

# Bethany Babies' Home

1928 – 1977

**Other Names:**

- Bethany Home for Babies
- Geelong Female Refuge
- Bethany (Child and Family Support) Inc
- Bethany Family Support Inc
- Bethany Community Support Inc

## Details

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Bethany Babies' Home was originally the Geelong Female Refuge when it was established in 1868. From 1928, the Refuge became known as Bethany Babies' Home. It accommodated pregnant women, babies and toddlers; it operated a maternity hospital and also adopted babies out. In 1977, it ceased to operate as a Home and became Bethany Community Support.

From 1977, all records relating to individuals, placements and adoptions at Bethany Babies' Home were transferred to the Victorian government.

Bethany Babies' Home was originally the Geelong Female Refuge when it was established in 1868. It subsequently provided accommodation for single pregnant women and 'care' for babies unable to stay with their families.

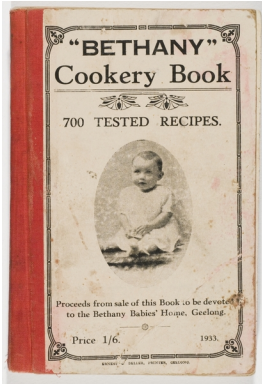
In 1928, the Refuge began to operate primarily as a babies' home. It was at this point that it became known as Bethany Babies' Home. As well as caring for babies and toddlers, Bethany operated as a maternity hospital and accommodated pregnant women. It also operated as a mothercraft training school. Bethany also became an adoption agency with the passing of the Adoption Act 1928.

By the late 1950s, Bethany was providing residential care for unmarried mothers, and residential care for children up to the age of four – comprising wards of state, Infant Life Protection placements and private placements.

Bethany Babies' Home ceased to operate in 1977 and became Bethany Community Support, a child and family welfare agency. From that time, all records relating to individuals, placements and adoptions from Bethany Babies' Home were transferred to the Victorian government.

Bethany Babies' Home was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices Inquiry* (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

## Gallery



### Bethany Cookery Book, front cover

**Description:** This is a copy of an image of the front cover of the "Bethany" Cookery Book from 1933. Proceeds from the sale of the book went to the Bethany Babies' Home, Geelong.



### Bethany Babies' Home

**Description:** This is a copy of an image of the buildings at Bethany Babies' Home in Geelong.



### Bethany Babies' Home car

**Description:** This is a copy of an image of nurses and babies from Bethany Babies' Home. It shows a car with signage that was used during "basket day" fundraising when the Home would seek donations.

## More info

### Chronology

- Geelong Female Refuge (1868 - 1928)
  - **Bethany Babies' Home (1928 – 1977)**
    - Bethany Community Support (1977 - current)

### Related Entries

#### Related Events

- [Medical experiments \(c. 1945 - c. 1970\)](#)  
CSL conducted trials at Bethany Babies' Home  
Date: 1959 - 1961
- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)  
Bethany Babies Home is mentioned in submission 178 to the Inquiry Committee as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

### Resources

- Murray, Suellen, John Murphy, Elizabeth Branigan, Jenny Malone, *After the orphanage: life beyond the children's home*, 2009
- Swain, Shurlee, *A refuge at Kildare: the history of the Geelong Female Refuge and Bethany Babies' Home*, 1985
- Hughes, Gary, [Polio vaccine tested at orphanages](#), The Age, 25 October 2004
- [Bethany Home for Babies](#), Camperdown Chronicle, 7 April 1934
- Care Leavers Australia Network, [Geelong and District Orphanages](#), No date

- [Geelong Female Refuge/Bethany Babies' Home \(1868-current\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Bethany Babies' Home

# Records

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

## Records

- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records \(1864 - current\)](#)  
Victorian Government Records relating to Wardship and Adoption contains records of adoptions organised from Bethany Babies' Home.
  - [Bethany Community Support Records \(1896 - 2007?\)](#)
  - [Records of Victorian Adoptions \(c. 1908 - current\)](#)
  - ['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 \(1904 - 1974\)](#)  
Item B236 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Bethany Babies' Home
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/bethany-babies-home/>