

# Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation

1846 – 2011

**Other Names:**

- Congregation of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy
- Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia

## Details

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The Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation, a Catholic religious order of women from Ireland, was established in 1846. The Sisters ran orphanages and children's homes, operated maternity homes, hospitals and arranged adoptions. The Sisters were part of the Catholic Migration Scheme which brought children to Australia from Britain and Malta. In 1954 the Perth Congregation became part of the Congregation of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. The Union was dissolved in 1981 and the Perth Congregation joined the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia. In 2011, the Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation was dissolved and merged with 15 former Australian congregations to become the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The first Sisters of Mercy in Australia, arrived in Perth in January 1846. They came under the leadership of Mother Superior, Ursula Frayne, and at the invitation of the first Catholic Bishop of Perth, Dr. John Brady.

The Sisters started their missionary activities as soon as they arrived, focusing on the education of children and visiting women and children in the nearby poorhouse. They soon began providing accommodation to children considered destitute, orphaned, or who were Indigenous, with the opening of their first orphanage, the Saint Francis Xavier Benevolent Institution.

The Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation continued to run institutions for children in care until the 1990s, including the St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage, the Subiaco Boys' Orphanage, the St Vincent's Foundling Home and the Catherine McAuley Centre.

In the twentieth century the Sisters started operating nursing and maternity Homes for unmarried mothers where adoptions were arranged from, including St Margaret's Hostel, St Anne's Nursing Home and St Gerard's Hospital.

Between 1947 and 1966, the Sisters were also part of the Catholic Migration Scheme which brought children to from Britain and Malta after World War II, with children placed at the St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage and St Vincent's Foundling Home.

In 1954, alongside eight other Australian congregations, the Perth Congregation became part of the Congregation of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

The Union was dissolved in 1981 and the Perth Congregation, maintaining its autonomy, joined the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia, alongside seventeen other Australian congregations.

In 1997 the Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation established the Mercy Community Services Inc. to continue and build upon the work of the Catherine McAuley Centre.

In 2011, the Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation was dissolved and merged with 15 former Australian congregations to become the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea.

# More info

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## Chronology

- **Sisters of Mercy, Perth Congregation (1846 – 2011)**
  - Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (12 December 2011 - current)

## Related Entries

### Ran

- [Mercy Hospital \(1997 - 2014\)](#)  
Date: 1996 - 2002
- [St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage \(1901 - 1971\)](#)
- [Benevolent Institution for Aboriginal Children \(1847 - 1860?\)](#)
- [St Vincent's Foundling Home \(1914 - 1971\)](#)
- [Catherine McAuley Centre \(1971 - 1991\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Catholic Orphanage for Girls \(1868 - 1901\)](#)
- [Subiaco Boys' Orphanage \(1872 - 1901\)](#)  
Date: 1876 - 1897
- [St Margaret's Hostel \(1918 - 1971\)](#)
- [St Anne's Nursing Home \(1937 - c. 1958\)](#)  
Date: 1937 - 2002
- [St Gerard's Hospital \(1944 - c. 1972\)](#)  
Date: 1944 - 1972
- [St Anne's Maternity Home \(c. 1958 - 1982\)](#)
- [St Anne's Mercy Hospital \(1982 - 1997\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Archives and Heritage Centre \(2012 - current\)](#)
- [Mercy Community Services \(Inc\) \(1997 - 2002\)](#)
- [Catholic Diocese of Perth \(1845 - 1913\)](#)
- [CBERSS: Christian Brothers Ex Residents and Students Services \(1995 - December 2005\)](#)  
The Sisters of Mercy part-funded Christian Brothers Ex Residents and Students Services (CBERSS) to deliver family tracing, travel and reunification services for former residents of Sisters of Mercy institutions.
- [Catholic Migrant Centre \(1992 - 2008\)](#)  
The Sisters of Mercy provided funding for the Catholic Migrant Centre.
- [Catholic Archdiocese of Perth \(1913 - current\)](#)

## Resources

- Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, [Learning Sequence 3, Teacher Resource 1 - Leadership of Ursula Frayne 1846-1857](#), 2017
- Information Services, Department for Community Development, [Signposts: A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920](#), 2004
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999
- [The Catholic Encyclopedia](#), New Advent, 2009
- Catholic Church, [Catholic Archdiocese of Perth - History](#), No date
- Catholic Welfare Australia, [Submission No 71 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), July 2003
- Peterson, Margaret, [Submission No 172 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 11 September 2003

- House of Commons Health Committee, [Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 11 June 1998 \(Health - Third Report\)](#), 11 June 1998
- Thomas, Ivy, [Submission No 483 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 1 November 2004

# Records

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## Records

- [Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Perth Archives \(1847 - 1991\)](#)
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