

# St Mary's Mission of Hope

1904 – 1953

## Details

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St Mary's Mission of Hope opened in Adelaide in 1904, run by an independent management committee that reported to the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide. The Home took in homeless girls, many from the Destitute Asylum. In 1922 toddlers were admitted and in 1930 teenagers were accommodated. During the 1940s Aboriginal girls from the Northern Territory were transferred to the Home. In 1953, it changed its name to St Mary's Home for Children, reflecting a change in function to only caring for pre-school aged children.

St Mary's Mission of Hope opened in 1904 at 84 Halifax Street, Adelaide. It was run by an independent management committee that reported annually to the Diocese of Adelaide. By 1906 it had moved to 'Wilton Lodge', at 154 Halifax Street. In 1909, the Home moved again to new premises at 222 Halifax Street, Adelaide.

St Mary's Mission of Hope's primary aim was to rescue homeless girls from the Destitute Asylum. An article in the Adelaide Church Guardian in 1907 described its aims as follows:

*The efforts of the lady workers are chiefly directed at bringing under influence of the mission the girls in the infirmary of the destitute asylum, and sheltering them after they leave that institution until suitable situations can be procured for them. By this means, many girls have been restored to the paths of rectitude, who would otherwise have been left to sink into hopeless degradation and vice*

At the home girls were sheltered, counselled and assisted to find employment. In its first 18 years, the Home took in mainly young girls, some of whom were pregnant. Those who had already given birth were allowed to bring their children with them. The Mission assisted the girls to find jobs where they could take their babies, or if this was not possible, arranged for babies to be fostered or adopted.

Between 1909 and 1916, 246 girls passed through the Mission. Many of these were girls who did not qualify for admission to the House of Mercy at Walkerville which, among other rules, required potential residents to be recommended by a clergyman.

In 1922 the focus of the Mission of Hope on rescue work changed when its manager Miss Jean Mills (who also worked with the Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Club) brought a number of small children into the Home. From this time St Mary's began to take in children of toddler age who were unable to be cared for by their families or who had been charged as neglected and made wards of the state. An article in the Adelaide Church Guardian in 1935 explained that that the focus changed because Miss Mills believed that 'to succeed in rescue work among younger girls, it was necessary to begin with little children'.

During this period, the Home accommodated between 25 and 30 children of pre-school and early school age, offering shelter and religious education. For schooling, children attended the Free Kindergarten, St John's Day School on Halifax Street and after its closure, the Flinders Street School.

The management committee of St Mary's Mission of Hope often struggled with lack of funds and relied primarily on charitable donations. From 1936 the St Mary's Mission of Hope operated in cooperation with The Orphan Home at Mitcham. While St Mary's took charge of toddlers and teenagers, the Orphan Home (later known as Farr House) took in children of school age. As part of the agreement between the two Home management committees, the Orphan Home provided a loan to St Mary's to assist with renovations which included the building of four new dormitories.

During the 1940s, in an arrangement with the Northern Territory Native Affairs Branch, a number of Aboriginal girls were sent from the Northern Territory to St Mary's. The Home was paid a subsidy by the Branch for their care.

In 1953 the management committee of St Mary's decided to return to caring for only pre-school children, aged between 2 and 6. In recognition of this change, the name of the Home was changed to St Mary's Home for Children.

## Gallery

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### St Mary's Mission of Hope

**Description:** This is an image of a badge from St. Mary's Mission of Hope, it is undated, the date included is an estimate.



### Halifax Street

**Description:** The library description states: Halifax Street, north side, February 12th 1937, site of building is 48 yards west of Cardwell Street and frontage is 14.5 yards. For a view of the new building erected in 1937 see B 7382. This photograph shows the bluestone single storey house that was Mary's Mission of Hope Church of England Home for Children. It was an imposing home with a bay window and an arched porch over the front door.



### Halifax Street, Adelaide

**Description:** The library description states: This neat new single storey building is the new premises for the St. Mary's Mission of Hope Children's Home. [On back of photograph] 'Acre 515 / Halifax Street, north side / St. Mary's Mission of Hope / Church of England Home for Children / February 8th 1938 / This building was erected in 1937 / Right side is 45.5 yards west of Cardwell Street / Frontage is 15.5 yards'.

## More info

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## Chronology

- **St Mary's Mission of Hope (1904 – 1953)**
  - St Mary's Home for Children (1953 - 1990)

# Related Entries

## Related Organisations

- [The Babies' Home Walkerville \(1912 - 1945\)](#)  
St Mary's Mission of Hope took over the role of caring for babies and infants in 1945 when the Babies' Home, Walkerville, closed.
- [The Orphan Home \(1860 - 1935\)](#)  
During the 1930s St Mary's Mission of Hope operated in conjunction with the Orphan Home and, as it was later known, Farr House. St Mary's took charge of toddlers and teenagers and the Orphan Home took mostly children of school age.
- [Anglican Diocese of Adelaide \(1847 - current\)](#)
- [Farr House \(1935 - 1982\)](#)  
During the 1930s the home operated in cooperation with The Orphan Home at Mitcham, also known as Farr House. It took charge of toddlers and teenagers while the Orphan Home took mostly children of school age.
- [House of Mercy and Retreat for Women \(1881 - 1974\)](#)  
St Mary's Mission of Hope took in some young women who did not qualify for admission to the House of Mercy and Retreat for Women at Walkerville.
- [Destitute Asylum \(1851 - c. 1917\)](#)  
St Mary's Mission of Hope took in many girls from the Destitute Asylum.

## Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

# Resources

- [Poor youngsters spending happy time at seaside](#), The Mail (Adelaide, SA), 4 January 1941

# Records

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

## Records

- [St Mary's Mission of Hope Records \(1904 - 1990\)](#)
  - [Records related to Church of England Social Welfare Bureau \(1947 - 1991\)](#)
  - [Miscellaneous Correspondence and General Papers, St Mary's Mission of Hope \(1930 - 1952\)](#)
  - [Annual reports, St Mary's Mission of Hope \(1906 - 1947\)](#)
  - [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/st-marys-mission-of-hope-2/>