

BoysTown

1961 – 2001

Other Names: • BoysTown, Beaudesert

Details

BoysTown, run by the De La Salle Brothers, was established in 1961. It was situated in Telemon Road, Beaudesert. BoysTown accommodated boys aged between 12 and 16 in seven cottages. The Beaudesert residential accommodation closed in 2001, and the buildings were demolished in 2017 or 2018. More than 1,000 boys passed through BoysTown during the 40 years it was in operation. In 2002, BoysTown Ltd, a new independent organisation owned by the De La Salle Brothers, was incorporated. In 2016, this organisation was renamed yourtown.

The publication, *A piece of the story* (1999), describes the earliest days of BoysTown:

At the invitation of, and in conjunction with, the Beaudesert Parish Priest, the De La Salle Brothers opened BoysTown in February 1961. Brothers Alban Dwyer and Kieran Rush arrived at the Beaudesert facility with 10 boys. It operated as a residential arrangement, with 7 cottages that accommodate up to 12 boys in each. A fully registered secondary school was part of the complex. Emphasis was placed on the development of life skills, career planning, a wide variety of recreational pursuits and familiarisation with modern technology. Situated on a large farming property, boys had access to farming experiences (p. 74).

A publication from 1976 described BoysTown as having 7 cottages, where boys lived with house parents. In 1975 the number of boys at the institution was reduced from around 110 to around 98 to alleviate overcrowding in the cottages. The publication stated that the maximum should be 84 boys with no more than 12 boys living in each cottage (Ann Amen, 1976, p.6).

BoysTown had its own secondary school on site. It also provided sports including swimming and horse riding. There were 70 horses at BoysTown in 1976 according to Amen, and boys could “earn the privilege” to take care of and ride their own horse.

BoysTown was still operating during the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions in 1998-1999. Commissioners and inquiry staff visited BoysTown in Beaudesert in the course of its work.

The inquiry’s final report (1999) stated that:

Complaints of excessive corporal punishment at BoysTown emerged from both the evidence of witnesses and departmental files. Other witnesses described the use of certain boys (through the Alderman system) to maintain control through a combination of peer pressure, intimidation and physical assault, and the Friday night ‘biffups’, or boxing matches, which were perceived as punishment. Boys with no boxing skills

were forced into the ring with bigger boys who were obliged to keep punching until the Director chose to stop the fight (p.75)

The report describes criticism of BoysTown in the 1970s by departmental child care officers, who commented on the institution's 'preoccupation with conformity, its degree of regimentation, and the general reluctance on the part of staff to deal with the social and emotional needs of the boys' (p.77).

A 1978 report to the Director of BoysTown from the department drew attention to the prevailing view among staff that parental contact was to be regarded as a privilege, and that the refusal of contact was being used as an effective and appropriate means of punishment (p.79).

Gallery



Entrance to BoysTown (de La Salle Brothers) (1999)

Description: This image is from page 74 of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse in Queensland institutions and the image is an Inquiry photograph.



BoysTown residential care facility (Beaudesert) (1999)

Description: This image is from page 75 of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse in Queensland institutions and the image is an Inquiry photograph.

More info

Related Entries

Ran

- [Albion Lodge \(22 July 1965 - 28 November 1974\)](#)
BoysTown ran Albion Lodge in conjunction with the De La Salle Brothers.
Date: 1961 - 1974
- [Logan Reserve Lodge \(1989 - 3 December 2001\)](#)
BoysTown ran Logan Reserve Lodge in conjunction with the De La Salle Brothers
- [Tarragindi Lodge \(1974 - 1991\)](#)
BoysTown ran Tarragindi Lodge in conjunction with the De La Salle Brothers
Date: 1974 - 1991

Related Events

- [Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions \(1998 - 1999\)](#)
BoysTown was an institution mentioned by a number of witnesses to the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions.
- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
BoysTown was mentioned in Submission 105 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Related Organisations

- [De La Salle Brothers \(1906 - current\)](#)
BoysTown ran Tarragindi Lodge, Logan Reserve Lodge and Albion Lodge in conjunction with the De La Salle Brothers
Date: 1961 - 2001
- [BoysTown Ltd \(2002 - 2016\)](#)
A registered company called BoysTown was created in 2002, after residential accommodation at BoysTown

Beaundesert had ceased.

Resources

- [Catholic Church schools and homes with the most child abuse claims revealed](#), ABC News, 17 February 2017
- Boystown Link Up (Community group), *Hidden scars : a report to the trustees of the De La Salle Brothers from Boystown Linkup*, 1999
- Boys' Town (Beaundesert, Qld.), *Boys' Town calling*, 1961 - 1995
- Owen Beevor Steele 1898; Bill Boyan; Ian Pedley, *Altars & artillery : the life story of Monsignor Owen B. Steele, founder of Boys' Town as told to Bill Boyan and Ian Pedley*, 1980
- *Old Boys Relive Days of BoysTown Beaundesert*, Beaundesert Times, 9 May 2012
- [A BoysTown ex-pupil receives a settlement many years later](#), Broken Rites Australia, 2012
- [Exposing The Truth About Boystown: Breaking the Silence](#), 60 Minutes Australia, 16 September 2012

Other Resources



Title: BoysTown Timeline

Type: Image

Date: 2013

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records

- [BoysTown Records \(1961 - 2001\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)

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