

Story of  
WybaLena



Produced by the  
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
511 Kent Street  
SYDNEY

N.S.W. WOMEN'S INTER - CHURCH  
COUNCIL

FOREWORD

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New South Wales Women's Inter-Church Council

Mrs. Millar has been so steadfast a supporter of the welfare and progress of the "Wybalena" Hostel for girls, that it is fitting that she should have written its story. It is a story of unremitting effort on the part of many faithful workers, undertaken in the knowledge that there were many young people in the country who needed wholesome accommodation during their years of training in the city.

To the Women's Inter-Church Council this came as a call to service, and so founded upon their faith in the help and guidance of God, the Hostel was their answer.

During twelve years, it has been a pleasant Christian home for 300 girls, and will, we hope continue so to serve our young citizens for many years to come.

G. A. Roseby, O.B.E.

WYBALENA HOSTEL 1946-1963.

It was in 1946 when Mrs. Wallace Deane was President of the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council that she expressed the wish that we could do something more than just meet together. Mrs. Bowie, a Baptist representative rose to her feet and said this was an answer to her prayer, and that we should start a Home for under-privileged girls who had been before the courts.

As a result of publicity given to an address on this subject by Mrs. Bowie, a donation of £1000 from the Gipp's Service Association was sent to the Inter-Church Council per Mr. Johnson. This money had been collected for this purpose by a group of men who had been wardens during the war, and who were made very aware of the numbers of girls before the courts for vagrancy.

Feeling that they as men were hardly qualified for such work they donated £1000 to the Inter-Church Council, who formed a Hostel Committee at the annual meeting in 1946, whose first meeting was at the Bible House on September 20, 1946. Those present were Mesdames Deane, Cox, McCallum, Bowie and Chapman. Misses Swann, Roseby, McDiarmid and te Kloot representing Gipp's Service Association.

An election of Office bearers resulted as follows:  
President: Mrs. D.D. McCallum; Organising Secretary: Mrs. M.L. Bowie, Correspondence Secretary and Treasurer: Miss Roseby; Legal Advisor: Mr. J.F. Dey; Auditor: Mr. Stone; Medical Consultant: Dr. Rachel Taylor; Architect: Mrs. Turner.

The women's organisations of the member churches of the Inter-Church Council were asked to raise funds for the Hostel and we read of £25.11.0 being raised by Congregational women, £200 by Churches of Christ; and £100 from 1/- stamp books,

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for which Mrs. P.C. Ryan was responsible and £100 from Baptist women.

Miss Roseby and Miss te Kloot undertook and prepared a brochure to publicise the project, and a property committee of three namely Mrs. Bowie and Misses Roseby and te Kloot was appointed.

Mr. Justice Downing was interviewed with regard to advice and co-operation with Hostel needs and plans.

By October 30, 1946 the Hostel committee was registered under the provisions of the Charitable Act. A deputation called on Mr. Kelly, Under Secretary for Justice and received assurances of interest and support, when some definite move was made by the committee. The object of the Hostel committee was declared to be "to establish, carry on, and maintain a Hostel or Hostels for girls and or women who have been or are liable to be charged before any court of law in N.S.W. with any offence or who are approved as necessitous cases".

Plans for conduct of the Hostel were submitted to the Justice Department viz:

1. Home Mother to look after girls, at £5 per week and quarters.
2. Associate Mother with oversight of house, food etc. at £4 per week and quarters.
3. Girls to be housed free of charge for one week and after that a proportion of wages earned to be charged £1 or £1.5.0 a week being mentioned.
4. An annual grant to be asked from Government.

In may 1948 the Justice Department replied

- a. they approved of constitution
- b. financial aid would be considered when a suitable building had been secured.

In 1948 it was decided to take part in Rose Day. By this time there was £1458 in the General Account

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and £268 in 1/- stamp account.

The Gipp's Service Association at this point became impatient at the slow progress of the project and so the first house was inspected at Malabar but was found to be unsuitable and later Mesdames Dowie, Brasnett, Butler, Miller, Greenhalgh were co-opted to the Committee.

The result of Rose Day effort, together with a stall in Martin Place was £102.9.0 and the Bank balance was £1769.19.7.

In 1949 there was a division of opinion as to whether the Council should ask State aid to purchase the Hostel or to buy it themselves.

