

Beaconsfield Babies' Home

1915 – 1946

Other Names:

- Berry Street Babies' Home (Beaconsfield)
- Berry Street Foundling Home

Details

The Beaconsfield Babies' Home was opened in 1915, in Beaconsfield. It was run by the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home, which also operated the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home in Berry Street, East Melbourne. The Beaconsfield Babies' Home was closed in 1946.

The Beaconsfield Babies' Home was established in May 1915. It was run by the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home (incorporated in 1914), which also operated the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home in Berry Street, East Melbourne.

Berry Street had long been advocating for a country home, 'handy to Melbourne', to house its children. Such a home would enable the buildings in East Melbourne to function as a 'receiving home', and provide a more salubrious environment for children.

In 1913, the Committee purchased a property at Beaconsfield to provide such a country home. The Beaconsfield Babies' Home was opened on 6 May 1915 by Lady Stanley, wife of the Governor.

Initially, Beaconsfield was used for pre-maternity cases, and as a convalescent home for mothers when discharged from the Women's Hospital.

In a Christmas Appeal published in the *Argus* on 14 December 1916, it was stated that 58 babies were being housed in the institutions at Beaconsfield and East Melbourne. The Appeal was for money or goods so that older children (who were boarded out once they reached 12 months of age) could receive their 'annual Christmas treat' at the East Melbourne institution. The Foundling Hospital also sought donations (money, clothing, toys) for the babies in its care.

In her history of Berry Street, Penwill writes that the community of Beaconsfield was very involved in the Babies' Home:

The local residents befriended the nurses and invited them into their homes. Women of the district took an interest in the children and women at the Home, and sewed, knitted and visited. They then formed an auxiliary to raise money, while their menfolk made vegetable plots and provided goods from their own gardens.

The Beaconsfield Babies' Home provided training for mothercraft nurses.

During the Second World War, Berry Street was taken over for use by the military. In 1942, staff, children and mothers were moved to Beaconsfield Babies' Home.

The Beaconsfield Babies' Home was closed in 1946 and the mansion where it was housed fell into a state of disrepair before being demolished in 1963. However, part of the building, the 'Kenilworth Coach House' remained and was mentioned as an important historic site in the City of Kardinia's 'Beaconsfield Township Strategy' (2001).

After the Home closed, there were some plans, which did not eventuate, to erect cottages on the site at Beaconsfield. When it was finally sold in 1963, funds were used as a building fund for the institution in East Melbourne.

Gallery



Beaconsfield Babies' Home

Description: This is a copy of an image of Beaconsfield Babies' Home.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home \(Incorporated\) \(1914 - 1964\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [The Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home \(1906 - 1964\)](#)

The Beaconsfield Babies' Home and the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home were both run by the Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home Incorporated.

Date: 1915 -

Resources

- [Christmas Appeals: special need for help](#), The Argus, 14 December 1916

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Berry Street Heritage Collection \(c. 1877 - current\)](#)
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