

William Tyson Kendall MRCVS 1851-1936

William Kendall, who was the son of a medical practitioner in Lancashire, England, was admitted to MRCVS in 1873. He arrived in Melbourne in 1880 en route for New Zealand, but decided to stay and opened a practice in Port Melbourne on a slender capital of £15.

Kendall was the moving force behind the formation of the first veterinary association in Australia in 1880. The Australasian Veterinary Medical Association was located in Melbourne and was successful in enrolling members in other colonies and New Zealand. Through this body, members were able to carry out their own active campaign to increase public awareness of the importance of establishing a veterinary school in Australia. The association published the *Australasian Veterinary Journal* in 1880. However, the journal lapsed after 12 issues due to lack of interest and support and the Association broke up shortly after.

In 1884, he was largely instrumental in bringing about the appointment of a Royal Commission on tuberculosis, which has as one of its results the amendment of the *Stock Diseases Act* and the addition of tuberculosis to the list of diseases. In the same year, he purchased buildings and moved his practice to what is now 38 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, to which, in 1885, he added a hospital. So rare was the concept of 'animal as patient' that initially the hospital had to purchase sick animals, often selling them back at a profit to their owners on recovery. It also provided a free clinic for animals whose owners were unable to pay.

On the basis of this practice, Kendall became the pioneer in veterinary education in Australia. He first sought protection for his students through a Veterinary Surgeons' Bill. The proclamation of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act* of 1887 legitimised the profession. Kendall then added classrooms to his Fitzroy buildings, and the first six students were enrolled in his Melbourne Veterinary College in January 1888. Although the college was successful, Kendall's financial difficulties in supporting the college became increasingly acute. He openly expressed the hope that the College would be taken over and become a public or State enterprise. Eventually, 61 students graduated from the college and 24 transferred to the new Melbourne University School established in 1908. The graduates of his college were the foundation of the veterinary profession in Victoria and beyond.

After being elected as an Honorary Associate of the royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and having acted for some time as Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Melbourne, Kendall retired from active work at the age of 67. He was survived by his second wife and five sons, of whom four – Colonel EA, Colonel WA, and Messrs J and H Kendall – graduated in veterinary science.

A portrait painted by Frederick McCubbin hangs in the Veterinary Clinical Centre of the University of Melbourne, Werribee.

References

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