

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0500

Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society

(1845 - 1983)

Born 1 January, 1845, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Died 31 December, 1983

Occupation Social support organisation

Summary

In response to the perceived needs of the 'deserving poor', the Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society (MLBS) began operations as the Presbyterian Female Visiting Society in August 1845. By 1851, it was known as the MLBS, and retained that name until 1964, when it became the Melbourne Ladies' Welfare Society. The Society supplied food, clothing and other necessities to the respectable poor at home, particularly women in the Fitzroy and surrounding areas. The MLBS was acknowledged as Melbourne's principal relieving agency and played a major role in dispensing social service benefits until the 1940s, when the Commonwealth Government assumed a greater responsibility for social welfare.

Published resources

Book

Women's work during fifty years in connection with the Melbourne Ladies' Benevolent Society, 1845-1895, Melbourne Ladies' Benevolent Society, 1895

Women who helped pioneers: pages of Melbourne history that glow, Woinarski, G Zichy and Abbott, E. S., 1945

Single mothers and their children: disposal, punishment and survival in Australia, Swain, Shurlee and Howe, Renate, 1995

Deserted and destitute: motherhood, wife desertion and colonial welfare, Twomey, Christina, 2002

Report

Annual report, Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society, 1964

Annual report, Melbourne Ladies Welfare Society, 1965

Journal Article

Poor relief in Melbourne: the Benevolent Society's contribution, 1845-1893, Kennedy, Richard, 1974

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

[Minute books, 1850-1983. \[manuscript\]](#)

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Mrs R C Dunn addresses from the Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society, November 1891, on the occasion of her resignation from the position of Honourable Treasurer](#)

Author Details

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