

# Brush Farm Home

1922 – 1988

- Other Names:**
- Brush Farm
  - Brush Farm Reform School for Girls
  - Thorbery Lodge
  - Brush Farm Home for Mentally Deficient Children
  - Brush Farm Girls' Home
  - Brush Farm Reformatory for Girls

## Details

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Brush Farm Home was established on the grounds of Brush Farm House in 1922 by the State Children's Relief Department. It housed up to 60 girls. Over the next 60 years, many girls with intellectual and other disabilities resided at Brush Farm Home. From the late 1970s, boys were also admitted.

Brush Farm House dates back to 1820 in Eastwood. It was leased then purchased by the New South Wales Government and had been used as a children's institution since 1894, housing the [Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys](#), [Brush Farm Reformatory](#) and [Eastwood Home for Mothers and Babies](#) prior to its conversion to Brush Farm Home.

Brush Farm Home used Montessori and Kindergarten principles to provide some degree of schooling and vocational training for up to 60 girls. In the 1960s cottages were added but the older dormitory-style accommodation was retained, despite its age and unsuitability, due to the increasing rate of intellectually handicapped girls in care. In this period, it appears to have included a facility called Brush Farm Reform School for Girls, or Thorbery Lodge.

From 1968 Brush Farm Infants' Home was located on the site, in a separate building. Boys were admitted to Brush Farm Home in 1978.

From August 1980 Brush Farm provided temporary residential care of disabled children, mainly for respite care when parents or foster parents needed a break or a holiday, as a temporary placement centre pending long term care or during family crises, and also for behaviour training.

Brush Farm Home closed in 1988. The estate was purchased by the Department of Corrective Services, who re-opened it as the Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy on 1 May 1989. The property was later sold to Ryde Council. The Brush Farm property is listed on the NSW Heritage Register.

## Gallery



### Brush Farm



### Brush Farm Buildings

**Description:** Brush Farm buildings, photographed in May 1976



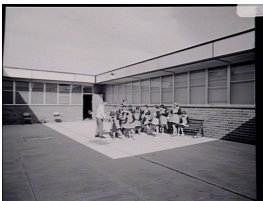
### Brush Farm

**Description:** Brush Farm, May 1976



### Science laboratory, Brush Farm reform school for girls, Thorbery Lodge

**Description:** Science laboratory, Brush Farm reform school for girls, Thorbery Lodge, 1968

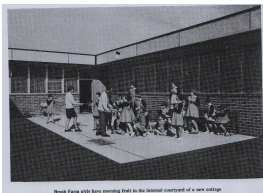


### Brush Farm home for girls. Reform School for Girls - Thorbery Lodge



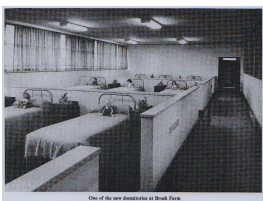
### Brush Farm

**Description:** This image shows the playground at Brush Farm Home.



### Brush Farm girls have morning fruit in the internal courtyard of a new cottage

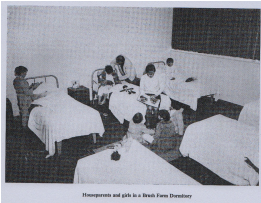
**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1968.



### One of the new dormitories at Brush Farm

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1966.

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### House parents and girls in a Brush Farm Dormitory

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1968.



### Brush Farm Home

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1959.



### The new cottages and school buildings at Brush Farm

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1965.



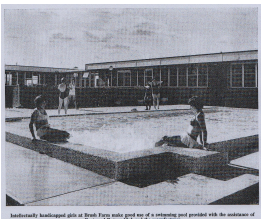
### The high staff-inmate ratio at Brush Farm Infants Home enables close attention to be given to the developmental needs of each child [original caption]

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1970.



### Brush Farm playing area

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1966.



### Intellectually handicapped girls at Brush Farm make good use of a swimming pool provided with the assistance of Eastwood Rotary Club and the manufacturer [original caption]

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1970.



### The "old" home, Brush Farm - one of Sydney's historic buildings, it is now unsuitable as a children's home but is to be retained for administrative and other purposes [original caption]

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1965.



### Brush Farm

**Description:** This is a scan of an image from the cover of a 1978 NSW Treasury report into the costs of building and maintaining NSW Child Welfare Department buildings. It was chosen to illustrate the structure as an example of modern architecture.

# More info

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## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, State Government of New South Wales \(1970 - 1973\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1973
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1975\)](#)  
Date: 1973 - 1975
- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)  
Date: 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 \(1975 - 1976\)](#)  
Date: 1975 - 1976

### Related Organisations

- [May Villa \(1919 - 1983?\)](#)  
In 1975, younger boys were transferred from May Villa to Brush Farm Home.
- [Brush Farm Infants' Home \(1968 - 1988\)](#)  
Brush Farm Infants' Home was located next to Brush Farm Home.  
Date: 1968 - 1988

## 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
- 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
- [Fifth Sectional Report Covering the Administration of the Acts relating to State Children](#), Royal Commission to Inquire into the Public Service of New South Wales, August 1920

## Records

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

### Records

- [Brush Farm Home records, State Archives NSW \(1922 - 1987\)](#)
- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
- [School Files \(1876 - 1979\)](#)

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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/brush-farm-home-2/>