

## 3.12 Providing health and welfare services

### Summary of theme

The risks of injury, ill-health or death presented by gold-mining in Ballarat in the 1850s prompted the establishment of an early hospital. Mechanised manufacturing and steam engines also presented the threat of injury. By the late nineteenth century, Ballarat was well provided with hospitals and other medical care. As well as doctors, nurses and midwives, there were also Chinese herbalists. The large range of welfare services in the municipality, provided by the churches, by philanthropic organisations, and by government, included benevolent institutions for the poor and vulnerable, orphanages, an industrial school, aged care, and infant welfare centres. The Catholic Church in particular has played a significant role in health and welfare services in Ballarat.

### Consideration of this theme in relation to the HUL approach

This theme reflects a relatively widespread activity type throughout the City of Ballarat with a large number of health and welfare institutions established. These were often large institutions set in extensive grounds that were established in the nineteenth century, often with a working farm attached. These are complex landscapes that have potential for historical archaeology. The formal layout of sites designed for health and welfare purposes followed an appreciation of landscape design and a strong conviction about the benefits of a garden setting for those who are unwell or recuperating.

While the motive of caring for human life was fundamental to these places, the lived human experience of welfare institutions was too often one of hardship, loneliness and loss. Many of these places, were (and continue to be) landscapes of trauma and pain for many residents and their families. This includes the Lakeside Asylum, and the former Ballarat Orphanage site, where many children were subject to abuse.

### Consideration of this theme relative to First Nations history

Health and wellbeing	First Nations people had their own healers but were provided with medical care through the Port Phillip Protectorate, and later through the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Overall, the Protectorate and the BPA provided inadequate medical care to cope with the health impacts of invasion and dispossession, which included malnutrition, exposure and lack of resilience to infectious diseases.
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Child welfare	There was no need for orphanages in traditional Aboriginal society because children were well cared for. Under the control of colonial authorities, many Aboriginal children were placed in the Ballarat Orphanage, including children who are part of the Stolen Generations.
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### Consideration of this theme relative to First Nations history

Ballarat Benevolent Asylum	It is likely that Aboriginal people were placed in the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum.
Industrial School	Aboriginal children were brought to the Ballarat Industrial School on the grounds of being 'neglected'.
Stolen Generations	<p>Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung children have been taken from their families for a long period of time since the beginning of settlement, which has led to inter-generational trauma and cultural disruption for many people.</p> <p>Other First Nations children from other parts of Victoria, including Gunditjmara children, were also sent to the Ballarat Orphanage.</p>
Hospitals	Many Aboriginal people have been treated in the Ballarat Hospital. Wadawurrung Elder Mulwallah (or Mullawallah) (King Billy) of Ercildoune died in the Ballarat Hospital in 1896 ( <i>Free Lance</i> , 3 October 1896, p. 1).

## 3.12.1 Building hospitals

### Ballarat Miners' Hospital

A sudden influx of thousands of people, predominantly miners, to the Ballarat goldfields in the 1850s created a critical demand for medical services. Gold-mining was a fundamentally dangerous and unhealthy activity and miners were subject to a range of risks. It involved a high degree of exposure to dirt and dust and toiling in dank, dark underground tunnels, and carried with it a high incidence of injury and death. Women on the goldfields in the 1850s faced significant health issues and many had little assistance during childbirth and afterwards, with its attendant complications.<sup>611</sup> Sickness among children on the goldfields was rife, as local cemetery records testify. Children were also particularly susceptible to accidents on the goldfields, such as falling into wells or mine shafts, or being injured by falling earth. Other work-related accidents were common in farming, especially with machinery use. Drowning was also common because few people were able to swim. Initially, medical services were scarce.

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<sup>611</sup> Wright, 2013.

