Sisters of the Good Shepherd

1863 –

Other Names:
- Australian Province of the Good Shepherd
- Good Shepherd Province of Australia/Aotearoa/New Zealand
- Good Shepherd Sisters
- GSANZ

Details

The first Good Shepherd Sisters in Australia landed in Melbourne on 24 June 1863. They had travelled from Angers in France at the request of Bishop James Goold of Melbourne, to establish a female rescue home. They purchased a property at Abbotsford, from which they ran an industrial school, commercial laundry, and provided accommodation for female juvenile offenders, and poor and homeless women. The Sisters went on to establish more foundations in Victoria as well as in Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. In 2022, the international Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd continues to exist. The Province of Australia/Aotearoa/New Zealand is part of its Asia-Pacific Circle.

The Convent of the Good Shepherd at Abbotsford, established in 1863, was the base for the Order's operations in Australia, as well as the site of several schools and institutions for women and girls. In 1890 the Australian houses were constituted as a separate province of the international order.

In the state of Victoria, the Good Shepherd Sisters went on to establish foundations at Oakleigh (1883), Albert Park (1892) and in Bendigo (1905).

The Sisters established a foundation in Tasmania, opening the Magdalen Home in Sandy Bay, Hobart in 1893. This institution was also known as Mount St Canice.

The next state to have a foundation was Western Australia, where the Sisters arrived in 1902. In Perth, the Sisters ran the Home of the Good Shepherd in two sections: a women's home (from 1902) and a reformatory (from 1909). In 1904, the Sisters opened a new convent and Home in Leederville and the Home of the Good Shepherd in Adelaide Terrace, Perth, closed.

In Queensland, the first Home run by the Sisters was the Good Shepherd Home for Girls at Mitchelton which opened in 1930. Archbishop Duhig had asked the Sisters in 1927 to establish a foundation in Brisbane.

The Pines, in Adelaide, South Australia, opened in 1946, following a request from Archbishop Beovich in 1941 for them to open a convent in his diocese.

One feature of the institutions run by the Good Shepherd Sisters around Australia was their commercial laundries, where girls and women worked. This laundry work had attracted controversy since the early 1900s and its legacy has continued to draw criticism in government inquiries in Australia and elsewhere, notably Ireland.

The Sisters also established foundations in New Zealand. There was an Australasian Province until 1957, when New Zealand became a separate Provincialate. New Zealand was reunited with Australia in 1972.

In 1952 Mother Mary of St Ursula Jung, Superior General of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd came to Australia and planned to visit the 15 houses of the Province.

From the 1970s, the number of residents in Good Shepherd institutions was falling, and in 1973 the Good Shepherd Sisters adopted a policy of deinstitutionalisation and began to withdraw from providing residential care and the work in laundries.

In Tasmania, the Sisters gave the Mount St Canice convent to the Archdiocese of Hobart in 1981, in exchange for a smaller one built for them in Claremont. There, they ran the Bayview, later the Blue Line, Laundry as a sheltered workshop. In 1991, they moved to a smaller convent in Austin's Ferry because of declining numbers. By September 1999, their numbers were so small that the house was sold and all but two moved interstate. The last Sister left Tasmania in 2006.

After the winding down and closure of the large institutions, the Sisters provided other forms of residential care to girls and women, such as hostel accommodation. For example, in Western Australia, the Sisters ran the Good Shepherd Teen Centre, with residential facilties for teenage girls.

The Good Shepherd Sisters also worked in such areas as youth, family and financial counselling, emergency housing, and prison, hospital and industrial chaplaincies.

In Victoria, the Sisters formed a new organisation in 1976, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services, to continue the order's work with children and families.

As part of their succession planning, the Sisters established Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand in 2008 to create a formal framework for sustaining and developing the Good Shepherd mission into the future.

Gallery

Nun from the order of Sister of the Good Shepherd escorting a girl, Children's Court Albion Street, Sydney, 25 October, 1963

Description: This is a digital copy of a black and white image from the John Mulligan Photograph Collection, ca. 1960-1976, that was created in 2002 by the National Library of Australia.

More info

Related Entries

Ran
- [Convent of the Good Shepherd, Abbotsford (1863 - 1974)](#)
- [Neuville (1971 - 1987)](#)
- [Home of the Good Shepherd, Leederville (1902 - 1979)](#)
- [Good Shepherd Home for Girls, Mitchelton (1930 - 1966)](#)
- [Mt Maria Re-Education Centre, Mitchelton (1966 - 1973)](#)
- [Mt Maria Youth Centre (c. 1973 - 1974)](#)
- [Toongabbie (1948 - 1960)](#)
- [Rosemount (1976 - 1981)](#)

- [Home of the Good Shepherd, Ashfield (1913 - 1969)](#)
- [Convent of the Good Shepherd "The Pines" (1942 - 1974)](#)
- [Magdalen Home (1893 - 1974)](#)
- [Convent of the Good Shepherd, Albert Park (1892 - c. 1973)](#)
- [Convent of the Good Shepherd, Bendigo (1905 - 1984)](#)
  Date: 1905 - 1982
- [Convent of the Good Shepherd, Oakleigh (1883 - 1981)](#)

Related Organisations
- [Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services (1976 - 2014)](#)
  In 1976, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services was formed, to continue the Sisters of the Good Shepherd's work with children and families.
  Date: 1976 -
- [Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (2008 - current)](#)
- [Good Shepherd Archive (1983 - current)](#)

Resources

- Stuart, Ann, *Submission no 109 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care*, 2005
- Chynoweth, Adele, *Good Shepherd Sisters denying history*, On Line Opinion: Australia's e-journal of social and political debate, 21 June 2013
- Franklin, James, *Convent slave laundries? Magdalen asylums in Australia*, Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society, 2013
- *Mary Terszak interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project (1999)*, 4 November 1999
- *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New Advent, 2009
- Catholic Welfare Australia, *Submission No 71 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care*, July 2003
- Thompson, Ann, *Submission No 410 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care*, 26 July 2004
- Thomas, Ivy, *Submission No 483 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care*, 1 November 2004
- Byrne, Geraldine, *Built on a hilltop : a history of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Western Australia, 1902-2002*, 2002
- No date
- No date
- No date
- No date
- Murray, Suellen, *Remembering, honouring and acknowledging former residents of Good Shepherd Homes: an oral history research study*, 2020

Records

Records

- [Good Shepherd Archive collection of records of provision of residential care in Victoria (1863 - c. 1981)](#)

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