

**PROFESSIONAL ISOLATION & INDEPENDENCE OF  
BUSH NURSES IN TASMANIA 1910–1957**

**'We were very much individuals on our own'**

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## STATEMENT OF ACCESS

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "ME Bardenhagen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'M' and 'B'.

Marita E Bardenhagen

15 October 2003

## AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis, this work contains no material either published elsewhere or extracted from a thesis presented by me for another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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## ABSTRACT

This is a thesis about the lives and roles of women who were Tasmanian Bush Nurses, who engaged in a facet of nursing that originated in 1910 and eventually was renamed District Nursing in 1957. The Bush Nursing Service provided nursing care to the populations of rural townships, the surrounding countryside and bush in a period of Tasmanian history when road transport and communications necessitated the nurse to operate with little day-to-day supervision and support. From a variety of public and private sources and in-depth interviews this thesis explores the twin themes of female professional isolation and independence. It demonstrates the dynamic nature of lived experience as the society in which the nurse lived and worked changed.

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