

Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies

1915 – 1922

Other Names:

- Eastwood Home for Mentally Deficient Mothers
- Brush Farm

Details

The Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies was established in 1915 by the State Children's Relief Board at Brush Farm House in Eastwood. Women and children who had been at the Shaftesbury Home for Mothers and Babies were moved there in 1915. Around 90 mothers and 200 children passed through Eastwood each year until it closed in 1922.

Brush Farm is in an area of Eastwood that is part of the Dundas Valley, so sometimes it is described as being in Dundas.

In the Annual Reports of the State Children's Relief Board, the Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies is described as housing mothers who were considered 'mentally deficient' or 'feeble-minded'. The definition of 'mental deficiency' was very loose and included women who, while unmarried, had more than one child. Eastwood was intended to support mothers to keep their babies and to help the babies survive, but another goal of the institution was to prevent the mothers from having more illegitimate children.

State Records NSW *Archives Investigator* states:

Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies was one of three special cottage homes set up by the State Children's Relief Board for the reception of mothers and infants, due to concern about high infant mortality rates, particularly amongst illegitimate children. The 1915 Annual Report of the Board stated that in opening these homes, their objects were to endeavour to preserve a larger proportion of infant life and reduce the number of deaths occurring from preventable diseases; to safeguard the lives of infants during the critical stages of their first few months; provide semi-starved and helpless mothers and expectant mothers with adequate home comforts and nourishment during the period preceding and following the birth of their children; to encourage breast feeding and the proper exercise of maternal function; and to keep young women who were not "inherently vicious" from the "contaminating influences found in association with large maternity units".

Eastwood Home for Mothers and babies closed in 1922, and Brush Farm Home opened in the same building.

Gallery



Eastwood Brush Farm House

Description: This image was posted on Wikimedia Commons. The descriptions states: Brush Farm House, Eastwood, Sydney.



Dormitory, Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the State Children Relief Board Report of year ended 5 April, 1915.

More info

Chronology

- Thirlmere Babies' Home (1907 - 1913)
 - Shaftesbury Home for Babies and Mothers (c. 1913 - 1915)
- **Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies (1915 – 1922)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [Infant Protection Act 1904, New South Wales \(1904 - 1923\)](#)

Resources

- [Fifth Sectional Report Covering the Administration of the Acts relating to State Children](#), Royal Commission to Inquire into the Public Service of New South Wales, August 1920

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/eastwood-home-for-mothers-and-babies/>