

Sydney Rescue Work Society

1890 – 1982

Details

The Sydney Rescue Work Society was formed in 1890 to 'take over, continue and strengthen the Rescue Work for seven years usefully and beneficially carried on by Mr G.E. Ardill and his philanthropic co-workers'. It ran numerous refuges and homes for women and children in Sydney and surrounding suburbs. From 1911 until at least the 1950s it was based at 141-155 Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills. It changed its name in 1982 to Communicare.

George Edward Ardill was a printer and Gospel preacher who, in 1882, opened a Women's Refuge known as the 'Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women'. With his wife Louisa, he then initiated the Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, which ran the Home of Hope, the Discharged Prisoners' Mission and the Open All Night Refuge.

The Sydney Rescue Work Society was a non-denominational body founded on the principles and teachings of the New Testament. It campaigned for temperance, the reform of alcoholics and prostitutes and the protection of infants, women and girls. Ardill, a printer, produced a newspaper called *The Rescue* to lobby for funds, thank his numerous supporters, and report his successes in rescuing 'the fallen'.

The Sydney Rescue Work Society grew rapidly under Ardill's energetic guidance. By 1911 the following agencies were actively serving the community under the Society's control: South Sydney Women's Hospital; Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers; Training School for Midwifery Nurses; Adoption Agency; Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women; a day nursery and crèche in the City; Open All Night Refuge for Women; Jubilee Home for working and unemployed women; Roslyn Hall Babies Home, Rockdale; the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children, with homes at Camden and Liverpool; and a general relief agency that dispensed money and clothes to the needy.

Sydney Rescue Work Society institutions were run on the cottage model, which was expensive and required high levels of staff. The Society's finances were frequently precarious and Ardill financed many of his operations with profits from the commercial laundry in the Home of Hope, and fees from training midwives in South Sydney Women's Hospital. He was criticised for this, and for using the labour of pregnant women in the laundry. However, the Society was a major force in the city's charitable networks, at least until Ardill's death in 1945.

By the 1970s, the principal activities of the Society were the Commonwealth Street Mission, providing food, shelter and clothing for homeless and destitute men and women; Roslyn Hall Children's Home, providing residential care for twenty children; Bethesda Home for Unmarried Mothers, providing accommodation and support for single pregnant girls; South Sydney Women's Hospital, which placed special emphasis on the care of unmarried mothers; an Adoption Agency; a hostel for business girls; and a Department of Evangelism. In addition to these, it maintained a relationship with the homes operated by the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children.

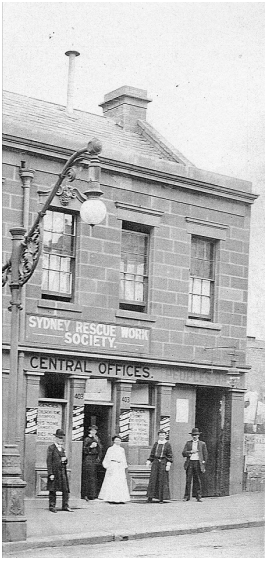
The Sydney Rescue Work Society changed its name to Communicare Sydney in approximately 1982 and in 2011 began trading as Integricare Sydney. It has sixteen child care services, including long day care centres, pre-schools, family day care and OOSH centres. The records of the Sydney Rescue Work Society Adoption Agency are now held by the Department of Community Services' Adoption Information Service. The Nursing History

Research Unit, Sydney Nursing School holds registers from the Home of Hope [South Sydney Women's Hospital] (1903-1905). Some records of South Sydney Women's Hospital from 1947-1949 and 1950-1976 are held by the Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick.

Whilst predominately focussed on long day care, family day care and preschool services for children, Integricare is considering ways to return to Ardill's original mission of administering to the needy.

The Sydney Rescue Work Society was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices Inquiry* (2012) as an organisation that was involved in forced adoption.

Gallery



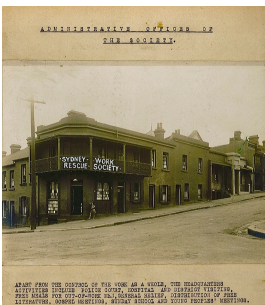
Sydney Rescue Work Society - Administrative Offices of the Society

Description: This photograph of the Sydney Rescue Work Society is from papers held by Integricare. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers

Description: This is a digital copy of an image published in the Sydney Rescue Work Society's Annual Report, 1950, p. 11, now held by Integricare. South Sydney Bethesda Waiting Patients Home (Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers), from the Sydney Rescue Work Society Annual Report, 1950.