In his survey of the Ballarat township in 1852, W.S. Urquhart had shown some foresight in his provision of a hospital reserve.<sup>612</sup> A miners' hospital at Ballarat was proposed by the end of 1855, and an imposing double-storey hospital building was erected in 1859.<sup>613</sup> Of the 85 beds provided by the hospital, only 15 beds were allocated to female patients.<sup>614</sup> The Chinese were provided a separate area with a separate entry, owing to racial attitudes at the time.<sup>615</sup>

The Ballarat Hospital grew in bursts. A gate lodge was added in 1872 and impressive hospital gardens were developed, as well as an extensive kitchen garden.<sup>616</sup>



**Figure 3.242** Ballarat Hospital, sketched in 1859. (Source: State Library Victoria)

### **Ballarat Base Hospital**

The Ballarat Miners' Hospital developed further in the 1880s and became the Ballarat District Hospital and later the Ballarat Base Hospital. It served as an important training hospital for nurses, with a nursing building completed in 1935 (FIGURES 3.277). A new nurses' home was completed in the early 1950s (FIGURES 3.278).

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<sup>612</sup> Urquhart, Ballarat Township Reserve, VPRS 8168, P0002, FEATR553, PROV.

<sup>613</sup> *Geelong Advertiser*, 21 November 1855, p. 2; 1859; Bate 1978.

<sup>614</sup> Ron Southern, *An Oak on Maiden Hill*, 2015, p. 36.

<sup>615</sup> Anthea Hyslop, *Sovereign Remedies: A history of Ballarat Base Hospital 1850s to the 1980s*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1989, p. 60.

<sup>616</sup> Hyslop, 1989, pp. 125, 130–31.

## St John of God Hospital

St John of God Hospital is a Catholic hospital in Ballarat which was established by the Sisters of St John of God in 1915. A two-storey Victorian-era mansion—the former home of William Bailey who had made his fortune on the Mount Egerton Mine—was acquired for the purpose (FIGURE 3.279).

A new hospital building was erected in 1952, which was further expanded in the 1980s. After 1952, the original Bailey building was used to provide nurses' accommodation<sup>617</sup> (note, however, that this building has since been demolished as part of the redevelopment of the hospital precinct).



**Figure 3.243** Ballarat District Hospital, 1882. (Source: National Library of Australia)

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<sup>617</sup> White, 1968, p. 148.



**Figure 3.244** The former mansion of William Bailey at Lake Wendouree was acquired for the establishment of the St John of God Hospital. (Source: St John of God Ballarat website)



**Figure 3.245** New Ballarat Hospital building, built in 1935 as a nurses' home. (Source: *Building*, 1 April 1936)



**Figure 3.246** Nurses' home, Ballarat Base Hospital, c.1950. (Source: *Pix*, 17 May 1952)

### **Lakeside Psychiatric Hospital**

The Ballarat Asylum (later Lakeside Psychiatric Hospital), which opened in 1877, was established on the north bank of Lake Wendouree. The facility operated until 1997, after which the site was sold and redeveloped for residential use. A number of mature exotic trees survive from the former hospital gardens.<sup>618</sup>

### **Other hospitals and medical services**

Addressing the deficiency of beds for female patients at the Ballarat Miner's Hospital, a women's hospital was built in Ballarat in 1884.<sup>619</sup>

There were a number of private hospitals established in Ballarat, including maternity hospitals and lying-in hospitals. These often established in existing homes with live-in

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<sup>618</sup> 'City of Ballarat – Exceptional Trees', 2023.

<sup>619</sup> News article 1884.

nurses. Examples include 'Clowance' at Mount Pleasant, which operated as a maternity hospital for some time (FIGURE 3.284) and Norwood private hospital (FIGURE 3.279).

Other medical services throughout the area were limited, but there were a number of doctors operating in the Ballarat area, including Eric Cunningham Dax and Dr Lindsay of Creswick. Doctor's residences were usually built with attached consulting rooms. An example is at 802 Sturt Street, Ballarat [VHR H0529], which was built in the 1890s and was situated close to the Ballarat Hospital (FIGURE 3.283).

Chinese herbalists were also operating in Ballarat East from the 1850s.



