

Harrison House

1960 – 1985

Other Names:

- Presbyterian Boys' Hostel
- Arthur Harrison Boys' Home
- Harrison House Youth Hostel

Details

Harrison House in Hawthorn was established in 1960. Run by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, it provided hostel-style residential accommodation for wards of state, boys on probation from the courts or institutions, and boys coming to Melbourne to find work from Kilmany Park in Gippsland. In its early years, it was known as Arthur Harrison Boys' Home. In around 1977/78 it became known as Harrison House Youth Hostel. In 1977, the newly-established Uniting Church took over management of the Home from the Presbyterian Church. The hostel underwent refurbishment in 1978 and 1982. In 1985, the institution at Hawthorn closed. That year, a new service, Harrison House Youth Services, was established in Mitcham.

The Home was named after a former Director of Social Services of the Presbyterian Church, Arthur G. Harrison. It was established out of Rev. Harrison and his congregation at the West Hawthorn Presbyterian Church being concerned about the needs of boys leaving Kilmany Park in Gippsland and coming to Melbourne to seek employment.

The Regent House Hostel for Girls in Elsternwick was sometimes described as a 'sister project' to Harrison House.

A Presbyterian Church publication from 1968 stated that Harrison House currently had 9 residents on probation, under the care of Mr and Mrs Lawn. It said that boys on probation remained at Harrison "only for a short time", 6 to 12 months. "During this time Mr and Mrs Lawn establish a boy in his work and his relationships with other people, so that when he leaves Harrison House he will be in a better position to hold his own in the world". The article also mentioned that a school teacher was volunteering at Harrison House, helping those who were studying. Three boys were doing apprenticeships and another two were with the Postmaster General's Department (Outreach, November 1968).

According to the website of UnitingCare Harrison, a letter from 1971 from the Senior Probation Officer for Victoria to the Director of Probation described Harrison House as a key model for providing residents with a therapeutic approach, rather than just board and lodging.

Harrison House was staffed by volunteers until 1978, when the first 4 paid staff were appointed. That year, the Hostel underwent a major refurbishment, and it also became known as the Harrison House Youth Hostel.

By 1982, Harrison House was supporting 20 youth at a given time. That year, according to the UnitingCare Harrison website, the hostel expanded to include a 9 bed residential unit. In the early 1980s, Harrison House had also developed additional accommodation and community support services in the eastern suburbs. In 1985, the hostel in Hawthorn closed. A new service, known as Harrison House Youth Services, was established in Harrison Street, Mitcham.

Gallery



Harrison House

Description: This is a copy of an image of Harrison House that was published in a Presbyterian Church publication, *Outreach* in November 1968.

More info

Chronology

- **Harrison House (1960 – 1985)**
 - Harrison House Youth Services (1985 - 1994)
 - Harrison Community Services (1994 - 2008)
 - UnitingCare Harrison (2008 - 2017)
 - Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited (2017 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Presbyterian Church of Victoria \(c. 1838 - current\)](#)
- [Uniting Church in Australia \(1977 - current\)](#)

Related Events

- [Case Study 30: Youth detention centres, Victoria, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(2015\)](#)

Harrison House was briefly mentioned in Case Study 30: Youth detention centres, Victoria, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, but was not the primary focus of the study.

Related Organisations

- [Kilmany Park Farm Home for Boys \(1923 - 1978\)](#)

Some former residents of Kilmany Park were accommodated at Arthur Harrison Boys' Home when they moved to Melbourne.

Date: 1966 - 1977

Resources

- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, *Uniting Church in Australia: agencies in Victoria delivering substitute care services*, April 2008
- McGarry, S., *'In Place of the Good Parent', The Crisis for Young People in Statutory Care*, 1999
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Report of Case Study No. 30: The response of Turana, Winlaton and Baltara, and the Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria to allegations of child sexual abuse](#), April 2016. *Relevance:* Harrison House was briefly mentioned in Case Study 30: Youth detention centres, Victoria, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, but was not the primary focus of the study
- [Harrison House Youth Hostel](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Harrison House
- Cook, Henrietta, [Child sex abuse survivor wins payout after electric shock "therapy"](#), The Age, 15 November 2020

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records

- [Records of UnitingCare Harrison \(c. 1960 - 2017\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/harrison-house/>