

# Jika Reformatory for Boys

1864 – 1879

## Details

---

In 1873 the Boys' Reformatory run by the Victorian government moved from the reformatories on board the *Sir Harry Smith* and the *Deborah*. The new institution at Coburg was known as the Jika Reformatory for Boys. It was located within the grounds of Pentridge prison.

The Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline had stated in 1872: 'a ship is not a fitting place for reformatory purposes if the boys be not expressly designed for a sea-faring life. Experience too clearly proves that immoral practices of the worst kind spring up amongst them, which can never be effectually suppressed'. It recommended that the reformatory on board the ship be abandoned as soon as an appropriate building for the boys could be found.

In 1873 the boys moved from the ships into Jika and were housed in an existing building (Pentridge's F Division). The department's annual report stated that the clothing and bedding provided on the ships was unsuitable for onshore, and provided them with new supplies.

The superintendent's report for 1878 stated that on 1 January 1879 there were 178 boys at Jika Reformatory, and 128 boys at the end of the year. He reported that they had attempted to divide the boys into classes but it had not been a "fair trial" as they lacked the buildings to keep the different groups separated.

At that time the reformatory also housed 46 girls. It was reported that the girls' conduct had on the whole been good. "Some of them, who were previously taken from the haunts of vice, on being sent out to service in the district, appear to give promise of a future respectable life. It is matter of sincere regret, however, that some who have been discharged to friends are known to have returned to localities and people where, and with whom, it is almost impossible for them to do well" (annual report 1878).

The 1879 annual report said that Jika had accommodation for 80, but only held 25. The department reported that the building was "substantial and suitable", but that it was required by the Penal Department for their adult female prisoners. Besides, the report went on, having the boys' reformatory within the walls of Pentridge Prison was "objectionable". For these reasons, the boys' reformatory was being moved to the former site of the Ballarat Industrial School. The reformatory at Ballarat had accommodation for 200.

# Gallery

---



## Convict Hulk *Success* at Williamstown

**Description:** The former prison hulk HM *Success* was the site of a reformatory for boys.

---



## Boys' Reformatory, Ballarat

---

# More info

---

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria \(1864 - 1887\)](#)

### Related Legislation

- [The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864, Victoria \(1864 - 1888\)](#)  
The Reformatory for Boys was established under the provisions of the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864.
- [The Juvenile Offenders' Act 1887, Victoria \(1888 - 1890\)](#)  
The administration of the Reformatory for Boys was governed by the Juvenile Offenders Act 1887.  
Date: 1887 - ?

## Resources

- Lynn, Peter, [Pentridge Prison](#), eMelbourne: the city past and present, 2008
- Victoria. Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline., [Report \(No.3\) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline: Industrial and Reformatory Schools](#), 1872
- Victoria. Children's Welfare Department and Reformatory Schools, [Report of the Secretary / Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools](#), 1887 - 1895. *Relevance:* Mentioned in reports dated 1888-1894

# Records

---

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

## Records

- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records \(1864 - current\)](#)
- 

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