Funds were still growing and the Bank balance was £2097 with a second amount from the Churches of Christ for £61.

A deputation met the Gipp's Service Association to discuss contentious matters with them. The result of the meeting was to go ahead with the project and inspect a house at Carramar if the Inter-Church Council agreed.

September 1949 Mrs N. Millar became president of the Inter-Church Council, Mrs. Knight, General Secretary, and Mrs. Hall's name appears for the first time on the committee.

The resignations of Mrs. Bowie and Miss te Kloot were regretfully accepted, and Mrs. Margaret Watts, a co-opted member of the Committee, was asked to do a survey of the courts to ascertain the real situation at the moment as to the need for a home for delinquent girls. She reported - "that welfare homes are too difficult to run and are no longer able to be maintained by privately sponsored organisations".

So the Hostel committee recommended to the Inter-Church Council that, as delinquency in its various phases is now being included in Government's

Welfare Scheme, a "Hostel for country girls who come to live in the city be established and maintained without Government subsidy".

The above resolution was altered to following: "That with the knowledge that three Hostels for delinquent girls had to close down because of lack of numbers due to changed conditions since the war, it is recommended that the Inter-Church Council use the proposed "Wybalena" Hostel for a home for students and business girls which is the urgent need of the present time" - moved by Mrs. Watts seconded by Miss McDiarmid. Gipp's Service Association gave approval in a letter but asked that the name "Wybalena" (Happy fireside) be retained.

A circular letter prepared by Miss Roseby was sent to all the churches notifying them of the change of policy, and Welfare officers of Education Department, Y.W.C.A., Women's Colleges all agreed on need for hostels for students and or business girls.

October, 1949 - A property committee consisting of Mesdames McCallum, Millar, Stolz and Chapman was appointed - Mr. Knight also offered to inspect any suitable places.

March 1950 - Mrs. Watts was offered position of organiser for three months which she accepted in May 1950 as from August. A public meeting was to be held in July to launch an appeal for £20,000 - there was £2300 in hand at this juncture.

#### LAUNCHING OF APPEAL

- Meeting at Bible House, July 28, 1950.

Miss Northcott - the Governor's daughter was present and spoke on behalf of her mother Lady Northcott. It was large and enthusiastic gathering and some very substantial donations were received. Two resolutions were passed:

1. To establish a student hostel.

2. Those present to constitute a Provisional appeal committee with power to add: Office Bearers: Patroness Lady Northcott; President: Mrs. N. Millar; Honorary Secretary: Mrs. J. Alison. Mrs. Watts to act as Treasurer, pro tem.

An office with part time typist was secured in O'Brien House, Young Street.

Shortly after Mrs. Ryan who had been very active with her Shilling Fund resigned and Miss Roseby was appointed treasurer.

During the following months houses were inspected at Potts Point, Lidcombe, Cremorne, Lane Cove, but all were rejected.

In April 1951 a meeting was called to discuss property at 1 Appian Way, Burwood which had been inspected by property committee and favourably reported on by Mr. Knight and Mr. Cooper, Architect. The cost was £8500. Miss Roseby reported that M.L.C. would lend us £5500 at 4½% for 5 years repayable with interest and principal at £116.7.6 per quarter. Deposit was £3000. This was agreed to and on our request, M.L.C. kindly accepted interest only for first year, until we had "Wybalena" organised, furnished and equipped as a going concern. The property was vested in three trustees viz. Mr. E. A. Hunt, and Mr. J. F. Dey, Solicitors, and Mrs. N. Millar. Mr. Dey prepared the Deed of Trusteeship. Here I would pay a tribute to Mr. Dey who gave us much time in arranging the legal details of the sale in an honorary capacity.

Mr. Knight undertook the necessary alterations and repairs. Kitchen was completely renovated, a new stove and refrigerator installed. The cost of the latter was borne by the Southern Tablelands Auxiliary. Miss Moore was appointed Matron in November 1951 and the Hostel was finally opened by Miss Northcott on March 15, 1952. Mrs. Absalom

Deans was President of the Inter-Church Council. Mrs. Wallace Deane became Chairwoman of the Hostel Committee - a position she held very ably till July 1957 when Mrs. Brig. Lewis was elected. The raising of money was taken over by the Appeal Committee but members of the Hostel Committee always assisted.

