PHIAC intervention No 1</i>	31
CHAPTER VI. <i>1999-2002: Stepping up</i>	35
CHAPTER VII. <i>PHIAC intervention No 2 (and the union fight-back)</i>	38
CHAPTER VIII. <i>2004-2012: Renaissance</i>	43
CHAPTER IX. <i>New horizons</i>	53
CHAPTER X. <i>Epilogue: Vale Noel Ross</i>	56
Appendix A: <i>Member testimonials</i>	60
Appendix B: <i>Directors</i>	64
Appendix C: <i>Membership History</i>	66





Labor Prime Minister, Ben Chifley said, 'I try to think of the Labour movement, not as putting an extra sixpence into somebody's pocket... but as a movement bringing something better to the people, better standards of living, greater happiness to the mass of people.'

The QTUHS and those who built it have helped brighten Chifley's 'Light On The Hill'.



Foreword

The first forty years of the Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund (TUH) have been characterised by impressive growth, strong leadership and the provision of innovative services. Underpinning all of this has been the bond of teaching and teacher unionism. It is and always has been much more than simply a health insurance provider.

This account of TUH properly focuses on some of the pioneers. Generations of teachers owe much to Jack Ross. We should not be surprised that Jack secured funding and support from the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) to create the QTUHS (Queensland Teachers' Union Health Society). He was a visionary and he knew how to get things done. In addition, the QTU was keen to ensure members were not only fairly paid but also able to get value from their membership. The QTU's support in the mid 1960s and early 1970s of the Queensland Teachers Credit Union and The Union Shopper reflects that vision.

QTUHS developed from one staff person and energetic volunteers to become one of Queensland's largest health funds and the dominant insurer in its market. Along the way there have been challenges, both external and internal. Every challenge has been met and in the process TUH has become stronger. TUH is much more than an insurer – it is OUR fund, OUR society, created for teacher unionists and their families by teachers and their unions.

The fund has pioneered new benefits, such as acupuncture, in house dental and optical clinics, Healthtrac, a stress management centre and much more. It has led the industry in supporting good health practices and preventative medicine, not only because it makes financial sense, but also because it cares about its members. Today, its management, financial strength and governance procedures are first class.

Health insurance in Australia is always going to involve major government regulation and intervention. It is a very dynamic and sometimes difficult environment. TUH's focus on member support and best practice management, coupled with the bonds that members share is the perfect recipe for its continued success.

Arch Bevis

*TUH member, QTU life member and former teacher, QTU union official,
TUH board member and Member of the Australian House of Representatives.*

April 1971

First meeting of Steering Committee to form a health fund for Queensland teachers chaired by Jack Ross, a primary school teacher.

March 1972

Queensland Teachers' Union Health Society began operations in Elizabeth Street, Brisbane.

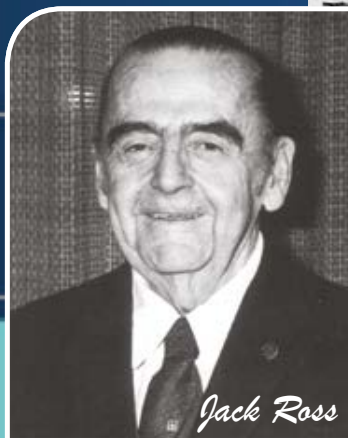
April 1972

Over 390 applications for membership were received.

November 1972

Membership reached 830; the health society grew to three staff members.

Jack Ross summed up the first year's operations: *'I believe we can all feel very happy and perhaps even a little proud that this scheme which many sceptics openly stated would never get off the ground is not only 'off' but is in well-balanced flight, and moving with all the momentum and propulsion the present and potential membership is capable of supplying.'*



1975

A three-line switchboard was in operation, with the membership base already at 3,600 and a monthly growth rate of approximately 100.

1979

The health fund reached 13,800 members and had 32 employees.

1982

Fund purchased first computer.



September 1987

In-house optical laboratory facility opened, speeding up the delivery of standard frames and also the carrying out of repairs on the spot.

March 1988

Plastic membership cards introduced to replace cardboard.

November 1989

Total membership of 16,756 covering 50,439 persons. Ambulance benefit introduced.

April 1984

The society purchased its new premises at 438-442 St Pauls Terrace, Fortitude Valley, which was later named 'Jack Ross House'. It was refurbished for offices, and the soon-to-be-opened dental clinic.

October 1986

Eyecare Centre opened alongside the Dental Centre in Fortitude Valley.



May 1990

QTUHS became a sponsor of the 'Life. Be In It' campaign.

October 1990

Healthtrac and Babytrac programs introduced.

August 1995

Introduction of 24 Hour Stressline phone service for members, providing confidential counselling, therapy and referral services for all members and their dependants.

May 1998

Physiotherapy was opened in Alandale House on St Pauls Terrace.

July 1999

Queensland Teachers' Union Health Society converted to Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund Limited (TUH).

4 June 2003

Administrator was appointed by the Private Health Insurance Administration Council (PHIAC) pursuant to the *National Health Act 1953*.

November 2004

Administration of the fund was returned to a re-formed TUH Board.

May 2005

Rob Seljak appointed as CEO.

November 2005

The Dental Centre celebrated its 21st birthday. The Health Care Centre accommodated 47,500 visits that year.

January 2007

TUH introduced health and wellbeing seminars that could be tailored to school staff meetings or meetings at work sites.

July 2007

TUH launched Member Services Online.

2009 - 2012

TUH expanded preferred provider arrangement which now includes 75 dental practices throughout Queensland.

February 2011

TUH assisted staff and members in the long journey of recovery from the Queensland floods.

November 2011

Fund reaches 25,000 policy holders.

February 2012

TUH completed the renovations to their state of the art Health Care Centre.

2012

TUH celebrates its 40th year of operations.



Noel Ross



1999

TUH was voted by Choice Magazine as the health fund offering the 'best buy' level of top hospital cover.

May 2000

Teachers' Union Health in conjunction with Union Shopper, launched 'Union Shopper Health'.





CHAPTER I

Beginnings: Jack Ross and Christopher Columbus



Queensland Teachers' Union building - Elizabeth Street

IN 1972, with the withdrawal of the last Australian logistic units from Vung Tau, Australia's engagement in the Vietnam War was over. A few months later, the wave of modern feminism would crash through the doors of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, where it was ruled that women performing the same job as men were entitled to be paid the same wage. The indigenous movement, too, was finding its voice, establishing the Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Old Parliament House as remonstrance against the then Coalition Government's refusal to recognise land rights.

By the close of this watershed year, Israel was still reeling after nine members of its Olympic team were shot dead by Palestinian terrorists in the "Munich Massacre"; Sydney-sider Belinda Green had captured the Miss World crown; raunchy TV soapie Number 96 was whipping up a moral panic; and the Labor Party – headed by the mercurial prime minister Gough Whitlam – ran the nation for the first time since 1949.

It was a time of rapid change, and often overrunning emotions; an invigorating milieu where all manner of ideas were countenanced and hatched. It was a time to dream. Even in the humblest of physical surrounds...

Teachers' Union Health, today's No 1 health fund for Queensland union members, was launched from a tiny, sparsely-furnished office in Brisbane's CBD, on 1 March 1972. The rented space occupied a nook of the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) building at 73 Elizabeth Street. There was just a few thousand dollars, eight inaugural directors and a truck-load of goodwill.

The founding chairman was Jack Ross, a long-time primary school teacher, doyen of school sports and humanist. In 1965, Jack had been the original chairman of the Queensland Teachers' Credit Union and was a great believer in the principles of co-operation, mutuality and beneficence. He was a man of many passions but his ambition to improve the circumstances of teachers and their families was unrelenting and came closest to defining him.

By the early 1970s, Jack had begun to talk to whomever would listen about the imperative of a health fund to serve teachers as an additional benefit to their union membership. He was a terrific organiser, thrived on a challenge, and those with whom he was well-acquainted knew better than to say to him: "It can't be done."



FOUNDING CHAIRMAN: *Jack Ross*

INITIAL DIRECTORS:
*Ron Cable, John Middleton
and Margaret Izatt*



First employee Margaret Izatt working at Elizabeth St.



Ron Cable & John Middleton 1972

Kevin Brasch



More than once, the irrepressible Kevin Brasch has invoked the deeds of a famous 15th century Genoan explorer when endeavouring to explain the “Jack factor.”

“Christopher Columbus was armed with only vision and passion when he left Italy to secure ships to find the New World,” Kevin says. “Jack Ross was armed with vision and passion as he tramped the highways and byways of Brisbane, as he sought to establish agents of change and advantages for his fellow teachers.”

“His mantra was to seek ways and means to improve the lives of teachers and their families; to seek knowledge to do this; to seek like-minded personnel to pursue his dream; to seek

to establish a Health Society for teachers by teachers; and to break the mould of impossibility by sheer perseverance.”

Kevin is somewhat of a powerhouse himself: a former top rugby league administrator (an ARL and QRL life member who in 1997 spent 76 days as Australian Rugby League chairman during the Super League war), a manager of State-of-Origin and Test teams, a top-level coach, and on the field, a skilful halfback who played league for Huddersfield in England and represented Queensland in rugby union.

Now-retired, he was also a diehard primary school teacher who retains a lively intellect and keen appreciation for all forms of history.

Elected in 1976, Kevin is the longest-serving director on the TUH board. His straight-shooting, borne of a self-appointed devil’s advocacy role, has proved invaluable in a crisis. And he couches Jack’s appointment to QTU life membership in the formative stages of the then Queensland Teachers’ Union Health Society (QTUHS) as a telling piece of symmetry. For it was Jack’s long experience with meetings and their intricacies of convention that honed his sense of strategy. On 27 October 1971, late in the day at the union’s annual conference, deliberations on some matters had dragged interminably. The delegates were restless. “Some,” Kevin recalls, “may even have been thirsty.”

Five minutes before packing up, Jack struck: putting through a motion to allocate \$7,000 towards investigating the potential of creating a teachers’ health society. (It’s worth noting that the QTU, at large, was already considered a pioneering union for its support shown to members beyond wage and industrial issues; legal services and low-cost loans had been introduced among other benefits). “Getting approval from the federal government was another monumental hurdle,” Kevin continues, “but cometh the time cometh the souls. Canberra eventually

gave this neophyte organisation the thumbs-up in February '72 and, with Jack as chair, our society was launched."

Jack also plied his magic touch when seconding personnel to the committee. "The formation of a committee (later to become known as a board of directors) was not an easy task," Kevin recounts. "It was uncharted waters. Being enthusiastic and/or community-minded was not sufficient".

"There was masses and masses of reading to undertake and understand. How did I get a jersey in those early days? I rang Jack about a Health Society matter and I don't remember what happened to my query... but I was suddenly on the committee."

Kevin Oswin



Others, such as original committeeman Kevin Oswin, were initially unconvinced. "I had been well-covered by a medical fund from my beginning as a teacher," he says. "Our third daughter developed a septic hip, causing a series of operations and hospitalisation over quite a few years. It was a very expensive exercise and I could not visualise how a small,

selected membership, as we envisaged in the Fund, could possibly afford to exist".

"Of course, the answers were soon provided and I became a fervid proponent of the proposal to form our own 'closed' fund."

In fact, Kevin Oswin would end up exemplifying the toil and sacrifice involved. With the fund on the brink of registration, he rallied the members of his local union branch at Lockyer, in the foothills of the Toowoomba escarpment, to sign on. "I had quite a good response but could never get Noel Ross (Jack's son), who was teaching in the Lockyer at the time, to join," he laughs. "I do not know what response he got from Jack, but I would expect that it was rather forceful."

(Ironically, Noel would go on to serve as TUH chairman, cumulatively for almost seven years across three separate periods from the 1990s to the early part of the new millennium).

Kevin Oswin says he can't exactly remember how many 200km return trips he clocked from his Lake Clarendon residence to the Elizabeth Street "broom cupboard" to attend society meetings. But sometimes the committee would convene two to three times a week. He would pick up Jack on the way and return him to his house afterwards, and only stepped down from the committee in December 1972 on account of a transfer to the Whitsundays.

"When I'd make it home to Lake Clarendon – after 10.30pm – I had a few hours to catch up on my school preparation for the next day," he says. "My three girls used to remember who I was, thankfully."

He carried a blue-paper QTUHS card, with his membership, "NO. 4" scratched in ink on the top right-hand corner, along with other abbreviated hand-written particulars (his cover was "PRIV. HOSP. Family"). Jack, of course, had secured



membership No 1. No 2 went to vice chairman Pat Doherty and the third was claimed by public officer John Middleton.

Kevin Oswin's departure to north Queensland and his resignation letter to Jack were met with a typical blend of gentlemanly flair and bold frugality. On 14 March 1973, the chairman wrote: "Dear Kev... there being still no scheme in existence for recompensing committee members for services rendered, it was decided, after careful consideration, that an ex-gratia payment of \$20 be made to you as a small token of appreciation for your valued services to the committee and to your fellow teachers."

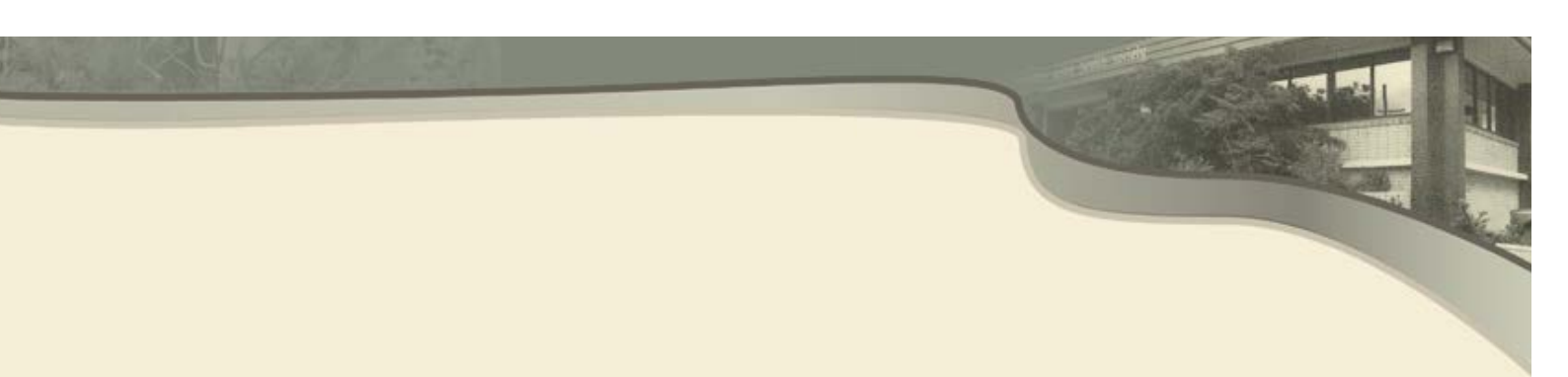
Today, the missive elicits a chuckle from the septuagenarian Kevin. He says: "Perhaps if I'd belonged to HIH (the financially-mismanaged insurance group which collapsed in 2001 in Australia's biggest corporate failure), the \$20 amount may have been much larger."

