

Homeless Children's Association Refuge

1981 – 1983

Other Names: • "429"

Details

The Homeless Children's Association Refuge was located at 429 Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst. It was run by the New South Wales Homeless Children's Association from May 1981 until July 1983. Also known as 429, it was a shelter for homeless children and youth and hundreds of young people passed through its doors. By July 1983, the Homeless Children's Association was no longer running the Refuge.

The Refuge was in a two-storey terrace in Darlinghurst that the Association leased from St Vincent's Hospital. It was located a five minute walk from the Kings Cross area, where large numbers of homeless children and young people gathered. The building at 429 Liverpool Street also served as the headquarters and offices of the NSW Homeless Children's Association. According to one article, its Chief Executive Officer Simon Davies lived at the refuge (A Current Affair, November 2022).

A document from April 1983 states that the Refuge had 8 young people living there, and that it had accommodated over 700 residents since it opened two years prior. Their average age was 15 (NAA: M3596, 484, page 139).

The Association's "Choices" magazine from March 1983, contained information about the rules of the Refuge – "respect other people, their privacy and property, refrain from breaking the law and taking drugs and alcohol". The magazine stated that the demand for assistance was overwhelming, with only 1 in 20 young people who approached the Refuge being accepted (NAA: M3596, 484, page 196).

Another document from June 1983 stated that the Refuge was no longer being operated by the Homeless Children's Association, all of its inner city projects having been taken over by other organisations. This document, a brief written for Prime Minister Hawke (who had previously been a board member of the Homeless Children's Association) stated that "the project in Liverpool had been particularly problematical, its activities having aroused police interest" (NAA: M3596, 484, page 236).

At least four former staff members at the Refuge have been charged with the abuse of residents. In December 2012 a former social worker at the shelter was charged with the abuse of residents.

In November 2022, former CEO Simon Davies was jailed for sexually abusing residents of the refuge.

More info

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