

1897.

VICTORIA.

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

R E P O R T

OF THE

INSPECTOR OF LUNATIC ASYLUMS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER,

1896.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACT 54 VICT. No. 1113, SECTION 79

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REPORT.

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE,
Inspector's Office,

Melbourne, 5th May, 1897.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit herewith, in accordance with the requirements of the Lunacy Act, a Report on the Lunatic Asylums of Victoria for the year 1896.

In Table I. will be found the number of the registered insane, and their distribution throughout the Asylums on 31st December.

The general results during 1896, as compared with 1895, are as follow :— There is a total addition of 61 persons registered as insane, 56 of these being on the asylum books, and 5 in the lunacy wards. The actual asylum population, however, at the end of the year was only increased by 12, as the patients who had been taken out on trial by their friends, and those boarded out, were 44 in excess of the number for the corresponding period of the preceding year.

The daily average number of patients resident was 3,970, showing an increase of 41 to be provided for throughout the year.

TABLE I.—Showing the Distribution of the Insane on 31st December, 1896.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the Public Lunatic Asylums—			
Yarra Bend	417	363	780
Kew	521	436	957
Kew Idiot Asylum	114	78	192
Ararat	390	281	671
Beechworth	356	261	617
Sunbury	215	313	528
Ballarat	123	102	225
Out on probation—			
Yarra Bend	21	21	42
Kew	52	73	125
Kew Idiot Asylum	4	2	6
Ararat	2	4	6
Beechworth	4	8	12
Sunbury ... ..	...	1	1
Ballarat	2	4	6
Boarded out from—			
Yarra Bend ... ..	...	4	4
Kew	3	13	16
Kew Idiot Asylum	2	1	3
Ararat ... ..	...	3	3
Beechworth	5	1	6
Sunbury	3	1	4
Ballarat ... ..	...	...	...
Total number of registered lunatics on the books of the Public Asylums	2,234	1,970	4,204
In the lunacy ward at—			
Castlemaine ... ..	...	...	...
Bendigo	6	2	8
Geelong ... ..	...	...	...
In licensed house ... ..	...	...	...
Total number of registered lunatics in the colony	2,240	1,972	4,212

TABLE II.—Showing the Admissions, Re-admissions, Discharges, and Deaths in Asylums during the Year ending 31st December, 1896.

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the Asylums, 1st January, 1896	...	...	...	2,221	1,927	4,148
Cases admitted :—						
First admissions	376	339	715			
Not first admissions	70	43	113			
Total cases admitted during the year	...	...	...	446	382	828
Total cases under care during the year	...	...	...	2,667	2,359	4,976
Cases discharged :—						
Recovered	114	96	210			
Relieved	19	37	56			
Not improved	69	77	146			
Died	231	129	360			
Total cases discharged and died during the year	...	...	...	433	339	772
Remaining in the Asylums, 31st December, 1896 (including those absent on trial and boarded out)	...	...	...	2,234	1,970	4,204
Average number resident during the year	...	...	...	2,147	1,823	3,970
Persons under care during the year	...	...	...	2,602	2,229	4,831
Persons admitted	...	...	...	381	302	683
Persons recovered	...	...	...	112	96	208
Transferred from one Asylum to another	...	...	...	46	75	121
Escaped	...	...	...	23	2	25
Retaken	...	...	...	16	2	18

TABLE III.—Showing the Previous Attacks among Persons Admitted during the Year 1896:

Number of Previous Attacks.	Persons.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.
Have had one attack	55	32	87
Have had two attacks	15	14	29
Have had three attacks	2	4	6
Have had four attacks	...	1	1

TABLE IV.—Showing the Admissions, Discharges, and Deaths, with the Mean Annual Mortality and Proportion of Recoveries per Cent. of the Admissions, for each Year since the 1st January, 1882.

