

Good Shepherd Home for Girls, Mitchelton

1930 – 1966

Other Names: • Industrial School for Girls, Mitchelton

Details

The Good Shepherd Home for Girls, situated in Mitchelton, was run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Initially set up in 1930, the institution focused on the reformation of girls and the care of poor, neglected children. The name was changed to Mt Maria Re-Education Centre in 1966.

According to the publication *A Piece of the Story* (1999), the Good Shepherd Home for Girls, also known as the Industrial School for Girls, Mitchelton, was licensed in 1933 under the *State Children Act* 1911. The home stood on a commanding hill in an area of 87 acres. The building was dedicated by Archbishop of Brisbane, James Duhig.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Good Shepherd Home for Girls was one of 3 denominational (ie, non-government) institutions for the reception of 'delinquent girls', who were sometimes referred to as 'incorrigible'.

It was a large, dormitory-style facility – according to the 1999 report of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, it accommodated between 30 and 50 'State girls', as well as a similar number of young women and girls with intellectual disabilities. In 1958, the Home's 2 dormitories were converted into recreational group rooms (p.143).

The report of the Commission of Inquiry stated that 13 former residents of Good Shepherd Home (and its successor, the Mt Maria Re-education Centre) gave evidence about their time at the institution. Three of the former residents spoke favourably about the institution (p.142).

The report stated that the Home's laundry 'for the instruction of the girls' was a major source of income. The inquiry heard evidence of former residents being made to work long hours 'at monotonous tasks and in trying conditions'.

The report also stated that solitary confinement was used at Good Shepherd Home (and the other two institutions for juvenile offending girls) 'as a means of disciplining particularly troublesome girls, especially those who repeatedly attempted to abscond' (p.145).

One former resident of the Home, Lucy Bartholomew (Beutel), emailed the Find & Connect web resource in 2013 to share her positive recollections of her time spent at the institution:

I was in Mt Maria in about 1964 to 1966. I have nothing but good memories of my time there. Mother Veronica was the head nun, I want to say that today at 63, I am a well adjusted, educated, mother of three

grown sons, and happy that I attended the institution. I believe I would have been on the streets, if not for those nuns.

Another former resident shared her story from Mitchelton in an oral history interview:

Some of the nuns were OK but there was no schooling for me. Wherever they put me, I caused trouble. They put me in the ironing room. I lasted a few days there and I threw the iron in the pool because only the private kids could use the pool. I wasn't allowed because I was a ward of the state. So they put me in the mangle room, which was pretty hot. I said, 'I'm not doing that!' So they put me in the washing room. Well I wasn't doing that. So they said, 'Well, you have to go in here.' It was the packing room and I was fine in there! I worked with Sister Ignatius. I used to have to count everything that come in—see that the blue tag was for the linen from the hotel on the Gold Coast. When they went back, everything had to match that order. If it said '80 sheets', there had to be 80 sheets. I was good at that because I was using my brain. I was happy there. I found my little niche and actually didn't throw a tantrum (Jean/Erin, Goodna Girls, pp.29-30).

Gallery



Home of the Good Shepherd, Mitchelton, Brisbane, 1931

Description: This description was supplied with the photograph and included on the library website: Initially set up in 1930 by the nuns of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd Institution focused on the reformation of girls and the care of poor, neglected children. The home stood on a commanding hill in an area of 87 acres. An extensive laundry was operated by the "inmates". The building was dedicated by Archbishop Duhig on Sunday last.

More info

Chronology

- **Good Shepherd Home for Girls, Mitchelton (1930 – 1966)**
 - Mt Maria Re-Education Centre, Mitchelton (1966 - 1973)
 - Mt Maria Youth Centre (c. 1973 - 1974)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Sisters of the Good Shepherd \(1863 - current\)](#)

Related Events

- [Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions \(1998 - 1999\)](#)
Good Shepherd Home for Girls was an institution mentioned by a number of witnesses to the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions.
- [Case Study 26: St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(2015\)](#)
Good Shepherd Home for Girls was briefly mentioned in Case Study 26: St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol, but was not the primary focus of the study.

- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)

Good Shepherd Home for Girls, Mitchelton was mentioned in Submission 120 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Resources

- Kovesi, Catherine, *Pitch Your Tents on Distant Shores: a history of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Tahiti*, 2006
- Gill, Alan, [Bad girls do the best sheets](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 April 2003
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Report of Case Study No. 26: The response of the Sisters of Mercy, the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton and the Queensland Government to allegations of child sexual abuse at St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol](#), March 2016. *Relevance*: Good Shepherd Home for Girls was briefly mentioned in Case Study 26: St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol, but was not the primary focus of the study

Records

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

Records

- [Records of Mt Maria, Home of the Good Shepherd, Queensland \(1933 - 1974\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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