

Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital

1948 – 1981

Details

The Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital was the name given to the former Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in 1948. Originally established to care for and isolate people suffering from infectious diseases, including polio and tuberculosis, the Northfield Wards began to admit patients with other ailments from the 1950s. Both children and adults were admitted to Northfield. In 1981 the Northfield Wards amalgamated with the Morris Hospital to form the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre.

The Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital was the name given to the former Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in 1948 when its management was transferred from the James Brown Memorial Trust to the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital had originally been established to care for and isolate people suffering from infectious diseases including influenza, scarlet fever, diphtheria, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis (also known as consumption). Improvements in immunisation and more effective antibiotic drugs led to a decrease in patient numbers during the 1940s.

The poliomyelitis epidemic of the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, saw an influx of patients including both adults and children. A former patient from the Northfield Wards who was admitted with polio as a child, remembers her time at the Wards:

... in 1958 or 59, as a child of 5, I was admitted to Northfield Infectious Diseases Ward. ... I can vividly remember being in the hospital and I couldn't walk and to me I was in for a long time. ... I was referred by our family doctor ... I can remember very clearly scooting around on polished marble floors on my pillow to visit this little boy who would just lay there he was so sick. There were thick strips of clear plastic (not unlike the entry to commercial freezer doors that we now use today) covering the one large door that was the entrance into my ward. ... I knew that I couldn't walk but I accepted it, in fact I was the only kid who could get around, they were all too sick to even move. I would throw my pillow on the ground and hang on to the railings on my bed and lower myself down onto my pillow and off I would go.

Around the time of this polio epidemic the Northfield Wards began to admit patients who did not have infectious diseases. These included orthopaedic and geriatric patients, and patients requiring rehabilitation.

During redevelopment of the Hospital in the 1970s some patients were moved to the Morris Hospital. In 1981 the Northfield Wards and the Morris Hospital amalgamated to form the new Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre.

More info

Chronology

- Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital (1932 - 1948)
 - **Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital (1948 – 1981)**
 - Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre (1981 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Royal Adelaide Hospital \(1939 - current\)](#)

The Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital were run by the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Related Organisations

- [Morris Hospital \(1936 - 1981\)](#)

Morris Hospital and the Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital amalgamated to form the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre in 1981.

Resources

- [New Spastic Centre "Major Step"](#), The Advertiser, 17 October 1952

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [Register of patients - Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, later Northfield Wards of the Royal Adelaide Hospital \(1932 - 1959\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. These registers cover patient admissions and discharges at the Northfield Wards of the RAH, and its precursor the Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, for the years 1932 - 1938 and 1951 - 1959.

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