

Moorakyne Hostel

1942? – c. 1988

Details

The Moorakyne Hostel was established in 1942 in Daylesford. It housed young women employed at Daylesford Textile Mills who were former residents of Travancore. In 1944, Moorakyne relocated to Travancore in Flemington and in 1950, relocated again to Hawthorn.

The Moorakyne Hostel 'for backward girls and women' began when the buildings at the Travancore Developmental Centre in Flemington were required by the military, and Travancore was relocated to Hepburn Springs in rural Victoria. According to the annual report of the Department of Mental Hygiene in 1943.

The five young women at Travancore who were in employment at the time of the transfer were housed in the Moorakyne Hostel in Daylesford and employed at the Daylesford Textile Mills.

The Moorakyne 'industrial hostel' was located in Travancore's pre-school block when it returned to Flemington in January 1944.

The Department of Mental Hygiene reported in 1944 that girls from the Moorakyne Hostel, Flemington, had been placed in employment at the Yarra Falls Spinning Mills, and that 'the management of which has commented favourably both on their behaviour and industrial ability'.

On 23 June 1949, Mr. Catarinich, Director of Moorakyne, wrote to the Minister of Health that he had been looking for:

... Suitable property for the accommodation of mentally defective girls who have been trained at Travancore, Janefield or Pleasant Creek children's institutions, and who are capable of earning their living in industry. At present, twenty of these girls are housed at Travancore, but the accommodation there was designed for the training of young children of retarded mentality.

In 1950, the state government purchased a property in Lisson Grove, Hawthorn to house the Moorakyne Hostel. It was hoped that after the buildings were prepared, it would house 40 to 50 young women. Moorakyne's residents spent their days in hospital and factory jobs.

Mrs Edith Cawsey was the supervisor at Moorakyne Hostel. In 1950, she discussed one factor behind the establishment of this 'industrial hostel' where the young women were sent out to work each day:

I think it is criminal to send these backward girls out to work as domestics in private homes. They come straight from institutions, have no friends and no opportunities for making friends when they are in service. Then when they get their time off they pick up some boy on a street corner and that's where the trouble

starts.

H.J. Martin, Secretary of the Mental Hygiene Authority wrote a letter to the Secretary of Department of Health on 11 June 1958 in which he described the purpose of Moorakyne:

[Moorakyne] is not an Institution to which patients are sent or in which they are confined. It is a staying point between mental institutions and the outside world established principally for mentally defective girls, some of whom have lived their whole lives in institutions. Such girls may stay at the Hostel for periods ranging from weeks to years. In other words it is a non-profit making boarding house, under the control of a benevolent boarding house management, for handicapped girls who are trying to get used to the feeling of living away from institutions and institutional forms of control.

On 27 April 1967, A.N. Mathieson, Assistant Secretary Mental Health Authority described Moorakyne Hostel in a letter to the Secretary of the Authority:

Many of the girls in residence go to work during the day although when first they go to the hostel they often attend sheltered workshops such as that attached to the Clarendon Clinic. Few girls are in the hostel between nine and three although after that time and at weekends the grounds are used. The girls wash their own clothes and are encouraged to undertake all household activities. There is a Supervisor and four other female staff in residence...

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- [Mental Hygiene Branch \(1944 - 1959\)](#)
- [Mental Health Authority, State of Victoria \(1962 - 1978\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Travancore \(1933 - current\)](#)

The Moorakyne Hostel was located on the same site as Travancore in Flemington.

Resources

- Symes, Margaret, [Submission no 370 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2004
- Holmes, P., *Moorakyn Hostel*, Australian Journal of Social Work, 1948

Records

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

Records

- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records \(1864 - current\)](#)
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- [General Correspondence Files \(c. 1920 - c. 1981\)](#)
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