Year.	Admitted.			Discharged.						Died.			Remaining 31st December in each Year.			Average Number Resident.			Percentage of Recoveries on Admissions.			Percentage of Deaths on the Average Number Resident.				
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Recovered.			Retrieved.			Not Improved.			Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.		
				Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.														
1882	246	219	465	117	135	252	13	8	21	...	...	138	60	198	1,732	1,415	3,147	1,636	1,263	2,899	47.56	61.64	54.19	8.43	4.75	6.82
1883	282	198	480	107	117	224	11	3	14	...	...	140	49	189	1,750	1,443	3,193	1,640	1,296	2,936	37.94	59.09	46.66	8.53	3.78	6.43
1884	298	249	547	145	145	290	8	4	12	...	...	142	67	209	1,749	1,479	3,228	1,660	1,338	2,998	48.65	58.23	53.01	8.55	5.00	6.97
1885	293	226	519	141	131	272	7	5	12	...	...	147	76	223	1,743	1,487	3,230	1,658	1,370	3,030	48.12	57.96	52.40	8.86	5.54	7.36
1886	333	262	595	128	115	243	7	3	10	...	...	125	74	199	1,818	1,560	3,378	1,694	1,421	3,115	38.43	43.89	40.84	7.37	5.27	6.38
1887	372	290	662	138	137	275	6	2	8	...	...	158	80	238	1,884	1,632	3,516	1,767	1,494	3,261	37.09	47.24	41.54	8.94	5.40	7.30
1888	381	267	648	171	136	307	4	4	8	...	...	127	90	217	1,966	1,666	3,632	1,811	1,513	3,324	44.88	50.93	47.37	7.01	5.94	6.71
1889	401	264	665	169	126	295	56	71	127	...	...	153	84	237	1,980	1,647	3,627	1,882	1,543	3,425	42.14	47.73	44.36	8.13	5.44	6.92
1890	438	311	749	168	126	294	17	24	41	...	...	161	103	264	2,066	1,703	3,769	1,954	1,588	3,542	38.35	40.51	39.25	8.24	6.48	7.45
1891	427	318	745	170	137	307	25	16	41	...	...	201	92	293	2,090	1,778	3,868	1,993	1,630	3,623	39.81	43.08	41.21	10.08	5.64	8.09
1892	399	307	706	142	144	286	20	22	42	...	...	181	102	283	2,136	1,818	3,954	2,045	1,681	3,726	35.59	46.90	40.51	8.85	6.07	7.59
1893	384	296	680	153	102	255	25	40	65	...	...	177	94	271	2,161	1,877	4,038	2,112	1,748	3,860	39.84	34.46	37.50	8.38	5.37	7.02
1894	402	293	695	124	97	221	21	43	64	...	...	207	118	325	2,205	1,911	4,116	2,119	1,793	3,912	30.84	33.11	31.80	9.77	6.58	8.31
1895	377	277	654	115	106	221	25	41	66	...	...	211	114	325	2,221	1,927	4,148	2,125	1,804	3,929	30.50	38.26	33.79	9.93	6.32	8.27
1896	384	305	689	114	96	210	19	37	56	...	...	231	129	360	2,234	1,970	4,204	2,147	1,823	3,970	29.69	31.47	30.48	10.76	7.08	9.07
Total	5,417	4,082	9,499	2,102	1,850	3,952	264	323	587	...	...	2,499	1,332	3,831	...	...	...	28,243	23,305	51,550	38.80	45.32	41.60	8.85	5.72	7.43

TABLE V.—History of Annual Admissions since the Opening of the first Asylum in 1848.

	Admissions.			Numbers.			Number per 100 of Admissions.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Discharged:—									
Recovered ... ..	...	...	...	4,392	3,691	8,083	29·13	34·20	31·25
Relieved ... ..	...	...	...	582	669	1,251	3·86	6·20	4·84
Not improved ... ..	...	...	...	3,111	2,258	5,369	20·63	20·92	20·75
Died ... ..	...	...	...	4,758	2,204	6,962	31·56	20·42	26·91
Out on trial and boarded out on 31st December, 1896 ... ..	...	...	...	98	136	234	·65	1·27	·90
Remaining ... ..	...	...	...	2,136	1,834	3,970	14·17	16·99	15·35
Total	15,077	10,792	25,869	15,077	10,792	25,869	100·00	100·00	100·00

TABLE VI.—Showing the Length of Residence in those Discharged Recovered, and in those who have Died, during the Year 1896.