**Figure 3.247** Norwood private hospital, Ballarat. (Source: PROV)



**Figure 3.248** Former doctor's residence, 802 Sturt Street, Ballarat Central. (VHD?)



**Figure 3.249** 'Clowance', Mount Pleasant, was used as a private maternity hospital. (Source: 'Discover Historic Mount Pleasant' brochure, 2019)

### 3.12.2 Public health

Local government authorities were authorised to take various steps to manage public health. In 1854, under the new *Public Health Act*, local government areas, including the

municipal areas of Ballarat (West) and Buninyong were declared as places of public vaccination. This was extended to Ballarat East in 1858 and Lake Learmonth in 1860. Fears of smallpox outbreaks in the late 1850s was a concern in Ballarat that saw high rates of public vaccination.<sup>620</sup> In the City of Ballarat East, public health responsibilities included managing the quarantining the Chinese lepers' colony.<sup>621</sup>

Local government areas were also required to appoint their own coroner and were responsible for setting aside a public cemetery (see Section 3.10.6)

The Spanish 'Flu pandemic of 1919 was a public health emergency that required local councils to set up makeshift hospitals to quarantine patients. In Ballarat, this included the Pleasant Street State School at Lake Wendouree.<sup>622</sup>

### 3.12.3 Welfare services and institutions

#### Ballarat Benevolent Asylum

Modelled on the Melbourne institution of the same name, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was built in 1859.<sup>623</sup> It relied on both government funding and private donations. The imposing building dominated its immediate environs and had a large garden (FIGURE 3.285).

Such institutions typically took in those who had little means to support themselves. The asylum was also a refuge for people suffering from mental illness, for which there was an unusually high incidence on the goldfields.<sup>624</sup> Contributing factors for this phenomenon are thought to include the fundamentally unstable or unsettled nature of mining life, and the experience of extreme highs and lows in fortune, both personal and economic. The asylum also provided accommodation and a maternity section for pregnant unmarried girls and women.<sup>625</sup> The Ballarat Asylum is also a place where Aboriginal people were admitted.<sup>626</sup> Children were admitted until 1869 and some of these children may also have been Aboriginal.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>620</sup> Cousen, 'The Smallpox on Ballarat', 2018.

<sup>621</sup> Victorian Places, 'Canadian'.

<sup>622</sup> Blake, 1973.

<sup>623</sup> Context, 2014.

<sup>624</sup> Jill Giese, *The Maddest Place on Earth*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2018.

<sup>625</sup> Chisholm (ed.), *The Spielvogel Papers*, Vol. 1, 1974.

<sup>626</sup> Giese, 2018.

<sup>627</sup> Find and Connect website.

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was partly demolished in 1941 and extended to form the Queen Elizabeth Centre.

### Queen Elizabeth Centre

In the early 1950s the Queen Elizabeth Benevolent Home, later known as the Queen Geriatric Centre, accommodated 600 aged and infirm residents.<sup>628</sup> In 1997, the Queen Elizabeth Centre merged with the Ballarat Base Hospital and the Grampians Psychiatric Service to form Ballarat Health Services.<sup>629</sup>



**Figure 3.250** Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, built in Ascot Street, Ballarat West, in the 1850s. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession No. H1786)

### Ballarat Female Refuge

The Ballarat Female Refuge was established in 1867 by a group of local Protestant women as an institution for women and girls who were pregnant and unmarried or were socially and economically vulnerable. The refuge was initially located in Grant Street. In

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<sup>628</sup> Find and Connect website; 'Ballarat: Australian city with a past ...', *Pix*, Vol. 27 No. 18, 17 May 1952.

<sup>629</sup> Find and Connect website.

1884, the Ballarat Female Refuge was relocated in 1884 to double-storey purpose-built premises in Scott Street, Ballarat East [VHR H1893], designed by Caselli and Figgis (FIGURE 3.286). The institution continued to operate until 1941.<sup>630</sup> The adjacent Alexander Steam Laundry, where the women worked, and the Alexander Babies' Home operated in association with the Female Refuge.<sup>631</sup> The Ballarat Female Refuge is likely to have been a place where Aboriginal women and girls were admitted.



**Figure 3.251** Former Female Refuge, 183 Scott Street, Ballarat East; photographed in 2008. (Source: Victorian Heritage Database)

### **Ballarat Industrial School**

Industrial schools were more a form of welfare than a provision of education. Following the *Neglected Children's Act 1864*, a number of industrial and reformatory schools were established in Victoria, including one at Ballarat in c.1865. This was located on the west side and adjoining the Botanical Gardens. Later this occupied part of the Ballarat Orphanage site at Ballarat East. Rudimentary learning was provided, but children were also trained in practical skills that would be useful for employment as servants and labourers.

