

Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital

1939 – 1966

Other Names: • QVMH

Details

Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital was the new name given to the Queen's Home at Rose Park in 1939. Run by a committee of management it provided maternity services for expectant mothers who stayed between 2 and 12 days after the birth of their child. Many women residing at the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies' Home also had their babies at the Hospital. In 1966 the Hospital was renamed the Queen Victoria Hospital.

In 1939 the Queen's Home changed its name to the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital Incorporated. Run by a committee of management it was located at 160 Fullarton Road, Rose Park. It was a maternity hospital that catered for all expectant mothers. Those who could not afford to pay were assisted free of charge and unlike the early days of the Queen's Home the Hospital made no distinction between married and unmarried women. The hospital also trained nurses for certification in midwifery.

A 1939 article described some of the workings of the Hospital:

The babies are all housed down stairs, and off the big nursery is the incubator room in which the small mites under 5 lb. in weight are nursed... Upstairs are the wards for the mothers. Each one contains not more than five beds, and some have only one or two. Waiting mothers are not admitted, as there is not the room to receive them. They enter on the day of the confinement, and remain for 12 days after the baby is born.

In the 1940s the Hospital was struggling financially and required grants from the State Government in order to survive. Public appeals were made via local newspapers when new equipment was needed, and annual appeals and button days were run to increase funds.

The wartime baby boom lead to overcrowding at the Hospital and in 1945 the State Government agreed to subsidise the Hospital's fund raising efforts on a 'pound for pound' basis.

In 1946 The QVMH was declared a public hospital under the provisions of the Hospital Benefits Act 1946. As a public hospital it was entitled to Commonwealth Government subsidy.

Overcrowding remained a problem and in 1947 led to a change in how long mothers stayed in the hospital after the birth of the child. It dropped from 12 days (as it was before the war) to only 2 days with the mother and her baby then being taken to one of a number of rest homes.

A 1950 Advertiser article shows that women from the Kate Cocks Babies' Home continued to have their children at the Queen Victoria Maternity Home just as they had done in the late 1930s at the Queen's Home.

In 1955 a two year midwifery course was offered at the Hospital for girls of 19 years and older. Nursing graduates could obtain their certificate in midwifery after 12 months training.

A 1957 Women's Weekly advice column listed The Queen Victoria Maternity Home, among other institutions, as a place where teenage girls with an 'unwanted pregnancy' could go for help.

There are a number of places in Adelaide where un-married mothers are cared for and you should visit them ... as soon as you can, and talk to the matron of the one you decide to go to. The available places are the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home, Wattle Street, Brighton, the McBride Maternity Hospital (Salvation Army), the Church of England House of Mercy, Fullarton, The Roman Catholic Fullarton Refuge, the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital, Adelaide. If you decide on the Queen Victoria Hospital, you should see the Almoner. One of the wonderful qualities common to all these places is the sympathetic help that is offered free. Don't be shy about seeing the people concerned, they deal with similar cases all day.

In 1963 it was reported that the Government had decided to spend £1,250,000 on the addition of a seven storey wing and alterations to existing buildings that would make the QVMH the largest midwifery hospital in South Australia with a capacity of around 180 beds. As the hospital grew and began to offer more services the management committee voted to change the name of the Hospital again. In 1966 they removed the word Maternity from the title and the Hospital became known as the Queen Victoria Hospital.

Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital 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



Exterior view of 'Queen's Home'

Description: The library description states: Exterior view of 'Queen's Home' part of Queen Victoria Hospital.

More info

Chronology

- Queen's Home (1902 - 1939)
 - **Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital (1939 – 1966)**
 - Queen Victoria Hospital (1966 - 1989)

Related Entries

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)

Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital was mentioned in submission 59 to the Inquiry Committee as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

Related Organisations

- [Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers \(1937 - 1954\)](#)
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.
 - [Kate Cocks Memorial Babies' Home \(1954 - 1976\)](#)
Some expectant mothers from the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies' Home gave birth to their children at the Queen Victoria Maternity Home.
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