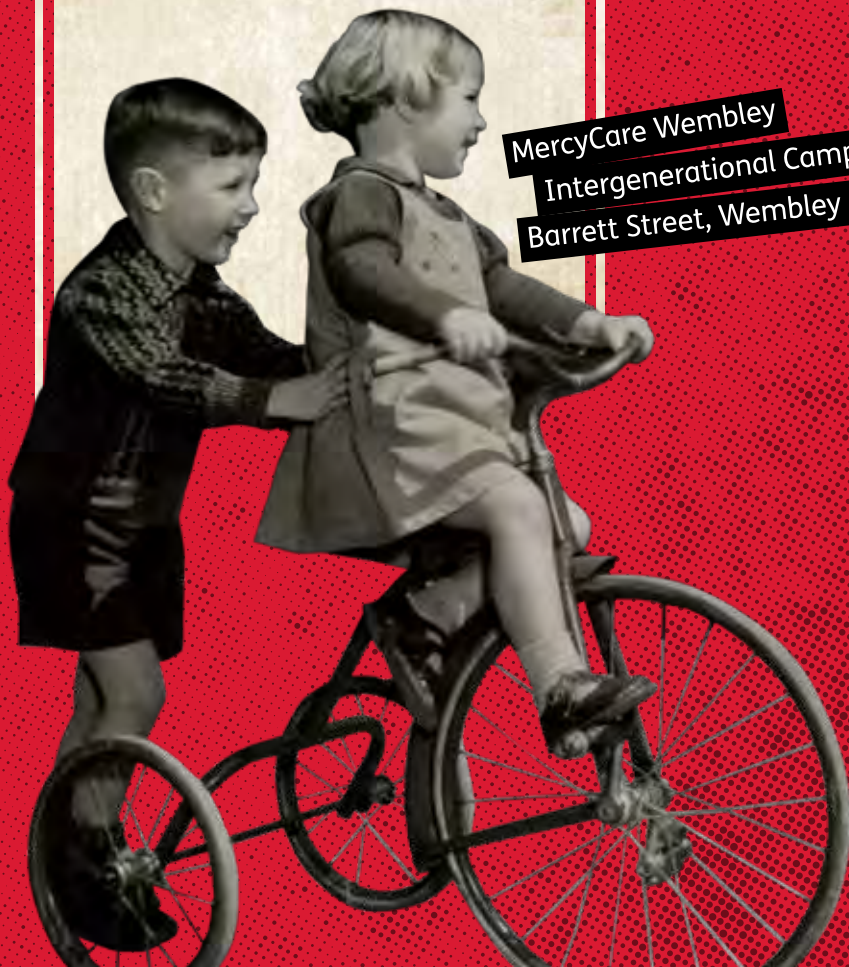




HISTORY ON THE HILL

A Celebration of Heritage



MercyCare Wembley
Intergenerational Campus
Barrett Street, Wembley

History on the Hill

Now home to the MercyCare Wembley Intergenerational Campus, the land overlooking Lake Monger was occupied by Benedictine monks as the New Subiaco Monastery from 1853 to 1864 before leaving to join the New Norcia Monastery; Australia's only monastic town located 132kms north of Perth.

During this time, MercyCare's founders – the Sisters of Mercy – had already established a presence in Perth following the voyage of seven Sisters from Dublin, Ireland to Perth in 1846. This mission was led by Sister Ursula Frayne, who spent 11 years in Perth setting up schools for vulnerable children before moving on to establish the Order in Victoria.

The Sisters of Mercy began caring for Catholic girls at their convent in Victoria Square in 1868. In 1876, the Sisters of Mercy took over management of the orphanage at New Subiaco. The Sisters left the site temporarily from 1897 – 1901 before returning with the girls.

Over the next 100 years, the Sisters of Mercy remained in charge of the site, adding new buildings and introducing new services to keep up with the changing needs of the community. In addition to the existing orphanage, this included a Foundling Home, a hostel for mothers and their babies, child care

services, a school, group homes; and nearing the last quarter of the century, a residential aged care home and retirement living village.