The *Aborigines Protection Act 1869* established the Aborigines Protection Board and set the pattern for subsequent policies in relation to welfare provisions for Indigenous people in Victoria. Regulations allowed for Aboriginal boys under 14 years and Aboriginal girls up

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<sup>630</sup> Ballarat Heritage Services, via VC.

<sup>631</sup> Jacobs and Rowe, 2006, p. 132.

to 18 years who were considered neglected by their parents or left unprotected, to be taken to a mission, a government reserve, or an industrial or reformatory school. The Act and its regulations gave the Victorian Government the power to make arrangements about the 'care, custody and education' of Aboriginal children. Subsequent regulations allowed government policies for the highly regimented treatment of Indigenous children to change without the scrutiny of the Victorian Parliament (see also Section 3.11.2).

### **Chinese Mission**

The Chinese Mission was founded in Melbourne in 1855, with branches established in Ballarat and Bendigo.<sup>632</sup> From the 1850s, cases of illness, injury and misfortune were typically addressed by a public call for private donations. In the 1860s, fund-raising was carried out for the Chinese lepers' camp in Ballarat East.<sup>633</sup> Some assistance was provided by the Ballarat Benevolent Society.<sup>634</sup>

Some of the Chinese who remained in Ballarat had little means to support themselves but were ineligible for the usual forms of welfare available at that time. In the early 1900s, the Australian Government returned a number of elderly Chinese to China.

### **Aged care and rest homes**

From the late nineteenth century, residents of Ballarat and further afield had shown concern shown to retired miners with various fund-raising activities for the Ballarat Worn Out Miners' Sustenance Fund. The Old Colonists' Association of Ballarat, formed in 1883, built the Old Colonists' Hall [VHR H0116] in Lydiard Street in 1887–89. It drew inspiration from the Old Colonists' Association in Melbourne, which had been established by entrepreneur George Coppin in the 1860s. The Old Colonists' Association in Ballarat was set up to provide support to the (male) pioneers of Ballarat, specifically the miners, and including those who had been involved in the Eureka Stockade.<sup>635</sup> The moulding to the pediment of the Old Colonists' Association building in Ballarat depicts two men, reflecting the gendered nature of the club.

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<sup>632</sup> Bonwick, *An Octogenarian's Reminiscences*, 1902, p. 230.

<sup>633</sup> News article, 1867.

<sup>634</sup> Dorothy Wickham, 'Ballarat Benevolent Asylum', <https://dorothywickham.com.au/article/ballarat-benevolent-asylum/>

<sup>635</sup> Old Colonists Association, Ballarat, VHR H0116.

Other welfare institutions in Ballarat include the Wendouree Asylum, the Ballarat Home for the Blind, and Ewing House.<sup>636</sup> Care was also provided by Freemasons Homes, Ballarat.

### 3.12.4 Orphanages

#### Ballarat Orphanage

As was the case in other large cities in Victoria, orphanages were established in Ballarat by both the government and the churches. The Ballarat Orphan Asylum was a government institution established at Ballarat East in 1865-66. A large complex of buildings was developed at an elevated site in Ballarat East (FIGURE 3.287). The orphanage was renamed the Ballarat Orphanage in 1909 and celebrated its jubilee in 1915. It was responsible for the care of thousands of children over the period of its operation.

The Ballarat Orphanage was a place of regimented activities and controlled behaviour. It was a place where child abuse took place and it remains a place associated with much trauma and suffering. A large number of Aboriginal children who had been removed from their families lived at the orphanage, Many Aboriginal children of the Stolen Generations were taken from their families and sent to the Ballarat Orphanage in the 1950s.<sup>637</sup>

The Ballarat Orphanage was renamed the Ballarat Children's Home in 1968.<sup>638</sup> It was closed in 1983 and the site has since been adapted for residential development.

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<sup>636</sup> See William A. Sloss, 'Medicine and Memories [Ballarat]', held RHSV.

<sup>637</sup> David B. McGinniss, 'Histories of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, 1866-1983', PhD thesis, Federation University, Ballarat, 2019; see also *Bringing Them Home report*, 1997.

<sup>638</sup> Authentic Heritage, 'Ballarat Orphanage Heritage Assessment', prepared for the City of Ballarat, 2012.