Length of Residence.	Recovered.			Died.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under 1 month	2	...	2	6	1	7
1 month and under 3 months	24	10	34	25	8	33
3 months " 6 "	25	16	41	31	12	43
6 " " 9 "	17	22	39	11	7	18
9 " " 12 "	13	17	30	16	3	19
1 year and under 2 years	19	14	33	23	16	39
2 years " 3 "	6	3	9	17	7	24
3 " " 5 "	3	7	10	20	21	41
5 " " 7 "	4	2	6	22	8	30
7 " " 10 "	1	2	3	14	14	28
10 " " 12 " ... ..	...	2	2	6	4	10
12 " " 15 " ... ..	...	1	1	9	6	15
15 " " 20 " ... ..	...	...	...	10	10	20
20 " " 25 " ... ..	...	...	...	7	1	8
25 " " 30 " ... ..	...	...	...	12	10	22
30 " " 35 " ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
35 " " 40 " ... ..	...	...	...	1	1	2
45 " " 50 " ... ..	...	...	...	1	...	1
Total	114	96	210	231	129	360

TABLE VII.—Showing in Quinquennial Periods the Ages of those Admitted, Recovered, and Died during the Year 1896, and of those Remaining on 31st December, 1896.

Ages.	The Admissions.			Recovered.			The Deaths.			Patients Resident 31st December, 1896.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under 5 years	4	2	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	11	2	13
5 years and under 10 years	5	6	11	...	...	...	2	1	3	11	19	30
10 " 15 "	9	3	12	...	...	...	2	...	2	34	24	58
15 " 20 "	16	16	32	4	9	13	4	3	7	84	76	160
20 " 25 "	39	35	74	15	15	30	7	2	9	148	98	246
25 " 30 "	52	56	108	17	19	36	18	11	29	206	160	366
30 " 35 "	63	49	112	21	13	34	26	13	39	220	167	387
35 " 40 "	50	43	93	12	12	24	19	11	30	194	176	370
40 " 45 "	38	37	75	6	3	9	16	12	28	187	158	345
45 " 50 "	34	27	61	11	8	19	14	6	20	178	187	365
50 " 55 "	32	21	53	6	4	10	27	13	40	224	218	442
55 " 60 "	15	19	34	3	3	6	19	12	31	185	182	367
60 " 65 "	20	22	42	3	3	6	19	7	26	148	137	285
65 " 70 "	13	6	19	4	1	5	20	10	30	99	87	186
70 " 75 "	12	12	24	5	...	5	10	3	13	41	43	84
75 " 80 "	9	6	15	1	...	1	12	9	21	31	27	58
80 " 85 "	4	4	8	...	...	...	2	5	7	19	15	34
85 " 90 "	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	2	3	4	2	6
90 " 100 "	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Unknown	29	18	47	6	6	12	13	9	22	209	192	401
Total	446	382	828	114	96	210	231	129	360	2,234	1,970	4,204

TABLE VIII.—Return of Patients on Probation under Section 87.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Out on probation on 1st January, 1896	57	102	159
Allowed out during the year	169	188	357
Total	226	290	516
Recovered and relieved :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	20	28	48
Of those allowed out during the present year	38	43	81
Total	58	71	129
Died :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	2	1	3
Of those allowed out during the present year	6	...	6
Total	8	1	9
Written off the books under section 89 of Act 1113 :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	13	25	38
Of those allowed out during the present year	6	11	17
Total	19	36	55
Returned to the Asylum at expiration of probation :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	12	20	32
Of those allowed out during the present year	44	49	93
Total	56	69	125
Remaining under care out of the Asylum on 31st December, 1896	85	113	198

TABLE IX.—Return of Patients Boarded out.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Boarded out on 1st January, 1896	11	20	31
Allowed out during the year	5	10	15
Total	16	30	46
Recovered—			
Of those allowed out during the present year ... ..	...	1	1
Returned to the Asylums by their guardians—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	2	2	4
Of those allowed out during the present year	1	4	5
Total	3	6	9
Boarded out on 31st December, 1896	13	23	36

TABLE X.—Showing the Manner in which Patients were Admitted during the Year 1896.