Jack, himself, was unpaid during the early days of the society. Such was his zeal for saving a buck, he would personally remove stamps from envelopes to derive a little income from philatelists he knew.

By April 1972, more than 390 applications for QTUHS membership had been lodged. By November the figure had grown to 830 – and the society had three staff members. The 1,000-mark was eclipsed by year's end, beyond expectations.

"I believe we can all feel very happy and perhaps even a little proud," Jack said at the time, "that this scheme, which many sceptics openly stated would never get off the ground, is not only 'off' but is in well-balanced flight, and moving with all the momentum and propulsion the present and potential membership is capable of supplying."





JACK PASSED away on 12 June 1981. He was 75. He had remained as society chair until his retirement in November 1978. His lengthy pro bono involvement with school sport covered rugby league, cricket, athletics and swimming. "In addition to these interests," Kevin Brasch says, "he took on the mammoth and onerous task of receiving the results of all primary school sports fixtures, late on Friday afternoons, and having them printed without fail and without error in the next day's *Courier-Mail*."

Kevin believes Jack's adherence to sport was "but a lesser part of his desire to forward the interests of others." His union activities were impassioned. For three decades, he was honorary secretary of the QTU assistant teachers' branch.

"Jack could sense not only opportunity but had the rare gift, when it came to innovation, of timing and delivery – essential qualities for maximum and effective impact," Kevin says.

One more thing, or should that be two. Jack suffered late-onset Type 2 diabetes. His gangrenous left leg was amputated mid-thigh in 1961. His right leg was surgically removed below the knee in 1979. After each amputation, Jack learnt to walk again employing artificial limbs.

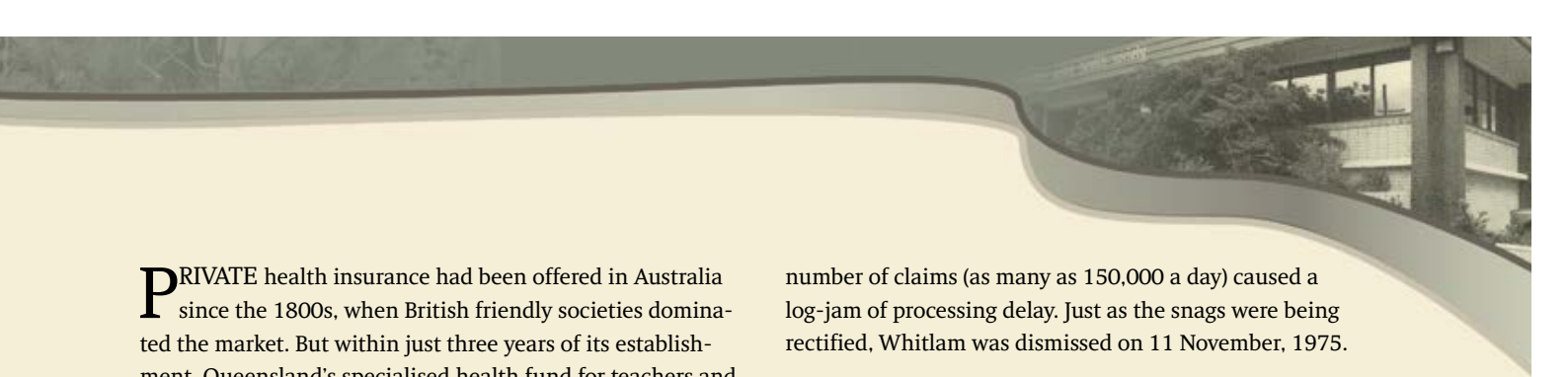
"If ever a pantheon of greats bedecks the TUH walls," Kevin says, "Jack Ross will take pride of place."





CHAPTER II

**The roaring Seventies...
and punching above
your weight**



PRIVATE health insurance had been offered in Australia since the 1800s, when British friendly societies dominated the market. But within just three years of its establishment, Queensland's specialised health fund for teachers and their families – also a friendly society – was enviably-placed. By 1974, it was the third-largest health society in the state. The following year, a three-line switchboard was operating to meet a customer base of 3,600. Extensive hospital, medical and optical benefits, plus generous pharmaceutical and dental coverage were snapped up. During this period, membership grew by about 100 new faces a month.

However, the private health insurance industry in general was muddled. Outside of Queensland, where a free public hospital system existed, almost one-fifth of Australians did not have voluntary health cover. Most were low-income earners, and concern intensified over the perceived gulf between those who could afford protection for health risks and those who could not.

In the late 1960s, the philosophical seeds of a commonwealth-sponsored universal health care system had been accepted as policy by the then opposition Labor Party. The plan was to provide, for the first time, free or subsidised health services to the Australian population. Upon rising to power, and in consideration of this mandate, Gough Whitlam set about constructing a framework. Called Medibank, the scheme came into effect on 1 July, 1975.

At every level, the impact was dramatic. Over the next nine months, the Health Insurance Commission – the administrative hub for Medibank and other government health programs – went from 22 staff to 3500. Eighty-one retail offices were opened, with health insurance cards distributed to nine out of 10 Australians. The mammoth

number of claims (as many as 150,000 a day) caused a log-jam of processing delay. Just as the snags were being rectified, Whitlam was dismissed on 11 November, 1975.

The incoming Malcolm Fraser-led Coalition government launched “Medibank Mark II,” essentially a bet each way on the building blocks laid by Labor. For a 2.5 percent levy on income, consumers could stay with universal coverage. The alternative was not to pay the levy and take out private health insurance. Throughout the next five years, the formula was constantly tweaked, with the Government struggling to find a balance between policies favourable to private insurers and ensuring the disadvantaged were not further marginalised on health. Ultimately, in 1981, Fraser decided to abolish universal coverage and preserve free public hospital care and Commonwealth medical benefits for a select group: pensioners on health cards, sickness beneficiaries and means-tested households. For everyone else, the onus was to insure privately, in return for a 32 percent tax rebate. All of which still left a pool of people who did not qualify for free treatment, but for whom private insurance premiums were out of reach.



That QTUHS managed to ride the roller-coaster of these tumultuous shifts is testament to its tailored service delivery: in other words, the efficacy to sound out teachers about what they wanted – and needed – in a health fund, and then keep the costs of supply down. Noela McNabb witnessed it all, joining the organisation in 1976 and serving variously as assistant manager and marketing manager before her retirement in 1997.

SUPER TABLE

QUEENSLAND TEACHERS' UNION HEALTH SOCIETY

OUR SUPER TABLE IS YOURS
for
\$5.18 SINGLE PER WEEK

33

BASIC MEDICAL,
15% GAP,
PRIVATE HOSPITAL
TO \$65 PER DAY,
THEATRE & LABOUR
WARD FEES PLUS
OUR RECENTLY
VASTLY IMPROVED
ANCILLARY BENEFITS

A WIDE RANGE OF
CHOICE INCLUDING
YOUR OWN DOCTOR

YOUR OWN TUHS

PROVIDES YOU WITH ADDED DETAIL AS WELL AS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND P.R.D. FORMS HEREIN

In 1978, the fund's "super table," offering the cream of medical and ancillary benefits, was available to singles for as little as \$5.18 per week. "Dedicated staff worked long hours and we had some very successful membership drives," Noela says. "And TUH," she counsels, "should always be the best health fund option for teachers and related education-based staff by maintaining better benefits and services at a lower cost. This was the very reason for its establishment in the first place."

Noela recalls operating from the QTU's post-CBD premises, the "A-frame" in Boundary Street, Spring Hill. "In 1977, we moved to the Queensland Teachers' Credit Union building (in Fortitude Valley), on the third floor, which gave us a lot more space," she says.

A-FRAME



CREDIT UNION



Yet the re-location sparked a flashpoint. Arch Bevis, then the QTU general secretary's representative on the board, would later become deputy secretary of the union before moving into federal parliament for 20 years (1990-2010) as the Labor member for Brisbane. He remembers the union leadership and QTUHS board at loggerheads.

"The health society wanting to move (location) was too much for many at the QTU who had not long before seen the credit union sever its ties to the QTU," Arch says. "Unlike the credit union, the health society membership was tied to union membership. The QTU leadership had no intention of seeing it take the credit union path. Personal differences and suspicions grew and a period of rivalry and dispute ensued."

Kevin Brasch says the mood grew hostile. "A major war erupted," he recollects. "The society was expanding rapidly but the union believed we should stay put (at Spring Hill), which led to a special general meeting – the likes of which I had not seen before or since. Keep in mind, it was Jack's group versus... I think it was somebody called Costello. In the end, Jack's group won the day. We went to the Valley and that's where the term 'gangbusters' had its origin. Or that's what I like to say."

The general meeting that followed this was a turbulent one. Kevin Brasch remembers:

"Those wishing to be elected [to the health society committee] gave a small speech and took questions from the floor. One young man, whom Jack encouraged to stand because he was at teachers' college, was first up. He was savaged and left the stage in tears, never to be seen again. Two other candidates left by the nearest exit as their names were being called."

Things eventually settled down and by 1979, 32 employees were on the books and the fund's participants had swelled to 13,800 including staff from the state's independent schools, for whom membership had been opened up. Indeed, the

contribution of the non-government teaching sector to the ascent and longevity of TUH cannot be overstated.



The Queensland Association of Teachers in Independent Schools' Union of Employees (QATIS) had been invited on to the health society committee by the QTU, which had the interests of all education union members in mind. One of QATIS' first advocates was Mavis Chappell, an extraordinary teacher. The type of educationalist all students hope – and deserve – to encounter at least once in their salad days.

Warm and nurturing, yet erudite, firm-handed and expectant, Mavis left an indelible mark on her roll-call of former pupils from Somerville House, a South Brisbane day and boarding school for girls. Her station, as a teacher of Year 5, was pitch-perfect, as she purposefully went about preparing classrooms for the upper years. She harnessed her clear, logical mind to de-code for her young disciples the more obscure concepts of mathematics. A lover of words, and their correct use, she would inspire a buzz of creativity.

Having arrived at Somerville House in 1964, Mavis also cultivated more than a passing interest in the then embryonic QATIS. She enlisted in the union in 1966 and in 1971 was elected as the Somerville House representative. In an era when secondary school prerogatives often hijacked the education agenda, she became a great fighter and campaigner for the needs of primary teachers.

As the inaugural QATIS delegate to the Queensland Teachers' Union Health Society, Mavis would ardently address her fellow committee members on ensuring the fund met the

demands and requirements of teachers in both non-government and government schools.

Reverend Canon Bruce Maughan, a former council member of QATIS, notes: "It was through her hard work and the hard work of QATIS representatives in general that the share of QATIS membership in QTUHS increased rapidly to what it now represents today – a significant partnership in an outstanding health fund."

Ill health forced Mavis's resignation from the QTUHS committee in 1978. Nonetheless, she continued to be an active supporter of both her union and health fund until her death from cancer in 1982.



Also in evidence in 1979, was a ballooning range of QTUHS ancillary products dispensing cover for hearing aids, funerals, overseas health care, outpatient theatre fees, physiotherapy, speech therapy, and orthoptic and chiropractic care. In the same year, the society joined the Health Insurance Restricted Membership Association of Australia (HIRMAA) so that it might stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other restricted membership health funds in advancing the welfare of members and presenting a united front on health issues.

In June 1980, QTUHS presented both parliamentary houses with a petition calling for the reintroduction of tax deductibility on health insurance contributions, a measure that had been in place for a number of years but withdrawn in 1975. When the provision for "a tax rebate separate from existing concessional deductions arrangements" duly appeared in the next Federal budget, it was widely surmised that the petition – containing 6,000 QTUHS member signatures – had brought some influence to bear.

Over the 1980-81 financial year, total membership (including families) expanded to 14,089, covering 38,000 individuals. The computer age beckoned, with the society purchasing its first machine and instituting electronic claims and cheque production. Previously, the making out of cheques, explains Robyn White, had necessitated manual typing.

"The cheques were then (cross-referenced) with the claim and staff folded and inserted them in envelopes for posting," says Robyn, the now-retired and popular Health Funds Operations Manager, who worked at TUH for 30 years from 1980. "All details of the claim paid were manually recorded on cards; these cards were attached to the claim before assessing the claim and were filed away numerically when the claim was completed."



Robyn White

"Service Provider numbers," she recalls, "were also manually accessed on microfiche. All member correspondence was completed on a typewriter. The financial returns covering pay roll deductions from the Education Department, private schools and the QTCU were processed manually onto members' policies."

“All accounts covering quarterly/half yearly/yearly membership fees were manually folded and inserted in envelopes for mailing.”

QTUHS commissioned Sydney-based computer consultancy Wacher Partners Pty Ltd to assist in the implementation, control and programming of an integrated computerised system. Where the compilation of certain society documents had been known to consume up to three hours, the machinery granted staff a far breezier reporting platform.

By 30 June 1981, spiralling membership had not only justified the fund's uptake of computers, but underlined the imperative of maintaining pace with technology in order to effectively administer the high volume of claims.

At November 1981, total membership was 14,500, insuring the health of 40,200 people. The fund was electronically processing members' records, premium contributions and claims. The Commonwealth Department of Health ordered all funds to become computer-compliant by September 1982, rendering QTUHS way ahead of its competition.

In November 1982, with 14,888 memberships (41,637 insured persons), the society explored the possibility of founding a branch office in Townsville. After due consideration, the Board deemed the proposition to be unfeasible. By this time QTUHS employed 27 staff.

Twelve months on, membership had jumped to 15,121, covering 43,850 people. But the ideological battleground over health in the '70s and '80s, acutely articulated in the policy tension between the Whitlam and Fraser regimes, delivered a massive headache to private health funds which were constantly scrambling to keep up. “So you see our health society was made up of passionate, determined, capable and intelligent people,” Kevin Brasch says. “How could you not be intelligent when the body for which you were responsible had changes of governments, accompanying philosophically-opposite stances, opposing versions of Medibank and other whims of government (to deal with).”


QTUHS had begun business with a basic medical product paying 85 percent of the schedule fee. This was reduced to 75 percent by legislation in 1978. The society then conceived a second medical table, covering 100 percent of the schedule fee. These provisions remained in place until the landscape changed again, this time irrevocably, with the Australian Government's new universal health care program.

Its name was Medicare, and it came to life on 1 February, 1984.



CHAPTER III

The Eighties: Medicare and the dawn of expansion



ON 5 MARCH 1983, voters swept the federal Labor Party back into office after a seven-year absence. The new prime minister was Bob Hawke, a charismatic former trade union leader, who had pulled off the greatest ALP victory in 40 years... a landslide, 25-seat majority. Hawke would go on to lead Labor to four consecutive terms – a record for the party – winning polls in 1984, 1987 and 1990. The '83 campaign, sewn together under the slogan “Bringing Australia Together,” targeted income tax cuts, a boost to pensions and unemployment benefits, an elevated tax-free threshold – and a revival of Medibank, as Medicare.

