

Wanslea

1945 – 1946

Details

Wanslea, at Bexley, was a residence for around 18 homeless girls of working age that was opened by the Women's Australian National Services (WANS) in New South Wales in 1944. It was modelled on a Western Australian not-for-profit organisation, Wanslea, that was set up by Western Australian WANS in 1943. Wanslea closed in 1946 and became Lucy Gullett House, a convalescent home for females.

Wanslea, at Bexley, was funded by New South Wales Women's Australian National Service branches in Newcastle and Sydney. It was officially opened by Lady Wakehurst, President and Commander-in-Chief of WANS and wife of the New South Wales Governor, on 21 May 1945. An open day was held on 25 June 1945.

The Women's Australian National Service was set up during World War II to assist wartime efforts on the home front. It had chapters across Australia, most notably in Western Australia and New South Wales.

Lady Wakehurst, the wife of the Governor of New South Wales and president of New South Wales WANS, supported Wanslea, saying during fundraising for the home:

As the WANS were pioneers of training, with other organisations, in wartime, I hope they will be pioneers in women's social work in peace.

When Lady Wakehurst, dressed in her WANS uniform, opened the home in May 1945 she said 'Wanslea is a monument to the devotion to duty and the fine, unselfish spirit of the WANS.'

When the Home opened, Matron MH Bowden was placed in charge. It had 18 beds, three in each room, and a sick bay for girls needing isolation.

Wanslea was intended to support 'girls who are going through temporary periods of trouble' while employment was found for them. The organisers called these girls 'homeless and friendless'.

Wanslea closed in 1946 and became the Lucy Gullett House, a convalescent home for female patients from Rachel Forster Hospital.

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Resources

- [Another "Wanslea"](#), Western Mail, 24 August 1944

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