

Sydney Adventist Hospital  
**Christian Centre for Bioethics**

Avondale Sydney Library

**Tom Ludowici Bioethics Collection**

Dr Bert Clifford, the General Superintendent, had a personal interest in ethics, having studied ethics by distance education through the University of South Africa. He later completed an intensive course in bioethics at Georgetown University in Washington DC in 1990. In the early 1980s Dr Clifford donated bioethics books to the San. This formed the basis of the current bioethics collection. The first National Bioethics Conference was held at the San in 1986. Following the success of the second conference a year later, coupled with the development of the resource collection, it was determined that the pursuit of bioethics at the San commanded sufficient respect from peers that the "Christian Centre for Bioethics" be created. This term appears for the first time in the proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference in 1988. Senior Chaplain Dr Tom Ludowici became the first, and only, Director, retaining this position until his retirement in July 2005. Plans to build a research centre as an extension beyond the Chaplains Department did not come to fruition. The establishment of the Hospital's Ethics Committee was a direct result of the burgeoning interest in bioethics.

Jenny Baldwin was the Librarian and the collection was located in her office in Administration. Some books were bought locally, and many were ordered from Barnes and Noble in the United States. There was no special budget for books. They were just charged to Administration in a period of the San's financial heyday.

Collection development highlighted human reproductive technologies and euthanasia. This reflected the early topics presented in the Centre's 11 National Bioethics Conferences (annual from 1986-1994 plus 1996 and 1998). Books were catalogued utilising the Library Classification Scheme of the National Reference Center for Bioethics Literature, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, in Washington DC.

From January 1985 Dr Clifford cut articles on bioethics topics from his newspapers at home. The tasks of selecting, cutting, and pasting into files was transferred to Jenny Baldwin and then to Sue Price. This became too labour intensive and in May 1995 the commercial supplier Media Monitors was utilised. The service was terminated in January 1998.

When the books and files outgrew Jenny's office it was planned to move them to their own room within the Hospital Library on Level 2 of the Major Extensions (named the A.K. Tulloch Theatre Block in 2003). The move took

place in July 1995, 2 months after Michael Rigby became Head Librarian. Michael assumed responsibility for collection development. Following the opening ceremony there were guided tours of the Library. One group was standing in the Bioethics room having just been told that bioethics issues included abortion and euthanasia. One gentleman very seriously asked "Which room do you do your euthanasia in?"

The room consisted of 2 bays of shelves for journals, 5 bays for books, a 4-drawer filing cabinet, and a large table which was heavily used by students for group study. An incident prompted the purchase of 2 further bays in May 1998. Two students were attempting to remove a book from a very tightly packed shelf. All 4 bays tipped forward and half a wall of books fell around the students who fortunately were not injured. Subsequently the shelves were securely attached to the wall.

By February 1998 the pre-July 1995 bioethics books were recatalogued into the main Library catalogue. This facilitated the books being available for loan.

In April 2003 the new 2-colour Bioethics brochure was inserted in all 900 copies of *Monash Bioethics Review*. Sydney-based students of Monash University Centre for Human Bioethics courses are potential users.

2 more bays of shelves were installed in February 2001. 800 bioethics books were processed between mid-2002 and mid-2003 so a double-sided range of 36 shelves replaced the large table in June 2003. Study space was down to a single carrel.

The role of a library is to offer information on all sides of an issue. Determinations of validity and credibility are left to the researcher. This dictum has been followed while building the bioethics collection. Its scope is comprehensive and its intent universal. At the turn of the millennium the hot topics were cloning and stem cell research.

On 19 April 2010 the then-retired Dr Ludowici was honoured with a naming ceremony. The Centre became the Tom Ludowici Bioethics Collection. It could not be contained in the one room and now also extends along the whole back wall of the Library.

Print journals are now being replaced with online full text subscriptions. The Library's main collection is weeded to remain current. By contrast bioethics print books are not weeded and have become a major historical collection. In 2016 it is one of the largest single collections of bioethics books in Australia.

## Holdings

	Books	Print journal subscriptions	Documents in Bioethics File
July 1995	700	15	c. 200
May 2006	4,200	25	930
Sept 2012	6,100	10	0
Sept 2016	7,500	8	0

## Subject areas

- bioethics
- ethics
- philosophy of biology, medicine and health
- nursing ethics
- science/technology and society
- codes of professional ethics
- sociology of medicine
- professional/patient relationships
- health care
- sexuality/gender
- contraception
- abortion
- population
- reproduction/reproductive technologies
- genetics, molecular biology and microbiology
- environmental quality
- neurosciences and mental health therapies
- human experimentation
- artificial and transplanted organs/tissues
- death and dying
- international/political dimensions of biology and medicine
- animal welfare

The major topics in the collection are medical and nursing ethics, abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering (including cloning), and stem cell research.

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