

Queen Alexandra Home for Children

1910 – 1960

Other Names: • Queen Alexandra Home

Details

Queen Alexandra Home for Children was operated by the Methodist Church. It originally opened in 1910 at Indooroopilly, in a house known as Robgill. Within a year, the Home moved to new premises ('Hatherton') in the suburb of Coorparoo. From February 1937, the Home received state wards. Queen Alexandra Home closed in September 1960.

The Queen Alexandra Home for Children was originally situated at Indooroopilly, in a house named Robgill. The house was donated to the State of Queensland by the McConnel family. The home opened in 1910 and in 1911 the children and staff were transferred to a newly established home at Coorparoo. The name Queen Alexandra Home for Children was retained.

According to a government report on Charitable Institutions to which Annual Grants are Paid and their Objects, the Queen Alexandra Home for Children, Coorparoo, was established to provide a home for children who needed its shelter and provision, and to train them to be useful citizens.

The general affairs of the institution were managed by a committee of 30 ladies, with a sub-committee of 5 gentlemen, in addition to the President of the Queensland Methodist Conference. The Committee was appointed by the Methodist Conference.

Elizabeth Kingsbury was a founding member and first president of the Queen Alexander Home for orphans, neglected and poor children, at Coorparoo. An extension wing added to the building in 1919 was named the Kingsbury Wing.

The institution was financed by donations, with payment from inmates from 6/6d to 12/6 per week, but no fee was received for quite a number of children. The Government gave an annual grant of 200 pounds from Revenue.

The Queen Alexandra Home for Children was licensed under the *State Children Act* 1911 in 1917 and *The Infant Life Protection Act* 1935.

During World War II the Queen Alexandra Home for Children temporarily relocated to Murgon whilst the military occupied their Coorparoo premises.

One former resident remembered the Home in an oral history interview:

Queen Alexandra Home was a huge building full of tiny children. There were private wards and state ward children. Still to this day I can remember the front entrance and the black and white tiles. I can't walk into a house that's got black and white tiles. I have to get out of it. There must have been 100 children in there.

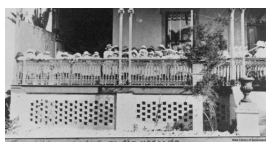
Sir and Matron were pretty brutal to us. There was a bottom dormitory and there was a dormitory upstairs when the girls got a bit older and there was a small boys' dormitory at the top of the stairs next to the Matron's and Sir's quarters. When they reached a certain age, they were sent out of the Home and put into another institution. One of our aunties worked there. There was probably about seven or eight staff altogether, including a cook, a gardener and the guy that chopped the wood up for the big wooden stoves in the kitchen (Judy, Goodna Girls, pp.51-52).

She remembered the children being beaten, and having to queue up to await this physical punishment. At the Coorparoo State School, the "Homies" were treated differently to other children, and received a poor education. She also remembered constant hunger:

We were always so hungry. In the morning before school we used to go into the cake shop and they knew we were Home kids and they'd give us the old cakes because they knew we were hungry. We'd bring them back and we'd hide them underneath bushes and we'd tell the tiny, little kids where to go and get the cakes (p.53).

When Queen Alexandra Home closed on 9 September 1960, the children were transferred to cottage homes.

Gallery



Children on the verandah of Alexandra Home, Coorparoo, Brisbane, Queensland, 1921

Description: This image was copied and digitised from an image appearing in The Queenslander, 12 March, 1921, page, 19. The Library description states: Children dressed in uniforms and hats are singing on the verandah of Alexandra Home, Coorparoo, Brisbane, Queensland. Double pillars and decorative iron work ballustrading are visible on the front of the verandah.



Afternoon tea in the grounds of Alexandra Home Coorparoo

Description: This image was copied and digitised from an image appearing in The Queenslander, 12 March, 1921, page, 19.



Group portrait of matron, sisters and children of the Queen Alexander Home, Coorparoo

Description: The Library description states: Matron, sisters and children of the Queen Alexandra Home for children at Coorparoo, Brisbane, Queensland. Children are dressed in uniforms and day clothes.



Hatherton House, Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo, Brisbane

Description: This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate only. The following description was included on the library website: Hatherton, a two-storeyed brick residence was erected in 1886 near the intersection of Old Cleveland and Cavendish Roads in Coorparoo. It was originally built for the Nicklin family but in March 1912 it was purchased by the Methodist Church and converted to the Queen Alexandra Home for Children. In the early 1960s the house was purchased by the Queensland State Government and known as Alexandra House. It has also been used as the College of Catering and Hospitality Services, Coorparoo, being renamed the College of Tourism and Hospitality (COTAH), in 1984.



Queen Alexandra Children's Home, Coorparoo

Description: This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate only.



Matron sisters and children at the Queen Alexandra Home Coorparoo Brisbane Queensland ca. 1913

Description: The library website includes the following description: Matron, sisters and children of the Queen Alexandra Home for children at Coorparoo, Brisbane, Queensland. The children are dressed in school uniform.

More info

Chronology

- **Queen Alexandra Home for Children (1910 – 1960)**
 - Alexandra Cottage (1960 - 1993)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Methodist Church in Queensland \(c. 1851 - 1977\)](#)
Date: 1911 - 1960

Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report
- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
Queen Alexandra Home for Children was mentioned in Submissions 229 and 505 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Related Organisations

- [Margaret Marr Memorial Home for Boys \(1924 - 1973\)](#)
Margaret Marr Memorial Home for Boys was established by the Methodist Church to relieve overcrowding at the Queen Alexandra Home for Children

Resources

- Butterworth, Lee, [McConnell, May Jordan \(1860-1929\)](#), The Australian Women's Register, 22 June 2009
- Social Work Staff, Faculty of Education, University of Queensland, [Directory of Social Services Queensland](#), 1958
- *Annual report: Queen Alexandra Home for Children*, 1911 - 1959

Records

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

Records

- [Adele Kiesecker Collection, Queen Alexandra Home for Children](#)
 - [UnitingCare Queensland Records \(1910 - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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