In his second reading speech in September 1983, Federal Health Minister Neal Blewett hailed the Medicare legislation as “a major social reform” that would “embody a health insurance system that is simple, fair and affordable.” He said universal cover was desirable from the standpoint of equity and “in terms of efficiency and reduced administrative costs.”

Matters of detail were all that separated Medicare from its previous incarnation. Despite the Coalition parties in later years whispering about its removal again (when Malcolm Fraser abolished Medibank, Australia had the distinction of being the only nation to both introduce and dismantle universal publicly-funded health insurance), John Howard dispelled any such plans. He would state he was sticking with the scheme in the run-up to the 1996 election in which he annihilated Hawke’s successor Paul Keating.

Before Malcolm Fraser’s 2.5 percent levy, Medibank had been financed from general revenue. For Medicare – referred to by some pundits as “Medibank III” – a levy on workers was to be imposed once more, set at 1 percent of taxable income. Single people earning below \$7,110 per year and married couples and sole parents with incomes of less than \$11,803 were excluded.

The levy would later rise to 1.5 percent of taxable income. But the chief differentiator from Medicare was that there now seemed no turning back. On some level, everybody acknowledged as much. And thus the private health insurance industry was staring at its biggest threat yet.

In 1970, private health coverage was at all-time highs of 80 percent. This fell sharply with the onset of Medibank and remained relatively low during the period of Medibank II, climbing rapidly when Malcolm Fraser ditched the program. With the advent of Medicare, private coverage plummeted to around 50 percent of the population almost overnight (it would continue to tumble, bottoming at around 30 percent in 1998-99).

QTUHS had nowhere to run. With the business of basic medical protection made redundant by Medicare, a number of society staff were sadly shown the door. By November 1984, nine of them had departed, leaving a work-force of 18. But the organisation, intent on maintaining lines of valuable medical support to the teaching community, refused to buckle. Moreover, the health society realised Medicare had to be approached as a blessing in disguise; a catalyst to a broader suite of products, services and ventures outside the orbit of socialised GP and hospital care. And so, the seeds were planted for today’s highly-successful, on-site Health Care Centre and Stressline (later to be branded as SupportLine), a counselling service much appreciated by teachers.

In April 1984, the society had taken possession of its new premises at 438 St Pauls Terrace, Fortitude Valley – later to be designated “Jack Ross House” – creating an excitement of its own. As a refurbishment swung into gear (the office was opened on 22 October), QTUHS strategists pin-pointed an opportunity to improve members’ health by directly supplying preventative dental services.

JACK ROSS HOUSE



For some time, the high percentage of dental claims had struck the fund as concerning. Several cases of over-servicing had been identified, as well as excessive charging from a number of dentists. The committee decided to launch a full-scale reconnaissance into the possibility of operating its own Dental Centre. Manager Margaret Izatt and Chairman Graham Lean went to Sydney and Wollongong to inspect a dental clinic set up by the Government Employees Health Fund of NSW. The dentists and management were happy to share vital statistics on their successful practice.

The pair also looked over the Tramway Union's Dental Clinic at Vimy House in Melbourne. These visits prompted a decision to conduct a survey of teachers (both QTUHS members and non-members) employed at schools in or near Brisbane. Almost 97 percent of member respondents said they would utilise a society Dental Centre, while more than 43 percent of non-members pledged to consider joining or transferring to QTUHS in the event of the facility being established. The results gave sufficient hope to the committee on the viability of such a service.

The re-fit of Jack Ross House would accommodate both office space and the dental clinic. In another stroke of prescience, further floor-area was earmarked for physiotherapy and optometry services, as part of a broader Health Care Centre, should they be desired later. The society opened the "Dental Centre" on 12 November 1984 under the prudent watch and unerring hand of Dental Manager Dr Arthur Toohey.

Margaret Izatt



RECEPTION AREA



*Dental Centre
Reception Staff*



Dr Toohey

“Indisputably a master stroke and an exemplar for all,” Kevin Brasch reflects, “was, and is, our preventative philosophy. It gave our members enormous pride and satisfaction. It could be argued it was too successful, as there was not a big return element. Dentist Arthur Toohey was the inspiration: he was not a young man at the time, but still amazingly passionate about his profession.”

In July 1985, the society farewelled Margaret Izatt, who had been with the society from the steering committee days to retirement. “The efficiency and diligence that Margaret gave to our committee went a long way towards our eventual success,” Kevin Oswin says. “She was uncomplaining, and always good-humoured.” Her replacement as General Manager was John Iwanicki.



DENTAL SURGERY

By August, the Dental Centre had enlarged to four surgeries and was heavily in demand. To this point, it had delivered more than 60,000 services to members. Despite operating from 8am to 7pm across back-to-back appointments, the waiting list spilled over. The committee felt it had little alternative but to expand the clinic to six surgeries. The additional chairs were in service by early December 1985.

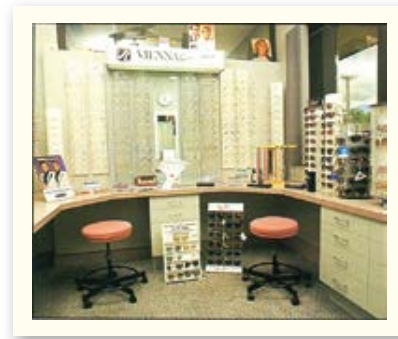
On 1 September 1985, the Federal Government tabled legislative changes to the National Health Act, providing a fillip to

members by way of increased benefits, especially relating to “in hospital services.”

By the end of the year, there were 14,413 fund contributors covering 42,983 beneficiaries, a decline of less than 1,000 memberships when compared to the pre-Medicare mark. QTUHS was clearly holding up.



Heartened and emboldened, the fund stretched its wings again from 1986-87. Or rather, it soared. The pipe-dream of an “Eyecare Centre” was forged into reality. It opened, alongside the Dental Centre, in October 1986. At the same time, the Dental Centre doubled in size to twelve surgeries, to this day one of the largest dental practices in Queensland.



OPTICAL DISPENSARY

Clients voted with their feet. In November 1986, the fund counted 14,869 members (44,721 people insured). By March 1987, membership had vaulted to 15,729.

The first quarter of the year generated a major upgrade of both computer hardware and software systems to meet Commonwealth Department of Health requirements. The fund also enlisted delegates from the Queensland Teachers' Union

and Queensland Association of Teachers in Independent Schools to help co-ordinate the first major membership drive – the “bring a friend sweepstake.”

Capitalising on its links with union representatives and school principals, the society contacted the 13,700 QTU and 980 QATIS members who were not fund members – yet eligible to join. However, the results were strangely disappointing. As a direct result of the promotion, only 496 new QTUHS members signed up. The fund thus had another quandary on its hands, and began to contemplate the prospect of expanding the membership base to cover other non-teaching union members.

September 1987 announced another landmark event: the opening of the in-house optical laboratory. The facility was warmly received by members, who were now able to access speedier delivery of standard frames and have repairs carried out on the spot.

By November 1987, membership was steady at 15,730 (covering 47,173 people). The Eyecare Centre was brimming with business and its arrival had translated to a substantial reduction in the number of claims from external optical providers.

The year had been one of far-reaching change for the health insurance industry, encompassing:

- Increases in public hospital fees
- An increase in the Medicare levy
- Elimination of the subsidy paid by the Commonwealth Government to private hospitals
- Changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits scheme
- Changes to “gap” medical benefits arrangements
- Introduction of a system of patient classification for the payment of private hospital benefits

In March 1988, plastic society membership cards were introduced. The forerunner was a computer-printed card made of cardboard, with members provided a plastic sleeve to protect it. In April, the fund successfully obtained access to the “Friendly Society” chemists’ network, handing benefits to members who presented their membership card. QTUHS also liaised with other health funds to establish arrangements for processing urgent claims while members were interstate.



MEMBERSHIP CARD

Over the previous five years, QTUHS had fielded numerous requests from members to offer types of general insurance cover. For its part, the fund was not only eager to help but obliged to stay alert to new opportunities in the post-Medicare era.

In October 1988, following the repeal of restrictions on health funds engaging in diversified businesses – and a lengthy phase of QTUHS diligence – the management committee declared the society would provide a product underwritten by CIC Insurance. Known as T-PAK, the package included insurance on homes, motor vehicles, boats and travel. The next month, a new travel insurance offering, “Travel Freedom,” was marketed, featuring a health check-up and vaccination service.

In May 1989, QTUHS’s benevolence rose to the fore with the release of its Cancer Expense Plan, aiming to ensure financial security and foster peace-of-mind for members suffering cancer.

By now, the extensive inventory of payments and services to members included:

- Basic hospital benefits
- Private hospital benefits
- Ancillary services benefits
- T-Pak general insurance
- T-Pak travel insurance
- Contributions through payroll deductions
- Direct credit of benefits to Queensland Teachers' Credit Union
- Dental Centre
- Eyecare Centre
- Pharmaceutical discounts
- Interstate claims payments
- 24-hour emergency card
- Travellers' medical service

Still, circulating the message continued to present challenges. In October 1989, after innumerable requests from teaching staff in schools and colleges for more detailed material on the gamut of products and services, marketing manager Noela McNabb embarked on a schedule of regular visits to education campuses. She distributed updated information kits and answered specific queries.

QTUHS also became a sponsor of *Life. Be in it*, the national healthy and active lifestyle campaign notorious for its animated star, the slothful Norm, and his much-mimicked refrain: "Warm the set and cool the tinnies!" The program was extended to school children via the promotion of on-site physical activities.

In November 1989, with total membership having hit 16,756 (50,439 beneficiaries), an ambulance benefit was introduced – just as responsibility for the regulation of private health insurance was removed from the Department of Health.

The Federal Government decided to form the Health Insurance Advisory Council (HIAC). This body reported to the Health Minister on day-to-day affairs impacting the funds, maintained statistical records and managed the re-insurance account. The health department continued to police companies and societies for compliance with National Health Act rules, while the Council was fully-funded by a levy on the health funds. Ripples of consternation sprang up, contending that the HIAC was merely a mechanism to cost-shift regulation from the Government to fund members. This body eventually morphed into the current day PHIAC (Private Health Insurance Administration Council).

The re-insurance account was originally created to split the cost of "long-term seriously ill" patients between private health funds and the government by reconciling both claims and contributions paid. The concept of re-insurance was a key component of the Australian private health insurance system as it supported community rating, premiums based on the product purchased rather than the age or health status of the insured person. But the Federal Government had been gradually winding back its contribution until 1989 when it became practically negligible, collapsing from a peak of \$150 million a year to only \$1 million.

This fact, together with a small but significant change to procedure – all claims for people aged 65 and over were now to be paid directly from the re-insurance account from the first day of hospitalisation – resulted in QTUHS being forced to significantly raise its account contribution. The health society's payment escalated from \$1.75 million in the 1988-1989 financial year to an estimated \$3 million in 1989-1990.

The Government later withdrew all subsidisation of the re-insurance account (today referred to as the risk equalisation fund).

In 1990, QTUHS extended its affiliation with *Life. Be in it.* The society and the campaign united to offer smoking members the chance to partake in the highly-regarded Cool Turkey Quitting Program.



Noela McNabb



Life. Be in it.
promoting healthy lifestyles
and facilitating team activities



Teachers' Union Health proudly supports Life. Be in it! Funworks through supplying Queensland schools with Funworks' activity sessions. The Life. Be in it! Funworks team has community through its activities of children.

also caters for family fun days, functions, or just a social get together for the largest of crowds. Fireman's toss mat.

Funworks is sure to make

1300 367 3863.



Life. Be in it.™

LIFE BE IN IT

Unique insurance packages that protect you from all angles.



T-PAK
Specially designed for Queensland
Teachers' Union Health Society

T-PAK NEWS  OCTOBER 1988

Protecting your Teachers only P INSURANCE SHOPPING™

CIC Insurance 

SERVICE T.U.H.S. MEMBERS AND FAMILY INSURANCE

of insurance policies from CIC Insurance and I can give members a buffer against the highest cost and expect it.

- You have a choice of FINCE E or FAME V cover. Single covers the insured person PLUS dependent children. Family cover insures your spouse as well. Benefits for children are 20% of your insured benefits.
- You are protected 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, irrespective of the world.
- CIC Insurance GUARANTEES TO ACCEPT your cover and doesn't require a medical or even a health questionnaire.
- Special financial INCURABLE REPLACEMENT cover to help maintain your average weekly income in conjunction with any sick leave, long-term, workers compensation or similar payments you receive.
- Payments can be paid to any nominee through SUPERANNUATION.
- To provide you with security in every way, there's a 30-day money back guarantee.

T-PAK



CHAPTER IV

1990-95: How's your health?

HEALTHTRAC was radical for its time. Activated in October 1990, as part of the benefit package, it would stir much conversation among members, staff and the committee. Imported under licence from the United States, its dual goal was to detect health problems and set members on the path of preventative health programs. Members received confidential, personalised health assessments and health education data to better manage their lifestyles.

Healthtrac

HEALTH LETTER

BROUGHT TO YOU IN THE INTEREST OF BETTER HEALTH

DO YOU HAVE A GOOD MEMORY? Or can't you remember?

QUICK MEMORY TEST

Memory Improvement Techniques

High Risk

SUPPORT PROGRAM

Healthtrac

High Risk

SUPPORT PROGRAM

Healthtrac

FREE ONGOING HEALTH ADVICE

Our Health Programs are designed to be ongoing and we regularly provide you with updated health information and educational material on your health priorities. You can be reassured that our participants are making informed decisions about their health.

The Questionnaire is the key

Periodically, we send you a Personal and Confidential Health Assessment Questionnaire (see attached). This is the most important part of the program for you.

When you do receive your questionnaire, please complete and return it so we can keep you with an ongoing guide in your program as well as accommodations to your priority areas of improvement.

So, please fill in each and every questionnaire as accurately as possible and send it back to us quickly so for we can keep you updated on your health.

- Healthtrac is a premier program in reducing medical costs for our subscribers.
- Healthtrac also increases your vitality and efficiency.
- It is very important for your own health to **Stay On Healthtrac**.

Healthtrac

THE COMPLETE WORK AND HOME PROGRAM TO BEST HEALTH

800PHONE 674 5222/276 OR FREE CALL 180 960 1217

5

easy steps to best health

Healthtrac

HEALTHTRAC

Former director Graham Moloney laughs at the memory of the “repeated Healthtrac recommendation of additional fibre.” He says: “It was subject to Kevin Brasch’s humorous comment at a number of board meetings.”

The introduction of Babytrac followed: again a confidential service designed to assist expecting mothers achieve the healthiest pregnancy. Mums-to-be received a free health evaluation, free education and information, and support from a nurse/midwife and maternal health educator.

Meantime, the reinsurance account continued to hover like a black cloud. The cost to QTUHS was anticipated to reach \$4.8 million over the next two years following the withdrawal of the Commonwealth Government subsidy.

QTUHS refused to have its enthusiasm dulled. In February 1991, the “Stress Management Centre” opened in Alandale House, 434 St Pauls Terrace. Services included confidential counselling, therapy and referral for all members and their dependants. By September, a whopping 12,000 members had registered for Healthtrac.



