

Crown Street Women's Hospital

1893 – 1983

Other Names: • Women's Hospital, Crown Street

Details

Crown Street Women's Hospital was established in Hay Street in 1893 and moved to Surry Hills in 1897. It was a public women's and maternity hospital. As well as being a general hospital, it cared for many unmarried mothers, including state wards and Aboriginal wards, and its staff arranged a high proportion of New South Wales adoptions. The Crown Street Women's Hospital was closed in 1983 and its facilities were transferred to hospitals in the outer suburbs of Sydney.

Founded by Dr James Graham in a four-roomed house in Hay Street in 1893, the Women's Hospital was funded by public subscription. A Board was formed in 1895 to run the hospital, although the government provided equipment and furniture.

The Women's Hospital moved to Crown Street in Surry Hills in 1897, leasing the site from the Australian Red Cross until it passed to government control in 1963. From 1897 Crown Street was a teaching hospital of the University of Sydney and by 1943 it had become the largest maternity hospital in New South Wales.

Crown Street aimed to lift medical standards for maternity care. In addition to providing wards for surgical cases and complicated births the Hospital provided treatment in homes, fertility treatments and outpatients services. The slogan of the hospital was 'Crown Street never turns a patient away!'

Crown Street Women's Hospital cared for many unmarried mothers, including state wards and Aboriginal girls who were in the wardship of the Aborigines Protection and Welfare Boards. Crown Street Women's Hospital developed a major adoption service, arranging a high proportion of the state's adoptions.

According to State Records, the Hospital's Nurseries were divided into five categories – Main, D, Premature, Adoption, and Founders Isolation. The term 'adoption babies' was used for all babies awaiting adoption, foster care or other Child Welfare Department arrangement.

The Crown Street Women's Hospital was closed on 31 March 1983 and its facilities were transferred to hospitals in the outer suburbs of Sydney. The building was redeveloped as office space. Its records were sent to the Royal Hospital for Women and are now located at Prince of Wales Hospital.

In 2011 and 2012 Crown Street Women's Hospital was the subject of close attention in the Senate Inquiry into Forced Adoptions, and was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* Report (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

Gallery



Crown Street Women's Hospital

Description: Crown Street Women's Hospital, from the corner of Albion and Crown Street, Surry Hills. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate. Reproduced by Judith Godden, Inside History Blog

<http://insidehistorymagazine.blogspot.com.au/2011/08/sydneys-crown-street-hospital.html>

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Charitable Institutions \(1888 - 1911\)](#)
- [Metropolitan Hospitals and Charities Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1911 - 1913\)](#)
- [Office of the Director-General of Public Health \(1913 - 1938\)](#)
- [Department of Public Health, State Government of New South Wales \(1938 - 1973\)](#)
- [Health Commission, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1982\)](#)
Date: 1973 - 1982
- [Health Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1982 - current\)](#)
Date: 1982 - 1983

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)
Crown Street Women's Hospital was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* Report (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

Related Organisations

- [Tresillian Mothercraft Homes, Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies \(1918 - current\)](#)
Social workers from Crown Street sent some unmarried mothers to live at Tresillian homes in the 1950s and 1960s. Tresillian cared for babies waiting for adoption.
- [Myee \(1926 - 1977\)](#)
Pregnant women who were living at Myee were sent to Crown Street Women's Hospital to give birth
- [Hospitals Commission of New South Wales \(1929 - 1973\)](#)
- [Tresillian Vaucluse \(c. 1935 - October 1968\)](#)
Crown Street Women's Hospital referred unmarried mothers for jobs as domestics at Tresillian Vaucluse.
- [Parramatta Girls Training School \(1946 - 1974\)](#)
Girls who were pregnant while they were in Parramatta Girls Training School were transferred to Myee and gave birth at Crown Street Women's Hospital before returning to Myee and Parramatta

Resources

- Senate Community Affairs References Committee, [Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 29 February 2012
- [Catholic Women's Association: Hospital Visitors' Activities](#), The Catholic Press, 10 September 1936
- [Don't forget](#), Australian Women's Weekly, 7 November 1936

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Birth registers, Crown Street Women's Hospital \(1 July 1953 - 1983\)](#)
 - [Medical records, Crown Street Women's Hospital \(1950 - 1983\)](#)
 - [Confinement books, Crown Street Women's Hospital \(1904 - 1933\)](#)
 - [Admission books, Crown Street Women's Hospital \(1916 - 1983\)](#)
 - [Labour ward registers, Crown Street Women's Hospital \(1 November 1943 - March 1983\)](#)
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