In 1953 the M.L.C. arranged a reducible mortgage so that amount of £10 and multiples thereof could be paid in at any time. This meant that as the Appeal Committee raised money it could be used to reduce the mortgage and thus lessen the burden of interest.

Miss Moore resigned as Matron in November 1952, and since then we have had six matrons namely, Miss Coombs, Mrs. Dukes, Miss Knox, Mrs. Drewitt, Mrs. R. McCallum and Miss Doughty. All gave valuable and trustworthy service.

Miss Doughty became assistant matron in 1954 and in 1957 became Matron and is still with us. We cannot speak too highly of her devoted service, her influence on the girls, and her excellent management and interest in the Hostel. We thank God for all her service and enduring interest in everything that concerns "Wybalena".

Mr. Knight has also been a wonderful guide and helper in all that concerns the building and repairs. All his work has been done just for wages and cost of materials, and is of such a high standard that we have always been free of worry in this respect, knowing that whatever Mr. Knight undertook would be well done. We would couple Mrs. Knight's name with her husband as she was secretary from 1949-1963 and during the latter years was Registrar also. Her faithful attention to details has freed the President of any anxiety and although she has handed over the Secretaryship to Mrs. Gundelach she is still Registrar, and keeping check on the enrolments.

"Wybalena" accommodates 21 girls, 3 single rooms having been made in the building since the opening.

Some of the improvements since the opening are:

The house painted inside and outside; new venetian blinds put on all windows; one shower tiled and two others lined with sheet aluminium; fence and gates repaired; new water service installed; down pipes and guttering renewed; Hill's Hoist installed; washing machine for girls; one bedroom converted and furnished <sup>as lounge</sup> gas fire in lounge and electric radiator in dining room; dining room completely renovated; many new power points installed; fire extinguishers installed; public telephone for girls; carpets put down in all bedrooms; new refrigerator and mixer; refrigerator for use of girls, one room furnished by St. Johns Ambulance Association.

We have gradually had to raise our fees from the initial £3 a week to present £5 a week because of rising costs.

During the 11 years of the Hostels existence almost 300 girls have passed through, doing university, training college, conservatorium, chemistry and business courses.

In November 1961 the Hostel became free of debt and for this we thank the Appeal Committee and its auxiliaries, the women's groups of our member churches, the Gillespie Trust and many private donors.

As the Inter-Church Council and all its activities are on a voluntary basis, the number of people who have worked hard for this project is numerous. But I feel I must mention Mr. and Mrs. Hall. Mr. Hall has always helped us with our money at Fetes etc., and now is our Hostel Treasurer, and does the banking, keeps the books and pays the accounts. Mrs. Hall has many times acted as

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Matron and filled a gap for us, and worked all through the years on every effort we have made. Miss Roseby who was in the Hostel project from the beginning did much writing to publicise it, spoke on it in many places and brought the enthusiasm of the Congregational women into action. As Treasurer from 1951 she kept us informed by monthly accounts of the state of the exchequer until physical infirmities made it impossible for her to attend our meetings and she handed over to Mr. Hall. Miss Roseby also gave many gifts of furniture to the Hostel and she indeed is still and always will be a real part of it.

Mr. McKenzie also helped with the banking whilst Miss Roseby was Treasurer and to him and Mrs. McKenzie who have now both passed away we are grateful. Mrs. McKenzie was a generous supporter and put her home at our disposal for functions at various times.

Grateful mention must also be made of Mr. Sandiford who did banking for us, and also audited our books for some years. Mrs. Sandiford worked hard on the Western Suburbs' Auxiliary as Treasurer. Illness forced both of these friends to retire from the work.

The late Brig. Lewis of the Salvation Army was Hon. Auditor for a short time and Mrs. Lewis was President of the Hostel Committee until their removal to Bathurst.

Our present Hon. Auditor is Mr. MacDougall of Mosman; Hon. Solicitor is Mr. Ian Hunt, succeeding Mr. John Dey when the latter became a Barrister.

The task of running a Hostel isn't easy. The rising costs in Municipal Rates, Water Rates, telephone, labour charges and insurances make it difficult to make ends meet at times.

We feel however that a Hostel of this kind is still a real need in the community; it is a

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real evidence of the ecumenical spirit among our women and it should be fostered and kept going.