BABYTRAC



ALANDALE HOUSE



STRESS MANAGEMENT CENTRE

The society pressed on and in February 1992 acquired the Professional and Technical Officers' Health Society. It would be operated as an open fund, under the banner Healthguard.

In November 1993, with Jack Ross's son Noel the new chairman, QTUHS came to an agreement with John Flynn Hospital at Tugun on the Gold Coast, covering patient accommodation and theatre fees for members.



Noel Ross

Indeed, Queensland's decentralised nature had always demanded a wide arc of responsiveness from the fund: teachers inhabit every corner of the state. Late in 1993, Townsville members were advised of preferred provider arrangements for dental and eye care services in their area – the first trial of preferred providers for regional members. As well, the Stress Management Centre began to refer members to counsellors

in country districts to provide support and guidance for non-metropolitan members.

In January 1994, QTUHS became a founding member of the Australian Health Service Alliance (AHSA). In October, the Federal Government required health funds to negotiate full-scale agreements with private hospitals and specialist providers. These contracts would form the basis of the "Total Care" product. Funds were permitted to insure for the medical gap – the difference between the government schedule fee and the Medicare refund for professional services rendered to a hospital inpatient. Through its involvement with the AHSA, the society struck Total Care agreements with the following hospitals:

- Sunnybank Private Hospital, Brisbane
- Belmont Private Hospital, Brisbane
- St Andrew's Hospital, Ipswich
- John Flynn Hospital, Tugun
- Mater Hospital, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay and Townsville
- Calvary Hospital, Cairns

Given positive feedback from Townsville members, preferred provider arrangements were locked in with an eye care centre in Rockhampton. A dental service was also secured for the city, the civic hub of central Queensland. However, the green light was given only after the society took the stonewalling Australian Dental Association to the Trade Practices Commission.





Many of today's teachers bear a profound burden. The core business of interacting with children is hamstrung by policy, paper-work and the threat of culpability. Whether doling out discipline, or comfort, a hands-off approach is rigidly enforced. Paradoxically, student families are ceding more and more responsibility to the classroom. Their expectation is that teachers, for all the bureaucratic constriction they face, will at the same time fulfil the role of proxy parent.

As early as October 1994, QTUHS spotted the mounting pressures and responded. "Stresstrac" was pioneered – a product designed to track and remediate teacher stress. Members were asked to fill out a simple questionnaire, then a computer program digested the information, measured it against a database and printed an eight-page profile and graph. Members were henceforth positioned to assess how stress was affecting their lives, and seek further help if required.

In November 1994, Healthtrac, over which the society held Australian and South-East Asian rights, was marketed to other health funds and corporate clients. It began to harvest a small stream of income for QTUHS. Meanwhile, the enduring affiliation with *Life. Be in it.* drew QTUHS sponsorship for the campaign's Running on Rainbows Art program, an art curriculum for schools and universities. The principal text book, published by Brisbane artist Wendy Allen, was snaffled up by teachers. More than 500 schools placed orders.

In August 1995, a 24-hour "Stressline" telephone service was initiated – the first of its kind in the Australian private health insurance industry – operated by healthcare organisation McKesson, to convey confidential advice to members throughout Queensland. The reaction was overwhelming: hundreds of callers hopped on the line in the first six months. Quality control was paramount. Where appropriate, phone counselors set in train referrals to psychologists and social workers for diagnostic evaluation and treatment.

Two years later, a frazzled QTUHS management could have done with just such a service themselves...



STRESSTRAC



CHAPTER V

High-wire act: PHIAC intervention No 1



THERE'S nothing like the change of season in Brisbane. The air is mild and swims with botanical fragrance. But in 1997, autumn's pleasures – while always brief – would rapidly descend into the darkest of winters at QTUHS.

A confluence of factors, including spiralling re-insurance costs, stagnating membership, unusually high claims and inadequate reporting from management to the board, had crimped the fund's performance. Money was desperately tight. And the federal regulator, the Private Health Insurance Administration Council (PHIAC), began to ask questions.

An independent statutory authority, PHIAC raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the fund's mandatory financial reporting and returns. Following further investigations, PHIAC uncovered that asset register records were shambolic – in one instance, the bank reconciliation did not balance by tens of thousands of dollars.

The *National Health Act* required private health insurers to maintain minimum reserves: the greater of either \$1 million or two months' contribution income. By late April 1997, TUH was teetering, reserves having dropped to below 1.5 weeks.

After seeking advice from PHIAC, then Federal Health Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge, granted the society a two-week exemption from the minimum reserves requirements.

In essence, at least \$1 million needed to be raised and many ideas were discussed, some utterly fanciful (one of the executive team even offered to contribute a substantial sum of their own cash!). Land and buildings were re-valued with a view to a possible sell-down of assets. Another tack considered was the sale of management rights in the society's business units, such as the Eyecare Centre, to third parties.

In fact, a sell-off of shares in the Eyecare Centre was recommended by Judy Holland, the CEO who was appointed to

succeed John Iwanicki in 1997. The board eventually accepted the proposal which raised some of the money needed by the health society. But undisclosed to the board, Judy and her husband, among others, were beneficiaries of a private business entity that was selected to invest in the facility. Judy maintained that she had invested her and her husband's money to save the fund; however the Australian Securities and Investment Commission later pressed charges against the former CEO, and she was convicted on one charge under the *Friendly Society (Queensland) Code* and one charge under the *Corporations Act*.

Clearly the board was in need of another strategy and it kept looking for solutions.

Most energy swirled around the concept of merging QTUHS with the NSW Teachers' Federation Health Society (NSWHS). Amalgamation appeared to be PHIAC's preferred course of action. After all, PHIAC had advised that the approval of the two-week hiatus, and any further exemptions, were contingent on satisfactory reporting of developments towards a QTUHS-NSWHS merger.

The board gave in-principle support to the proposal, sought urgent meetings with NSWHS counterparts – who were receptive – and negotiated to extend its reserves deadline. But there were differences that made a merger difficult. NSWHS was an unincorporated body, while QTUHS remained, at the time, a friendly society. Each state had conflicting approaches to service delivery and governance, and the backdrop of traditional rivalry (from the sporting field to different summer time zones) fed QTUHS's unease.

Rugby league stalwart Kevin Brasch may have been demonstrating his maroon colours, but he was steadfastly opposed to a health fund "spawned, nurtured and fought for by the Queensland Teachers' Union," marching to a stranger's tune.

“Our membership principles were at complete odds,” he explains.

“Our members could become board members, had access to annual reports and financial statements and attended AGMs, while the NSWHS had stronger connections to the NSW union council. The NSWHS also had not cultivated the same harmonious relationship with the State’s independent teacher union as had occurred north of the border, where the independent union had representation on the QTUHS board.”

Kevin sums up: “It didn’t seem right to lose our identity in Queensland. So we developed two strategies – continue the negotiations with NSW Teachers, as directed... and determinedly looked for an escape route.”

Kevin remembers the next few weeks as a series of highs and lows, “many times, in the same day.” Then the notion of selling Healthguard, the open fund acquired by the society in 1992, gained traction. And following that, a slice of serendipity.

“Out of the blue, HBF (Western Australia’s largest health insurer) – who had no idea we wanted to sell an open fund – phoned our organisation, as they had other organisations, to advise us they were interested in purchasing an open health fund,” Kevin says.

“But it wasn’t that easy. A series of nail-biting negotiations led by QTUHS’ commercial and marketing manager took place over the next few weeks. Nothing less than a signed, iron-clad agreement for \$1 million would satisfy the minister’s office. And we were so short of time.”

Indeed, the Australian Government Solicitor (on behalf of PHIAC) had already begun action against QTUHS in the

Federal Court. A preliminary directions hearing was scheduled for 4 July, but then adjourned for 10 days. The court’s most likely first step would be to appoint a fiduciary supervisor – known as a judicial manager – who under section 82Z of the National Health Act would be open to three basic courses of action:

- Transfer the business, or part of the business, to another company (the merger option)
- After a period of judicial management, allow the fund to carry on its business
- Wind up the Queensland Teachers’ Union Health Society

Another option was for QTUHS to seek a judicial manager of its own choosing rather than accept PHIAC’s nomination. “Or as Steve Knudsen [Chairman of QTUHS at the time] put it, ‘select death by lethal injection rather than death by electrocution,’” Kevin says.

“During a board meeting around this time, detailed discussions were held in relation to our options. Some very memorable speeches were made that night, and while there might have been varied opinions at the start of the debate on how we should proceed, the final stand was exposed by Steve and I quote: ‘I don’t want to give it to someone. I want them to steal it from me!’”

However, siege mentalities are rarely helpful, and the board began to fear that its future would be determined by a report based on assumptions that it could not test, and conclusions that it did not have access to.





Then suddenly, five days later... the miracle. QTUHS relinquished control of Healthguard to HBF WA, for a consideration of \$962,835. "After [we] had almost despaired of success," Kevin Brasch says, "the contract with Healthguard was signed. We had our million dollars!"

A courtroom battle averted, Dr Wooldridge and QTUHS signed a minute of agreement on 29 July exempting the society from minimum statutory reserves for three months. The accord was conditional on QTUHS achieving the baseline two calendar months of reserves by 30 June 1998. Says Kevin: "The board and management had been given a chance. We were determined that the window of opportunity for which we had been fighting would not close on us. It was a great day of victory against almost insurmountable odds."

A thorough, scrupulous business plan was drawn up to meet the target, along with parallel strategies to improve short-term results. By the following June, the society's reserves had reached 2.72 calendar months. "As far as I know, there has never been another group who has fought off a takeover or merger [on terms proposed or directed by PHIAC] in the history of private health insurance," Kevin ponders. The terms directed by PHIAC were tough, and many thought QTUHS could not meet them. Says Kevin, "We proved we could."



After the horrors endured, 1997's Christmas-New Year festive break couldn't come soon enough. But the months of mayhem had also obscured several quiet gains by the unswerving engine-room staff of QTUHS.

More positive feedback flowed from members accessing the Rockhampton and Townsville optical and dental preferred providers. Members also embraced a new dental preferred provider in Toowoomba. QTUHS re-negotiated the pact with Healthtrac Inc, USA. The new deal conferred to the fund marketing and distribution rights for Healthtrac in Australia, Asia and parts of Africa for 20 years. Healthtrac remained a small source of society income.

QTUHS became a beneficiary of negotiations between the Australian Health Service Alliance and 296 private hospitals Australia-wide; 44 of them in Queensland. A new health insurance industry computer software system "WHICS" was installed, leading to faster output and furnishing the board and management with more detailed statistical data to enhance planning.

By May 1998, "Bodyfix" physiotherapy had also opened – consulting from the society's Alandale House premises on St Pauls Terrace. Later that year, Graham Lean retired from the board. An original QTUHS director, Graham was the organisation's second chairman, serving in the role for 12 years.



ALANDALE HOUSE



CHAPTER VI

**1999-2002:
Stepping up**



THE celebrated re-branding of Queensland Teachers' Union Health Society was no cosmetic makeover. In converting to Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund Limited, a company limited by guarantee, directors were accorded more flexibility when determining investments. Management was loosened from complex accounting procedures and members meeting the qualifying criteria were still eligible to nominate for the board. Members maintained their voting rights at the annual general meeting.

That said, the new trading name, Teachers' Union Health, resounded among staff, members and in the market-place. It was corporately zippy and direct, and after the strains of two years earlier, appeared to inspire an air of rejuvenation. The company and accompanying logo were launched at fund headquarters on 24 June, 1999.



Announcing re new TUH

Members were immediately sent an encoded card that enabled electronic, point-of-service claiming from participating providers via HICAPS. However, TUH was determined not to forsake country members. A “remote travel and accommodation” benefit was introduced to assist members in the regions obtain medical services more than 100km from home. The concept was greeted rapturously. And *Choice* magazine also had something to say about TUH’s first year – issuing an award as the health fund offering the “best buy” level of top hospital cover.

After so much buffeting by various government instrumentalities, the industry had been cut a break in January 1999 with the introduction of a new private health insurance rebate. The Federal Government was now paying 30 percent of TUH members’ private health insurance premiums. The rebate was not means-tested, covered payments for all hospital and ancillary policies and arrested the membership decline TUH had battled since 1993.

By the end of the year, the Government had introduced Lifetime Health Cover. Consumers older than 30, who did not have private health insurance, were set a deadline of 15 July 2000, to either buy health insurance or be subject to a 2 percent premium loading for each year beyond the age of 30 that they delayed their purchase. Although very much a carrot and stick approach, the combination of lifetime loading and the rebate would eventually catalyse renewed membership growth for TUH.

Also in 1999, the fund ushered in loyalty bonuses. Ancillary benefit limits were expanded as a reward for length of membership. The base limits increased by 5 percent after two years, 10 percent for four years and 20 percent after six years.

In 2000, the fund again secured *Choice’s* gong for best buy level of top hospital cover. The recently developed website was updated; among the improvements, members were afforded on-line access to health fund forms. And the fund joined the Australian Health Insurance Association (now Private Healthcare Australia), an industry body representing 23 funds covering 95 percent of the nation’s private health insurance consumers.

In May, TUH, in conjunction with Union Shopper Inc, successfully launched a subsidiary brand known as Union Shopper Health (USH). USH was designed to serve the health demands of a distinct cohort: members of the Australian Services Union

(ASU), the Queensland Public Sector Union (QPSU) and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). Union Shopper Health members were offered the same benefits and entitlements as TUH members. After 12 months of operation, USH membership stood at more than 500.

The fund's extensive marketing campaigns promoting government initiatives and incentives (Lifetime Health Cover, the 30 percent rebate and the Medicare levy surcharge) boosted the upturn in membership.

A Healthy Lifestyle Bonus was developed to reward members intent on healthy lifestyle choices. Members could put the benefit towards the cost of a range of pursuits including gym membership, health and education courses, sporting equipment, massage and weight management and quit smoking programs. Then, in November 2000, TUH opened a health centre – "Hooked on Health" – in the Brisbane bayside suburb of Cleveland, offering dental, optical and allied health services.

The fund's intuitiveness – its capacity to spot a gap in the market and plug it – was now a specialty. Following the deregulation of Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) by the Federal Government, TUH, in concert with another Brisbane-based company developed a health insurance product aimed singularly at the needs of international students in Australia.

Across the year 2000, more than 7,000 members participated in Healthtrac programs. Two rival health funds and an employer group had also adopted the program for their members. As the Healthtrac licensee in Australia, TUH realised revenue from the arrangements. The next year, "Ultimate Choice" and "Easy Choice" packages were introduced. More than 70 percent of existing members rushed forward to subscribe to one option or the other:

UNION SHOPPER



NEW PRODUCTS



HOOKED ON HEALTH



- Ultimate Choice offered top-end health cover with high-level hospital and extras benefits. Extras limits were increased with each year of membership and bonuses were attainable for maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- With Easy Choice, members had the option of transferring to a comprehensive yet economically-priced package, providing many, value-for-money benefits

In November 2002, TUH signed a partnership with Results Physiotherapy which included the services of an acupuncturist and podiatrist. Consultations occurred at both Cleveland and Fortitude Valley. And TUH's stocks were looking healthy. Membership had climbed to more than 17,000, staff numbers had reached 120, turnover eclipsed \$45 million, and land and building assets were valued at \$8 million-plus.