		Yarra Bend.	Kew.	Kew Idiot Asylum.	Ararat.	Beechworth.	Sunbury.	Ballarat.	Total.
Lunatics sent to the Asylum by their friends	{ Male	28	69	10	4	4	...	8	123
	{ Female	36	85	8	7	4	...	10	150
" " the police ...	{ Male	112	52	5	30	18	...	8	225
	{ Female	54	52	4	13	2	...	5	130
" received from Benevolent Asylums ...	{ Male	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	4
	{ Female	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
" " Hospitals	{ Male	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
	{ Female	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	6
" " Gaols	{ Male	20	...	...	...	4	...	...	24
	{ Female	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
" " all other public institutions (including transfers)	{ Male	5	5	6	23	1	...	12	52
	{ Female	4	4	5	20	37	11	1	82
Total		274	276	38	97	70	11	44	810
Escaped patients retaken		6	6	...	2	3	1	...	18
Total admissions		280	282	38	99	73	12	44	828

TABLE XI.—Showing the Nationalities and Religious Persuasions of those admitted for the first time during the Year 1896.

Birthplaces.	Religious Persuasions.										Total.
	Protestant.					Roman Catholic.	Pagan.	Hebrew.	Mahome-tan.	Unascertained.	
	Church of England.	Presby-terian.	Wesleyan.	Lutheran.	Other Protestant Denomi-nations.						
Victoria	98	38	36	1	21	79	...	2	...	5	280
Other Colonies and British Possessions	15	1	7	...	4	9	...	1	1	...	38
England	74	2	20	...	17	5	...	1	...	7	126
Scotland ... ..	...	29	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...	35
Ireland	10	7	3	...	3	86	...	...	...	4	113
France	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2
Germany	2	...	...	8	...	2	...	...	...	...	12
China ... ..	...	...	1	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	7
Other Countries ...	3	...	...	2	...	8	...	...	...	2	15
Not known	14	5	6	2	3	20	...	...	...	11	61
Total	217	82	73	13	52	212	6	4	1	29	689

TABLE XII.—Showing the Average Number of Patients employed attending Amusements and Divine Service.

Particulars.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the Workshops (Male)—			
Blacksmiths	11	...	11
Carpenters	18	...	18
Mattress-makers ...	1	50	51
Shoemakers	23	...	23
Tailors	35	5	40
Painters	11	...	11
Basket-maker	1	...	1
Mat-makers	17	...	17
Engineers	3	...	3
Frenchpolisher ...	1	...	1
In the Workshops (Female)—			
Sewing (making-up and repairing clothing)	...	388	388
Fancy work ... ..	...	47	47
Miscellaneous occupations—			
Working on the farms	170	...	170
" in the gardens	104	...	104
" in the kitchens	45	...	45
" in the stores	8	...	8
" in the laundries	...	259	259
" in the wards and airing courts	519	517	1,036
" as servants at private quarters	25	20	45
" on roads and ornamental grounds	64	...	64
" in mess-rooms	9	4	13
Other work about the establishments	124	4	128
Amusements—			
Balls and concerts ...	596	544	1,140
Billiards and reading room	400	210	610
Cards, chess, dominoes, &c.	352	100	452
Bowls, cricket, croquet, football, and tennis	204	49	253
Walking and driving	515	350	865
School (attending) ...	92	68	160
Attending divine service	650	620	1,270

TABLE XIII.—Showing the Total Receipts and Expenditure of the Department of Hospitals for the Insane during the Year 1896.

Receipts.						Amount.		
Collections by the Master-in-Lunacy for maintenance of patients at—						£	s.	d.
Yarra Bend Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	2,908	9	1
Kew Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	4,238	19	8
Ararat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	1,326	15	10
Beechworth Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	978	16	5
Sunbury Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	787	7	6
Ballarat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	521	12	11
Lunacy Wards	...	...	...	...	...	4	3	7
Amount of fines	...	...	...	...	...	52	10	10
„ sales	...	...	...	...	...	840	6	1
Miscellaneous collections	...	...	...	...	...	83	8	10
Total	...	...	...	...	...	11,742	10	9

Expenditure.						Amount.		
General expenses						£	s.	d.
...	...	...	...	...	...	1,995	3	9
Maintenance at—								
Yarra Bend Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	20,342	0	3
Kew Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	25,705	10	10
Ararat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	17,078	13	6
Beechworth Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	15,831	6	6
Sunbury Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	11,911	16	4
Ballarat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	5,874	6	1
Lunacy Ward, Bendigo	...	...	...	...	...	190	15	0
„ „ Castlemaine	...	...	...	...	...	9	18	0
„ „ Geelong	...	...	...	...	...	43	0	0
Expenses in connexion with the committal and transport of lunatics	...	...	...	...	...	1,308	12	3
„ „ boarded-out patients	...	...	...	...	...	590	12	2
Total	...	...	...	...	...	100,881	14	8

TABLE XIV.—Showing the Total Cost of Maintenance against each Asylum, the Sums expended against each Vote, and the Amount of General Expenses for the Year 1896.

