

Alexandra Babies' Home

c. 1909 – 1973

Other Names: • Alexandra Toddlers' Home
• Alexandra Infants' Home

Details

The Alexandra Babies' Home was established in around 1909. It housed up to 36 children aged under five years of age. From 1964, it was known as the Alexandra Toddlers' Home. It closed in 1973.

The Babies' Home accommodated boys and girls under 5 years of age. The Home had a capacity of 36 children, and most of the children were state wards. The Home also acted as a 'feeder home' to the Ballarat Orphanage, with children being transferred there once they reached the age of four.

The Babies' Home single storey building at 187 Scott Parade was completed in 1909. It was on the same site as the Ballarat Rescue Home (formerly the Ballarat Female Refuge, established in 1867). The Female Refuge added a maternity ward in 1887 and later set aside specialist accommodation for infants. In 1909 the infants were moved into a newly-erected single storey building next door to the refuge, which was named the [Alexandra Babies' Home](#) (Wickham & Golding, *Refuge, Rescue and Reform*, 2024, p.262).

The Alexandra Babies' Home was originally run by a committee of management. In 1921 the Ballarat Town and City Mission took over management of the Alexandra Babies' Home, as well as the Female Refuge next door. At its annual meeting in July 1922, the City Mission announced that the site was now named the Ballarat Female Rescue and Alexandra Homes (*Ballarat Star*, 20 July 1922).

The Rescue Home next door to Alexandra Babies' Home closed in 1941. After this, the Babies' Home was the Town and City Mission's main charitable effort. The Home developed links with the nearby [Ballarat Orphanage](#). In 1942 HC Ludbrook, Superintendent of Ballarat Orphanage, was elected President of the Babies' Home committee (Wickham & Golding, p.271). In the later years of World War Two the Home experienced an acute shortage of staff. The Home closed briefly for additions and alterations to take place and the refurbished institution reopened in July 1945. 58 children, ranging in age from 10 days to 2 and half years, passed through the Home over the next 12 months. An average of 22 children lived at the Home at this time (p.273).

One submission to the Senate inquiry into children in institutional care was from a former resident of Alexandra babies' Home in the 1960s. They wrote:

I was placed in The Alexander babies home in Ballarat. My 2 younger sisters and my younger brothers were there with me. Even though I was so young I really do remember things. I remember being hungry and cold all the time, I remember a roomful of small crying rocking children being smacked and punished for crying and rocking ... (I had never wet my bed before going into that home I wonder why I started!!!!) I was only 4 and this treatment was being metered out to children much younger than my self what sort of people where these so called carers (submission 473).

In 1964, the name changed to Alexandra Toddlers' Home, to reflect that children at the Home were aged from 18 months to 5 years. The Matron's report from 1964 stated:

At last we are known as the Alexander Toddlers' Home, where we house 36 children, from the ages of 18 months to five years ... We had thirty admissions during the year and thirty discharges, eighteen children returned to parents, nine transferred to Orphanage, and three were fostered to private homes (Wickham & Golding, p.277).

In September 1973, newspapers reported that the Alexandra Toddlers' Home would be closing in the near future due to "extreme financial difficulties". On 26 September 1973, there were still 28 children at the Home and 15 staff. Throughout October, the future of the Home was unclear, with a report about the Board of Management's decision to close on 2 October, and another article about a 12 month reprieve on 10 October. A photograph in the *Ballarat Courier* had a caption about the Home "going broke by degrees".

Alexandra Toddlers' Home finally closed on 8 November 1973. That day, 13 children travelled to Melbourne by bus and were admitted to [Hartnett House](#) in Brunswick. Other children who had been at the institution were transferred to nearby institutions, [Ballarat Children's Home](#) and [Nazareth House](#). A number of children were returned to their parents from the institution when it closed (source: press clippings held by Department of Families Fairness and Housing).

The institution ceased to be registered by the Social Welfare Department as a Children's Home upon its closure in November 1973.

In 2010, the building was being used as bed and breakfast accommodation known as 'Alexandra House'. It later returned to private ownership.

National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

In 2021, the Victorian government has agreed to be a funder of last resort for this institution. This means that although the institution is now defunct, it is participating in the National Redress Scheme, and the government has agreed to pay the institution's share of costs of providing redress to a person (as long as the government is found to be equally responsible for the abuse a person experienced).

Gallery



Former Female Refuge Complex [editor's note: former site of the Alexandra Babies' Home, Scott Parade, Ballarat East]

Description: This single storey building at 187 Scott Parade was constructed in 1909 for the Alexandra Babies' Home (later known as the Alexandra Toddlers' Home). Previously, babies and their mothers were accommodated at the two-storey building at 183 Scott Parade (the former Ballarat Female Refuge). It would seem that babies and toddlers were accommodated in both buildings in Scott Parade at different times.



Alexandra Toddlers' Home

Description: This is a copy of a photograph showing new signage being erected at the entrance of the Alexandra Toddlers' Home, run by the Ballarat Town and City Mission.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Ballarat Town and City Mission \(1867 - 1974?\)](#)

The Ballarat Town and City Mission took over the management of Alexandra Babies' Home in c.1921.

Date: 1921 - 1974

Related Organisations

- [Ballarat Orphanage \(1909 - 1968\)](#)

Some babies were transferred from the Alexandra Babies' Home to the Ballarat Orphanage.

Date: 1938 - 1968

- [Ballarat Female Refuge \(1867 - 1941\)](#)

The Alexandra Babies' Home began operation as part of the Ballarat Female Refuge. It was located on the same site as the original refuge at 183 Scott Parade.

Resources

- Crawford, Mavis, [Submission no 532 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Findlay, Deborah, [Submission no 449 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- [Alexandra Babies' Home \(1909 - 1974\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Alexandra Babies' Home
- O'Neill, Cate, [More photographs unearthed](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 19 January 2016
- Wickham, Dorothy and Golding, Frank, [Refuge, Rescue & Reform: voices of suffering and survival](#), 2024

Records

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

Records

- [Ballarat Town and City Mission records \(c.1887 - 1973\)](#)
- ['Closed' Agency and General Correspondence Files \[Charities Board of Victoria\] \(1923 - 1983\)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)