

The Haven

1897 – 1988

Other Names: • The Haven Foundling Home and Refuge

- The Haven Maternity Home
- The Haven Hospital and Nursing Home
- The Haven Child Care Centre
- The Haven Hostel for Girls with Intellectual Disabilities

Details

The Haven, North Fitzroy, was established by the Salvation Army in 1897. It had various functions over the years, including a maternity home, foundling hospital, babies' and toddlers' home, day care centre and hostel for girls with intellectual disabilities. It closed in 1988.

The Haven was situated at 73-75 Alfred Crescent, North Fitzroy. It was established by the Salvation Army as a 'Foundling Home and Refuge' in a substantial private residence in Alfred Crescent, North Fitzroy in 1897. The private home was modified to provide dormitories, a maternity hospital and a nursery. The Haven was then utilised as a maternity home for young mothers from around the State.

The book *Delinquent Angel* describes what The Haven might have been like for a young woman in the post World War Two period.

... Fitzroy was a raw and seedy place. Terraced cottages compacted street after street. There were missions for the poor, food kitchens, doss houses and places where the needy could get handouts ... A middle class girl might be intimidated in the streets of Fitzroy but she would not be recognised. The Haven was locked behind a corrugated iron fence with metal arrowhead pickets running along the top ... New inmates arrived into an austere place, with a regimen calculated for their own good ... The smell of the daily routines hung in pockets around the building. Beeswax and eucalyptus on buffed wooden floors and staircases. Boiled cabbage and pumpkin, baked custard, boiled and roasted meats from the kitchen. Disinfectants from the swabbed bathrooms and delivery rooms. And the nursery smelled of new babies and milk and more disinfectant ...

The girls were forbidden to go beyond the walls. A condition of their stay was that they must be hidden. They were allowed no male visitors, not even their fathers. The girls were not allowed to divulge their surnames or talk about their families. Here they were all equals, all equally shamed (Georgeff, 2007, pp.319-320).

In 1932 a two storey hospital and nursing home was erected on the Alfred Crescent site to accommodate infants and toddlers. The Haven operated as a hostel for single mothers, and as a hospital and home for babies and toddlers until the mid 1970s.

The hospital section of The Haven was closed in 1967. Expectant mothers were then taken to the Royal Women's Hospital for their confinements.

A woman who was at the Haven in 1963 wrote:

There were a large number of us there in varying stages of pregnancy. The girls ranged from 16 to I guess 25yrs. On entry we were given a name by the matron which we had to use, family names were taboo. We all got on well together as we were all equal to a degree, pregnant & unmarried ... Rules were ridiculous, you had no time to yourself, up very early & on the go till 8pm with an hour's rest at 1.30pm. That side was not a problem for me but it was the heavy chores we had to do. We were just cheap labour as there was an orphanage attached to the home, different floors for babies, toddlers & pre schoolers. We were moved around weekly to different areas, scullery, laundry, kitchen, dormitory, bathrooms etc. as well as the orphanage (submission 167 to the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices Inquiry).

Two submissions to the Senate inquiry stated that their parents paid a weekly fee to the Salvation Army to cover residents' board at the Haven (submissions 173 and 291).

In 1971 a new Babies' Home was opened at the rear of the older buildings. This consisted of a wing with a reception area, lounge, office for the Sister-in-Charge and a room for newborn babies awaiting adoption and babes up to six months. Another wing comprised four units each for five children.

At this time the Haven Hostel, Babies' and Toddlers home had accommodation for a maximum of 31 babies and toddlers from birth to three years. The Hostel section was still catering for single mothers whose babies were delivered at the Royal Women's Hospital, although the numbers had consistently decreased over the previous few years.

In May 1973 the Salvation Army advised the Department that it would be closing the babies' home in June and establishing a day care centre in its place.

In 1975 the function of the 'The Haven Centre' was further changed. Until its final closure in 1988, it operated as a hostel for girls with intellectual disabilities who needed supportive help and care.

The Haven was mentioned in the *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices Inquiry* (2012) as an institution that was involved in forced adoption. It was also cited in the report of the Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria.

One person born at the Haven to a single mother made a submission to the Victorian inquiry. She wrote that her mother was too ashamed to tell her parents she was pregnant, so she said she was moving interstate to study:

What she actually did was move into Salvation Army's, The Haven, in Alfred Crescent North Fitzroy, all alone in a state where she knew no one. The Haven was a maternity and children's home, where women who had sinned were able to spend their confinement working like slaves in exchange for their food and accommodation (submission 89, quoted in Legislative Assembly, 2021, p.146).

Gallery



The Haven Maternity Home, Melbourne



The Maternity Home, North Fitzroy

Description: This is an image of the Salvation Army's maternity home in North Fitzroy known as The Haven. It shows a large two-storey mansion with ornate balconies surrounded by a large fence. This image is one of a set of images of Salvation Army Homes published in the *Weekly Times* on 31 January 1903.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory \(1921 - 2018\)](#)
- [The Salvation Army, Australian Territory \(1880 - 1921\)](#)

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)

The Haven was mentioned in submissions 167, 173, and 291 to the Inquiry Committee as an institution that was involved in forced adoption.

- [Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria \(2019 - 2021\)](#)

Resources

- *75 Alfred Crescent residence, Fitzroy North*, The Age, 18 June 1996
- [Salvation Army Child Care Centres](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to The Haven
- Goold, S & Liddle, K, *In our own right: Black Australian nurses' stories*, 2005
- Kirkham, John C, *Southern Soup-Soap-Salvation, a compendium of Salvation Army Social Services in the Australian Southern Territory*, 2003

Records

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

Records

- [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Southern Territory \(c. 1889 - c. 1988\)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
- [Admission and Discharge Day Books \[The Haven\] \(1907 - 1975\)](#)
- [Labour Ward Case Books and Registers \[The Haven\] \(1916 - 1967\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/the-haven/>