

TUBERCULOSIS AND THE AUSTRALIAN STATE:

**Australia's National Anti-tuberculosis Campaign 1898–1948
An Administrative History of a Public Health Policy**

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SUMMARY

This thesis examines the Australian public health campaign against tuberculosis from 1898 to 1948. It explores why the Federal Government invested an unprecedented amount of money into a national campaign against tuberculosis in 1948 when mortality rates had been in decline for five decades and constitutional responsibility for public health rested with States. The study analyses the medical, political and administrative responses to tuberculosis with particular focus on the role of state-employed public health physicians in policy making. The interaction between medical understanding and public health policy and its administration is considered across state and federal jurisdictions and it is argued that a cohort of public health physicians succeeded in their pursuit of a national prevention and control scheme the essence of which was established in the 1910s. The foundations for federal involvement in this public health scheme were laid in the early 1920s when the Commonwealth entered the health arena in two ways. First, the Commonwealth Government assumed responsibility for the medical repatriation of returned soldiers after World War I and then established its own health department in 1921. This provided state-employed physicians with a national base from which to pursue their case for a uniform national attack on tuberculosis.

Two main mechanisms of public health control were advanced, which were gradually introduced by State governments during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Essentially, reformers called for the detection of the tubercular through case notification to health authorities and isolation of sufferers in sanatoria to protect the broader community from infection and to educate the tubercular on personal preventive behaviours. States made tuberculosis a notifiable disease and

established public sanatoria, but State and local health authorities struggled to implement these mechanisms of control for a contagious but chronic disease that required prolonged oversight by health authorities and long stays in sanatoria. Despite falling mortality rates public health physicians were dissatisfied with the results of the measures and blamed poor implementation.

Physicians had long considered the possibility of a nationally consistent tuberculosis policy and during the inter-war period a cohort of doctors with a philosophy centred on preventive medicine pursued this goal. By the end of World War II the balance of State-Commonwealth powers had shifted. The conflict conferred additional war-time powers on the Commonwealth and aided post-war increases in federal power. This allowed the Commonwealth Labor Government to intervene in tuberculosis policy and add a national public health campaign against tuberculosis to its post-war reconstruction agenda. A long held medical position cohered with ideas on post-war reconstruction and Labor Party philosophy on social welfare to bring about an unprecedented national health campaign.

STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

CAROL ANN PUTLAND

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TERMINOLOGY

Consumption	General term to describe pulmonary tuberculosis throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century.
Diggers	Australian soldiers
Lang Labor	Break-away group from the Australian Labor Party led by Jack Lang, New South Wales Premier
Old Tuberculin	Heat sterilized cultures of <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> that are filtered and concentrated.
Phthisis	Any wasting disease but normally referred to pulmonary tuberculosis.
Tubercle	A small area of inflammation at the site of initial infection of <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> .
Tubercular	Medical - Having the characteristics of or relating to tubercles or nodules. Commonly used as an adjective to describe sufferers of tuberculosis, but also as a collective noun
Tuberculin	General term for extract of <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> first used by Robert Koch as a treatment for tuberculosis, but now used diagnostically only.
Tuberculin PPD	Tuberculin Purified Protein Derivative, developed in the 1939 was an improvement on Old Tuberculin. PPD contained no by-products capable of contaminating the result and showed sharp differentiation between reactions.
Tuberculophobia	Fear of becoming infected with tuberculosis?
Tuberculous	Referring to tuberculosis, or to infection caused by <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> .
White Plague	Pulmonary tuberculosis.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAAS	Australasian Association of the Advancement of Science
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AJPH	Australian Journal of Politics and History
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMG	Australasian Medical Gazette
AMJ	Australian Medical Journal
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AAMS	Australian Army Medical Service
BCG	Bacillus Calmette Guerin
BMA	British Medical Association
Cwlth	Commonwealth
COSA	City of Sydney Archives
CSL	Commonwealth Serum Laboratory
DT	Sydney Daily Telegraph
FHC	Federal Health Council
IMJ	Intercolonial Medical Journal
JCSS	Joint Committee on Social Security
JLS	Joint Library Store (Flinders and Adelaide Universities)
MJA	Medical Journal of Australia
ML	Mitchell Library (New South Wales)

MP	Member of Parliament
MO	Medical Officer
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NSW	New South Wales
PMO	Principal Medical Officer
QLD	Queensland
RAH	Royal Adelaide Hospital. Named ‘Royal Adelaide Hospital’ after November 1939. The name of the hospital from 1840 to 1939 was the ‘Adelaide Hospital’.
RPA	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
RSL	Returned Services League
RSSILA	Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia
SA	South Australia
SLSA	State Library of South Australia
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
TAS	Tasmania
TB	Tuberculosis, usually referring to pulmonary tuberculosis
TPI	Totally and Permanently Incapacitated
UAP	United Australia Party
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WHO	World Health Organisation