So what happened next came as a thunderous jolt.



CHAPTER VII

PHIAC intervention No 2 (and the union fight-back)



IN EARLY 2003, the Private Health Insurance Administration Council again delved into the commercial affairs of TUH. This time, the ramifications of the probe were felt for years to come.

It had originated in February, with PHIAC appointing a Brisbane accountant from Price Waterhouse Coopers, to “inspect” the fund after the alleged discovery of a “number of financial and administrative irregularities.” According to the inspector’s report, compiled in May, “significant issues in the organisation’s corporate governance practices” were identified. Several breaches of the *National Health Act* had allegedly occurred, resulting in “the loss of a significant proportion of the fund’s reserves.” However, TUH directors considered that many of the assertions were untested and the board was not granted an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

TUH’s substantial investment in Healthtrac was particularly scrutinised. The report found the TUH board was unable to produce key documentation about the deal with US Healthtrac, or provide adequate account records of funds that had been advanced.

Board Chairman Noel Ross rejected those findings. He indicated that Healthtrac had earned returns and the investment had only been chosen after seeking appropriate advice from legal and financial experts. Noel added that TUH’s solvency was “very sound.” The Chief Executive Officer of PHIAC responded to the inspector’s report by stating in June that TUH was in a “strong financial position.”

Shortly afterwards, however, PHIAC announced the appointment of an administrator to the fund.

The inspection report did not recommend that PHIAC place the organisation into administration. The appointment of an administrator has traditionally occurred where a health fund is failing financially, but this was not the case with TUH.

“TUH... was in a very sound financial position and had endured considerable growth over the previous two years,” Kevin Brasch states.

“The fund had reserves in excess of the actuarially-recommended level. It had recently reviewed its tables, the contribution rates were very competitive and TUH retained its ‘value for money’ reputation recognised by *Choice* magazine. The long tradition of providing direct services to members was being maintained and improved. Thus, the fundamentals of TUH, at the time of the appointment of the administrator, were extremely strong.”

The company had spent 30 years ripening into one of the most spectacularly inventive health funds in the country. But its heart and every tributary had always belonged to teachers. Now this quintessence was at risk, not just at the hand of an external administrator but through an additional raft of conditions imposed by PHIAC.

In order to maintain its health fund registration under the Act, TUH had to submit to an independent review of risk management, accept the appointment of an auditor, and show evidence of compliance with the fund’s own investment guidelines. “PHIAC is concerned that there are aspects of TUH’s affairs which require urgent attention and management,” the regulator said in a media release at the time.



PHIAC, the statement continued, had interceded as a “precautionary step” to “ensure the fund’s long-term viability.”

Yet the pivotal blow was PHIAC’s proposed decree that ongoing registration be contingent on TUH changing its constitution to alter the composition of the board. At least 50 percent of the board of directors were to be “independent,” or not members or employees of the QTU or Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU, formerly QATIS).

Furthermore, the board chairman was also to be an independent, and hold a casting vote. “Effectively members of the QTU and QIEU would no longer have control of their fund,” Kevin Brasch recounts. While acknowledging the logic of injecting independent directors, the unions were not prepared to be whittled down to a minor partner in any power-sharing arrangement.



The QTU and QIEU devised a war plan and resolved to fight the PHIAC proposals. Kevin recalls, “QTU and QIEU began a process of ensuring members were mobilised to provide public support for their fund.”

The unions successfully applied to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a stay of the condition relating to the board make-up, pending a review. This was vital as far as the fund was concerned as it prevented PHIAC from taking immediate control and dismissing the incumbent directors. And it was only possible due to both union memberships agreeing to help finance the appeal and legal bills of the directors. Union resources were also marshalled to campaign against what TUH characterised as PHIAC’s “attack” on the fund.

Events escalated at the TUH annual general meeting held on Tuesday, 25 November 2003. The PHIAC appointed administrator attended the meeting and so did one hundred and fifty TUH members, many of whom spoke passionately against the proposed changes.

The unions had done their homework: apart from their vocal physical presence, 2,000 proxies – a monstrous response – had been sent in to the meeting via QTU general secretary, John Battams.

“There was such a strong feeling at the (first) meeting,” John Battams recalls, “that PHIAC’s actions in appointing an administrator of the fund was unwarranted and inappropriate. A clear message was sent to the regulator that members wanted control of the fund to remain in the hands of teachers.”

The meeting voted to adjourn the AGM until February, where a series of resolutions by the members would be considered.

Present TUH director Samantha Pidgeon, a department head at Runcorn State High School, recounts her fiery baptism on corporate governance. “The stoush with PHIAC began not long after I joined the board,” she says. “Those were difficult and stressful times... I remember meeting long into the night, led by fearless campaigners John Battams and (co-director and QIEU general secretary) Terry Burke, as we worked to ensure that TUH remained a fund for teachers, run by teachers.”

“Kevin Brasch commented at the time that when you’re in a fight, campaigners like John and Terry are exactly who you want on your side. There’s no doubt that John and Terry were instrumental to the strategy put in place. And they gave us the courage to fight.”

At the annual general meeting held in February, TUH members overwhelmingly passed motions opposing the PHIAC conditions and the appointment of an administrator.

a. That the members at this Annual General Meeting reject the conditions imposed on TUH by PHIAC on June 4, 2003, in particular those conditions... which specify that:

- the Constitution must be amended to require that at least 50 percent of the Board be Independent Directors (defined in substance as not being a member or employee of QTU or QIEU or any other approved union in the fund);
- the Chair of the Board must be an Independent Director, and
- the Independent Director Chair of the Board have a casting vote on the Board;

conditions would result in TUH members being disenfranchised from applying for or holding the majority positions on the Board that manages and controls their fund and this is not in the interest of the Fund members.

For: 2612

Against: 18

b. That the members at this Annual General Meeting desire that PHIAC immediately withdraws its imposed conditions on the Fund and end the appointment of an Administrator to TUH and return control of TUH to the democratically elected TUH Board.

For: 2606

Against: 23

The two unions re-iterated that if PHIAC refused to heed the view of TUH members, the appeal against the regulator's orders would proceed in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The decision to jointly fund the action received tremendous support from each rank-and-file body. Both the QTU and QIEU maintained they would do whatever it took to force the regulator to back off.

The AAT appeal kicked off on 16 August, 2004. Samantha Pidgeon says her then fellow director and now QTU general secretary, Graham Moloney, deserves special mention for his prodigious research and preparation in the lead-up. She says: "His corporate knowledge and meticulous understanding and recall was fundamental to the case put forward by the unions."



CITY HALL MEETING



Samantha Pidgeon

The unions called evidence from corporate governance boffins including Henry Bosch AO, the former chairman of the National Companies and Securities Commission. These witnesses outlined their satisfaction with the structure of the board and its decisions, while signalling that some processes could be improved. Mr Bosch argued that the board should be strengthened by one or two independent directors, a position supported by the unions.

For the unions, it was always a matter of principle. That is, the right of organisations established by members to elect, from their ranks, their own board of directors and maintain control over their destiny. And unexpectedly, on the morning of 23 August – after one week of hearings – the parties found common ground on terms acceptable to TUH and reached an in-principle settlement on 25 August. The tribunal case was adjourned.

The proposed settlement was considered at an extraordinary TUH general meeting, endorsed by the two union executives, then accepted by the fund. The outcome was a new TUH board to be comprised as follows: chairperson (independent director), three other independent directors, the QTU general secretary, three more QTU directors and two QIEU directors. Thus, a clear majority of union directors was retained and the incoming board resumed control on 18 October. While victory was sweet for TUH members and, of course, the QTU and QIEU, regrettably the fund had been plunged into administration for 16½ months.

“I still look back in wonder,” Samantha Pidgeon says, “at the amazing support of TUH members from both unions who decided to dig in and attend large extraordinary meetings of the company and send their proxies.”

“Never has a group or company been so underestimated. It is fitting that the union began the fund and the union was there to ensure its survival and to protect it in its darkest hour.”



CHAPTER VIII

**2004-2012:
Renaissance**

AFTER the turbulence of roughly two years, TUH's procurement of one of the state's eminent company directors as its first independent chair was almost providential. "As I transitioned into life as a professional company director," Dawson Petie reflects, "it was probably meant to be that I ended up working with others to restore the damage caused to TUH."



Dawson Petie

In the mid-1990s, Dawson had in fact contemplated applying for the advertised position of TUH CEO. Instead, he went on to enjoy the rest of his full-time working life (1998-2001) as General Manager Client Services at the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC), a major Australian institutional investor responsible for more than \$70 billion in funds under management.

Aside from his vast corporate experience, he had held leadership positions in the Finance Sector Union and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) – where he was Queensland General Secretary from 1991-95. He had closely followed the evolution of the Queensland Teachers' Credit Union (into one of Australia's first mutual banks, QT Mutual Bank), TUH, and Union Shopper. "Three extraordinarily successful businesses," he says today, "founded and nurtured by the teacher unions in Queensland."

He knows other veteran directors mulled over the prospect of sitting as TUH's inaugural independent chair, and walked away. "But I had participated in or observed the

history-changing (businesses) of the union and I was strongly committed to the long-term success of these achievements," Dawson says. "TUH had a wonderful record of success over most of the previous 30 years and there was no reason why poor management and some issues with the industry regulator should destroy the future for this great company."

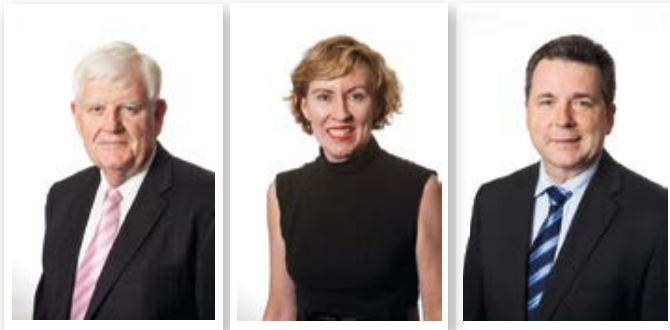
Yet in the wake of PHIAAC's approval of Dawson's nomination as chair, there were sensitivities to be navigated. Samantha Pidgeon recalls: "The change to the board composition was challenging as it required directors to consider their position and for some to step down to make way for independent directors."

"I clearly remember the day that we were meeting to decide who would not be contesting the director elections. It was difficult because it was always people's preference to 'go out' on their own terms. But I retain a great regard for those who decided to fall on their swords."

In harness with the unions, Dawson was integrally involved in recruiting his three co-independents, and this, too, was no easy task. A leading executive placement agency, MDN Consulting, was hired to help net prime candidates but several inquiries fell understandably flat given TUH's recent history. The professionalism of the selection procedure – not to mention Dawson's powers of persuasion – eventually won out.

Darcy Edwards (an accountant and former Queensland Treasury public servant and QIC executive), lawyer Teresa Hamilton and barrister John Merrell took to the board with vim. Dawson points out: "They have proven their value to the company by continuing to be re-elected to the board. It is also a credit to the selection process that the high calibre of the directors appointed aided the board succession process..."

Darcy Edwards being appointed my successor as chairman when I retired from the role in 2009.”



Darcy Edwards

Teresa Hamilton

John Merrell

However, Darcy now confesses that Dawson's approach about a directorship triggered a few jitters. “When I expressed some interest, he then gave me more details (about TUH) and the recent intervention by PHIAC,” Darcy says. “This information damped my enthusiasm somewhat but I agreed to review some documents he had and to have a further discussion with him”.

“As I was familiar with director liability issues, the documentation gave me considerable concern initially. After further review and discussion, I came to the conclusion that, at the time, the organisation was financially sound... but there were a number of what can be best described as administrative policies and procedures which needed to be implemented or enhanced”.

“Because of this and my belief that the agreed revised board structure was sound, with a mixture of independent members with a range of skills, and teacher [union] representatives, plus an independent chair, I agreed to be nominated for the position of director.”

At the TUH annual general meeting of November 2004, the new board was elected in a charged environment. “The atmosphere could best be described as very strained or tense,” Darcy recalls. “Still, given the turmoil which had so recently occurred and the level of feeling that was still present, we new independents were politely received and appointed without any fuss.”



With the new board, the foundations were cemented. But the rebuilding task would require stamina, and immense skill and effort. TUH was still under the eye of PHIAC, and would be until the asserted business-related chinks were smoothed out. Members had displayed remarkable loyalty during the period of administration – there was no panic-driven “run” on the fund – but the re-configured board was intent on shoring up that confidence, even lifting it, if it could.

To this end, Dawson says the other crucial position that needed filling was that of company secretary. He was delighted with the choice of John Williamson, a senior executive who had a wealth of industry experience.

“John had retired from executive life but was now providing consulting and contract company secretarial support,” Dawson says. “He was ideal and quickly built a good rapport with the board and with the regulator, methodically working away at the issues identified for attention.

“It was a significant day when TUH was advised that it was free of special oversight by the regulator as a result of this extensive program of work. After completing his work at TUH, John's expertise led to his appointment as general manager (corporate governance) at Tarong Energy, a major Queensland corporation. He was also subsequently recognised for his

contribution to good governance by the professional body for company secretaries, CSA.”

Dawson explains that over time, the fusion of independent directors and “member” directors worked. “It was a good formula for the board and we learnt a lot from each other,” he says. “The independent directors became very aware of the rich history of achievement of TUH and in implementing change, we were sensitive to not making change for change’s sake.”

“We all embraced the ethos of quality-of-service rather than the low cost/low quality model adopted by some of TUH’s competitor health funds. TUH is fortunate that the quality of the member directors is so high. Typically, they are senior union leaders who are experienced administrators and education professionals. They were enthusiastic about their roles and about their professional development as directors.”

Two of those union heads, former QTU secretary (now Queensland Council of Unions president) John Battams and the QIEU’s Terry Burke, remain on the board – the latter as deputy chairman. Dawson says he could not have instigated TUH’s renewal, let alone have progressed apace, without their outstanding support. “They recognised that change was required and fully backed all initiatives,” Dawson says. “Both

have served as deputy chairman, John initially and then Terry, and they were a great source of advice and support to me during my five years as chairman.”

Dawson says he seized the opportunity to become chairman because he understood the genesis of TUH, and the fund’s altruistic goals. He favoured not-for-profit models and was aware of TUH’s “ethos of high quality service to members.”



John Battams

“These foundations and beliefs were all reinforced by my subsequent exposure to the company,” he muses. “It was obvious why our members had stuck with us during difficult times. Long-serving directors such as Kevin Brasch embraced and protected the quality of services developed by TUH over its history, including the excellent dental and eye care centres”.

“No one was more pleased than Kevin when we could shift the emphasis away from governance, governance, governance and get back to growing membership and further developing service to members.”

