

Clifden Children's Home

1891 – 1923

Other Names:

- Clifden Farm Home
- Clifton
- Clifden Home for Orphans and Waifs

Details

Clifden Children's Home was a privately-run Home for "destitute children" and Convalescent Home opened in 1891 in Smythesdale, moving to Wedderburn in 1894. The Home aimed to provide farm training for homeless and "neglected" children of Melbourne. From the early 1900s a number of state wards were placed in the Home. In 1923 the Home was purchased by the Try Boys' Society and renamed the Clifden Farm and Try Boys Home.

The Clifden Children's Home was run by two women who lived in the Home (Ms Colvin and Ms Brumby). The Home predominately took in children from Melbourne, with on average between 15 and 20 children from infancy to at least 13 years old living at the Home at any given time. Some of the older children at Clifden went to the local state school whilst the other children were home-schooled by one of the managers. All of the children were taught domestic and farm work at the Home. The Home was privately funded through charitable donations, and received some support from the Gordon Institute and the Try Society from at least 1896.

Clifden Home was initially located in a 6 room rented house on a 40 acre property 2 miles from Smythesdale. In 1894 the Home moved to a purpose-built 8 room house on a 12 acre property 2 miles from Wedderburn.

From the mid 1900s the Home received children placed there by the Victorian Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools. The 1911 annual report of the Department describes the Home (which it refers to as the "Clifton Home") as a foster home for "delicate children" with "chest and tubercular diseases" that had been used by the Department for several years. The Department placed 8 children in the Home in 1911, and a further 10 children were placed there the following year.

In May 1923 the Clifden Home was purchased by the Try Boys' Society for use as a farm Home for boys. An article published in the *Northern Star* in 1923 stated that by this point over 300 children had passed through the Home in its 32-year history. It gave the reason for the sale as the failing health of the two managers who had run the home since its inception.

Gallery



Sir R Talbot opening Boys Farm [Wedderburn] [picture]

Description: This image shows a group of people, including Sir R Talbot, gathered for the opening of the Clifden Farm and Try Boys Home at Wedderburn, Victoria. The group are gathered next to a large single story building. A sign next to the entrance of the building reads "Allcroft". This image is part of the Try Boys Society Collection of photographs held by the State Library of Victoria. Note: This image is dated 1905, however the Try Society Boys Farm at Wedderburn is thought to have opened in 1923.

More info

Chronology

- **Clifden Children's Home (1891 – 1923)**
 - Clifden Farm and Try Boys Home (1923 - 1938)
 - Melrose Training Farm for Boys (1938 - 1957)

Resources

- Victoria. Children's Welfare Department and Reformatory Schools, [*Report of the Secretary / Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools*](#), 1887 - 1895

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