The future is in the hands of the Inter-Church Council or may be Australian Church Women, who knows?

M. Millar,  
November 1963.

#### APPEAL COMMITTEE 1950-1963.

##### Appeal Committee 1950.

As already outlined in the account of the Hostel movement, the appeal committee came into being at a meeting at the Bible House on July 28, 1950. The first meeting was held at the Rural Bank on August 16, 1950.

Present: Mesdames Millar (in chair), Watts, Alison, Chapman, R. Luke, P.H. Morton, Ferris, Parker, Knight, R. McCallum, Stolz, Palmer, Bevan, Ryan, Bond, Clouston, Bedkober, Morice, A. Deans, Pearson, Persia Porter, Payten, Gill, Wyper, Dyster, Forrest, Morris, W. Deane, Misses Roseby and McDiarmid.

The resolutions setting up this committee which were passed at the meeting at Bible House on July 28, 1950 were re-read and confirmed.

The main object of this committee was the raising of money. The Hostel constitution had been altered to allow of the formation of auxiliaries for this purpose. They were to be asked to raise £50 for 3 years, all monies to be forwarded to the Central Committee. The first effort was a street stall at Denistone East bringing in £20.9.0 and a Spring Fete was

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planned for September in the Central Baptist Hall, raising £112.8.4. Rose Day was to be one of our activities as we were registered under the Charities' Act. This activity was carried on till 1962 and raised an amount of £590.14.8.

In 1951 Mr. King who had been acting as Treasurer resigned and Mrs. Payten became our Treasurer and remained so doing wonderful work until her death in April 1962. We felt her loss keenly and missed her bright personality from our midst. As well as the Treasurer's work, she did an immense amount of sewing for all our stalls.

In the meantime Mrs. Watts had been busy and formed an auxiliary at Narrabeen under Mrs. Sheppard and one at Dee Why under Mrs. Twigg. Both these functioned till 1954 - Narrabeen raising £125 and Dee Why £37.18.6. At Moss Vale Mrs. McInnes and Miss Henrietta Rose formed the Southern Tablelands Auxiliary which has supported us all through the years and to date has raised £356 as well as paying for our first refrigerator. On Mrs. McInnes' death the auxiliary placed a lovely stone seat in the garden at "Wybalena" in her memory. Mrs. J. Minehan - the hon. secretary still plans to hold one function a year for our funds.

In August 1951 the North Shore Auxiliary was formed under Mrs. J. Muhaly and Miss Allan. This auxiliary functioned till 1958 raising £98.2.0.

The Mosman Auxiliary was formed under Mrs. R. B. Wyper as President and Mrs. Bluett Honorary Secretary and Mrs. Murdoch Treasurer and they continued till 1958 and raised £465.

The Western Suburbs Auxiliary under Mrs. Palmer began in 1953 and closed in 1963 having raised £610 which included £20 for purchase of a sewing machine and £40 towards a piano. This group is still meeting in a social way in one and another's homes.

Our auxiliary at Goulburn ran into adverse circum-

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stances and only functioned for a short time, realising £31.1.0.

As well as raising money these auxiliaries helped in all our various functions and were a tower of strength to the Central Committee and we record our grateful appreciation of all their work. Their total contribution was £1713.12.6.

Later in 1951 Mrs. J. Alison resigned as secretary owing to ill health and Mrs. R. B. Wyper became our honorary Secretary and remained so till 1963.

This was not easy for her as she experienced years of illness with her husband, and also herself. But her interest never flagged and is still as keen as ever and to her we say a big thank you for constancy, efficiency and devotion.

The three Executive Office Bearers have been the same during our 13 years of operation.

In 1951 we were greatly cheered by an Exhibition of the Archibald Prize rejects arranged by Lady Plowman which realised £162.

Mrs. Watts left us after 3 months and we closed our office in O'Brien House as it was too expensive and the President conducted all the business from her own home.

1951 was taken up gathering money to have enough to put a deposit on a house which eventually came our way when the Inter-Church Council decided to purchase a house at a Appian Way, Burwood for £8500.

