

Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies

1895 – 1978

Other Names: • Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital

Details

The Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies in Annandale was founded by George Lewis in 1895 and run by Matron Attenborough from 1896 until 1924. It catered to both married and single mothers. Many children of single mothers were adopted from the Hospital. In 1930 it temporarily moved to Herbert Street, Dulwich Hill before returning to the same property in Annandale in 1931. The Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies closed in 1978.

The Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies was located at 61 Albion Street Annandale, in Sydney's inner west. The building dates from 1845 but the hospital was founded by George Lewis in 1895. It catered to both married and single mothers.

Unmarried mothers were not charged for their stay in the home however they were required to attend to other patients and complete chores. One (married) mother who had two children at Queen Victoria in the 1960s remembered the way single mothers were treated:

The unwed mothers attended the others until they were due to have their babies. When the children were born to the unwed mothers they were taken away and put for adoption ... When the unmarried mothers went out to the shops matron even gave them a wedding ring to wear. How quaint and how things have changed. The greatest joy I witnessed was a little Scots girl who had her baby and she was planning to marry the week following the baby being given up. Her boyfriend who was also the father saw the baby and said no we are keeping it and we will face your parents together and tell them the news.

Matron Attenborough was in charge of the home from 1896 until 1924. On Lewis' death in 1926 the building was left to the Presbyterian Church. The home had six to eight beds, and in 1929 reported that 300 babies were born at the hospital each year. The Presbyterian Social Service Committee then ran the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies. In 1930 the hospital temporarily moved to 24 Herbert Street, Dulwich Hill before returning to the Albion Street house.

In 1952 a Ladies Auxiliary, led by Mrs Hope Figtree, was formed. At that time 560 women gave birth each year in the hospital, and 60 of those were unmarried mothers. The hospital had 22 beds, and could accommodate up to 16 unmarried mothers who were able to live in the hospital from the time they were five months pregnant.

The hospital was later transferred to the Hospital Commission and was closed in 1978.

Medical records are held by Prince of Wales Hospital (1953 to 1978). Social work records are held by Community Services' Adoption Information Unit.

Gallery



Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies

Description: 61 Albion Street Annandale c. 1970

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Hospitals Commission of New South Wales \(1929 - 1973\)](#)
- [Health Commission, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1982\)](#)

Related Glossary Terms

- [Forced Adoption \(c. 1940 - c. 1970\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Presbyterian Church of Australia \(1901 - current\)](#)

The Presbyterian Church of Australia was involved in running the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies

Resources

- Herbert, Harry (Rev), [Address to Uniting Church Historical Society](#), September 2011

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Records relating to Adoption \(1900? - current\)](#)
Records of adoptions from the Queen Victoria Hospital are held by the Department
 - [Private adoption agency contact files \[Dependent Children and Adoptions Branch, Department of Community Services\] \(1950 - 1975\)](#)
Records from Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies are included in this series.
 - [Medical Records, Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies \(1957 - 1976\)](#)
 - [Confinement books, Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies \(1910 - 1978\)](#)
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