After the passing of one of the Sisters' most prominent figures – Sister Martin Kelly – in 1987, the operation moved towards lay management before forming as MercyCare in 2002.

Fast forward to today and MercyCare continues its mission to bring compassion and justice to life and break cycles of significant disadvantage. Services now reach even further into the community to fulfil the vision for all people and communities to thrive.

MercyCare is proud of its long history in Western Australia and the work carried out by the Sisters of Mercy at the heritage-rich Wembley site. Preserving the remaining structures and artefacts of this era and honouring the heritage of the site will continue to be important to MercyCare in the years to come.

Pioneering women



Catherine McCauley founded the Sisters of Mercy as a Catholic religious order four years after opening the first 'House of Mercy' in Dublin, Ireland in 1827 to help people experiencing significant disadvantage.



Ursula Frayne led a small group of six Irish Mercy Sisters from Ireland to Perth in 1846, establishing the Sisters of Mercy in Western Australia and laying the foundations for MercyCare as it is known today.

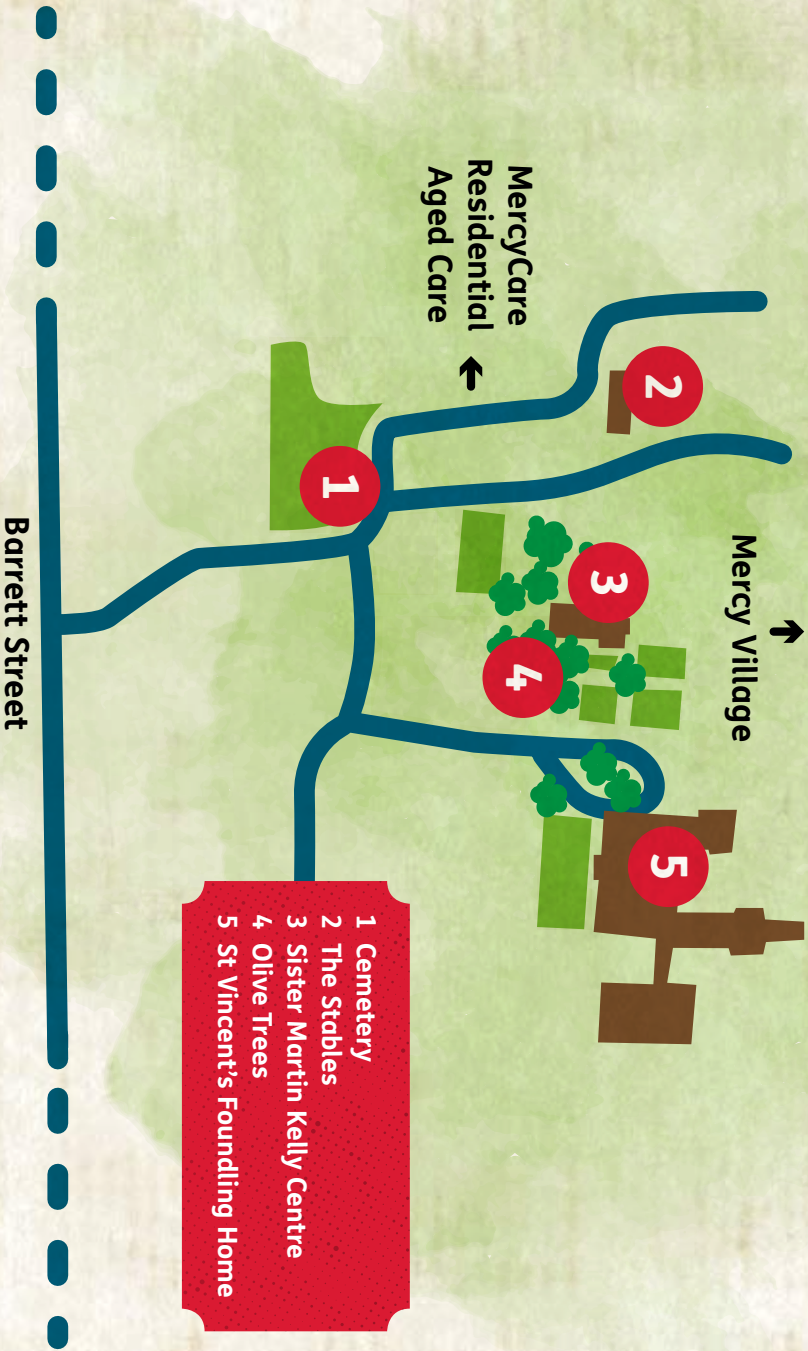


Sister Martin Kelly made a significant contribution to the development and expansion of services at the Wembley site. During the 1970s she pioneered the transition away from institutionalised care to the residential care model that continues today.

Today

MercyCare Wembley Intergenerational Campus is made up of an Early Learning Centre, a Residential Aged Care home and retirement living at Mercy Village. Surrounded by beautiful grounds and a rich heritage, the Intergenerational Campus is a caring community for all ages in the heart of Wembley.





1 THE CEMETERY

