

# Somerton Crippled Children's Home

1939 – 1976

**Other Names:**

- Somerton Sick and Crippled Children's Home
- Crippled Children's Home, Somerton Park

## Details

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The Somerton Crippled Children's Home was established by the Crippled Children's Association of South Australia at Somerton in 1939. It initially operated as a home for the after-care of children suffering from polio. From 1951 the Home began to care for children with other disabilities including neuromuscular diseases like multiple sclerosis and Huntington's disease. In 1976 children from Somerton Home were transferred to the new Regency Park Centre for the Young Disabled.

The Somerton Crippled Children's Home was established by the Crippled Children's Association of South Australia at the beach front at Somerton in 1939. The property 'Alvington', the former home of the late Mr William Bickford, was purchased in 1938 by the Association to be used as a home for the after-care of 'crippled children' particularly those suffering from poliomyelitis, more commonly known as polio. After remodelling for the purpose with new bathroom facilities and a lift, the Home was expected to accommodate 35 to 40 children, with an absolute maximum of 50.

The first Matron of the Home, Sister M. Hocking, was appointed in December 1938 and the first seven children entered the institution on 13 February 1939. At this time the Home had facilities for 25 children and a staff including the Matron, a charge sister and four nurses.

By March of that year there were already more than 20 children at the Home. Many had previously been cared for at the Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital and the Adelaide Children's Hospital. The Home's two wards were full, as were two smaller rooms, and children were sleeping in the 'solarium' or Sun Room. There was a large schoolroom with a balcony, and according to The Advertiser of 1 March 1939:

*the education Department is to appoint a teacher to the Home so that the children will be able to continue their lessons.*

Alterations to the Home continued in 1939 with a playroom planned. Some smaller rooms were kept empty to allow for the accommodation of country children coming to Adelaide for treatment.

A new wing to accommodate nursing staff was opened in 1946 and in the late 1940s extensive improvements were made to the home adding two new general wards at a cost of 5,000 pounds. The additions were paid for through a public fund raising appeal and a grant from the government.

From 1951 Somerton began to care for children with disabilities other than polio, including neuromuscular diseases like multiple sclerosis and Huntington's disease.

In 1957 the introduction of the Salk vaccine prevented further epidemics of poliomyelitis in South Australia.

In the early 1970s the Crippled Children's Association began building a new larger facility at Regency Park. This facility was designed to replace both the Somerton Crippled Children's Home and the Ashfield House School – a day school for children with cerebral palsy. In 1976 children from Somerton Home were transferred to the new Regency Park Centre for the Young Disabled.

## Gallery

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### Somerton Crippled Children's Home

**Description:** The library description says the following is included on the back of the photograph: The Advertiser, photo, Krischock. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.

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### Crippled children's home

**Description:** This image shows children at Somerton Crippled Children's Home.

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### Crippled children's home

**Description:** This image shows a group of children at Somerton Crippled Children's Home.

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### Somerton Crippled Children's Home, north west corner showing additions, circa 1970

**Description:** The library description says the following is included on the back of the photograph: photo by Don. G. Meller, outdoor division, Mora Studio, 49 Rundle Street.

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **Somerton Crippled Children's Home (1939 – 1976)**
  - Regency Park Centre (1976 - 1992)

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Crippled Children's Association of South Australia, Inc. \(1939 - 2004\)](#)  
Date: 1939 - 1976

#### Related Events

- [Interstate movement of Northern Territory children \(1930s - 1970s\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [South Australian Committee for Crippled Children \(1932 - 1939\)](#)

## Resources

- [Vida Merle Maney interviewed by Adair Dunsford for the Honoured Women Oral History Project \[transcript\]](#), 16 March 1999

## Records

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

### Records

- [Crippled Children's Association of SA Inc \[Records\] \(1940? - 1970?\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/somerton-crippled-childrens-home-2/>