



## HERITAGE SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 3

### ISABELLA FITZPATRICK

A strong and intelligent business woman, Isabella Gertrude Fitzpatrick was one of the first women elected to local government after amendment to the Local Government Act in 1920. She is also thought to have been one of the first sugar growers in the Rollingstone area and was influential in the founding of the local school.



Isabella Gertrude Wyatt was born in Townsville on the 26 August 1874. Her father, Charles Wyatt, was the licensee of the Court House Hotel, now the Herbert Hotel. Charles was a well-respected

hotelier and member of the Townsville community. When he died suddenly in 1904, his wife, Eliza took over the running of the hotel.



Isabella, John Fitzpatrick and family.

Their daughter Isabella, married John Fitzpatrick on 5 December 1906. John is thought to have come from Toowoomba and served in the police force until his marriage to Isabella in Townsville. John renamed the hotel the Herbert in 1910.

Isabella and her husband ran the hotel until 1914 when they moved north to Armidale (now Rollingstone) where they owned and ran the hotel. By this time Isabella and John had four children.

The Armidale Hotel had been a Cobb and Co. coach stop on the busy road between Townsville and Ingham since the 1880s. The hotel also served people living and working in the local area.



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In 1914 the hotel had no running water and water had to be brought to hotel from the creek in kerosene tins. Eventually John Fitzpatrick dug a well and a windmill. When the township name was changed to Rollingstone in 1915 the hotel name was also changed. Mrs Fitzpatrick built a new hotel adjacent to the railway line in 1921. In January 1924, the Thuringowa Shire Council nominated Mrs Fitzpatrick for a vacant position on the Council. The nomination was unanimously accepted and Mrs Fitzpatrick was appointed on the 15 January 1924. She was one of the first women to serve on a local government authority in Queensland. However she did not nominate for a position in the next Council election in April 1924. It is not known why she did not stand but it may have been due to her business commitments and the distance she had to travel for meetings.

Isabella sold the hotel in 1933 but did not leave the Rollingstone district until 1949 when she went to live with her daughter Evelyn in Sydney. She died at her home on 30 September 1949 and was buried in the Field of Mars Cemetery at Ryde in Sydney.

was erected over it and this provided a reliable supply of water to the hotel for many years.

### Acknowledgements:

- Bianka Vidonja Balanzategui, *Thirty-three miles to Rollingstone, A Short History of Rollingstone and Balgal*, Thuringowa City Council, Thuringowa Central, 2003.
- D Gibson-Wilde and B Gibson-Wilde, *A Pattern of Pubs, Hotels of Townsville 1864-1914*, James Cook University, Townsville, 1988.
- Lyn Henderson, *More than Rates, Roads and Rubbish: A History of Local Government in Action in Thuringowa Shire 1879-1985*, PhD Thesis, James Cook University, April 1992.
- Thuringowa Library Heritage Services, Oral History Collection, Interview with John Fitzpatrick.

