

# Dame Mary Herring Spastic Children's Hostel

1956 – 1992

**Other Names:**

- Lady Herring Spastic Children's Hostel
- Lady Herring Spastic Centre

## Details

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Dame Mary Herring Spastic Children's Hostel in Armadale was a centre that provided residential care to children with cerebral palsy. Run by the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria, it opened in 1956 and was approved as a children's home in 1964. Residential accommodation was provided in congregate care form at the Hostel itself, as well as in a number of cottages owned by the organisation. A number of state wards were placed in the hostel. The hostel was initially called Lady Herring Spastic Children's Hostel, the name changing to Dame Mary Herring Spastic Children's Hostel in 1969. The hostel was deregistered as a nursing home in 1991 and the Huntingtower Road premises was sold the following year. Residents of the hostel were moved to smaller community-based group homes.

Lady Herring Spastic Children's Hostel at 2 Huntingtower Road, Armadale was opened in 1956. The hostel provided accommodation for children with cerebral palsy who were up to 18 years old, however some residents remained at the hostel into their early twenties. At the time of its opening it provided accommodation for four children, including one ward of the state. By the time of its approval as a children's home in 1964 the hostel accommodated 38 children between the ages of 2 and 16 years old, including two state wards. It was reported that in 1978 there were 14 state wards residing at the hostel, and approximately 17 in 1981. The hostel itself had capacity for 25 children in addition to providing three emergency beds and four parent relief beds. Accommodation was provided for an additional 13 children in the two cottages. The hostel and the cottages owned by the organisation were staffed by a mixture of trained nurses, mothercraft nurses, and untrained volunteers, some of whom resided in a cottage adjacent to the hostel.

Children who were of school age received education at Marathon Spastic Centre in Toorak. Older residents were able to work in a workshop owned by the organisation. The hostel took part in an aged foster grandparents' scheme, where older people were invited to act as foster grandparents to the children at the Hostel. In 1969 the hostel arranged a week's holiday in a rented cottage near Frankston for the children in residence at the hostel who were state wards. These annual holidays continued for approximately another eight years.

The 1960-61 annual report of the Spastic Society of Victoria recorded the purchase of the first cottage associated with the hostel at Malvern (189 Wattletree Road). These ten premises had capacity for five children. Initially residents here were adolescents, however younger children were also accepted in subsequent years. In 1964 the premises at 6 Huntingtower Road was purchased for the purpose of providing accommodation for hostel staff.

In July 1986 four premises operated by the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria in Armadale (no 6 and no 8 Huntingtower Road), Malvern (189 Wattletree Road) and Glen Waverley (12 Almay Place) were declared as approved children's homes. In 1987 the hostel was declared a Nursing Home under the Nursing Home and Hostels Legislation Amendment Act 1987. It is unknown whether its function changed at this time. In 1991 the Dame Mary Herring Hostel was deregistered as a nursing home and in 1992 the hostel was sold, and residents of the hostel moved to a number of smaller group homes.

# More info

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## Resources

- [Dame Mary Herring Spastic Children's Hostel](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Dame Mary Herring Spastic Children's Hostel
- Wilde, Sally, [The History of Prahran: Volume II 1925-1990](#), 1993
- [Opening of Garden](#), The Age, 21 March 1952. *Relevance:* The article relates the the launch of an appeal by the Spastic Children's Society to fund a new residential hostel. It is likely that Dame Mary Herring Spastic Children's Hostel was opened as a result of this appeal

## Records

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

### Records

- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
- [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/dame-mary-herring-spastic-childrens-hostel/>