

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0549

Governesses' Institute and Melbourne Home

(1857 - 1936)

Born 1 January, 1857, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Died 31 December, 1936, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Social support organisation

Summary

The Governesses' Institute and Melbourne Home opened in Melbourne in 1863 with the aim of accommodating governesses, shop women, needlewomen and servants and to provide a central employment registry in a self-supporting institution. Its forerunner, the Melbourne Female Home, which opened in September 1857 in temporary premises in Collingwood, provided shelter only for newly arrived single female immigrants who were without friends in the colony. The Governesses' Institute occupied a number of premises over the course of its existence in Little Lonsdale St. Melbourne, "Wynamo" in St Kilda and "Lovell House" in Caulfield. The governing body comprised a central committee, with nine local or suburban committees. A matron was employed to supervise the Home and its occupants. Strict rules applied; women were only admitted if they arrived on a week day, could pay a week's board in advance and were without children. In 1863 Mrs Laura Jane a'Beckett was elected secretary of the management committee of six men and twenty-six women. It closed in 1936.

Published resources

Book

The governesses: letters from the colonies 1862-1882, Clarke, Patricia, 1985

Thesis

A lady in every sense of the word: a study of the governess in Australian colonial society, Jones, Gwenda D. M., 1982

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

[Records, 1856-1936. \[manuscript\]](#)

Author Details

Rosemary Francis

Created 17 September 2003

Last modified 29 October 2018