

History of Karitane

Karitane Mothercraft Society **Founded by The Late Sir Truby King, C.M.G, M.B, B.Sc**

Karitane started in New Zealand in December 1907 when child health advocate Sir Truby King raised concerns about the high infant mortality rate at a time when no formula was available to mothers unable to feed their infants.

Although his motto was “BREAST FED IS BEST FED” he started clinics and experimented with milk formula to combat his concerns.

Karitane is named after the beachside township about 45 kilometres north of Dunedin in New Zealand. In 1907, Dr Truby King founded the Royal Society for the Health of Women and Children in Dunedin although he owned a house at Karitane, where he and his wife provided care for thirteen malnourished, ailing babies.

Dr Truby King was able to put into practice his ideas about infant feeding when breastfeeding was impossible. With the help of Lady Plunket, wife of the Governor of New Zealand, he organised fundraising and established a centre offering advice to mothers and training for nurses.

The first Australian Mothercraft Home was opened in a cottage at Coogee in 1924. Miss McMillian was sent from New Zealand and became the first matron. She opened the first baby clinic that year, which was located in Sydney. The Society grew rapidly and a larger hospital was established at Woollahra in 1927.

Additional clinics were established throughout Sydney and mobile clinics supported mothers as far south as Wollongong & Picton, west to the new Hills district and north to Berowra.

Karitane moved to Randwick in 1974, where a Family Care Cottage still operates. Due to the increasing needs of parents in the South Western Sydney, Karitane relocated to its current location at Carramar in 1994.

This move also included the establishment of a specialised day service that supports women and their families experiencing perinatal mood and related disorders (Jade House), an additional Family Care Cottage at Liverpool and a Volunteer Support Program.

The history of Karitane is reflected in its changing logo:



1923 original logo



1944 logo



Early 90s



Current logo