

Carramar

1961 – 1984

Other Names:

- Carramar Maternity Home
- Carramar Hostel

Details

Carramar, also called Carramar Maternity Home and Carramar Hostel, was an Anglican home for unmarried mothers at Turramurra. It was run by the Home Mission Society and at its peak held up to 27 women. Mothers who kept their babies were sent to a post-natal cottage at Berowra. Its staff also arranged adoptions and the Anglican Adoption Agency was set up as part of Carramar. Carramar and the Berowra post-natal cottage closed in 1984.

In 1966 the ABC Four Corners television programme visited Carramar, as part of a story on adoption and footage from the Home was featured in a 2012 Four Corners story about forced adoptions.

One of the Matrons at Carramar was Shirley Jones. She organised adoptions of the babies of unmarried mothers. Jones was interviewed in 1970 for an episode of the tv program Four Corners about unmarried mothers.

FOUR CORNERS REPORTER (1970): Carramar's Matron Jones explained that the girl can see her baby at least once, but not hold it or feed it. Is she told much about the new parents?

SHIRLEY JONES (1970): Yes, I do like to let the girl know – if she particularly wants to know; most of them do – the type of work the adopting father would do, and the type of suburb. Nothing that would identify the actual suburb.

FOUR CORNERS REPORTER (1970): So, the two parties can never meet?

SHIRLEY JONES (1970): No, no ("Given or taken?" – Four Corners).

Not all women who went to Carramar adopted their babies. The Home Mission Society provided a separate cottage at Berowra that gave post-natal care and support for women who were keeping their babies.

Carramar closed in 1984, at the time Care Force was formed to take over the Home Mission Society's operations. A February 1984 article in the Home Mission Society newsletter *Pulse* explained the reasons for closing the Home, and the decision to move the Home's operations to group homes in Parramatta. The article describes how the Home worked and mentions the post-natal cottage at Berowra for women who were keeping their babies. It also gives a sense of how society, even in the 1980s, judged unmarried mothers:

After much consideration over many years by the Care Force management committee, it has been decided to sell the "Carramar" Hostel for single pregnant girls at Turramurra. The work will be relocated in smaller houses in the Parramatta area, which is now the centre of Sydney.

Reasons for the decision included the costs of maintaining the very large building on Boomerang Street, Turramurra, and its unsuitability for a small number of girls. Also, many of the girls felt that Turramurra was too expensive for them to shop in, too far from the centre of things and too different from where they came from. They felt conspicuous in the area.

Carramar at Turramurra has given 23 years of most valuable service. In its early years, it was often full, with a substantial waiting list. At times, up to 27 girls were accommodated. In recent years the numbers fluctuated greatly, but averaged about nine girls.

It is planned to replace "Carramar" with two smaller houses; one for younger girls with live-in staff and the other for girls over 20 who will look after themselves with assistance from staff. All staff will be trained in social work and will implement programmes designed to assist the girls, emotionally and spiritually.

The post-natal cottage at Berowra has also been closed, but this important work for girls who are keeping their babies will be recommenced near the other hostels when they begin to operate.

One suitable house has already been located for a new "Carramar" not far from Parramatta, but some opposition from neighbours is being experienced and patience, tact and prayer are required.

Our aim is to provide an accepting, homey, comfortable and caring environment where God's love is shown in a community context with which the majority of girls would be familiar.

After Carramar closed the building was demolished and the site subdivided into lots for two houses.

Carramar was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices Report* (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

One woman's submission to the Senate inquiry stated that young women in Carramar in the mid 1960s were not advised of any help that might be available if they kept their babies. "We were told constantly we would be wrong to keep our babies. We were told our babies would be called 'bastards' by the neighbours and the public if we dared to keep them ... we were brainwashed against keeping our babies by a cold uncaring Matron and staff (submission no 112). Another woman who was in Carramar in the mid 1970s described similar treatment in her submission: "... we were subjected to intense propaganda, aimed at having us relinquish our babies. The most common line being, if we *really* loved our babies, we would give them away, to a proper two parent family" (submission no 248).

This woman stated that the women at Carramar who planned to keep their babies were treated differently: "It only ever seemed to be one or two at any given time ... out of about 20 residents. The staff made it quite obvious that they weren't considered to be doing the *right* thing. If you were keeping your baby you were not allowed to talk to the other girls about your decision or your plans. It also guaranteed you a single room ... no doubt so you wouldn't contaminate your room mate's thinking on the matter of adoption" (submission no 248).

Gallery



Carramar

Description: Carramar maternity home in Turramurra, from ABC Four Corners 1965-1966. In 1966 the ABC Four Corners television programme visited Carramar, as part of a story on adoption and footage from the Home was featured in a 2012 Four Corners story about forced adoptions.



The former Carramar Hostel, Turramurra

Description: This is a scan that was made by the staff of Anglicare Out of Home Care Services of an image that appeared in the 13 February 1984 issue of the Care Force newsletter *Pulse*, showing Carramar.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Home Mission Society of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney \(1857 - 1997\)](#)

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)
Carramar was mentioned in submission 38, 93, 109 and 112 to the Inquiry Committee as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

Related Organisations

- [Carramar Adoption Agency \(1960 - 1965\)](#)
- [Anglican Adoption Agency \(1978 - 1997\)](#)

Related Concepts

- [Adoption in New South Wales \(c. 1923 - current\)](#)

Resources

- Senate Community Affairs References Committee, [Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 29 February 2012
- Stewart, Jan, [Submission no 316 to the Senate Inquiry into the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), No date
- Alan Gill, *City of God grows in heart of Sydney*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 May 1976
- Alan Gill, *Off to a good start: Giving the young a chance*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 March 1978

Records

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

Records

- [Records of the Anglicare Adoption Services \(1961 - current\)](#)

- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/carramar-2/>