

St Heliers

1945 – 1986

Other Names:

- Allyn House
- Paterson House
- Hunter (Hunter Pre-Discharge Cottage)

Details

St Heliers was established at Muswellbrook by the Child Welfare Department in 1945. It was a rural training home, organised on the cottage system, on 700 acres. Some children were transferred from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and placed in this Home. It was initially for boys aged 14 to 18 years who were thought to benefit from, and prefer, training for rural and farm work. In 1973 the property became a care facility for both boys and girls, housing 92 children. St Heliers closed in 1986 and in 1989 was converted to an adult correctional facility.

According to NSW Corrective Services, St Heliers was part of the original St Heliers property, which was settled by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Dumaesq and named after a town on the Isle of Jersey. The property passed through several owners before being bought by the State Government in 1945. It was used as a child welfare institution until its closure in 1986.

There were at least two, and later, five ‘cottages’ as St Heliers, each run by a married couple, including ‘Allyn’ and ‘Paterson’ cottages. In 1958, the Annual Report of the Child Welfare Department described the training regime at St. Heliers’, as being divided into three ‘parties’:

1. *practical work in agriculture, farm machinery, cropping*
2. *instruction in dairying, pig raising and poultrying,*
3. *instruction in the care of fat stock (sheep and cattle).*

A 16mm colour film, *Fresh Fields*, was made in 1959 by the Child Welfare Department about the training farm at Muswellbrook. It was meant to showcase the ‘rehabilitation’ of St. Heliers, and was probably used as a training film for new employees. It shows pictures of the buildings, has footage of boys doing farm work like milking, driving tractors, harvesting vegetables, and so on. One scene shows boys at a morning assembly, lined up and then marching.

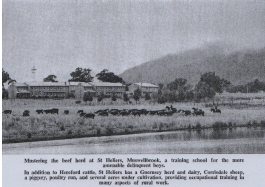
According to a Child Welfare Department Annual Report of 1966 St Heliers was ‘a training school for the more amenable delinquent boys’. It was a working farm:

In addition to Hereford cattle, St Heliers has a Guernsey herd and dairy, Corriedale sheep, a piggery, poultry run, and several acres under cultivation, providing occupational training in many aspects of rural work.

In 1973, changes in ideas about working with 'delinquent' boys, and the growing need for accommodation for state wards, forced the Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS) to change St Heliers entirely. It was converted in November 1973 to a care facility for boys and girls, housing 92 children.

The property was purchased by Corrective Services from the Department of Youth and Community Services in 1988 and opened as an adult low security Correctional Centre in September 1989.

Gallery



Mustering the beef herd at St Heliers, Muswellbrook, a training school for the more amenable delinquent boys [original caption]

Description: This is a scan of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department Annual Report of 1966. The rest of the caption reads 'In addition to Hereford cattle, St Heliers has a Guernsey herd and dairy, Corriedale sheep, a piggery, poultry run, and several acres under cultivation, providing occupational training in many aspects of rural work.'

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, State Government of New South Wales \(1970 - 1973\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1975\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1976 - 1988\)](#)
- [Department of Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs, State Government of New South Wales \(1975 - 1976\)](#)

Related Events

- [Transfer of children from Australian Capital Territory \(ACT\) and Norfolk Island to New South Wales \(NSW\) \(1941 - 1986\)](#)

Resources

- Boyle, Brian, *The Child Welfare Schools: Recollections of these unique schools and the men and women who taught in them often under considerable difficulty*, 1996

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
-

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