

May Villa

1919 – 1983?

Details

May Villa was established at Carlingford, or Dundas, by the State Children's Relief Board in 1919. It was first a home for around 30 girls defined in 1919 as 'feeble-minded', but in 1920 it became a home for primary school aged boys who were also defined as 'feeble-minded'. It had a special school attached to the premises and in its early years the teachers were trained in the Montessori method. In 1975, May Villa began operating as a Residential Care Unit for primary school-age boys. May Villa was closed by the end of 1983.

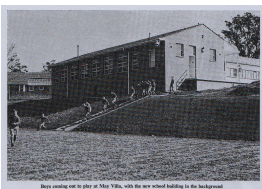
The State Children's Relief Board Annual Report of 1919 reported the establishment of May Villa as a specialist institution that was designed to treat school-aged girls who were considered 'feeble-minded' or 'mentally defective'. These were terms used to describe people who were considered intellectually disabled, but could also mean the children had behavioural problems. In 1920 May Villa became a home for school-aged boys.

In its first year May Villa had a special school attached to the premises. Teachers at this school were trained in the Montessori method, which incorporated music, singing, dance, drumming, play and craft into the children's routines. The teachers also applied psychological treatments to improve children's confidence. The home was run as cottage care.

Images from Child Welfare Department Annual Reports in the 1960s show that a new school was built in the grounds in around 1963, and that there was an extensive playground, with climbing equipment, a cubby house and a toy car.

According to the State Records Authority of NSW, in 1967, the capacity of May Villa was 30 boys. In 1975, the younger boys were transferred to Brush Farm Home, and May Villa began operating as a Residential Care Unit for primary school-age boys, all of whom attended community schools.

Gallery



Boys coming out to play at May Villa, with the new school building in the background

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1964.



"May Villa" boys show improved ability and co-ordination on the climbing equipment

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1967.



The old car and cubby house in the grounds of "May Villa"

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1967.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Berry Training Farm \(1934 - 1977\)](#)
Boys from May Villa were sent to Berry Training Farm when they reached the age of 14.
- [Brush Farm Home \(1922 - 1988\)](#)
In 1975, younger boys were transferred from May Villa to Brush Farm Home.

Resources

- [Mr. Walter Bethel](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March 1929
- [They'll All Enjoy Christmas Parties](#), The Australian Women's Weekly, 9 December 1933

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
- [May Villa records, State Archives NSW \(1933 - 1983\)](#)

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