

The Yeronga Animal Refuge Dr Michael Macklin



help of Brisbane's animal lovers, Mary Wienholt ran this service for seven years till "*the refuge had grown so much that Mrs Wienholt, who devoted her whole time to this noble and unselfish work, latterly found it too great a tax on her stretch, and decided to hand it over to the charge of the Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty...*"⁴ At the handover of 40

acres of freehold, 5 acres of Crown land, 2 cottages and other outbuildings plus income on January 31, 1927, the QSPC's President complemented Mrs Wienholt on her noble self-sacrificing work. However, the *Brisbane Courier* published a most uncomplimentary piece about the Society's Annual Report claiming it had failed to pay tribute to Mrs Wienholt's work: "*So much human work has been done by Mrs Wienholt that it is remarkable that even at this late stage there is no recognition of it by the society.*"⁵ The refuge was closed in 2013 and the site transformed over the following years into the *Renovare* residential complex. Mary, not one to rest on her laurels, had already established a Hospice at what is now Hanworth House in 1913 for "*elderly, impoverished gentlewomen*" - a breakthrough institution then as it would be even today - and in 1927 she also handed over this establishment to the Brisbane Theosophical Society. Mary Wienholt was a truly remarkable woman to whom Brisbane owes a debt of gratitude.

The lower land prices sparked by the 1893 floods enabled Mary Wienholt¹ to fulfil one of her dreams and in 1920 she, along with a number of friends², secured land on the corner of Venner and Fairfield Roads to establish the aptly named '*Yeronga Refuge of Aged and Starving Horses and Lost and Strayed Dogs*'.³

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¹ In keeping with the times, she is usually referred to in newspapers as Mrs John Wienholt after her husband.

² Legally, the land was under the control of F. A. Stimpson, J. D. Wienholt, W.C. Horstman, A.H. Whittingham and A.D. Walsh.

³ The acquisition of this site has been variously put previously at 1923 and 1921. However, it seems clear from the following article that it was acquired in the middle of 1920:

The fund to assist in meeting the cost of securing a rest paddock for horses in connection with the Refuge for and Dogs Horses received a good start yesterday, when £11/10/ was received by the hon secretary, Mrs. John Wienholt. The refuge commenced its humane work a little over a year ago, and the present extension is the acquiring of 40 acres of well grassed land adjoining the refugee at Yeronga. with the object of helping horses working on Brisbane streets, owned by working men. who get their living by means of their horse and cart, and who are to be encouraged to give their horses needed spell from work, or, in the case of a slight jury or sickness, a necessary rest. This will mean a heavy expenditure, and until the amount is paid off a certain number of horses will be taken at full agistment fees. Lovers of horses are appealed to for help in this good cause, and the "Courier" will be pleased to acknowledge any donations towards the fund. The amount so far received are: - -Queenland Turf Club, £10; Maisie Hudson, 10/: "Sympathiser," £1: total to date £11/10/. The winning number for the Indian table cover and dressed doll, raffled for the benefit of the refuge, were Nos 101 and 130. Winners may obtain their prizes by calling at Wilkinson's Ltd., corner of Queen and George streets, Brisbane. Brisbane Courier, Saturday 3rd September 1921, p.6.

⁴ *Daily Standard* Friday 4 Feb 1927. p.2.

⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 29th July 1927, p.14.