**Figure 3.252** The Orphan Asylum, East Ballarat, 1893. (Source: State Library Victoria)

### **St Joseph’s Boys’ Home**

The Sisters of Nazareth opened a Catholic orphanage on the west side of Lake Wendouree in the 1880s, known as St Joseph’s Boys’ Home. The Nazareth Boy’s Home opened as part of St Joseph’s Home in 1913.<sup>639</sup>

### **Other orphanages**

Several other orphanages and children’s home were established in Ballarat, including the McCallum House and George Street Children’s Home (later Ballarat Town and City Mission Rescue and Children’s Home).

The Alexandra Babies’ Home in Ballarat East operated from 1909 to 1974. It mainly took in babies who were state wards. Once the children were 4 years old they were sent to the Ballarat Orphanage.<sup>640</sup>

## **3.12.5 Bathing establishments**

In the nineteenth century, the practice of public bathing was encouraged for its therapeutic benefits in terms of general health and hygiene. The ongoing problem of the constant dirt and dust associated with mining, coupled with the lack of an adequate water supply, created strong demand for public bathing facilities in Ballarat. The bathing establishments in Ballarat, which included Turkish Baths and Jenkins Hydropathetic

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<sup>639</sup> Evans (ed.), 1964.

<sup>640</sup> Ballarat Heritage Services, via VC; Finding Records, <https://www.findingrecords.dhhs.vic.gov.au/collectionresultspage/AlexandraBabiesHome>

Establishment (FIGURE 3.288), drew much praise from visitors. Bath Street, off Lydiard Street, is a reminder of the location of the former baths.



**Figure 3.253** Jenkins Hydropathic Establishment at 105 Dana Street, Ballarat. (Source: Ballarat Library, via Victorian Collections)

### 3.12.6 Providing public housing

The Housing Commission of Victoria, established in 1938, built housing for low-income families in Melbourne and other cities and towns across Victoria. The provisions of the Victorian *Housing Act 1943* allowed for the acquisition of land for the establishment of housing estates. In 1945, the Housing Commission acquired a group of 23 suburban blocks in Hurley Street, Ballarat North, for new homes. Plans were prepared by Geelong architects Buchan, Laird, and Buchan, who were responsible for most, if not all, of the early HCV designs.<sup>641</sup> They were pre-fabricated timber-framed brick-veneer homes with an iron roof and a central projecting porch with a sloped verandah (FIGURES 3.289, 3.290).

In 1949, the Housing Commission built an additional 23 houses in Sebastopol.<sup>642</sup> This was considered an economically disadvantaged area that was identified as being in need of public housing. The modest homes (built in Birdwood Street) and followed a similar design as those in Hurley Street.

The HCV also developed the Walsh housing estate at Ballarat North in 1945;<sup>643</sup> a housing estate at Wendouree in 1951;<sup>644</sup> and a housing estate at Ballarat West in 1952.<sup>645</sup> Upon arriving at Ballarat as newly arrived British migrants in the early 1950s, the Hathaway

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<sup>641</sup> Renate Howe (ed.), *New Houses for Old: Fifty years of public housing in Victoria, 1938-1988*.

<sup>642</sup> *Argus*, 1949.

<sup>643</sup> *Age*, 18 December 1945, p. 3.

<sup>644</sup> Victorian Places, 'Wendouree'.

<sup>645</sup> *Age*, 26 July 1952, p. 20.