Lunatic Asylums.	Daily Average Number Resident.	Total Cost of Maintenance.			Salaries.			Fees to Official Visitors.			Clothing, Bedding, and Material for Manufacture.			Allowance to Chaplains.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Yarra Bend	789	20,342	0	3	10,799	15	3	...	1,701	9	3	70	0	0		
Kew	1,143	25,705	10	10	12,821	4	3	...	2,527	17	11	70	0	0		
Ararat	668	17,078	13	6	8,445	6	9	...	1,518	17	7	131	10	0		
Beechworth	611	15,831	6	6	7,855	0	9	...	1,314	11	1	60	10	0		
Sunbury	542	11,911	16	4	5,959	5	4	...	980	1	3	72	0	0		
Ballarat	217	5,874	6	1	2,657	3	3	...	554	14	3	60	0	0		
General expenses	...	1,995	3	9	1,595	14	8	111 5 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	3,970	98,738	17	3	50,133	10	3	111 5 0	8,597	11	4	464	0	0		

Lunatic Asylums.	Provisions and Extra Articles.			Stores, Purchase of Stock, Books, Amusements, &c.			Fuel, Light, and Water.			Medicines and Medical Comforts, Surgical Instruments, &c.			Stimulants, Wine, Spirits, Beer, &c.			Forage.			Incidentals.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Yarra Bend	5,231	3	8	700	3	2	1,103	12	6	239	9	9	189	7	9	63	19	1	242	19	10
Kew	7,098	1	2	734	4	3	1,452	15	2	276	13	10	244	7	2	85	7	4	394	19	9
Ararat	4,820	6	11	542	2	9	1,268	12	3	86	5	10	37	2	6	68	8	9	160	0	2
Beechworth	4,556	10	4	333	5	7	1,235	9	7	96	15	10	141	3	2	36	17	11	201	2	3
Sunbury	3,135	3	2	672	5	7	730	2	10	97	13	8	27	5	2	59	11	0	178	8	4
Ballarat	1,722	3	7	123	17	5	450	15	3	51	11	8	45	13	9	67	13	10	140	13	1
General expenses	...	...	...	20	14	2	2	0	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	265	9	4
Total	26,563	8	10	3,126	12	11	6,243	8	2	848	10	7	684	19	6	381	17	11	1,583	12	9

TABLE XV.—Showing the Average Weekly Cost of Maintenance of Patients for the Year 1896.

Lunatic Asylums.	Daily Average Number Resident.	Total Cost of Maintenance.	Collections for Maintenance, Sales, Fees, Fines, &c.	Salaries.	Allowance to Chaplains.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Yarra Bend ...	789	20,342 0 3	3,069 3 0	0 5 3 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Kew ...	1,143	25,705 10 10	4,554 14 11	0 4 3 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
Ararat ...	668	17,078 13 6	1,523 3 4	0 4 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 1
Beechworth ...	611	15,831 6 6	1,105 5 6	0 4 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Sunbury ...	542	11,911 16 4	883 12 5	0 4 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ballarat ...	217	5,874 6 1	602 8 0	0 4 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Total ...	3,970	96,743 13 6	11,738 7 2	...	...
General expenses ...	...	1,995 3 9	...	...	...