Up to 30 Catholic priests and nuns are buried at the Wembley site's private cemetery including two of the original Sisters of Mercy who came over to Perth from Ireland in 1846. The last known burial took place in 1914 and the cemetery was closed soon after. Between 1925 and 1936, the graves of at least ten persons were exhumed and re-interred elsewhere, including the nearby Karrakatta cemetery.

A cemetery or pretty garden?

Large white wooden crosses once marked the grave sites but were removed out of sensitivity to the children at the Foundling Home who found the cemetery's presence distressing. Today, the consecrated ground is marked by a single monument and landscaped garden.



2 THE STABLES

Built by the Benedictine monks more than 160 years ago and later used to produce Royal Show-winning olive oil, The Stables is one of Perth's earliest agricultural buildings. It's the only remnant structure of the Benedictine Monastery of New Subiaco, from which the Perth suburb took its name. Recognised by the National Trust and Heritage Council, it was restored by MercyCare to its former glory in 2019 after falling into a state of disrepair.



A step back in time

Manufacturing the shingles for The Stables' roof was one of the restoration's biggest challenges as sheoak logging is now strictly controlled and shingle fabrication is a small and specialised industry.



Tradespeople working on the restoration down-skilled their techniques to authentically reflect the skill-level of the original builders who would have had very little – if any – stone masonry or carpentry experience.

3 SISTER MARTIN KELLY CENTRE

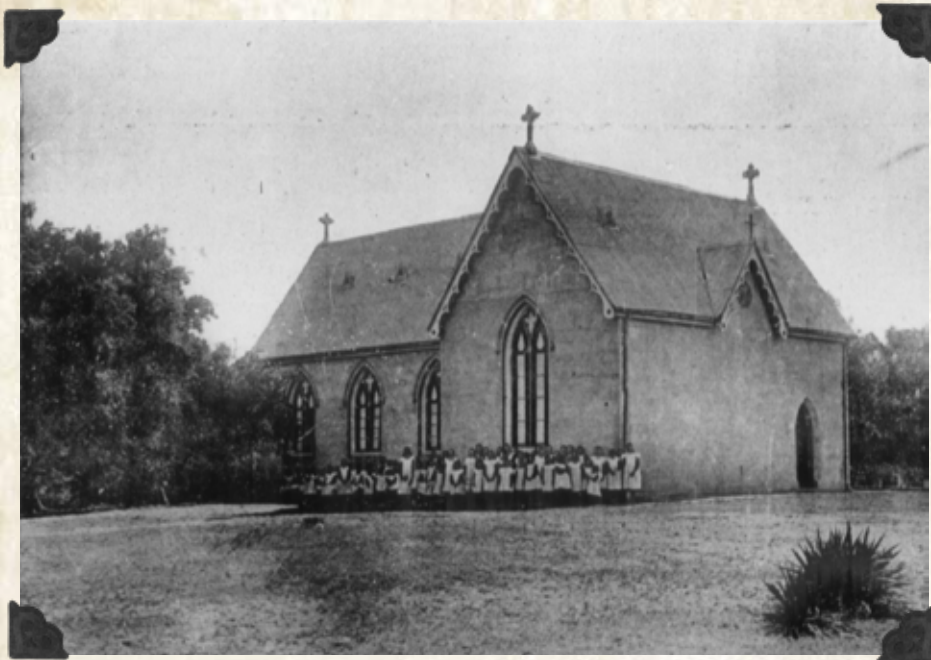
Named after one of the most prominent Sisters in the Wembley site's history, the Sister Martin Kelly Centre is the most significant heritage building on the site. It was built on the highest ground in 1893 as a schoolhouse and was known as 'The Old Chapel'.

