

Mission Rescue and Children's Home, Canadian

1897 – c. 1921

Other Names: • Canadian Children's Rescue Home
• Canadian Rescue Home

Details

The Mission Rescue and Children's Home, Canadian was established in 1897 and run by the Ballarat Town and City Mission (Canadian is the name of an area in Ballarat).

Wickham and Golding write that the Home was “pleasantly situated on rising ground at the east end of Clayton Street, near Sinclair’s Hill and Butts Street in Canadian Gully (2024, p.218). Apparently the Ladies Committee of the [Ballarat Female Refuge](#) were unhappy that another institution for “fallen women” had opened. However, the Mission stressed that the two institutions were quite different, in that the Female Refuge was for women who had “strayed for the first time from the path of virtue” and the Home at Canadian was for “another class of women”, those “who had been leading vicious lives” (Wickham and Golding, p.218).

Initially, the Mission established this Home to provide assistance to “unhappy girls and women”. John West Lau of the City Mission wrote to the *Ballarat Star* in 1898 to describe the work of the Home. Between June 1897 and April 1898, the Home received 29 adults and 24 children. As at 23 April 1898, 4 adults and 14 children remained at the Home. Lau wrote that:

Our chief end and aim, while rendering temporary aid to those who come to us in their need, is to help them in the way to a better life. While we have no fixed time for our inmates to remain, we make it a condition that those admitted shall remain as long as we consider it advisable, and until suitable situations are obtained. The children are allowed to remain with us when necessary, and every means taken to keep the mothers in touch with their children, and to foster maternal love. Upon obtaining situations they are expected to contribute to the maintenance of their children (Ballarat Star, 23 April 1898).

Wickham and Golding tell the story of one family who sought help from the Home in the late 1890s, with tragic consequences. A single mother who had given birth at the Lying-in Hospital at the Benevolent Asylum left her daughter in the care of the Home so that she could work in a live-in position in Ballarat. The baby died of diarrhoea in May 1898 “brought on by not having her mother’s milk”. This event led to a new policy at the Canadian Home, that mothers were required to stay for at least 3 months and breastfeed their babies (Wickham and Golding, p.229).

In 1902, Lau wrote to the *Ballarat Star*, to warn readers that “certain unauthorised persons” were soliciting donations for the Mission Rescue and Children’s Home. At that time, 18 children and 7 adults lived at the Home (*Ballarat Star*, 10 May 1902). In 1904, Lau told the Ballarat Town Court that the Home was so crowded that there was “no chance whatever” that 3 siblings charged with being neglected could be accommodated. In the end, the

girl was admitted to the Home at Canadian, and her 2 brothers were committed to state care (*Ballarat Star*, 14 January 1904). Most children were committed to the Home by the courts (Wickham and Golding, p.229).

In November 1907, the Home opened a new wing with 7 additional rooms. The Home celebrated the opening of its new building on 22 November 1907. In 1909 there were 42 children living there. Numbers declined from 1912 to a figure in the mid-20s (Wickham and Golding, p.237).

In 1916, the Canadian Home changed its function to be a rescue home for young women. The President of the Town and City Mission wrote a letter to the editor of the *Ballarat Courier* newspaper in August, stating "No doubt you are aware we have taken the children away from Canadian, and placed them at [George street](#), in what will be known as the 'Mission Children's Home'. The Home at Canadian will be continued as a Rescue Home for Girls". He wrote the letter to appeal to the public to donate items such as furniture, blankets and bed linen to the new Home (*Ballarat Courier*, 5 August 1916).

In 1917, the Canadian Home reported that since it became a Girls Rescue and Reformatory Home it had dealt with around 30 girls and young women. It was thought that the necessary work to be done with these young women could not be successful when "children of tender years" were in the same institution (Wickham and Golding, p.245).

In 1919, the Mission decided to close the children's Home at George Street, and children once again were admitted to the Canadian Home.

In 1921, the Mission closed the Canadian Home (Wickham and Golding, p.257), and consolidated all of its activities on a site in Scott Parade, Ballarat. The Ballarat Female Refuge and the [Alexandra Babies' Home](#) (established in 1909) were on the site, together with the new Ballarat Town and City Mission Rescue and Children's Home, which continued operating until 1941.

Gallery



The Canadian Rescue and Children's Home

Description: This is a copy of a photo of the Canadian Rescue and Children's Home from around 1917.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

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

Related Organisations

- [George Street Children's Home \(1916 - c. 1920\)](#)

Other Resources

Title: Mission Rescue and Children's Home, Canadian: Opening Celebration

Type: Image

Date: 1907

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Ballarat Town and City Mission records \(c.1887 - 1973\)](#)

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