

Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital

1964 – 1975

Details

Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital was the new name given in 1964 to the former Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home. Berry Street was a major centre for mothercraft nurse training until 1975. It also functioned as a maternity home, foundling hospital, and adoption agency. In 1975, the name of the agency changed to Berry Street Child and Family Care.

Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital was the new name given in 1964 to the institution in East Melbourne. Previously, it was known as the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home.

Berry Street was approved as a private adoption agency, under the Adoption of Children Act 1964, in February 1966. Adoption had long been an important function at Berry Street and its predecessor institutions, dating back to the 1870s.

In 1975, Berry Street's Adoption Agency closed.

Berry Street was a maternity home, foundling hospital, and adoption agency. It was also a major training centre for Mothercraft Nurses until 1975.

The final graduation of mothercraft nurses took place on 19 March 1975. Many past mothercraft trainees from Berry Street joined the Past Nurses Association and continued to take an interest in the institution.

The Toddlers' Wing, built in the post-war period was renamed the Appleton Wing in 1969, to honour Miss E.M. Appleton, a long-serving Committee member. The Appleton Wing provided accommodation for 16 toddlers.

In 1968, Berry Street opened a small pre-school. The pre-school endeavoured to give children from Berry Street experiences of 'normal life'. The children, many of whom had never seen the daily routine of household tasks like meal preparation, were able to 'play houses' at pre-school with miniature equipment.

By the 1970s, Australian society was changing and unmarried mothers were beginning to receive social security support. There was consequently less need for young women to seek the refuge of Berry Street. There were fewer children available for adoption.

In another reflection of changing times, in 1972 Berry Street employed its first qualified social worker. Berry Street was also considering opening a day care centre in the Appleton Wing.

The Home temporarily closed on 28 February 1975. The relocation of children from Berry Street made possible the temporary accommodation of Vietnamese war orphans, who arrived in Melbourne in April 1975.

The program at Berry Street was redefined in 1975, towards child care, family counselling and residential care in family group homes.

In 1975, the name of the agency changed to Berry Street – Child and Family Care.

Berry Street Victoria is the custodian of records from the Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital.

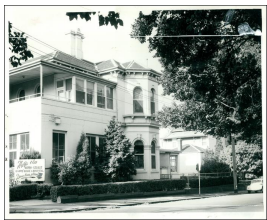
Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* Report (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

Gallery



[Baby looks intrigued]

Description: This is a copy of an image published in *The Argus* on Thursday 2 July 1953. The image shows a baby and mothercraft nurse from Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital. The caption read, Baby looks intrigued as he is weighed by Margaret Witton, a trained mothercraft nurse at Berry St. Foundling Home [altered from original].



Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital, East Melbourne

Description: This is a copy of a photograph of the Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital. There is a sign that reads: 'Help the Berry Street Babies' Home & Hospital. Donations please.'

More info

Chronology

- The Victorian Infant Asylum (1877 - 1902)
 - The Victorian Infant Asylum and Foundling Hospital (1902 - 1906)
 - The Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home (1906 - 1964)
- **Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital (1964 – 1975)**
 - Berry Street - Child and Family Care (1975 - 1992)
 - Berry Street Incorporated (1992 - 1994)
 - Berry Street (1994 - current)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Family Group Homes run by Berry Street \(1970 - 2000s\)](#)

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)

Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* Report (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

Resources

- Senate Community Affairs References Committee, [Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 29 February 2012
- [These Girls Love Babies](#), The Argus, 2 July 1953
- *Two Little Girls Who Know Berry Street*, The Sun News-Pictorial, 10 August 1967
- *Helping To Build a Babbies' Home*, The Sun News-Pictorial, 28 August 1967
- *Tots' Wing Is On Way*, The Sun News-Pictorial, 4 September 1968
- O'Neill, Cate, [The importance of photos](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 17 June 2015
- Cerreto, Alicia, [Berry Street 140 Years: restoring trust and hope](#), 2017
- [The Victorian Infant Asylum \(1877-1902\) later known as Berry Street](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Berry Street Babies' Home and Hospital

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records

- [Berry Street Heritage Collection \(c. 1877 - current\)](#)
 - [Records of Victorian Adoptions \(c. 1908 - current\)](#)
 - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/berry-street-babies-home-and-hospital/>