Lunatic Asylums.	Provisions and Extra Articles.	Clothing, Bedding, and Material for Manufacture.	Stores, Purchase of Stock, Books, Amusements, &c.	Fuel, Light, and Water.	Medicines and Medical Comforts.	Stimulants. Wines, Spirits, Beer, &c.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Yarra Bend ...	0 2 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 10	0 0 4	0 0 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1
Kew ...	0 2 4 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 3	0 0 5 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 1
Ararat ...	0 2 9 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 3 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 8 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
Beechworth ...	0 2 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 10	0 0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 9 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 1
Sunbury ...	0 2 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 5 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
Ballarat ...	0 3 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 11 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1	0 0 1
Total ...	...	...	...	...	...	...
General expenses ...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Lunatic Asylums.	Forage.	Incidentals.	Total Weekly Cost of Maintenance per Patient.	Average Collections per Week for Maintenance, Sales, Fees, Fines, &c.	Weekly Cost per Patient, Deducting Collections for Maintenance, Sales, Fees, Fines, &c.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Yarra Bend ...	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 9 11	0 1 6	0 8 5
Kew ...	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 8 7 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 1 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 7 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Ararat ...	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 9 10	0 0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 8 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Beechworth ...	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 9 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 8 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 9 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Sunbury ...	0 0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 8 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 7 10
Ballarat ...	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 3	0 10 5	0 1 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 9 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
Total ...	...	...	0 9 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 8 3
General expenses ...	...	...	...	...	0 0 2 $\frac{1}{4}$

TABLE XVI.—Showing the Admissions, Re-admissions, Discharges, and Deaths during the Year ended 31st December, 1896, in Lunacy Wards at Bendigo, Castlemaine, and Geelong.

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the wards, 1st January, 1896 ...	...	...	...	2	1	3
Cases admitted:—						
First admissions ...	51	40	91			
Total cases admitted during the year ...	...	...	...	51	40	91
Total cases under care during the year ...	...	...	...	53	41	94
Cases discharged:—						
Recovered ...	18	14	32			
Not improved ...	27	24	51			
Died ...	2	1	3			
Total cases discharged and died during the year ...	...	...	...	47	39	86
Remaining in the wards, 31st December, 1896 ...	...	...	...	6	2	8

TABLE XVII.—Showing the Number of Patients Visited and the Number of Miles Travelled by the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums during the Year 1896.

Place and Date of Visit.		Number of Patients on Day of Visit.		Number of Miles Travelled.		Place and Date of Visit.		Number of Patients on Day of Visit.		Number of Miles Travelled.	
		Number.	Total.	Number.	Total.			Number.	Total.	Number.	Total.
Yarra Bend—						Beechworth—					
26th March ...	785	...	2	18	5th February	608	...	345	1,380		
29th March ...	784	...	2		4th June ...	607	...	345			
20th June ...	799	...	2		28th August ...	610	...	345			
27th June ...	796	...	2		12th November	614	...	345			
12th September	781	...	2				2,439				
26th September	773	...	2		Sunbury—						
15th November	781	...	2		30th January	543	...	49½			
28th November	785	...	2		5th March ...	543	...	49½			
19th December	790	...	2		22nd March ...	542	...	49½			
			7,074							29th May ...	540	...	49½
Kew*						Ballarat—					
						10th March ...					
						10th June ...					
						15th September					
						9th December					
						885					
						4,811					
						206					
						206					
						206					
						206					
						824					
Ararat—						Total ...					
11th March ...	678	...	114	456	...	...	17,888	...	3,123		
11th June ...	669	...	114								
16th September	666	...	114								
10th December	666	...	114								
			2,679								

* Inspected by Board of Official Visitors.

The following changes have taken place in the distribution of the insane during the year:—

In Yarra Bend, a decrease of	...	...	21
Kew, an increase of	...	...	14
Cottages for Idiots, an increase of	...	...	21
Ararat, an increase of	...	...	16
Beechworth, a decrease of	...	...	10
Sunbury, a decrease of	...	...	21
Ballarat, an increase of	...	...	13

By a judicious selection of patients for transfer to the country asylums from Yarra Bend and Kew, not only is overcrowding minimized at the metropolitan asylums, but the patients themselves have by their removal the advantages associated with change of scene and surroundings.

Admissions.—The number of persons admitted during the past year was 683, or 33 in excess of the admissions for the previous year. The re-admissions, or patients who had been previously under treatment in an asylum, numbered 123.

On the 31st December, 1896, the estimated population of Victoria being 1,174,888, the admissions in proportion to the general population were 1 in 1,720. In 1895, the proportion was 1 in 1,818. At the end of the past year the proportion of insane to sane was 1 to every 279 of the estimated population, the figures for the preceding year being 1 in 285.