Sydney Rescue Work Society administrative offices, circa 1890-1900

Description: This photograph is of a Sydney Rescue Work Society office and is from papers held by Integricare. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



House of Hope laundry, Stanley St., Newtown [Home of Hope]

Description: This is a digital copy of an image held at the State Library of New South Wales in Series 04: Photographs, postcards, and clippings including views in New South Wales, ships, and portraits, ca. 1870-1915.



First offices of the Society

Description: This photograph is of a Sydney Rescue Work Society office and is from papers held by Integricare. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



[Silver trowel] presented to Miss Sarah Taylor by the former inmates of the Home [of Hope] on the occasion of laying the Memorial Stone of the Home of Hope Laundry, Newtown, 28th Feb. 1891

Description: A silver trowel presented to Miss Sarah Taylor by former inmates of the Home of Hope, on the occasion of laying the Memorial Stone of the Home of Hope Laundry, Newtown [Camperdown], 28 February 1891.

More info

Chronology

- **Sydney Rescue Work Society (1890 – 1982)**
 - Communicare Sydney (1982 - 2011)
 - Integricare (2011 - current)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Commonwealth Street Mission \(1910s - 1970s\)](#)
- [Hostel for Business Girls \(1950s - 1970s\)](#)
Date: 1950s - 1970s
- [South Sydney Women's Hospital \(1905 - 1976\)](#)
Date: 1904 - 1976
- [Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women \(1883 - 1904\)](#)
The Sydney Rescue Work Society took over the management of the Home of Hope in 1890.
Date: 1890 - 1904
- [Open All Night Refuge \(c. 1882 - 1950s\)](#)
Date: 1890 - 1950s
- [Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers \(c. 1904 - 1976\)](#)
Date: 1911 - 1976
- [Sydney Rescue Work Society Adoption Agency \(c. 1911 - 2000?\)](#)
Date: 1911 - 1976?
- [Jubilee Home \(1887 - 1960?\)](#)
Date: 1911 - 1950s

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)
Sydney Rescue Work Society was mentioned in submission 61 to the Inquiry Committee as an organisation that was involved in forced adoption.

Related Glossary Terms

- [Homefinder \(1890 - 1920s\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children \(1887 - current\)](#)
The Sydney Rescue Work Society was an umbrella organisation that took in the work of the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children and often reported on the latter's activities. Although the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children became independent in 1945, a formal partnership was recommenced in the 1970s.
Date: 1890 -
- [Roslyn Hall Babies Home \(1911 - 1973\)](#)
The Sydney Rescue Work Society was related to the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children, which ran Roslyn Hall Babies Home.
Date: 1911 - 1973
- [Roslyn Hall Children's Home \(c. 1890 - 1976\)](#)
- [Integricare \(2011 - current\)](#)
Integricare is the current name of the organisation that was founded as the Sydney Rescue Work Society. Integricare holds some records of the Sydney Rescue Work Society, and manages the records of agencies under the Rescue Work Society's control.
- [Tresillian Mothercraft Homes, Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies \(1918 - current\)](#)
Tresillian and the Sydney Rescue Work Society were both involved in adoptions. Tresillian cared for babies waiting for adoption.
- [Nursing History Research Unit, Sydney Nursing School, University of Sydney \(1990? - 2024?\)](#)
The Nursing History Research Unit holds registers from the Home of Hope that were created by the Home's operator, the Sydney Rescue Work Society, from 1903 until 1905.
- [Blue Ribbon Gospel Army \(c. 1882 - c. 1890\)](#)
The Sydney Rescue Work Society possibly replaced the Blue Ribbon Gospel Army.
Date: 1890 -
- [Our Children's Home, Liverpool \(1887 - 1936\)](#)
The Sydney Rescue Work Society was related to the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children, which ran Our Children's Home, via their founder, George Edward Ardill.

Resources

- Sydney Rescue Work Society/Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children, *The Rescue: official organ of the Sydney Rescue Work Society and Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children*, 1880 - 1910
- [Survey of Social Agencies](#), Australian Women's Weekly, 15 July 1933
- [Social Derelicts. A Haven of Rest. Waifs and Strays. The Home of Hope.](#), Evening News, 13 July 1895
- [Women's Conference at Sydney: Fifty-Two Societies Represented, Record of Great Social Work](#), The Mercury, 10 August 1911

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/sydney-rescue-work-society/>