The opening by Miss Northcott was on March 15, 1952. 4 girls were in residence and the remainder of the 20 we could take, came within the next few days. It was expected that the fees of the Hostel would pay for its upkeep, and salaries, and the interest bill on the loan of £5500, but

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that the Appeal Committee would raise the remainder of the mortgage. The Fete at the opening together with gifts realised £420 which was sufficient to pay for remodelling, kitchen, bathroom and laundry and £500 from the appeal was passed over to pay for furnishing.

We held seven such fetes realising £1289; three Balls were held realising £489.16.3 and five Jumble Sales brought in £117.7.3. Mrs. P.C. Ryan's 1/- Fund started about 1948 realised over £500.

We sent out three Appeals, one in 1950, the second in 1955 and the last in 1960. For this last one we secured permission to circularise the women's organisations of the various churches. 1000 letters were sent out, the churches defraying cost of postage by sending them with other literature. Also the letters were copied by Miss M. V. Willis free of charge. The result of this effort was £677.16.0 and on November 24, 1961 a cheque for £825 was presented to Miss Roseby to liquidate the overdraft.

The loan was really due for renewal in September 1961 but on Miss Roseby's representations M.L.C. kindly deferred it until the result of our Appeal, thus saving us the legal expenses of a renewal.

Our many other activities included picture shows, flower demonstrations, travel talks, American Teas, four Recitals by Miss Joyce Trickett, Recital of "Christmas Carol" by the Rev. Norman Cocks, Musicals, Recitals, Villawool Parade, and talk on Herbs.

In 1956 we issued a "Christmas Recipe Card" and have continued to do so each year. These proved very popular and helped to publicise "Wybalena" and were revenue producing.

Our biggest and most consistent benefactors have been Lady Gillespie, Miss Gillespie and the Gillespie Trust. In all, cheques totalling £1300 have come to us from this source, unsolicited and so all the more welcome. We record our grateful

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appreciation to Lady Gillespie who gave us an initial £500 and put us on the list of benefactors for the Trust.

The Late Mrs. Martin McGrath gave us £150 - Mr. John Ross, a grazier of Holbrook, £60; Walter Eliza Hall Trust, £25; St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church and their Dorcus Society £92.16.4; Salvation Army Officers £30; Inner Wheel Rotary £20; Order of Eastern Star £10; Epping Inter-Church Council sent us a regular annual donation.

In 1957 on the retirement of Sir John Northcott, Lady Northcott indicated her wish to retire from the position of Patroness and at our request Lady Woodward graciously accorded us her patronage, and the Hostel Committee, Appeal Committee and the members of the Inter-Church Council entertained her to morning tea at "Wybalena" on November 13, 1957.

Since 1959 Mr. P. McDougall A.C.I.S., A.A.S.A., has been our honorary auditor. He has been most helpful in bringing our books up to standard and we thank him most sincerely.

In 1963 the Appeal Committee having done what it was appointed to do, decided to disband but asked its members to serve on the Hostel Committee, which most of them agreed to do. We decided to put the balance of our funds into a Reserve Account to be used in Emergency repairs at the Hostel. This account is at the Burwood Branch of the Commonwealth Bank.

The final annual report of the Appeal Committee was read at the Bible House on May 9, 1963 and the final meeting of the committee was held at "Wybalena" on August 9, 1963.

Thus ends 13 years of strenuous but satisfying work. We were always a happy team on the Appeal

Committee and rejoice in the fact that "Wybalena" is free of debt.

To the many people who have helped us in this effort go our sincere thanks and appreciation for work well and truly done by folk who were working hard in their own churches but went the "second mile" for "Wybalena" Hostel and helped us to raise over £10,000.

Compiled and written by M. Millar

ADDENDUM

As Secretary of the "Wybalena" Hostel appeal and a member of the Hostel Committee, it is my privilege and pleasure to add to this report, expressing appreciation of the wonderful service and sacrificial effort so willingly given by our President, Mrs. Norman Millar, B.A.

The years under review have not always been free from worry, but it is clear that over this period of time, much has been achieved for the Hostel. It is also clear that this is largely due to the dedication and ability of Mrs. Millar. Quick to accept the heaviest load, alive to the tragedy or comedy of any situation, and one who is ever the first to call in time of trouble, and a cheery companion in time of rejoicing, she has been an inspiration to us all. And so we place on record our thanks, for the quiet and very effective and gracious support, she has given at all times to "Wybalena" and the Women's Inter-Church Council.

W. L. Wyper,  
Honorary Secretary.