In connexion with these statistics, it may be mentioned that there has been no abnormal increase of insanity, the admissions having been one less than the average for the preceding five years, but a reduction of nearly 7,000 in the general population of the colony has been reported for the year, and the insane ratio has been affected accordingly.

Discharges.—The names of 772 patients were written off the asylums' registers during the year. The recoveries numbered 210, relieved 56, escapes 25, deaths 360, and 121 patients were transferred from one asylum to another—chiefly to fill vacancies in country asylums, and in some instances to meet the requirements of particular cases.

Recoveries.—The patients discharged as recovered numbered 210. This is the lowest number recorded during the past fifteen years, and shows a diminished percentage of recoveries on the admissions. This decrease in the discharge rate is largely due to the change of type of insanity coming under treatment; there being a large increase of cases of general paralysis amongst the admissions. In the Kew Asylum, about 50 per cent. of the males received during the past two years were suffering from this most hopeless disease, and the superintendents of the other asylums report the increased frequency of the malady. The state of health of the patients on admission has much influence on the recovery as well as on the death rate.

In calculating the percentage of recoveries, imbeciles and idiots are not excluded from the number of admissions.

Relieved.—The names of 56 patients were written off the books as "relieved." These patients were on probation with their friends, and did not return to the asylums within the statutory time. If they had presented themselves for medical examination, no doubt the greater number, if not all, would have been discharged as recovered.

Mortality.—The rate of mortality, calculated on the average numbers resident, was 9.07 per cent.; the male rate being 10.76 and the female 7.08. It will be seen on reference to Table IV., that the average death rate for the preceding fourteen years was only 7.29; the male ratio being 8.69 and the female 5.60. There has been an increasing death rate during the past three years, and the explanation is found in the fact that the admissions have been in a very unsatisfactory condition as regards mental and bodily health; the cases of general paralysis generally terminating fatally within two years of admission. There has also been an accumulation of feeble patients in the asylums, whose deaths during the past two or three years have increased the average rates for that period. At the Beechworth Asylum an epidemic of influenza prevailed during January, 1896, and 4 male and 15 female patients succumbed. At the other asylums the general health of the inmates was satisfactory, and no epidemic or preventable disease occurred.

Casualties.—On the morning of the 20th December, 1896, one of the single rooms of the Kew Asylum was discovered to be on fire, and the inmate, a female patient, was found dead, with severe burns on her body. Very careful and searching inquiries were made by the police as well as the asylum authorities, without ascertaining how the fire originated. An inquest was held on the body, the coroner's jury returning a verdict of "suffocation by fire, origin unknown," and attaching no blame to any member of the staff. The other casualties were not serious, and do not call for special notice.

Probation.—The probationary system has attained satisfactory dimensions, no fewer than 357 patients having been allowed to leave the asylums with their friends during the year, and as 159 patients were on trial at the beginning of the year, 516 altogether had the benefit of removal from asylum restraint. At the end of the year 198 remained under care of their friends.

Boarding Out.—On the 31st December, 1896, 36 patients were absent from the asylum under the care of guardians, who were paid a small weekly sum for maintenance.

Lunacy Wards.—The lunacy wards attached to the Bendigo, Castlemaine, and Geelong hospitals admitted 91 patients for observation and temporary treatment. Three patients were in the wards at the beginning of the year, making 94 cases under care during the twelve months. These were disposed of as follows:—32 were discharged as recovered, 51 were transferred to the lunatic asylums, and 3 died, leaving 8 in the wards on 31st December.

Water Supply.—The water supply to the Yarra Bend Asylum is now in a satisfactory state, and a good pressure is available for domestic requirements, and should also be obtainable in the event of an outbreak of fire, for which purpose pillar

hydrants have been placed in convenient positions. The water supply to the Idiot Asylum has also been improved, but it is to be regretted that the alterations and additions so urgently required at Ararat, Beechworth, Ballarat, and Kew, have not yet been carried out. The work is of so important a nature that the cost might fairly be regarded as a first charge on the Public Works Vote for this department.

I may mention that, in my opinion, Lake Kerferd, from which the Beechworth Asylum draws its supply, is in an unsafe condition, as the drainage of some neighbouring houses may be carried into it after heavy rain.

Food.—The official visitors report that the food supply has been of good quality, and any articles inferior to sample that have been sent to the asylums by contractors have been promptly dealt with.