Dawson adds that the proficiency of TUH’s staff – who would increase in number to 135 by 2011 – was equally significant. “Services could not have been consistently delivered without the commitment of TUH staff,” he says. “The company has been successful in retaining many long-term staff, who (continue to) provide the high level of service that TUH members appreciate”.

“But,” he cautions, “for any organisation to be sustainable, it must continue to change and adapt to a shifting business environment.”



Dawson stood down as chair in June 2009, having steered TUH onward and upward, and perhaps just as importantly, left in his footprints a cultural awakening.

“The TUH board operates in a very professional, friendly and courteous way... but in a deliberate manner where there is



Terry Burke

complete solidarity,” reveals John Merrell. “While the functioning of the board is of course a reflection of the excellent people that are on it, this board has developed that way, through, in my view, the influence of Dawson from when he became chair.”

Samantha Pidgeon agrees: “Not to say our meetings are not collegial and friendly now, but there’s more of an air of professionalism around our dealings. And perhaps an absolute focus on not only doing right but being seen to be doing right, by our members and our regulator”.

“In my mind, it can be described as a determinedness to ensure that members who stood by us during those times will never regret doing so.”

Samantha says Dawson’s prowess in the field of corporate governance, blended with his grasp of the union movement, engendered peerless insight. “He understood where we’d come from, what we’d been through, and knew what had to be done,” she says. “He just seemed to get us”.

“He believed in a board of ‘equals’ and set a tone that didn’t value the independent directors over the union directors. He created a team when things could so easily have been coloured with an ‘us and them’ aura. Dawson stepped up to help this great organisation with respect, calm and goodwill.”

Yet like all successful leaders, Dawson – when minded with a particular vision – would mercilessly drag his troops with him.

In early 2005, the sub-committees were to be re-formed, and it went without saying that Darcy Edwards, as the qualified accountant on the board, was picked by Dawson as the chair of the audit committee. Samantha, however, had strongly indicated her preference to remain on the Membership and Marketing Committee. “I knew this wasn’t going to occur,” she

says, “when I received a phone call from Dawson one morning that began with, ‘Sam, mate, I need to ask you a favour...’ I was thereby a member of the Audit and Risk Management Committee!”

John Merrell’s experience was almost identical. “I have a re-collection of visiting Dawson and suggesting the sub-committee that I would like to be on,” he says. “I can remember Dawson very patiently listened to what I had to say. But then he looked at me in the way a kindly uncle looks at an eager nephew and pointed me, gently but deliberately, in the direction that he thought I should go. Namely, to be chair of the Human Resources sub-committee, a sub-committee that Dawson knew needed to be established.”

John and the other directors had earlier received a taste of Dawson’s clarity, direction and alacrity in the form a pre-Christmas email. In the note, dated 22 December 2004, Dawson sent best wishes to the directors and their families for the festive season, then jumped into matters he wished them to contemplate over the Christmas break.

He invited them to devise the sub-committees to be formed, and nominate those on which they desired to be a member (not that, as outlined, their inclinations necessarily had much bearing). Funnily enough, later in the same email he produced his own list of sub-committees – which were the ones ultimately established!

Dawson had also attached a draft board governance charter that he had penned himself. “More pointedly,” John says, “he set out in the email that he would be back at work on 10 January 2005. And that he would be looking forward to our responses as to which board sub-committees should be established, which sub-committee we would prefer to be on, and our comments on the draft board governance charter. Talk about cracking the whip!”

Since handing over to Darcy, Dawson has barely slowed, continuing to serve as a director on five boards, including the colossal Queensland Rail, and UnitingCare Queensland.

"Dawson was the right person at the right time for TUH," John Merrell says. "The legacy of his experience, expertise and goodwill will benefit TUH long into the future."



In May 2005, TUH's administrator-appointed CEO John Beattie decided to return to his family in Perth. His successor was Rob Seljak.

The recruitment process, again involving MDN Consulting, had been exhaustive. "Notwithstanding the past difficulties for the company, the applicants were impressed with the progress that was being made and with the quality of the board," Dawson Petie remembers. "They were enthusiastic about the future and wanted to work with the board to develop and grow the company."



Rob Seljak

That Canadian-born Rob rose above the pack comes as no surprise. He had held various senior executive positions over 15 years, including at WorkCover NSW (general manager, insurance) and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (general manager). Both jobs demanded a high degree of management expertise, fastidious ethical standards and the ability to connect with others clearly and empathically.

"Rob Seljak has been an important factor in the successful move out of the administration and PHIAC conditions," Samantha Pidgeon says.

"He got his head around TUH and the health insurance industry rapidly and has built around him a team of fantastic senior executives who continue to take the company forward. [That group today encompasses company secretary Sarah Morris and executive managers, Cathy McGuane (Member Services) and Greg Rheinberger (Health Care and Insurance Services)].

"Rob is highly regarded beyond TUH and I'm proud when I attend industry events or professional development to hear people say how great he is and how lucky we are to have him".

"He does not set himself apart from staff and this can be seen in his interactions with them. I've run alongside Rob in the Bridge to Brisbane (fun run), and seen him in various formal and informal settings. People believe in his leadership and want to do the right thing. He inspires people in the organisation to do their best."

Such high-spirited sentiment should not mask the enormous backroom challenges Rob has conquered in moving the fund to its position of relative comfort today. Brick-by-brick, he assessed the organisation and repaired, strengthened or replaced its broken parts. He fortified it with the glue of self-belief and inclusion. His was both a top-down and bottom-up approach.

"When I started as Chief Executive Officer, the organisation and the board were estranged to a degree, following more than 16 months where the fund's operation was overseen by an administrator rather than the board," Rob says. "The newly-established board and TUH needed to get to know each other again".

"I immediately involved the board in all of the key issues facing TUH, through regular meetings with the chairman, the chairs of committees and board directors. I introduced a consultative and participative leadership style with staff

and arranged numerous meetings with teams, departments and divisional staff to reinforce our strategic direction and objectives”.

“I listened to feedback and input on all the issues that were unresolved and addressed the key barriers to improved staff morale and performance. The chairman and I took the unprecedented step of attending staff meetings instituted by both of us to discuss the future directions of TUH and answer any concerns of staff in any aspect of the organisation.”

Rob says Dawson Petie had identified four major areas for his urgent attention: strategic planning, structure, cultural change and corporate governance.

Strategic Planning

After an initial stocktake of TUH's performance was undertaken in June 2005, a planning session in November resulted in a Strategic Plan aligning key targets to the board's priorities. The plan has been a cornerstone of the organisation's progress in the ensuing seven years, with annual reviews taking into account new obstacles and the changing private health insurance environment. A critical issue facing TUH was its stagnant membership growth over the years of administration. At the premier strategy meeting, John Battams gave everyone a dose of salts (including Rob, who had been in the job for only 2 months) with his pronouncement: “If you are a membership organisation, and your membership is not growing, you're dead!”

The board duly elevated the bolstering of membership as a priority. “The only way we were going to grow is if people felt proud of TUH,” Rob recalls, “including our members, stakeholder unions and our staff, a pride that had been eroded due to the difficulties the health fund had experienced over the previous couple of years.”

“The board set numerous strategic targets and these were translated into organisation targets for membership growth, regional growth, young membership growth and union membership growth. Happily, all targets were achieved in 2010-11 and continue to be tracked.”

TUH Structure

Rob consulted the board, staff and the executive on developing and implementing an improved organisational structure for TUH to align it with the Strategic Plan. The decision was taken to install a new executive team – split into defined areas of responsibility. “One of the challenges TUH faced,” Rob says, “is that although it tried to provide a lot of different services to the members in the past, this came at a cost. The organisation, I felt, took its eyes off the ball in terms of its key service, private health insurance. One of my early objectives was to de-clutter the business and build a strong health insurance fund that would become a model rather than a *target* for government regulators.”

Cultural Change

Rob reveals that when he joined TUH, a major human resources report – from an external consulting firm – landed on his desk. The document made for ugly reading: staff morale was poor, the executive was not trusted and management style was deemed to be autocratic. “The board was so concerned, it established its own HR Committee to oversee positive change in staff engagement,” Rob says. He knew, however, that like a festering sore, the diminution of workplace culture happens gradually. Genuine healing would also require time and care, not band-aids.

“I worked with the Human Resources Committee to develop an environment where consultation and involvement by staff at all levels was encouraged and expected,” he says. “I engaged with employee unions represented at TUH to foster a positive

industrial environment where consultative committees such as the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the Joint Consultative Committee are productive and respected. In those early years, we laid the foundation for a settled workforce that was committed to improving services for members and the performance of TUH.”

Under TUH's new charter, the morale of staff and their reported relationship with supervisors recovered so dramatically that the board ultimately decided to discontinue its HR Committee.

Corporate Governance

PHIAC had imposed 16 conditions of registration to be met in order for TUH to continue to operate independently. Most of the provisos were around corporate governance, relating to matters such as the composition of the Board, the constitution, risk-management and compliance. In response, a significant corporate governance program was delivered with the able assistance of company secretary John Williamson. “We worked diligently in addressing the conditions imposed,” Rob says, “so that by the end of 2006, all conditions were removed by PHIAC and complete control of TUH was returned to the Board, a most welcome result after the previous turbulent times!”

The fund's other pressing issue was high management expenses. The Government uses a “management expense ratio” to express each health fund's operating costs as a percentage of premiums collected. The industry standard is 10 percent – and any fund over 12 percent attracts the attention of government regulators. During one phase, TUH's management expense ratio was as high as 16 percent.

Says Rob: “Clearly, one of my early challenges was reducing costs while not compromising services to members. The board wanted to ensure we remained on good terms with the

regulator in the future. And the hard work of management to implement and improve its corporate governance framework yielded positive results.”

In 2008, as part of its on-going review program of health funds, the regulator conducted a comprehensive review of TUH. Four PHIAC officers interviewed management, directors and staff across four days, and pored over thousands of pages of documents to satisfy themselves that the fund complied with all standards and requirements under the *Private Health Insurance Act*. Their report was disseminated in September 2008: TUH had passed with flying colours.

In 2011, the fund was subjected to another PHIAC review; this one focused on governance. Again, TUH emerged with a near perfect score. Only one minor recommendation was to be implemented. “At the same time,” Rob adds, “TUH went through a significant process to re-register under the new *Private Health Insurance Act 2007* which we did successfully, including the adoption of a new constitution at a specially convened members' meeting, with no issues raised by the Department of Health and Ageing during the process.”



In November 2005, the dental unit celebrated its 21st birthday. The Health Care Centre, which nowadays houses dental, optical, physiotherapy, Pilates, massage, acupuncture, podiatry and dietetics services, was at that stage registering 47,500 visits a year. Meantime, Hooked on Health at Cleveland turned 5. Its visitor tally was about 8,500 a year.

But some of the key advances of Rob's ongoing tenure indeed revolved around his so-called “de-cluttering.” At the close of 2005, the fund opted to cease offering private health insurance to overseas students. “Although it did bring in some revenue, it also required management commitment and time to administer. It was separately legislated by the government.

The board decided that the fund should no longer deliver this service as it was not in the best interests of members.”

In June 2006, the fund’s property at 25 Baxter Street, Fortitude Valley, was renovated, with Union Shopper taking up the lease. On 27 November, the Union Shopper Health brand was folded into TUH, bringing teachers and services and public sector union members under the one fund umbrella. The agglomeration reduced confusion among prospective new members and improved efficiencies in the running of one, and not two, divisions.

During 2006, TUH engaged an independent research company to conduct a Member Satisfaction Survey. The feedback led to a clearer grasp of how fulfilled members were with products and services. While areas for improvement were identified, praise also was liberally dealt. The survey has been repeated annually, with 2012 returning the best level of satisfaction yet (*see member testimonials, Appendix A*).

In November 2006, TUH implemented a significant information technology change, migrating its main operating system to HAMBS Systems Ltd, a mutual company providing health insurance software and services to over 20 health funds. At the same time imaging and workflow technology was introduced allowing TUH employees to process claims, memberships, premiums and benefits electronically, reducing a large component of paper-based work.

The next year began with an extensive review of Stressline. Management found many members were not fully aware of the magnitude of the service; it was generally perceived as a utility for people suffering stress only. Once wider understandings were gleaned, members wanted a name change to more appropriately reflect a highly-professional, broad-spectrum counselling and advice service – and a terrific benefit of membership.

The fund responded in the shape of a new brand, TUH SupportLine, offering confidential counselling to all members. Also in January 2007, TUH pioneered health and well-being seminars, tailored to school staff meetings or gatherings at work sites.

In 2008, the board endorsed the renewed development of a preferred provider network – offering discounts to TUH members at private dental practices across Queensland. The strategy was intended to reduce long waiting times at TUH’s own Dental Centre and provide affordable dental care to members outside Brisbane.

“This was really the beginning of what would become a trend to offer additional services to members without creating an additional administrative burden to the fund,” Rob says. “The preferred dental provider network has grown to 75 dentists in every major regional centre along the east coast of Queensland.”

Then, on 28 July, 2008 the board agreed to write-off its investment in the controversial Healthtrac. The American parent company hit financial and logistical problems and fell into administration. TUH continued to operate the system in its own right but with the demise of US Healthtrac, the health algorithm supplying the source information to customers was not being updated. Effectively, the read-outs had become unreliable.

Rob recounts: “Prior to the administration period, TUH management spent a lot of resources trying to work with the US company to save Healthtrac, which had consumed a lot of the fund’s time and money in previous years. It was becoming a financial and medical risk to the organisation. The board agreed to close it down and replace it with an outsourced provider.”



A modern, user-friendly, online health appraisal – the cleverly-named Health-e-Profile – was adopted, superseding Healthtrac's paper-style assessments. Meantime, the board began to question why a relatively small concern such as TUH operated its own employee superannuation fund, tying up board and staff members on a committee of trustees. The market-place was overwhelmed with highly-efficient and competitive super fund options. So TUH wound up its superannuation arm and, following an open tender process, chose HESTA as the default super fund for employees.

Rob's microscope also examined TUH's portfolio of discounted travel and other insurances to members. The board accepted his recommendation that services extraneous to health be dumped. "TUH had been required to be across a variety of insurance services at considerable time and expense," he says, "as well as additional management time and commitment to administer." Today, only travel insurance (as an extension of private health insurance) is retained – as TUH is not allowed to pay benefits for medical or hospital services provided overseas.

On 1 February 2009, TUH delivered two new products, Young Choice and Active Choice, with the unapologetic ambition of targeting the younger market to help sustain TUH into the future.

In 2009 -10, the Health Care Centre received 26,100 dental patients for 64,600 services. There were 8,200 eye tests, 10,700 pairs of spectacles sold and 9600 physio/podiatry/ massage treatments imparted. The following financial year underscored the fund's resurgent strength: an \$8 million surplus, 6 percent membership growth (at least double the industry rate) for three successive years, and an inventory of 25,000 policies (representing 54,000 Queenslanders – still predominately teachers, education workers and their families). They were the beneficiaries of 660,000 processed claims worth more than \$70 million.

