

PRESS RELEASE: 28th January 2009

Australia Day was a particularly special day for The Infants' Home, Ashfield, as its President, Mrs Gillian Hirstman, was presented with the an Australian Day Achievement Award by Ashfield Council for her significant contribution and achievements in the field of Children Services.

Mrs Hirstman's life long commitment to children commenced in primary school. "Gillian's belief in the importance of providing services to young children and their families is inspiring to those who work with her" said Mrs Jennifer Evans, CEO of The Infants' Home. "Gillian has tirelessly focused on developing support for [our] organisation so that the children and families of Ashfield and the surrounding areas can access services that will ensure a good start to life."

Mrs Hirstman's contributions as a fundraiser, board member and currently President of the Infants' Home, have seen her working with local government and members of Parliament

The importance of Mrs Hirstman's work is reflected in the unique standing that The Infants' Home enjoys within the community. Its leafy Henry Street site in Ashfield provides a one-stop shop of integrated care, education, health and support services for young children and their families.

This recognition of Mrs Hirstman comes as The Infants' Home commences its' celebration of 135 years of service to the local community.

It was in May 1874 that the Infants' Home first opened its doors as a Charitable Residential Care Centre for infants and their mothers. Originally sited In Paddington, The Home obtained its permanent site in 1876 when its committee members were able to purchase the twelve and a half acre site known as "Gorton" in Ashfield.

Today, on a somewhat smaller 5 acre site The Infants' Home longevity in child and family service provision continues to flourish. Throughout its rich history it has pioneered many initiatives that are now taken for granted; such as pre-school learning centres, parenting education and early intervention. With over some 60 staff members, The Infants' Home provides early intervention, parenting support and child care services (both Long Day Care and Family Day Care). Its standing in the community as a leader in child and family services has long been recognised by local, state and federal government, who provide funding for The Home. This funding is supplemented by the generosity and financial support of many of The Homes' supporters to fully over operating costs.

Preparations for the 135th Anniversary are well under way and the staff, supporters and families of The Infants' Home look forward to celebrating its rich and diverse history with the local community.