Works and Buildings.—The laundries so urgently required at Yarra Bend and Sunbury have not yet been erected, but plans for a laundry at the former asylum have been prepared, and a contract has just been accepted for the work. Some important additions were approved for the Idiot Asylum which will give greatly increased dormitory accommodation, and the buildings are now in hand. A considerable amount of work has also been done at the Sunbury Asylum, in preparing the new wards for occupation, and these buildings will probably be ready for patients in a few months' time. Some smaller works have been executed at the other institutions, but all the asylums require a thorough overhaul, and in my opinion it would be more economical to take the work in hand at once, otherwise extensive or permanent damage may result.

It is again urged that the district architects should make periodical examinations of the asylum buildings, and report to this Department, before the yearly estimates of expenditure are prepared, the nature and cost of the works necessary for keeping the buildings in a satisfactory state of repair.

Staff.—Many changes have taken place in the staff during the year. I regret to have to record the death of Dr. Deshon, who had been superintendent of the Beechworth Asylum for fourteen years. He was succeeded by Dr. Samson, whose place at Ballarat was filled by Dr. Barker. Two junior medical officers were appointed—Dr. Mullen, at Sunbury, *vice* Dr. Player, resigned; and Dr. Thompson, at Ararat, *vice* Dr. Barker, transferred. A second medical officer was provided for on the estimates for Yarra Bend, but the salary offered was not attractive, and it was only within the past few weeks that the position was filled.

In the attendants' staff a number of vacancies occurred, due to retirement of old officers, by transfers to other departments, and (especially amongst the females) by resignations. Every effort has been made to maintain a high standard of efficiency, but under the present system there are difficulties not easily surmounted. The vacancies in the male attendants' staff have been filled by excess telegraph messengers in the Postal Department, who have been required to replace trained attendants, some of whom were mechanics and others good farm hands. The female attendants have only been allowed £25 a year, without increments, and experience has shown that this rate of pay is not sufficient to induce well-qualified young women to join the service.

Provision has been made on the Estimates for additional staff for the Idiot Asylum.

Cost of Maintenance.—The expenditure of the Department during the year amounted to £100,881 14s. 8d. This sum includes payments not directly controlled by the Department, *viz.*: Contributions to hospital authorities at Bendigo, Castlemaine, and Geelong, for maintenance of patients in the lunacy wards, £243 13s.; expenses in connexion with committal and transport of lunatics, £1,308 12s. 3d.; expenses of boarding out patients, £590 12s. 2d.; general expenses and official visitation, £1,995 3s. 9d. When these amounts are deducted, the actual cost of maintenance of the six asylums is reduced to £96,743 13s. 6d. This gives a weekly rate of 9s. 4½d. per patient, as compared with 9s. 1½d. for the preceding year. The Master-in-Lunacy's collections amounted to £10,766 5s.; amounts received from the asylums, from sales of surplus produce, &c., £840 6s. 1d.; from fines and miscellaneous items, £83 8s. 10d. Deducting these collections from the asylum expenditure, will reduce the weekly cost to 8s. 3d., or 2¾d. more than last year.

There has been an increased expenditure in the following items, *viz.*:—Provisions, clothing and bedding, stores, fuel; and a decrease in salaries.

Although the rate for maintenance has been gradually decreasing for some years past, the saving has not been effected by any curtailment of the dietary scale or diminution of ordinary comforts. Substantial savings result from all the asylums having farms and gardens in working order, from which supplies of milk, eggs, vegetables, &c., are obtained. Also from the workshops, where the paid artisans, assisted by patients, manufacture large quantities of boots and all the clothing required.

Competition amongst tenderers has also reduced the prices of supplies obtainable under contract to very reasonable rates.

GENERAL REMARKS.

As at present organized, the Victorian asylums do not, in my opinion, give the patients all the advantages that it should be possible to provide for them, and I have accordingly submitted a special report on the subject for the consideration of the Government.

At the same time I am glad to be able to state that the condition of the asylums has been steadily improving during the past ten years, and, if the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Asylums, to hold the medical superintendents responsible for the proper working of the asylums, be given effect to, there is no reason why the Victorian Institutions should not be benefited to such an extent as to make them compare favorably with those of other lands.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. V. McCREERY,
Inspector of Lunatic Asylums.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.