And still, in 2011-12, the fund easily maintained its long-running record of comparatively low-cost health insurance. TUH's premium increase was 3.96 percent against an average industry rise of 5.06 percent. The fund's 40th anniversary year would also shepherd in completion of a major and overdue refurbishment of the Health Care Centre, a unit which has triumphed beyond all expectations.

Membership growth and satisfaction continue to rise. The modern TUH simply displays new confidence in an old ideal: delivering quality services to members at affordable premiums.



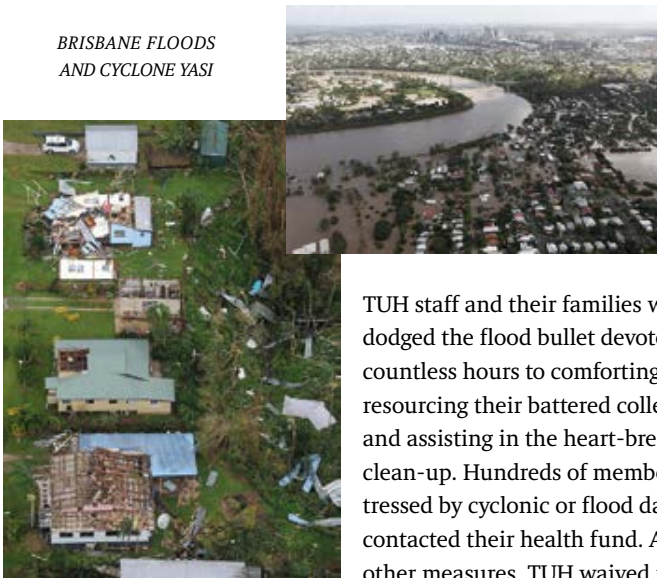
CHAPTER IX

New horizons

THE horrific 2010 -11 summer of floods gave all Queenslanders pause. TUH, although physically spared, was far from insulated from the emotional wreckage churned by the burst Brisbane River, and in the regions, by mammoth inland seas and flash torrents.

The January inundation devastated the houses of some fund staff. Later in the month, when Cyclone Yasi tailed in to north Queensland, smashing all in its wake, many members were deeply impacted. Some were left homeless.

BRISBANE FLOODS
AND CYCLONE YASI



TUH staff and their families who'd dodged the flood bullet devoted countless hours to comforting and resourcing their battered colleagues and assisting in the heart-breaking clean-up. Hundreds of members distressed by cyclonic or flood damage contacted their health fund. Among other measures, TUH waived fund

premiums for up to three months to reduce financial pressure. In TUH SupportLine, scores of callers salvaged a faint but invaluable silver lining.



As the recovery continues in 2012, the mood of poignancy inside cities, towns, business and industry persists. For the TUH community, celebrating a 40th birthday in such times

crystallises their workplace reminiscences – memories which are, in the main, supremely pleasurable.

Irrespective of its knife-edge challenges, TUH has never felt less than a close-knit family. Maybe it has drawn even closer as a result of its trials, a camaraderie fostered through endurance. Distinguishing the organisation is a predilection for fun, humour, and dare one say, eccentricity. Many a vibrant staff party has lightened many a load.

On a more serious note, Health Management administrative officer Julie Sues is grateful for a supportive structure that nullifies the pangs of the daily grind. "There have been some very stressful times at TUH," she says. "However, I have found that TUH does look after its employees, as long as the employees look after it. I never take for granted that tea, coffee, the Christmas breakfast and so on will be supplied at no cost. Any significant events in my life, such as births or deaths, are recognised by fellow staff. This is what makes me feel like I belong, and makes it easy to get up each morning to spend the day at TUH."

Provider Relations officer Robyn Bennett concurs. "Many stories, many parties, many memories," she says when asked about her time with TUH. Technically, she became a staffer in 1992 when the fund took over her then employer, the Professional and Technical Officers Health Society, transforming the business into Healthguard.

"I've been lucky to have had many and varied roles and challenges since joining TUH," she says. "But the people I've worked with have always been one of the main reasons for my loving it."



Even Jack Ross's visionary faculties could not have anticipated the undulating landscape ahead. Almost from inception 40 years ago, TUH has proved brilliantly innovative: introducing computerised claims well in advance of competitors, offering personalised health assessments and confidential counselling services, creating its own dental and optometry practices.

Along with the peaks have come crashing lows. But perhaps a "colourful history" also suggests experience. And character. Lessons learned are trigger points for renewal – and guidelines to a future knotted to tenets of truth, transparency and honour.

That future is bright. TUH today is the envy of many for its loyal membership base and financial strength. In 2011, 98 percent of TUH members surveyed were either satisfied or very satisfied with the way their health fund performed for them. With consistently strong results over the past five years, the board is in a prime position to scale the next level. The digital age, soaring health costs, an ageing population, new medical technology and emerging health services will certainly present challenges. Or create opportunities.

Take Charmaine Twomey. A business services manager for a leading Brisbane -based superannuation administrator, she was appointed to a casual vacancy on the TUH board in 2009. Ever since, her youthful savvy has been highly valued. But the board's most recently-appointed director insists it is she who has been enriched by the spirit of Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund Limited.

On any extrapolation of these words – *her words* – this marvellous company appears in good hands...



Charmaine Twomey

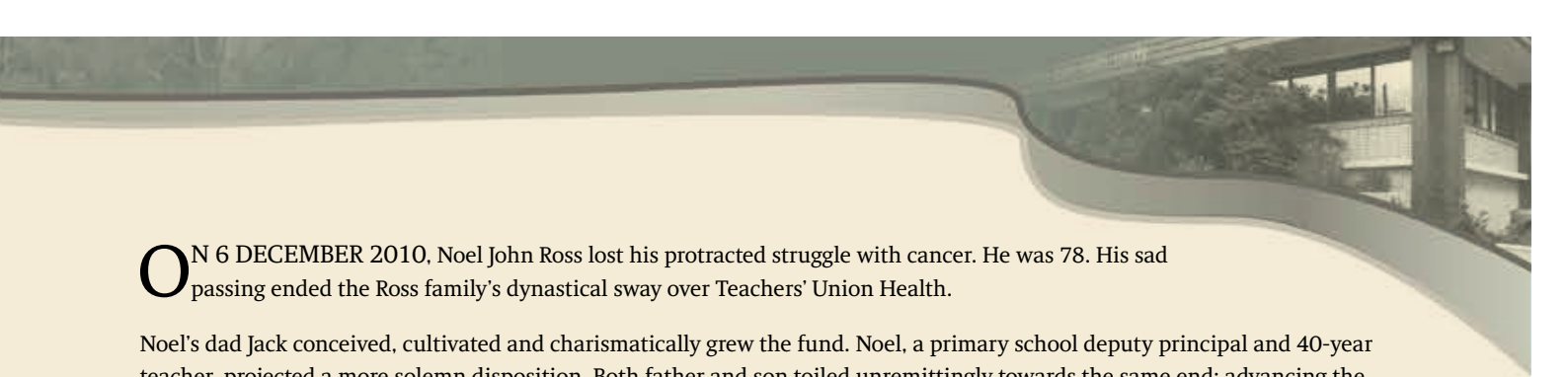
During a recent board meeting, we received feedback from an exercise where members, non-members and employees were asked to write what would be TUH's obituary in order to understand the feelings out there about TUH. On the face of things, this exercise seemed quite negative: the thought of writing an obituary about an organisation that is so clearly 'alive and kicking' seemed preposterous.

However, after hearing the obituaries that were written, I quickly ate my words. They were the most wonderful way of hearing peoples' feelings on our organisation. I was so proud to form part of a company which really seemed to breathe. A company that embraced its members like a mother would cradle her young. One that showed compassion, thoughtfulness, and was always there in times of need. A company that truly cared for its members in the way a 'profit for member' company should. This legacy – profit for members – is something that I value dearly and I suspect is the single key factor in TUH's success over the years...



CHAPTER X

Epilogue: Vale Noel Ross



ON 6 DECEMBER 2010, Noel John Ross lost his protracted struggle with cancer. He was 78. His sad passing ended the Ross family's dynastical sway over Teachers' Union Health.

Noel's dad Jack conceived, cultivated and charismatically grew the fund. Noel, a primary school deputy principal and 40-year teacher, projected a more solemn disposition. Both father and son toiled unremittingly towards the same end: advancing the lifestyle, security and well-being of teachers and their families.

Married to Audrey and a father of five (three of them would become teachers), Noel was a life member of the QTU and a deputy chairman of the then Queensland Teachers' Credit Union. For many years, he was the teacher-nominated director on the boards of State Super, QSuper and Gosuper. He was elected to the TUH board in 1977, serving as deputy chairman from 1989-93, and then as chairman until 1996. From 1997-2000, he was again TUH chair. In 2001, he returned briefly to the deputy chair's role before assuming the chairmanship a third time, making way for Dawson Petie in 2004.

At Noel's funeral service on 13 December 2010, Kevin Brasch delivered a stirring, heartfelt eulogy. In honour of Noel – and the extended Ross family – it is re-printed here:

"Today, I offer to Audrey and her family the condolences of the Teachers' Union Health, and in particular, of those who had the privilege of serving with Noel".

"I first knew Noel when he was playing 5st 7lb footy for Toowong State School and I for Newmarket. Toowong played in sky blue and Newmarket in anything we could get. That was in 1945 and the second world war was still in progress. Few people knew Noel was a nifty halfback and later played seniors with the Wests' club. In my long association with State of Origin teams, Noel was never backward in telling me what I should tell Arty, Wally, Wayne, or Mal, to do".

"In our formative days at Teachers' College, it was drummed into us what our philosophy for success in school and life ought to be: fair, firm and friendly. I think Noel was always guided by that principle! No-one at that time could possibly have guessed that his life was to become so inexorably entwined in the service and welfare of his fellow teachers. He was to serve a quarter of a century with TUH and always with modesty and the utmost integrity".

"When I was alerted that Noel was fighting his illness, my thoughts and reflections turned to his past and achievements. Of course I refer only to Teachers' Union Health. His influence in other spheres is both well-documented and enormous".

"The written word was always important to Noel, so I chose to record my sentiments and feelings via a letter to ensure he knew how greatly he was valued and appreciated.

Unfortunately, the letter is unfinished, but I would like to share it with you all"...



Dear Noel,

As you battle your illness, my thoughts and reflections turn to the past, a past where your shadow has been cast long and in the process, you have had an enormous impact on the lives of generations of teachers. You have more than amply filled the shoes of your famous father, Jack!

Whether it be as a director, a deputy chairman, or chairman, your capacity for work over that time has been massive. You have given unstintingly of yourself. You always ran the extra yard; carried the extra load; and epitomised all that is selfless.

In earlier days, we were guided by our own versions of best practices, before they became known as governance, compliance, risk management and the like. There were no such things as directors' liability, remuneration, or company directors' groups who would provide guidance.

Some said we weren't always amenable to change. But how about radical changes to health schemes, the purchase of our own premises, changes in governments and the implementation of computers?

The dental unit and Health Care centre weren't bad either, were they Noel?

During our tough times, you exerted an incalculable influence with statesman-like leadership and judicious endeavours. Some said: Noel, you should have been company finance director, for you were careful with a dollar. Do you remember, Noel, on an overseas trip, we were in Boston, in fact at Fenway Park, home of the famous Red Socks baseball team. They were playing the Yankees. The significance of the game faded when my wife spotted Kevin Costner in the Boston dug-out. Your only comment, Noel, was: "I hope he paid to get in!"

Noel, in all your dealings, I have found you nothing but tolerant and humane. I always enjoyed your sartorial exactitude and shared your love and appreciation of the spoken and written word. Once Noel, when I was at Westminster Abbey, I read a plaque, and although a world away from Brisbane, I said to (wife) Tilly: "This could be written for Noel." It went: "His superior dedication to his pursuits added a lustre to those interests and whose character as a man reflected honour."

On your retirement, I admired and enjoyed your presence at AGMs where you could always be relied upon to instigate probing and controversial issues. You have been an integral and essential pillar of this organisation, an organisation that will always be indebted to you. In fact, I can pay you no greater compliment than to include you in the pantheon of TUH illustrious personnel.

"It was there, where I stopped writing my letter and now need go no further. I believe we would all agree it has been a privilege to be Noel's colleague. On behalf of TUH, I thank Audrey and the Ross family for the gracious manner in which they have supported Noel in all his endeavours in making Teachers' Union Health the health fund for teachers. From here on Audrey, may good fortune be your constant companion."





Appendix A: Member testimonials

Every year, members take the trouble to write letters to, email or telephone TUH with messages of gratitude. Often, stories are told revealing extraordinary displays of compassion, support and service from the fund's frontline and backroom staff. TUH honours those employees, as it thanks its loyal members. Genuine care and respect – outlined in the sample of feedback below – are what turns a health fund into family.



Hello.

Just a note in sincere appreciation for the assistance given, & the kindness & empathy shown to me by Holly, when I attended my Hygenist appointment last Wednesday.

After being unable to find a parking bay at TUH, or on-street parking, I ended up parking in the McWhirters Building carpark. This made me very apprehensive at the thought of now being late for my appointment, as not knowing the area I was disorientated & I wondered how I would find my way to TUH. I had asked 3 people who didn't know where TUH was.

As I had left home an hour prior to my appointment, for a 25 minute journey & I was now late, I phoned & spoke to a lovely lady who checked with Holly to see if I could still be seen. She then gave me precise instructions on how to get to TUH.

Whilst sitting in the Hygenist's chair, I then became very upset & emotional about being late & I also wondered how on earth I would find my way back to my car. Holly was most empathetic & offered to take me to my car in her lunch break. She even attempted to use the parking vouchers she had, to pay for my \$20 parking fee. She also rescheduled a dental appointment I had for today, for later that afternoon, to save me an additional trip.

Holly went far beyond her duties to offer & provide assistance to a distraught member. I am most grateful for all the kindness shown by her!!

I also wish to sincerely thank Judy for her caring, on hearing from Holly of my plight, & for the very kind assistance she also provided!

These staff members are an absolute credit to your organisation, & are to be commended on showing initiative in providing exceptional service!!

Thank you TUH.

Kind regards.

Lyn Box



27 March 2012

The Manager,

Teachers' Union Health

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to thank you most sincerely for approving the current chemotherapy that my husband Geoff Hodges is using. Geoff has always been a fit and healthy man, playing tennis 3 or 4 times a week, non-smoking, very light drinker and always the correct weight. Imagine our shock last year when he was diagnosed with a very aggressive non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Geoff had months in and out of Pindarra Private Hospital on the Gold Coast and then in September had a stem-cell transplant using his own stem cells. The TUH supported us through all this and were absolutely wonderful and very generous. I had dealt with both my parents through long illnesses. They were in MBF and I was continually surprised at how much better Teacher's Union Health was compared to MBF.

Now unfortunately Geoff's cancer has come back and his only chance for recovery is another stem cell transplant in the Royal Brisbane Hospital using donor stem cells. Before this can happen he needs to be in remission and Torisel (the chemo he is currently on) is the best chance for this to happen. After only one round he is already responding wonderfully to this drug and we would like to thank you so much for approving this and hopefully for approving the next round.

