Benevolent Society of New South Wales

1813 –
Other Names:
- The Benevolent
- New South Wales Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Benevolence

URL: http://www.benevolent.org.au/

Details

The Benevolent Society of New South Wales was established on 8 May 1813 and celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2013. It was founded to provide aid to the destitute, needy, sick and vulnerable aged people, women and children. For much of the nineteenth century it was effectively the social welfare arm of the New South Wales Government, as the government paid the society to provide residential care and deliver aid to the poor of Sydney and beyond.

The first residential institution operated by the Benevolent Society was the Benevolent Asylum, opened in 1821 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie, in Devonshire Street.

The Benevolent Asylum was located on the corner of Pitt and Devonshire Streets, Sydney on a site now occupied by Central Railway Station. The New South Wales Government resumed the site in 1901 when it began building the station. With the compensation the Society received it bought 'Flinton' in Paddington, then developed the Thomas Street Asylum in Ultimo.

From 1917 until 1986, the Benevolent Society ran the children's home, Scarba House, in Bondi. The Society ran the Royal Hospital for Women in Paddington from 1901 until 1992. The Benevolent Society apologised in 2011 for its past adoption practices that included forcing some women to give up their children for adoption.

When the Benevolent Society's adoption agency closed in the 1970s, adoption records were transferred to the predecessor of the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

The Benevolent Asylum records from 1857-1900 have been indexed and the index is available online.

Gallery

Liverpool Asylum

Benevolent Asylum

Description: This is a copy of an image from the Benevolent Society of NSW's Collection.

More info

Related Entries

Ran

- Benevolent Asylum, Sydney (1821 - 1901)
  Date: 1821 - ?
- Thomas Street Asylum (1904 - 1911)
  Date: ? - 1911
- Renwick Hospital for Infants, Thomas Street (1911 - 1920)
  Date: 1911 - 1965
- Scarba Welfare House for Women and Children (1917 - 1920)
  Date: 1917 - 1920
- Scarba Welfare House for Children (1920 - 1965)
  Date: 1920 - 1965
- Scarba House for Children (1965 - 1986)
  Date: 1965 - 1986
- Royal Hospital for Women (1901 - current)
  Date: 1901 - 1992
- Liverpool Asylum (1851 - 1862)
- Renwick Hospital for Infants, Summer Hill (1921 - 1965)
  Date: 1920 - 1965

Related Organisations

- Post Adoption Resource Centre (1991 - current)
  The Benevolent Society of NSW established the Post Adoption Resource Centre in 1991.
  Date: 1991 -
- Tresillian Mothercraft Homes, Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies (1918 - current)
  Tresillian and the Benevolent Society of New South Wales were both involved in adoptions. Tresillian cared for babies waiting for adoption.
  Date: 1960s -
- Society for the Relief of Destitute Children (1852 - c. 1915)
  Members of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales formed the Society for the Relief of Destitute Children to specifically care for children.

Resources

- Ramsland, John, *Children of the back lanes: destitute and neglected children in colonial New South Wales*, 1986
- Thompson, Geoff and Hichens, Clay, *Given or Taken?*, 27 February 2012
- Squires, Kathryn and Slater, Lisa, *Living at Scarba Home for Children: A history of the Scarba Welfare House for Children (1917-1986) in the context of child welfare practice in New South Wales*, 2006
- The Benevolent Society, *Scarba House for Children (Historypin)*, Historypin: The Benevolent Society, 2011
- The Benevolent Society, *Historypin: The Benevolent Society channel*, 2011
- The Benevolent Society, *Royal Hospital for Women, Paddington NSW*, History Pin: The Benevolent Society, 2011
- Garnsey, Heather and Killion, Martyn, *Sydney Benevolent Asylum: Index to Admissions and Discharges 1857-1900*, 2007

- Bluett, Ros, *Charity and Justice: The early days of the Benevolent Society in Sydney*, 24 March 2013
- Rathbone, Ron, *A Very Present Help: Caring for Australians Since 1813*, 1994
- O'Brien, Anne, *Poverty's Prison: the poor in New South Wales 1880-1918*, 1988
- Benevolent Society, *Benevolent Society: 200 year celebration: Last 200*, 2013
- Museums of History NSW, *Infirm / Destitute Asylums Guide*, No date
- *A tradition of caring*, Australian Women's Weekly, 13 December 1978

Records

Records held by other organisations

- Records relating to Adoption (1900? - current)
- Benevolent Society of New South Wales Collection, 1813-1996 (1813 - 1996)
- Benevolent Society adoption register [Dependent Children and Adoptions Branch, Department of Community Services] (23 May 1969 - 1 September 1975)

You can view this page online by visiting https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/benevolent-society-of-new-south-wales/