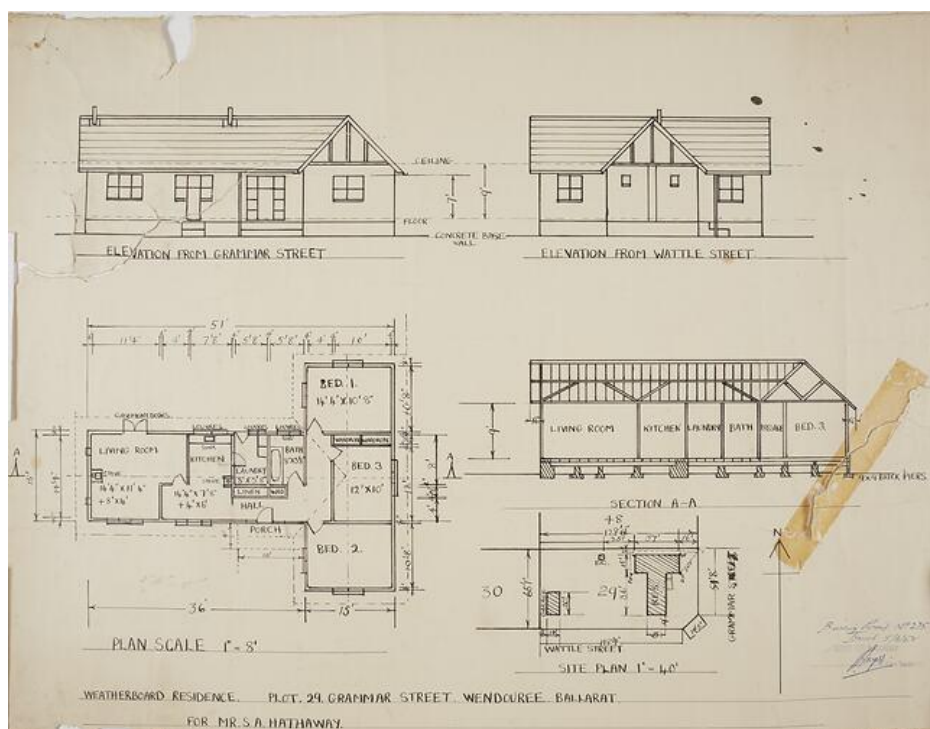
family built a modest timber-framed brick house in Grammar Street at the Wendouree Housing Commission Estate (FIGURES 3.291, 3.292).<sup>646</sup>



**Figure 3.254** Brick veneer Housing Commission house in Hurley Street, Ballarat North. (Source: Realestate.com)



**Figure 3.255** Brick veneer house built by the Housing Commission of Victoria in Hurley Street, Ballarat North. (Source: PRD Ballarat)



**Figure 3.256** Architectural plans for the Hathaway family home, Plot 29 Grammar Street, Wendouree, 1954. (Source Museums Victoria Collections, Item HT 5063)

<sup>646</sup> Museums Victoria Collections, Item HT 5063, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/2217338>



**Figure 3.257** The English-born Hathaway children at the rear of their new home under construction, Wendouree Housing Commission Estate, 1955. (Source: Museums Victoria Collections, Item MM 144186)

### 3.12.7 Infant and maternal welfare

Infant welfare centres, also known as baby health centres, were first established in Ballarat in the 1930s. Infant welfare centres were taken up as a municipal service across Victoria from 1918 in response to the high levels of infant morbidity and mortality in the state and as a means of better monitoring the health of individual babies. The centres were managed by local councils but supported by the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association, and from 1920, by the Society for the Health of the Women and Children of Victoria.

In 1933, it was proposed to utilise a portion of the former Ballarat East Town Hall building as the Ballarat East Baby Health Centre. A new building for Ballarat East Baby Health Centre was erected within the Ballarat East Town Hall Gardens in 1938 to a design by the PWD architect Percy Everett (FIGURE 3.293).<sup>647</sup> As was common in the period, a domestic or residential style was adopted for the building. In central Ballarat an infant welfare service was provided by c.1940, which operated from the Ballarat Town Hall.

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<sup>647</sup> Context, 2019, p. 12.

There were also infant welfare centres opened at Buninyong, Sebastopol, Black Hill and Wendouree.<sup>648</sup>



**Figure 3.258** Ballarat East Infant Welfare Centre, designed by the Public Works Department architect Percy Everett, was opened in 1938. (Source: Context, 2020)

Additional baby health centres were established as Ballarat’s suburban population increased through the postwar period. By 1963, an infant welfare centre had opened in the developing residential area of Alfredton.<sup>649</sup>

### 3.12.8 Aboriginal welfare

The Aboriginal welfare service, the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), was established in 1979. It provides a range of service for local Aboriginal people in Ballarat and district, including health, social, welfare and community development programs.<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> See public building files for these places, PROV (not cited).

<sup>649</sup> The Progress of Ballarat.

<sup>650</sup> BADAC, <https://www.badac.net.au/about>