

# Lady Dugan Red Cross Home

1946 – 1970

**Other Names:** • Kooringa Red Cross Convalescent Home  
• Kooringa Convalescent Home

## Details

Lady Dugan Red Cross Home in Malvern was a Home for convalescent servicewomen, run by the Australian Red Cross. For the first 2 years of its operation it was known as Kooringa Home. It also received convalescent mothers and babies, and later provided temporary accommodation for children of ex-servicemen whose parents were hospitalised. It opened in 1946 and closed in 1970, when the property became the Lady Dugan Children's Home, run by the Victorian government.

Kooringa Red Cross Home (as it was known from 1946 until mid 1947) was located at 16 Hamilton Road, Malvern, in a property that was once Toorak College (the building was demolished in the 1970s). It began as a Home for convalescent servicewomen. An article from 1946 ('Women's News') reported that the Red Cross planned to use Kooringa for its post-war peacetime program to establish hostels and children's Homes.

The Red Cross began moving adult women patients into Kooringa in around March 1946. Previously they had been accommodated at 'Edgecliff', the Red Cross hospital in the suburb of Hampton. An article from April 1946 reported that Matron Florence Mummery was in charge at Kooringa, and a committee helped to run the Home. Doctors, nurses and Red Cross volunteers attended the Home daily.

*When the home was open for inspection yesterday, it had, if not a full complement of patients, a goodly number of convalescents, mostly walking cases who were encountered sitting out in the sunshine, reading in the lounge, interviewing their visitors in the reading rooms and halls, and some sitting round the fire in the dining room, where small round tables make for pleasant informality at meals (The Argus, 11 April 1946, p.10).*

Kooringa also accommodated girls – in 1946, it was reported that 5 girls, mostly teenagers, were staying at the convalescent home (*The Age*, 13 August 1946). The Home had capacity for up to 50 patients (*Weekly Times*, 17 April 1946).

In 1947, a newspaper article described Kooringa as a convalescent home for women and children. The article stated that Kooringa offered special medical treatment for a limited number of poliomyelitis patients who lived long distances from the city. At that time, Kooringa's youngest patient was 5 years old (*The Herald*, 31 July 1947).

Kooringa was renamed in June 1947 when it became known as the Lady Dugan Home (Esther Elizabeth Dugan was the president of the Victorian division of the Australian Red Cross).

In 1951, the Victorian Health Department subsidised the Red Cross to set up a residential and outpatient service for children with polio at Lady Dugan. Previously this service had been provided out of Welfare House in St Kilda.

Women and children were admitted to Lady Dugan for short term accommodation. It was possible for mother and child to be admitted together, and other siblings could also come if necessary. Girls and women could be admitted for short or long term treatment and care, but males over puberty age could attend only as outpatients. Older children could be admitted alone for the school holidays for re-assessment, repairs and replacement of equipment and a short burst of intensive treatment (source: Betty Fussell, 1999).

Joan S, a polio survivor, remembered what it was like for her living at Lady Dugan Home around 1960:

*During my primary school years, I began to spend holiday times as a live-in patient at Lady Dugan Red Cross Home in Malvern. At first Mum stayed with me to catch up with physios and do a complete review. I loved going to Lady Dugan, it was a beautiful old mansion with a huge staircase ...*

*Meals were announced with a huge gong which we took turns to ring. We all went to a dining room to eat and the food was so good. We also had our own private supplies of fruit, lollies and biscuits, which we kept in our lockers (The Calliper Kids, 2009).*

*In 1970, the Victorian Social Welfare Department leased the Malvern property from the Australian Red Cross, and it became the Lady Dugan Children's Home, for wards of the state.*

## Gallery



**Lady Dugan Children's Home**

## More info

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Australian Red Cross \(1914 - current\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Lady Dugan Children's Home \(1970 - 1976\)](#)

Kooringa Red Cross Home and Lady Dugan Children's Home were located on the same site in Malvern, Victoria.

## Resources

- [Hobbies make 'polio' patients' days brighter and shorter](#), The Herald, 14 March 1947
- [Country patients for Lady Dugan Red Cross Home](#), Portland Guardian, 30 October 1952

## Records

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

## Records held by other organisations

- [Records of Red Cross Children's Homes \(1918? - 1990s\)](#)
- [Australian Red Cross Collection, University of Melbourne Archives \(1914 - 2014\)](#)

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