

# St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and Hall

## ESTABLISHING PRESBYTERIANISM IN TEMORA.

The Temora gold rush commenced in 1880, and within weeks over 100 claims had been pegged out. By April 1880 a village had been established, and the town of Temora was proclaimed in May of that year. The first recorded visit by a Presbyterian minister to the Gold Field was that of Rev Andrew Mac Donald Tait, of the Presbytery of Goulburn, who arrived on a Friday in mid August 1880, after a long and rough trip by stage coach from Cootamundra, having traveled by train from Goulburn. A Service was held in an unfinished building in Lower Temora (on the alluvial mine workings on Trungley Road, now the northern outskirts of the present town), while in the afternoon he preached in the street in Middle Temora (the present town centre).

In 1882 the joint Parish of Cootamundra and Temora was formed. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1883, Temora was formed into a separate Parish, and Rev Alexander Riddell was ordained and inducted as the first minister of the Parish. In 1888 the second minister, Rev Alexander Dandie from Scotland was inducted, and served until 1895. During these formative years the ministers traveled relatively long distances by horse and sulky to service the many rural communities that were developing around Temora, such as Barmedman, Bagdad, Beaconsfield, Combaning, Gidginbung, Morangarell, Narraburra, and Mimosa.



## THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (1881).

The old brick building on the left was the original Presbyterian Church in Temora. It is now being used as the Church Hall. It was Rev Andrew MacDonald Tait who was far sighted enough to see the potential of the agricultural land surrounding Temora, and that this had the potential to maintain Temora as a successful town when the mining finished. He was able to challenge the Presbyterian laymen of that time to acquire this block of land in De Boos St., and to commence the construction of a Church. During 1881 this brick Church building was erected at a cost of 350 pounds. Evidence indicates that the Dedication Service took place in January 1882. Today it is accepted that this is the oldest brick building in Temora.

## THE PRESENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (1930).

By 1922 the original Church building was proving inadequate for the growing Congregation, and the initiative to build a new Church was raised. During the 1920's in Rev John Alexander Malcomson's ministry, planning and fund raising continued. In 1928 a number of bad seasons placed doubts in the minds of the Congregation whether to proceed, even though the existing Church was now too small. In 1929 a final plan was agreed upon, and the decision was made to proceed. The Foundation Stone of the present Church building was laid by the State Moderator, Rt Rev C. A. White, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1930 during the Ministry of Rev Herbert Hillman. The Church was completed in November 1930, and dedicated by Rev R. G. Macintyre on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1930. During the 1930's and early 1940's the Parish of St Andrew's suffered considerable financial problems, with the cost of the new church, and the effects of the Great Depression coming just as the building was completed.

When the present Church building was completed in 1930, the original Church began its role as the Church Hall. Over the years there have been a number of suggestions and initiatives put forward to demolish the building, and to replace it with a "grandier" hall. Shortage of finances, together with other commitments, have resulted in these plans not being implemented, and fortunately the building has survived to become a Heritage building of significance in Temora's history.

These two buildings are a witness to the many ministers that have served in this Parish, and for the dedication and loyalty of the many Presbyterians that have made up the Congregation since 1880. They have given generously to provide the significant Church buildings we are so fortunate to have today, and for establishing and continuing a Christian witness in this community.