In 1989, the building was renamed the Sister Martin Kelly Centre in recognition of the contribution to child care made by Sister Martin Kelly, who worked tirelessly for a better future for disadvantaged children from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, receiving an MBE for her achievements.



After falling into disrepair several decades ago, the building was returned to a functional state in 2016 following a major restoration project which was recognised with a State Heritage Award.





Pioneering with passion

Sister Martin's arrival at the site in the late 1960s coincided with a number of developments in Australian society. Always one with her finger on the pulse, Sister Martin Kelly was responsible for introducing a long day care service at the site and transitioning children into smaller 'family-size' cottages to end institutionalised care at the site.

A Bishop and an outlaw

Tragedy struck the site in 1879 when a lightning strike hit the monastery building and electrocuted several sisters, killing one boy and caused serious damage to the building.

The Orphanage Manager – Bishop Gibney – set off for the Eastern states to raise funds for building repairs. On his travels he came across the Kelly Gang's shoot-out with police at Glenrowan, where he was allowed to cross the siege lines to issue last sacraments to Ned Kelly and his gang. By the time the Bishop arrived at his destination, people were so in awe of everything that had unfolded, they donated without hesitation and the Bishop returned to the West with plenty of money!

4 OLIVE TREES

Upon arriving at the site in the 1850s, the Benedictine monks wasted no time planting olive trees for future harvesting. Two years later, the olives were ready, and the monks began making olive oil.

Recognising the money-making potential of the inherited olive groves, the Sisters began producing large quantities of olive oil to sell.

The taste of success

The girls from St Joseph's orphanage exhibited the olive oil at the Royal Perth Show each year where it was often awarded first prize. Bottles of the award-winning olive oil and some of the equipment used to make it are among some of the site's most treasured artefacts in MercyCare's possession today.

Protecting a legacy

The olive trees, including some original and their descendants, are now heritage-listed. All remain in good condition and continue to produce quality olives.



5 ST VINCENT'S FOUNDLING HOME

In 1914, the Sisters of Mercy opened St Vincent's Foundling Home – the first Catholic Foundling Home in Western Australia. It operated alongside St Joseph's orphanage, caring for children from birth to six years old.

Extensions were added to the building over the years to expand its services, including a kindergarten, a nursery and a wing for unmarried mothers and their babies.

Today, the building is home to the MercyCare Wembley Early Learning Centre.



The mysterious hatch in the wall

To save her getting up and dressed in the night, rumour has it the Sister on night-duty at St Vincent's used a hatch in the wall to chastise the children when they got too noisy. This meant she only had to put her head dress on and not her full habit.

The mysterious hatch sits in the wall of the centre manager's office.

Secret symbolism

Look a little closer at the ornate Federation-style architecture and you will notice discreet dollar-like symbols. These are in fact Catholic symbols to signify the building as a Holy place, incorporated into the building's design by architect George McMullen.





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