

# Waitara Foundling Home

1898 – 1927

**Other Names:**

- Home for Foundlings
- Waitara Orphanage
- Waitara Home
- Waitara

## Details

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The Waitara Foundling Home was established in 1898 by the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney Congregation as a home for babies and for unmarried mothers, who were referred from hospitals throughout the eastern states of Australia. In 1928 the Waitara Foundling Home was renamed Our Lady of Mercy Home.

The Waitara Foundling Home was first established in an old cottage on Leek's Orchard. In 1902, a two-storey brick home for mothers and babies was built, providing accommodation for mothers and their babies from hospitals and private homes throughout the eastern states of Australia.

In 1921, Waitara Foundling Home was granted 5 shillings per week for every orphan in its care by the NSW Government. This allowance was extended to a range of private institutions that cared for children.

In 1925 a pre-school kindergarten was opened within the Home, for the children in residential care.

Whenever possible, mothers remain with their children until they were weaned.

The Waitara Foundling Home was renamed Our Lady of Mercy Home in 1928 in recognition of the fact that many of the children in the home were not orphaned.

## Gallery

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**Young mother entering Home [Waitara]**

**Description:** This is a copy of an image from the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney Congregation archives collection. This image shows the back of a woman standing at the entrance gates of Our Lady of Mercy Home, Waitara.



**Front of Home [Waitara and Our Lady of Mercy]**

**Description:** This is a copy of an image from the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney Congregation archives collection. This image shows the front of the building where Waitara Foundling Home and later, Our Lady of Mercy Home, Waitara operated.

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## Waitara Old Chapel

**Description:** This is a copy of an image from the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney Congregation archives collection. This image shows the inside of the Waitara Old Chapel at Our Lady of Mercy Home, Waitara.

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **Waitara Foundling Home (1898 – 1927)**
  - Our Lady of Mercy Home, Waitara (c. 1928 - 1977)
  - Mercy Family Life Centre, Waitara (1977 - 1994)
  - Mercy Family Centre, Waitara (1994 - 2001)

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney Congregation \(1865 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1898 - 1927

#### Related Organisations

- [Mercy Family Life Centre, Waitara \(1977 - 1994\)](#)
- [Mater Misericordiae Hospital \(1906 - 1982\)](#)  
Mothers from Waitara Foundling Home were sent to birth at Mater Misericordiae Hospital.

### Resources

- [The Cry of the Children: Mr P McGarry Introduces a Deputation: The Chief Secretary's Sympathetic Words](#), Freeman's Journal, 25 November 1915
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999

## Records

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

### Records

- [Records of institutions run by the Sisters of Mercy \(North Sydney\) \(1903? - 1990?\)](#)
  - [Sisters of Mercy \(North Sydney\) Historical Records \(1898? - 2001?\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/waitara-foundling-home/>