It started with threepence.

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children - celebrating 106 years of care for the children of Western Australia.

On Monday the Children's Hospital was opened for the reception of patients. Everything at the hospital was in excellent order, as the result of the untiring efforts of the matron (Miss Anderson) and her efficient staff of nurses and assistants.

The honorary medical staff were all present and punctual to time. The first patient admitted was Elliott Patrick Mullins, 2 years and 4 months old, suffering from bronchitis and tonsilitis. There were two other indoor patients admitted, and three received outdoor attention.

The Hospital, built, equipped, and furnished, even to the installing of instrument and drugs, has cost approximately £12,000 and is absolutely free of debt, showing that in twelve months the public of Western Australia have nobly responded to the appeal for the children, and have in that time given over £7,000 pounds to this most deserving object.'

Children's Hospital first Annual Report.

ADMISSION POLICY 1909

This institution provides medical treatment and nursing for the sick and suffering children of the poor of the State, from birth to twelve years of age, and is entirely undenominational.

1910s

The main reason for admission is typhoid fever, pneumonia, influenza and summer diarrhoea. Doctors apply a few drops of whisky or brandy on the tongues of patients to treat cases of severe diarrhoea. Patients are also treated with saline infusions, castor oil, barley water, rice or albumen water. Ice bags and heat treatments are applied to pneumonia patients and shaving their heads is done to reduce fevers. Cot endowment proves to be the most reliable source of income. Radio campaigns and regular newspaper columns 'Dear Auntie Nell' and 'Dear Uncle Tom' at the Sunshine League catch the interest of WA children who post letters along with donations to assist the purchase of cots. The children become honorary Sunshine League members and surrogate nieces and nephews to Auntie Nell and Uncle Tom. For £1,000 a cot could be endowed in perpetuity, while £50 endowed a cot for one year. Cots are labelled with brass plaques acknowledging their subscriber. Inpatients are required to help with the daily running of the hospital in whatever way they are able such as darning socks and stockings, rolling bandages, handing out meals, dusting and tidying and preparing swabs. Visiting hours for parents and relatives are restricted to Wednesdays and Sundays only between 2.00pm - 4.00pm. Patients sleep on iron framed beds with horse hair mattresses. Sometimes two children are placed head-to-toe in the one bed. Floors are timber and are polished daily to a high sheen. Coil steam heaters are arranged down the centre of the wards during Winter. Each ward has a veranda where children are moved to during the day. In later years, due to space shortages, children are moved here permanently to recover.