

# Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers

1937 – 1954

## Details

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The Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers opened in 1937 at Brighton. Run by the Methodist Church, it accommodated single girls who were pregnant or had given birth to their first child. It also took in other children in need of shelter. Pregnant women gave birth at the Queens' Home and later the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital. In 1954 the Home was renamed the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home in honour of its founder.

The Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers opened in 1937 at 46 Wattle Street, Brighton, now known as Hove. It was run by the Methodist Church and provided accommodation for single girls who were pregnant and girls who had recently given birth to their first child. It also gave shelter to orphaned children, those deemed to be neglected and children whose parents were unable to care for them due to ill health or other reasons.

The beginning of this Home dates back to 1935 and the work of Kate Cocks who was the first female police officer in South Australia. Shortly after her resignation from the Women Police in 1935, a distressed unmarried mother with a newborn baby was sent to her home in Castle Street, Parkside, by fellow police officer. Miss Cocks, who had also worked as a probation officer for the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department, gave the woman temporary accommodation. Over the ensuing weeks more women and babies in similar need joined her. Cocks provided accommodation in two cottages at the rear of her Parkside home. An annexe to this Home in Parkside was later established at Broadview, for children under the age of 3 (Paterson, 2005).

Concerned about the lack of shelter and support for these women, Miss Cocks approached the Methodist Women's Association and suggested the establishment of a Home. In 1936 the Church Women's Welfare Department was formed with Kate Cocks as its first superintendent. The same year the Home Mission department of the Methodist Church purchased a property at Brighton known as Old Oxford House. From 1910-1934 the building had been a training college for young Methodist men and then briefly, from 1934-1936, a home for the elderly. In 1937 it opened as the Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers.

According to Paterson, the house next door to Old Oxford on the east side became the 'Brighton Girls Home'. Kate Cocks purchased a home immediately opposite the new grounds and lived there until her death (Paterson, 2005, p.6).

The first matron to assist Miss Cocks in running the new Home was Sister Ruth Barrett. Kate Cocks continued to care for girls and their babies without pay for 15 years. Initially pregnant women from the Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers were sent to the Queen's Home for the birth of their child. After 12 days they returned. This practice continued after 1939 when the Queen's Home became known as the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital.

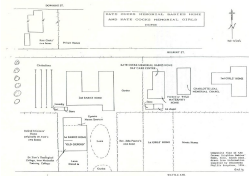
Fundraising efforts by church members as well as a number of bequests to the Babies' Home enabled the Home to be extended in 1947 and later an enclosed playground was added. In 1951, a bequest financed the building of

the Wyld Maternity Home, which became a part of the premises.

Kate Cocks oversaw the Home at Brighton in her role Superintendent of the Women's Welfare Department of the Homes Missions within the Methodist Church, an unpaid position. She remained in this position until 1950, when she was aged 75 (Paterson, 2005). When Kate Cocks died in 1954 the Home was renamed the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home in her honour.

## Gallery

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### Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home and Kate Cocks Memorial Girls Home

**Description:** This is a copy of a plan showing the site of the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies' Home. It was published as an illustration to a chapter by Roslyn Paterson, 'Kate Cocks, a caring policewoman' (2005). The caption to this plan reads: 'Composite plan of the former Brighton Babies' Home, Hove, South Aust. drawn from information supplied by Deaconess Phyllis Bonython, 1994'.

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers (1937 – 1954)**
  - Kate Cocks Memorial Babies' Home (1954 - 1976)

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Home Missions Department of the Methodist Conference \(1901? - 1950?\)](#)  
Date: 1937 - 1950
- [Women's Welfare Department of the Methodist Conference \(1936 - 1977?\)](#)  
Date: 1950 - 1954

#### Related Organisations

- [Queen's Home \(1902 - 1939\)](#)  
Pregnant women from the Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers were sent to the Queen's Home for the birth of their children.
- [Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital \(1939 - 1966\)](#)  
Pregnant women from the Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers were sent to the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital for the birth of their children.

#### Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

## Resources

- Bailey, Ivor, *Mission story: the story of the Adelaide Central Mission*, 1987
- Kate Cocks Childcare, [Our Centres History \(Extracts from 2014 AGM\)](#), 2012
- UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc and Uniting Church of South Australia, [Joint Submission to the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices 2011 Inquiry - Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs](#), 2011

# Records

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

## Records

- [Records of Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home \(1937? - 1976?\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/methodist-home-for-babies-and-unmarried-mothers/>