KARITANE’S CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH
IN NEW SOUTH WALES
1923-2000

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMS</td>
<td>Australian Mothercraft Society Plunket System</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHC</td>
<td>Baby Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA</td>
<td>British Medical Association (later the Australian Medical Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>Coalition of the Liberal and Country (later National) Parties of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWA</td>
<td>NSW Country Women’s Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Director-General of NSW Department of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMBW</td>
<td>Division of Maternal and Baby Welfare and its successors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>Daily Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCC</td>
<td>Family Care Cottage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMS</td>
<td>Karitane Mothercraft Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPS</td>
<td>Karitane Products Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJA</td>
<td>Medical Journal of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English speaking background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Health and Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRB</td>
<td>NSW Nurses Registration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>Parent Support Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPA</td>
<td>Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSWMB</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWSAHS</td>
<td>South Western Sydney Area Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAP</td>
<td>United Australia Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>The World Health Organisation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY

Baby Health Centre. The Alice Rawson Schools for Mothers were the first such centres in Sydney. They were called Baby Clinics from 1914 when they were run by the State-funded Baby Clinics Board. The Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies took over the management of the Baby Clinics in 1919. They were referred to as Baby Health Centres by Dr Margaret Harper in 1925. Nurses operated the centres with medical oversight. The Department of Public Health took over their management in 1926. In 1933 their function was given as ‘the teaching of mothercraft and supervision of infants along the simplest lines’. In 1964 their work was described as ‘a nursing service to advise and encourage mothers in the care of their babies and themselves. It has developed from basic education in hygiene and infant feeding to embrace all aspects of infant care.’ 1

Board of Health. Governing body of the New South Wales Department of Public Health. The President of the Board was the Director-General of Public Health.

Division of Maternal and Baby Welfare. Created in 1926 as part of the New South Wales Department of Public Health and it became the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health in 1965 when the school medical service was incorporated.

Eugenics. ‘Coined by Sir Francis Galton in his 1883 book, Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development. He described it as a new ‘Science which deals with all those influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage’. ‘2

Family Care Cottage. Centre providing additional support to families with children under five years who are experiencing parenting difficulties. They are set up to deal with ‘normal’ family problems and they are ‘orientated to behaviour management and socially based problems rather than acute physical illness’. Centres are staffed by nurses and may include social workers, psychologists and voluntary parent support workers. Fifteen centres in NSW were listed in the Department’s 1986 Guidelines for Family Care Cottages. 3 In 2000 Karitane operated family care cottages at Randwick and Liverpool.

Infant Welfare Sister. A registered nurse in NSW who had completed a course of between four and six months in infant welfare. In 1966 the NSW Nurses Registration Board set up an examination system for the course they called ‘Mothercraft Training Short Course (six months)’. 1

Karilac. Sugar of milk preparations used to modify cow’s milk for infants, manufactured by the Karitane Products Society.

Kariol. Plunket Emulsion or New Zealand Cream. An oil-based infant feeding supplement manufactured by the Karitane Products Society.

Karitane Nurse. The name given to those who had completed a course of Plunket Society training in mothercraft in New Zealand. The system of training was adopted in NSW. The twelve months course, followed by four months of practical case work, was for those with no previous training.

1 NSW Department of Public Health, Report of the Director General, 1933, 33. 1964, 45.
Mothercraft. Knowledge of and skill in looking after and bringing up children. A much used term up to the 1980s when it was replaced by the terms ‘parenting’ and ‘early childhood care’. In spite of its considerable usage there are not many definitions. The Lancet in 1915 gave this medical definition, ‘a new word which has been felicitously coined to cover the science and art of safeguarding the health of the expectant, the puerperal, and the nursing mother’. Truby King wrote in 1918 ‘The modern world needs stimulation of interest and rational, practical, sympathetic education and help in Motherhood and Mothercraft,’ without saying what it was. Its all-pervasive nature is emphasised in this 1924 definition, ‘Mothercraft’ covers the period from the time before your baby is born to the time he finally leaves your hands, a grown man’. In 1937 the NSW Director, Division of Maternal and Baby Welfare wrote this: ‘The aim of the Baby Health Centres is to establish the fundamental of preventative medicine in Infant Welfare as exemplified by the term ‘mothercraft’. Clements also used the term in quote marks ‘A number of studies in various parts of the world have shown that ‘mothercraft’ is a difficult quality to define but not so difficult to describe, correlates well with the health and nutritional status of children.’

Mothercraft Nurse. In 1964 an Amendment to the NSW Nurses Act established a Mothercraft Nurse Register. Examinations were conducted by the Nurses Registration Board for the course they called ‘Mothercraft Training Long Course (fifteen months)’. The 1987 Amendment Act removed these nurses from the Register and placed on the Roll of Nurses.

NSW Department of Health. Known as the Department of Public Health from 1913 to 1973. It was absorbed into the Health Commission in 1973 and re-established as a Department in 1982. It is also known as NSWHealth. The Director-General of Public Health was concurrently the President of the Board of Health and Chair of the Nurses Registration Board. In this document the term ‘Department’ covers its various titles, and the term ‘Minister’ is used for the NSW Government Minister with responsibility for the Department.