Our wonderful oncologist Dr. Stephen Stylian has put so much effort into saving Geoff and we thank you for your part in this.

Geoff and I were both teachers and were both in TUH before we married - in fact between us we have been members in the top scale for over 55 years. Like all your members we hoped something like this would never happen to us but when it did we were so glad we were with you. I am happy for this letter to be published in your journal.

Thank you again for your help and support during this difficult time for our family.

Di and Geoff Hodges



TESTIMONIALS CONT-D:

“TUH is great - I've been a member for (nearly) all my life and they have never ever disappointed”

“I'm amazed at how competitive TUH is and spruik its values and attributes to all who'll listen - keep up the good work”

“As a new member of TUH, I am impressed by the service I have received so far and am more than satisfied that I changed health insurance”

“I just receive terrific service all the time at TUH – I'm not just a membership number”

“I cannot express my praise enough to the way my sickness was handled by TUH, so on a scale of 1 to 10 on satisfaction I give you 11”

“I'd like to congratulate TUH for the service that is provided. The staff in particular have been exceptional with care, friendliness and helpfulness. Keep up the good work and know that it is appreciated.”

“I have recently returned from overseas, and am delighted to say that the high standard of personalised service of TUH staff is still very much in evidence. Well done! It's good to be back!”

“Excellent service. We feel special to belong. Professional, polite, quality service. Co-operative staff. Thank you!”

Appendix B: Directors

Below is a list of the Committee/Directors who helped to shape TUH over the last 40 years.

1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Ross - Chairman • P Doherty • R Cable • M Chappell • C DeVantier • R Jones • J Jordan • G Lean • J Middleton • K Oswin
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Ross - Chairman • J Arnold • M Chappell • R Cable • C DeVantier • R Jones • J L Middleton
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Ross - Chairman • J Jordan • J Arnold • R Cable • C Devantier • G Lean • C Sinclair • M Chappell • R Jones
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Ross - Chairman • J Jordan • J Middleton • J Arnold • R Cable • C De Vantier • G Lean • C Sinclair • M Chappell • R Jones
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Ross - Chairman • R Cable • J Middleton • M Stephenson • B Minter • J Rockett • J Arnold • M Chappell • K Brasch • I Hope • R Jones • G C Lean • C Sinclair
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Ross - Chairman • G Lean • J Arnold • M Chappell • K Brasch • N Ross • C Sinclair • J Hefferan
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J H Ross - Chairman • G C Lean • J Arnold • M Chappell • K Brasch • N Ross • C Sinclair • J Hefferan
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • R Jones • J Arnold • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • M Chappell • V Cottell • V Luckus • N Ross • B Stephenson
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • R Jones • J Arnold • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • V Cottell • V Luckus • N Ross • B Stephenson
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • R Jones • J Arnold • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • V Cottell • V Luckus • K Oswin • B Stephenson
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • R Jones • J Arnold • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • V Cottell • V Luckus • K Oswin • B Stephenson
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • R Jones • J Arnold • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • V Cottell • V Luckus • B Minter • K Oswin • B Stephenson
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • R Jones • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • V Cottell • V Luckus • B Minter • K Oswin • N Ross
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • N Ross • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • L Comino • R Jones • V Luckus • B Minter • K Oswin
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • N Ross • A Bevis • K Brasch • R Cable • L Comino • R Jones • V Luckus • Barry D Minter • Kevin A Oswin
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean Chairman • N Ross • A Bevis • K Brasch • L Comino • P Haslett • R Jones • V Luckus • B Minter • K Oswin
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • N Ross • A Bevis • K Brasch • L Comino • P Haslett • R Jones • S Knudsen • V Luckus • B Minter
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • N Ross • A Bevis • K Brasch • L Comino • P Haslett • R Jones • S Knudsen • V Luckus • B Minter
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Lean - Chairman • N Ross • J Battams • K Brasch • L Comino • P Haslett • R Jones • S Knudsen • V Luckus • B Minter

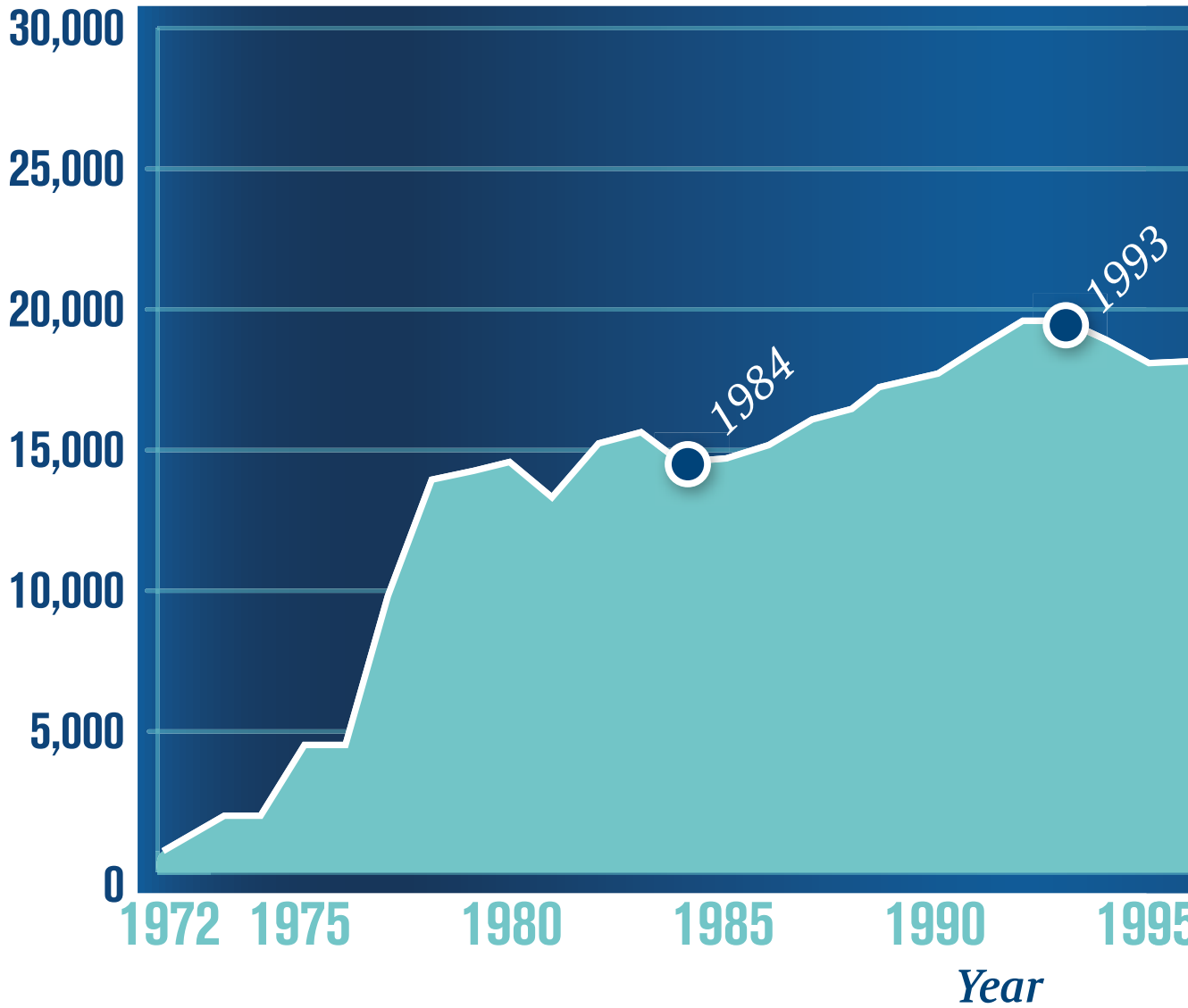
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G Lean - Chairman N Ross J Battams A Bennison K Brasch P Haslett R Jones S Knudsen V Luckus B Minter
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G Lean - Chairman Noel Ross J Battams A Bennison K Brasch P Haslett V Luckus S Knudsen B Minter J Shepley
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G Lean - Chairman N Ross J Battams A Bennison K Brasch V Luckus S Knudsen B Denis J Shepley
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman S Knudsen G Lean J Battams A Bennison K Brasch V Luckus B Minter J Shepley
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman S Knudsen G Lean J Battams Ann Bennison K Brasch Viday Joseph Luckus B Minter J Shepley
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman S Knudsen G Lean J Battams A Bennison K Brasch B Minter J Shepley
1997/98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman K Ruttiman J Backen K Brasch T Burke G Moloney C Cooper G Lean B Minter

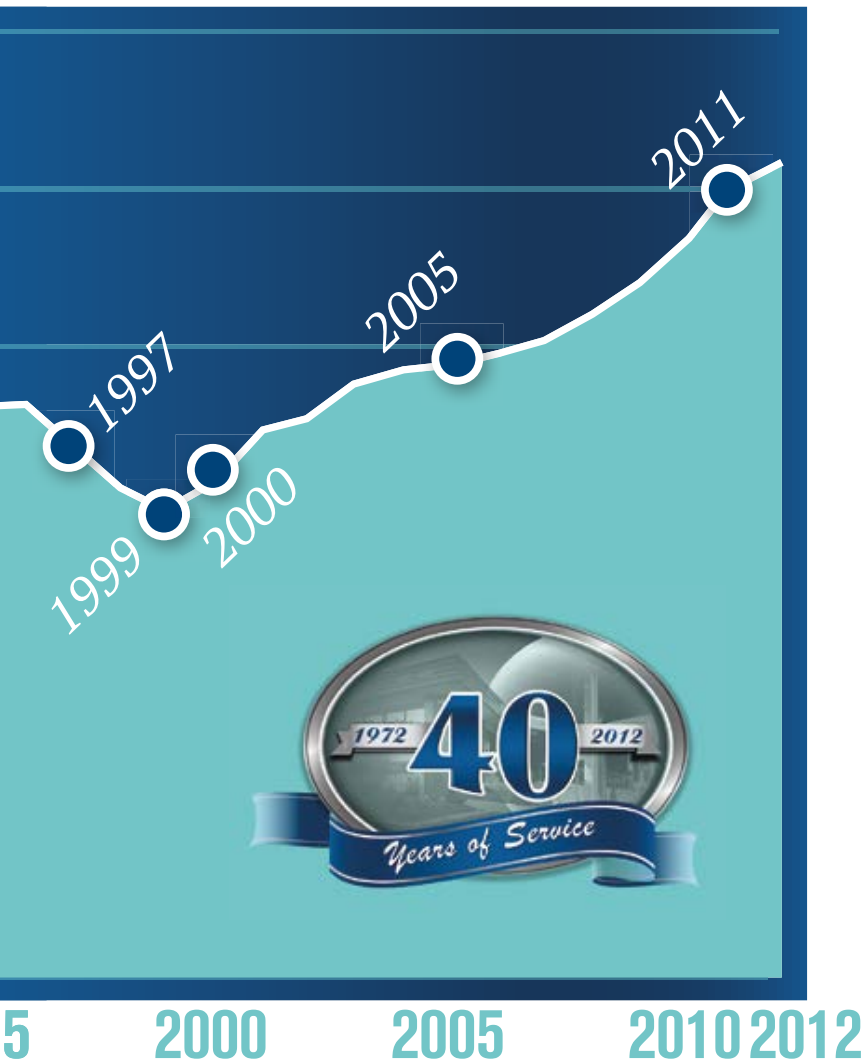
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman K Ruttiman J Backen K Brasch T Burke C Cooper E Mackie J Battams
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman K Ruttiman K Brasch G Moloney B Minter J Backen C Cooper E Mackie T Burke J Battams
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K Ruttiman - Chairman N Ross E Mackie K Brasch B Minter C Cooper G Moloney J Backen T Burke J Battams
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman E Mackie J Backen C Cooper T Burke B Minter K Brasch G Moloney S Pidgeon J Battams
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman E Mackie J Backen K Brasch T Burke C Cooper B Minter S Pidgeon K Seed G Moloney
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N Ross - Chairman E Mackie J Backen K Brasch T Burke C Cooper B Minter S Pidgeon K Seed
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Petie - Chairman J Battams J Backen K Brasch T Burke C Cooper D Edwards T Hamilton E Mackie J Merrell B Minter S Pidgeon N Ross K Seed

2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Petie - Chairman J Battams K Brasch T Burke C Cooper D Edwards T Hamilton J Merrell B Minter J Backen S Pidgeon
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Petie - Chairman J Battams K Brasch T Burke C Cooper D Edwards T Hamilton J Merrell B Minter S Pidgeon S Jones
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Petie - Chairman T Burke J Backen J Battams K Brasch C Cooper D Edwards T Hamilton S Jones J Merrell S Pidgeon
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Petie - Chairman J Backen K Brasch T Burke C Cooper D Edwards T Hamilton S Jones J Merrell S Pidgeon C Twomey
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Edwards - Chairman T Burke J Backen K Brasch C Cooper T Hamilton S Jones J Merrell S Pidgeon C Twomey
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Edwards - Chairman T Burke J Battams J Backen K Brasch C Cooper T Hamilton S Jones J Merrell S Pidgeon C Twomey
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Edwards - Chairman T Burke J Battams K Brasch C Cooper T Hamilton S Jones J Merrell S Pidgeon C Twomey

Appendix C: Membership History

Policy Holders





1984

Medicare was introduced

1993

First preferred provider network for regional members

1997

Introduction of Medicare Levy

1997

Introduction of Private Health Incentive Scheme

1999

30% Federal Government Rebate replaces the Private Health Insurance Incentives Scheme

1999

TUH introduces new healthcare product

2000

"Lifetime Health Cover" introduced

2005

Introduction of the 65+ Rebate

2011

TUH reaches 25,000 members

About the Author

Matthew Fynes-Clinton is a feature-writing and investigative journalist who began his career as a cadet on Brisbane's *The Courier-Mail* newspaper in 1981. He has written extensively in the fields of education and health and in 2009 won the Best Investigative Report at the Queensland Clarion Awards for a series on illicit drugs and their devastating effects. He grew up in Brisbane and lives in the Sunshine Coast hinterland where he and his journalist wife Jane have raised three children over 24 sublime years of marriage.

Founded in 1972 by Jack Ross, an educationalist, community worker and visionary, Teachers' Union Health – then the Queensland Teachers' Union Health Society – convened its earliest committee meetings in a “broom cupboard” at Elizabeth Street, Brisbane city. The nascent organisation barely had time to catch its breath: the 1970s' watershed introduction of universal health care threatened the future of private health insurance. But Jack and his team refused to concede their dream of a not-for-profit health fund for the state's hard-working school teachers. And today, TUH's proud standing in the private health insurance market is a monument to that vision. The fund has experienced internal controversies, and two extreme battles for survival. But above all, this inspiring 40th anniversary story reflects the dedication of thousands of loyal TUH staff and members. Through the highs and lows, they have brought strength in numbers.





TUH
Health Fund

Celebrating 50 years