Open All Night Refuge

c. 1882 – 1950s

Other Names:
- Open All Night Refuge for Women
- Night Refuge
- Open All Night Refuge for Friendless Women

Details

The Open All Night Refuge was established in Darlinghurst by George Edward Ardill in 1883, via the Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, which later became the Sydney Rescue Work Society. It provided temporary accommodation for women and children, including those fleeing domestic violence. It also took in "friendless" women, including the homeless, those who had been recently released from gaols or asylums, and women visiting Sydney who could not afford other accommodation. Throughout its 70 years it occupied various locations in Surry Hills and Sydney. It closed in the 1950s.

George Ardill and his wife Louisa provided regular gospel temperance services at the refuge, offered beds and meals and tried to find work for those seeking aid. Each night it accommodated around 30 women and six children. Single mothers seeking longer term assistance were, at least in the early years, likely to be encouraged to send their children to the State Children's Relief Board, so most women stayed for the shortest possible time.

Initially the Open All Night Refuge was co-located with the Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women in Darlinghurst, but the organisations were separated in 1884 when the Refuge moved to 60 Druitt street. In 1886 it moved to 34 Cooper Street, Surry Hills. In 1888 it had moved to 403 Sussex Street, Sydney, and in 1905 it moved to the corner of Little Hay and Harbour streets. In late 1909 the Open All Night Refuge temporarily moved to 89-91 Ultimo road as the building it occupied on Little Hay street was to be demolished, and had moved again to 43 Bathurst street by December 1910. In December 1912 a lot on the corner of Commonwealth and Reservoir streets, Surry Hills, was purchased for use by the society, and the Open All Night Refuge moved into newly constructed premises there in mid-1915.

According to *The Australian Women's Weekly*, in 1933 the Open All Night Refuge was in the same spot on Commonwealth street, with its entrance on Beauchamp Lane, Surry Hills. The *The Australian Women's Weekly* said children were taken in with their mothers by the Open All Night Refuge, and temporary food and shelter was provided for them.

Ardill promoted the refuge as 'welcoming' in his Sydney Rescue Work Society newsletter *The Rescue* in the 1890s but former Communicare CEO and Sydney Rescue Work Society historian Bruce Thornton records that journalists at the time said the refuge 'dismally hovered over the street', was 'wretchedly furnished' and had a 'mean and forbidding' atmosphere. This austerity was something Ardill and his followers considered necessary to ensure the reformation of alcoholics.

Gallery

'Door of Hope' Mission, Little Hay & Harbour Streets,

Description: This is a digital copy of a black and white print of a glass plate negative, from an album produced to document demolition works in the City of Sydney.

More info

Related Entries

Run by
- Sydney Rescue Work Society (1890 - 1982)
  Date: 1890 - 1950s
- Blue Ribbon Gospel Army (c. 1882 - c. 1890)
  Date: 1882 - 1890

Related Organisations
- Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women (1883 - 1904)
  During 1883 and 1884 Open All Night Refuge was co-located with the Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women

Resources

- *A Visit to the "Home of Hope"*, Evening News, 31 May 1884
- *Advertising: Open-All-Night Refuge, 396, Crown-street, Surry Hills*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 January 1884
- *Women's New Home*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 September 1884
- *The Sydney Home of Hope*, The Daily Telegraph, 27 May 1887
- *General News*, The Daily Telegraph, 20 July 1886
- *Rescue Work*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 October 1905
- *Sydney's Open All-Night Refuge*, Lachlander and Condobolin and Western Districts Recorder, 7 July 1915

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