NSW Nurses Registration Board. Established by the NSW Nurses Act 1924 and administered by the Department of Public Health and its successors.

Plunket Nurses Association. Also called the Truby King Nurses Association and the Karitane Mothercraft Association. Founded by Matron MacLean in 1931 as a mode of continuing education.

Plunket Nurse. The name given to the registered nurse who completed the Plunket Society’s postgraduate training course in New Zealand. The system of training was adopted in NSW. The registered nurses trained by the Australian Mothercraft Society were called Plunket Nurses until 1936 when they were called Truby King Nurses.

Plunket Society. The Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children (Inc) founded in 1907, later the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society. In 2000 it was the nationwide provider of most well-child support services operating through nationwide branches.

South West Sydney Area Health Service. In 1987, the Metropolitan Regional structure of the NSW Department of Health was abolished and its Area Health Services rationalised to create the South West Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) as an administrative entity centred on Liverpool. In 1992 it was enlarged to include Bowral. In 2005 SWSAHS merged with the

6 F Truby King, 1918, Natural feeding of infants, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 27.
7 Herself, 17 September 1928, 14.
8 NSW Department of Public Health, Report of the Director General, 1937, 42.
Central Area Health Service creating Sydney South West Area Health Service, (SSWAHS) or ‘Sydney South West Health’.

The Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies. Founded in Sydney in 1918 and endowed by statute.10 ‘Tresillian’ is the name of the house bought by the Society in 1920 to use as a mothercraft training centre.

Truby King Nurse. Registered Nurse who completed the course in infant welfare at the Karitane Mothercraft Home and Training Centre in Sydney. From 1966 these nurses sat the NSW Nurses Registration Board examination for the course they called ‘Mothercraft Training Short Course (six months)’. The 1987 Amendment Act removed specialist registers and this type of course became a University qualification.

The Australian Mothercraft Society Plunket System. Established in 1923, the name changed to the Australian Mothercraft Society Truby King System in 1937, to the Karitane Mothercraft Society in 1970 and to Karitane in 1996. In this document the Society is referred to as the Australian Mothercraft Society or Karitane as best suits the context.

The Commonwealth Department of Health. The Commonwealth Government established a Department of Health in 1921. Since 1987 it has had numerous name changes. In 2007 it was called the Department of Health and Ageing.

The Karitane Mothercraft Home and Training Centre. Opened in 1924 in Coogee, moving to Woollahra in 1926 and Randwick in 1972. Also known as the Karitane-Sydney Mothercraft Home until 1933, then the Ethel-Allen Karitane-Sydney Mothercraft Home from 1933 to 1943. It was referred to as the Karitane Hospital in some contexts. It operated with a Rest Home Licence until gazetted as a Third Schedule Hospital on 21 November 1958. From 1992 the name changed to the Karitane Residential Family Care Unit and it moved to Carramar in 1994.

The Karitane Products Society. An Industrial Provident Society headquartered in Wellington, New Zealand. It manufactured and supplied foodstuffs and preparations for infants and young children. From 1929 to c1932 there was a branch at 72 Buckingham Street, Sydney.

Tresillian. The name of the house bought by the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies in 1920 and used as a mothercraft training centre.

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10 Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies Incorporation Act 1919 (NSW).
ABSTRACT:

KARITANE’S CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH IN NEW SOUTH WALES, 1923-2000

This thesis is about the substantial service Karitane provided in the teaching of mothercraft to guide parents in the care of their young children in New South Wales. At first called the Australian Mothercraft Society, it emerged in New South Wales as a voluntary organisation in 1923, closely allied to New Zealand’s Plunket Society founded in 1907 by Sir Truby King.

Karitane was at its most active in the 1940s when it provided over a quarter of Sydney’s residential mothercraft services. Its beginnings were overshadowed by conflict and the New South Wales Department of Public Health did not acknowledge Karitane until the 1960s. Until then Karitane was absent from the public record of services for mother and baby in NSW. Sydney’s Eastern Suburbs community and the Karitane Products Society in New Zealand supported Karitane before it integrated into New South Wales’ government supported health services. Throughout it delivered on its aims of teaching mothers ways of caring for infants, disseminating knowledge about the care of young children and preparing specialist nurses.

The main theme of this thesis is the ‘moving frontier’ that is the boundary between the voluntary providers of health services and governmental provision of health services. Karitane’s development has depended on the politics of health care at Commonwealth, State and local levels. The secondary themes derive from the competition for scarce resources amongst the professional groups involved; doctors, nurses and health service administrators. Karitane’s experience has not been unique; it has followed a trajectory common to voluntary organizations providing personal care services through the twentieth century and it has conformed to trends in public health. Sometimes Karitane led the trends and sometimes it trailed; it adapted to circumstances but it retains a degree of independence.

Shining through all the problems with resources are the human experiences of appreciative mothers who used Karitane’s services and the dedicated staff and supporters who provided mother-centred help with the care of infants. The mother/infant relationship continues to be a central concern for public health. This study of Karitane gives a longitudinal perspective on the contribution of a small band of skilled people with a clear mission to provide services to assist mothers with their babies and young children.