

Silky Oaks Haven for Children

1940 –

URL: <http://silkyoaks.org.au/>

Details

The Silky Oaks Haven for Children, in Manly West, was operated by the Open Brethren and the Council of Silky Oaks Children's Haven. It was established at Toowong in 1940 and moved to Manly in 1946, and was licensed as a foster home. The first State children were admitted to Silky Oaks in April 1950. From the 1970s, Silky Oaks established a number of cottage homes.

Silky Oaks Haven for Children was licensed under *The Infant Life Protection Act 1905* on 6 September 1940. Silky Oaks was licensed as a residential facility under *The State Children Act 1911* on 30 March 1957. The first family group cottage was completed in 1965/66 and licensed under *The Children's Services Act 1965* on 4 August 1966.

The name Silky Oaks was adopted because the kitchen at the Cross Street residence at Toowong was made from Silky Oak timber.

The original home is over 100 years old. It provided the first dormitory style accommodation for the children.

In 1946 Silky Oaks moved to Manly Road, Manly. An extension to the Manly property was opened in 1959 and called Cornell House after Mary Cornell, who worked to establish a place for neglected children.

A publication from 1968 stated that Silky Oaks accommodated 80 children, ranging from pre-school age to 14 years, and several working teenagers. It noted that "long term placements are preferred. Parents are expected to provide clothing where possible". Children at Silky Oaks attended either Manly West State School, Wynnum High School or Darling Point Opportunity School (Social Services Queensland, 1968, p.95).

Alexander Cottage was named after Max and Jean Grey and is also known as 'Grey Cottage'. In 2014, it continues to house residents.

Farm Cottage was located across the road from Silky Oaks, at 227 Manly Road. It hosted a work program designed for the boys and generated income for the Home. In 2014, a retirement village now stands on the site of Farm Cottage.

In 2014, Balmoral and Durack Cottages are closed.

Silky Oaks Haven was one of the institutions investigated as part of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions in 1998-1999. In its final report, the Commission acknowledged the 'helpful approach' of the Council of Silky Oaks, and inquiry commissioners and staff conducted a visit and inspection of the Home.

The Commission heard allegations of sexual abuse of residents of Silky Oaks by a staff member in the 1960s, which were substantiated by the perpetrator's guilty plea in 1995. This case is discussed in the Commission's

report on pages 88-90.

In 2026, Silky Oaks continues to run residential programs for children in out-of-home care located in the Wynnum/Manly, Redlands, Moorooka and Logan areas.

Gallery



Original house, Silky Oaks Children's Haven

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Open Brethren Assembly \(c. 1914 - current\)](#)

Related Events

- [Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions \(1998 - 1999\)](#)
The Commission of inquiry into abuse of children in Queensland institutions visited the site of Silky Oaks Haven for Children.
- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
Silky Oaks Haven for Children was mentioned in Submissions 102 and 120 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Related Legislation

- [State Children Act 1911, Queensland \(1911 - 1966\)](#)
- [Children's Services Act 1965, Queensland \(1965 - 2000\)](#)
- [Infant Life Protection Act 1905, Queensland \(1905 - 1966\)](#)

Holds

- [Silky Oaks Haven for Children, Records \(1940 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Grey Cottage \(1960 - 1991\)](#)
Grey Cottage is located on the site of Silky Oaks Haven for Children.
- [Alexander Cottage \(1991 - current\)](#)
Alexander Cottage is located on the site of Silky Oaks Haven for Children.

Resources

- Social Work Staff, Faculty of Education, University of Queensland, [Directory of Social Services Queensland](#), 1958
- Tronc, Diane, [Silky Oaks](#), Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions blog, 1 June 2011
- Moore, Tony, [MP wants 'sorry sites' to be in plain sight](#), Brisbane Times, 8 July 2016

Records

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

Records

- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/silky-oaks-haven-for-children/>