

Young People's Refuge

March 1975 –

Other Names:

- The Girls Refuge
- TGR
- YPR
- Detour House

URL: <https://www.detourhouse.org.au/about-us/>

Details

The Young People's Refuge opened as a crisis centre in Chippendale in 1975. It was linked with Stretch-A-Family. In 1991 it was based in Marrickville and offered 24-hour crisis accommodation to girls aged 13-17. In 2013 it has two refuges in inner-western Sydney and is linked to Detour House, a supported accommodation service that includes drug rehabilitation programmes and refuges. In 2016 Young People's Refuge was renamed The Girls Refuge.

The Young People's Refuge (YPR) was opened in Chippendale as a youth crisis centre in March 1975. It was established as an alternative to the services offered by the State Government and traditional care providers, such as the churches. Initially viewed as a radical alternative (it was inspired by the Glebe Women's Refuge, Elsie, set up by women's liberationists), the refuge struggled to obtain funding for its operations. A newspaper article from July 1975 stated that "For the past five months the Refuge has scraped by on donations and help from the different charities. As I left they were taking delivery of a supply of canned food from one such charity. 'We'll be eating out of tins for a while with this stuff'" (*Tribune*, 26 July 1975).

This article stated that the Refuge was run by the young people living there. Only one outsider, a member of the YPR committee, attended the Refuge's weekly meetings.

Once a week they get together with the two Jeffs [Jeff Stanton and Jeff McCarthy, who ran the Refuge] and decide on rules for that week and division of housework among themselves. They do their own cooking too. None are great cooks, but they say the food's better than in the institutions – and you can decide your own menu. Any hassles are worked out at the meeting.

The article also reported that the Refuge has "a battery of lawyers, doctors and social workers on call". It said the Refuge had won a "major victory" in being allowed to house "runaway kids", "at least until the Welfare people investigate the home background. So far, no runaway has been returned home against his or her will" (*Tribune*, 26 July 1975).

Within a short time of opening, the refuge moved to North Sydney, and also operated in Manly for a while. To combat concerns that the needs of children under sixteen years who were coming to the refuge were not being met, the Stretch-A-Family (SAF) scheme began operating with the placement of some under sixteen year olds in voluntary foster families.

At the end of 1984, SAF and YPR agreed to a mutual separation. YPR moved to separate premises and still operates as a crisis refuge for young women. SAF continued to operate as a professional fostering agency for adolescents.

In 1996, YPR moved from Marrickville to Leichardt. At this time it became a facility for young women only.

In 2003 the management of Young People's Refuge was taken over by Detour House. In 2016 Young People's Refuge was renamed The Girls Refuge. The services provided by The Girls Refuge in 2018 include short term accommodation (up to three months) for up to eight young women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, as well as support to young women and families living independently. Priority is given to girls who are aged 13-15 and young women from Aboriginal or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

More info

Related Entries

Related Organisations

- [Stretch-A-Family Inc. \(1976 - 2021\)](#)

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