

# The Babies' Home Walkerville

1912 – 1945

## Details

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The Babies' Home at Walkerville was established by the Church of England in Walkerville in 1912. It cared for, and often adopted out, babies born at the House of Mercy, a refuge for unmarried mothers. After the home closed in 1945, babies were placed at St Mary's Mission of Hope.

The Babies' Home at Walkerville was established in 1912 by the Church of England at Gawler Terrace, Walkerville. It cared for babies born at the House of Mercy which operated in the same suburb. While the House of Mercy was a refuge for unmarried mothers, The Babies' Home focused on after-care of their babies as well as other infants. The House of Mercy management committee ran the home until a separate committee was formed in 1915. The leading figure in its administration was Miss Nellie Barker. In 1914 the home was caring for 14 babies.

The existing cottage was replaced in the early 1920s. In 1929 it was further extended to include a new annex named the Barker wing after Nellie Barker and her mother who provided the majority of the funding.

Many babies were adopted from this home. An article in 'The News' in October 1934 reported that children available for adoption from the Walkerville Babies' Home were in 'such brisk demand' that the matron of the home required the assistance of a referee in organising placements.

In 1945, a proposal to transform the home into a Mothercraft Training Centre was rejected by the Walkerville Council. This led to the closure of the Babies' Home that same year. St Mary's Mission of Hope took over the role of caring for babies and infants and the Walkerville property was sold.

The financial affairs of the Babies' Home Walkerville were not wound up until 1962, at which point its assets were transferred to St Mary's Home for Children (the successor to St Mary's Mission of Hope).

## Gallery

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**The Babies Home Walkerville**

**Description:** These images were published in the Finding Your Own Way guide, section 1. The top photo is from 1929, while the bottom photo is from 1928.





## A woman holding a child at the Babies' Home

**Description:** The library description states: A woman, possibly a doctor of the South Australian Babies' Home holding a very young child, she stands by several children's cots. Location is possibly the Babies' Home at Gawler Terrace, Walkerville where the Matron in charge was Miss A.T.C. McGahey.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Related Organisations

- [House of Mercy and Retreat for Women \(1881 - 1974\)](#)  
Many babies born to mothers living at the House of Mercy were placed at the Babies' Home, Walkerville.
- [St Mary's Mission of Hope \(1904 - 1953\)](#)  
St Mary's Mission of Hope took over the role of caring for babies and infants in 1945 when the Babies' Home, Walkerville, closed.
- [Anglican Diocese of Adelaide \(1847 - current\)](#)

#### Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

### Resources

- Dickey, Brian, *Giving a hand: A history of Anglicare SA since 1860*, 2003

## Records

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

### Records

- [Babies' Home Walkerville Records \(1912 - 1968\)](#)
  - [Records of the Babies Home, Walkerville \(Adelaide, S.Aust\) \(1920 - 1948\)](#)
  - [Records related to Church of England Social Welfare Bureau \(1947 - 1991\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/the-babies-home-walkerville-2/>