

Presbyterian Babies' Home

1928 – 1977

Details

The Presbyterian Babies' Home opened in 1928 in East Melbourne. In around 1933, the Home relocated to Camberwell. It housed babies and children up to the age of four. In 1977, it became the Canterbury Family Centre.

The *Argus* newspaper reported on the opening of The Presbyterian Babies' Home by Lady Stonehaven on 26 October 1928. It was located in a remodelled portion of the Old Scotch College, Lansdowne Street, East Melbourne.

The Babies' Home launched an appeal in 1929 to raise £5,000 to help its work 'caring for unwanted children'.

The Presbyterian Babies' Home relocated to Camberwell, to a former mansion known as 'Linda', donated to the Church in 1929.

The 'Linda' mansion, at 19 Canterbury Road, Camberwell was donated to the Presbyterian Church in 1925, by Elizabeth McNeill McCormick in 1925 in memory of her late father, WJ Craig.

The Babies' Home was invited to take over the Camberwell site in 1929. Previously, it housed a hostel for young women known as the Craig Memorial Hostel. This hostel closed after going into debt.

The foundation stone at the new Home was laid in June 1933. The Babies' Home was for children up to the age of four.

The Camberwell property was remodelled for its new tenants – babies were housed at the rear, and the Home's staff and administration were at the front, in the main house. The Babies' Home also provided mothercraft training.

In 1971, the Child Care Service of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches was established. This led to a reorganisation of the adoption services of Presbyterian and Methodist Babies' Homes. From 1971, the arrangement of adoptions and supervision of placements was carried out by Methodist Babies' Home staff.

In 1977, the Presbyterian Babies' Home was renamed the Canterbury Family Centre. The Centre's director Carol Richards oversaw significant reforms, including the construction of four units on the grounds of the Home, where children and staff had immediate access to psychologist and social workers.

Gallery



Presbyterian Babies' Home, 19 Canterbury Road Camberwell



Presbyterian Babies Home, Lansdowne Street, East Melbourne, with Scotch College Chapel in background

Description: Extensive historical notes on verso of backing sheet: Melbourne is well served by her institutions for the care of orphan children. Here are some of the inmates of the Presbyterian Babies Home in Lansdowne Street, East Melbourne. The chapel in the background of the picture is that of Scotch College, which for many years was next door.



Wattle Day in the City

Description: This is a copy of an illustrated article published in *The Argus* on Saturday 26 August 1933, p.21. The image shows a baby and adults collecting money for Wattle Day. The original caption reads: Child, from the Presbyterian Home, accepts a contribution on behalf of the babies [altered from original caption].



Presbyterian Babies' Home, Melbourne: Wartime air raid practice

Description: Caption reads, 'Windows of the Presbyterian Babies' Home made shatterproof by lining them with cot mattresses. The children are sitting quietly on stretchers during air raid practice.'



Three Korean nurses have been studying hospitals, nursing administration and nursing training in Australia.

Description: They are Miss Kim Keum, of the Severance School of Nursing, Seoul; Mrs Lee Kwi Hyung, Director of National University School of Nursing and Miss Hong Young Sook, Chief Nurse at the Korean Red Cross Hospital in Seoul. In Melbourne they spent two weeks at the Presbyterian Babies' Home, which cares for 50 babies - (from left) Mrs Lee, Miss Hong and Miss Kim watch children at play [photographic image].



Presbyterian Babies' Home, Group photo

Description: This is an image of graduating Mothercraft nurses holding babies at the Presbyterian Babies' Home, 19 Canterbury Road, Camberwell. It is part of a private photo album of a mothercraft nurse who trained at the Home in 1974-1975. Copies of photos in this album are available through Connections UnitingCare.



[Nurse entertaining babies during air raid practice]

Description: This is a copy of an image from the collection of the Australian War Memorial. [From catalogue description:] Melbourne, Vic, 1942-06-10. A nurse entertaining babies on a mattress under a table at the Camberwell Babies Home [Presbyterian Babies' Home] during an air raid practice.

More info

Chronology

- **Presbyterian Babies' Home (1928 – 1977)**
 - Canterbury Family Centre (1977 - 2000)
 - Connections UnitingCare (2000 - 2017)
 - Uniting - Connections (2017 - 2020)
 - Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited (2017 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Presbyterian Church of Victoria \(c. 1838 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Methodist Babies' Home \(1929 - c. 1974\)](#)

In 1971, the Methodist Babies' Home took over the administration of adoptions of children from the Presbyterian Babies' Home.

Date: 1971 -
- [Copelen Street Family Centre \(1974 - 1991\)](#)
- [Craig Memorial Hostel \(c. 1926 - c. 1929\)](#)

The Craig Memorial Hostel occupied the former mansion 'Linda' in Camberwell which was bought by the Presbyterian Church in 1929 and became the site for the Presbyterian Babies' Home in around 1933.
- [Presbyterian and Methodist Child Care Service \(1971 - 1977?\)](#)

Resources

- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, *Uniting Church in Australia: agencies in Victoria delivering substitute care services*, April 2008
- [Presbyterian Babies Home, Camberwell \[photo set\]](#), Connections UnitingCare's photostream, 2011
- [Formerly Linda House: 19 Canterbury Road](#), Victorian Heritage Database, 2011
- [Eighth Division repays Chinese friendship.](#), The Australian Women's Weekly, 29 March 1947
- [Presbyterian Babies Home \(1928-78\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Presbyterian Babies' Home
- Goold, S & Liddle, K, *In our own right: Black Australian nurses' stories*, 2005
- [Helen Baldwin interviewed by Helen Belle Curzon-Siggers in the Bringing them home oral history project \[sound recording\] \(1999\)](#), 10 September 1999

Records

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

Records

- [Uniting Photographs Collection \[Methodist and Presbyterian Babies' Homes\] \(c. 1940 - c. 1980\)](#)
 - [Records held by Uniting Church Archives \(1923 - 1994\)](#)
 - [Records of Uniting - Connections \(adoptions and out-of-home care\) \(1910 - 2020\)](#)
 - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
 - ['Closed' Agency and General Correspondence Files \[Charities Board of Victoria\] \(1923 - 1983\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/presbyterian-babies-home/>