

Wolston Park Hospital

1969 – 2001

Other Names: • Goodna

Details

The Wolston Park Hospital, situated at Wacol, Queensland, was a State-run facility. Wolston Park Hospital was previously known as the Brisbane Special Hospital, and sometimes was referred to as Goodna. It is known that children who were wards of the state were placed at Wolston Park during the 1960s-1980s, despite the existence of [Wilson Youth Hospital](#) and [Karrala House](#), dedicated institutions for children and young people deemed to have mental health issues .

It is estimated up to 60 wards of the state were sent to Wolston Park, usually as a transfer from a Queensland children's institution or from Lowson House, an adult ward within [Brisbane Hospital](#). From around the 1950s to the 1980s, juvenile "delinquency" was seen as a psychiatric as well as moral issue. As Chynoweth writes, "For decades, child protection policies have been conflated with institutionalised punishment and treatments of mental illness". During the 1950s, girls from the industrial schools could be sent to psychiatric hospitals if they were deemed disruptive (*Goodna Girls*, p.5). Children and young people continued to be placed in adult psychiatric hospitals in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Children placed at Wolston Park reported abuse of all kinds, isolation and neglect, use of chemical restraints and contact with adults with mental health issues. The Queensland government apologised in 2010 to former wards of state placed in adult mental health facilities, and in 2017 made ex gratia payments to former patients at Wolston Park who had participated in a reconciliation process with the state government.

Some teenage wards of state were sent to Osler House, an adult ward at Wolston Park for women judged to be criminally insane (*Inside the house of horrors*, 2025). A priest who used to work at the hospital said "I didn't like the atmosphere of Osler House. It was worse than [Wilson](#). I was absolutely appalled that we would send young people there and have them locked up with those who had been judged by the courts to be criminally insane. Wilson was violent and so I also assumed that Osler House was violent. From what I could see, there was no monitoring, no oversight, and no therapeutic or educational programs of any kind (*Goodna Girls*, p.111)."

The closed ward for male patients at Wolston Park was Pearce House. Kerry Carrington, whose brother Randall was an involuntary patient at Wolston Park in the 1970s describes Pearce House as "a brutal locked ward for convicted violent offenders" (*Remembering Randall*).

Tammy was incarcerated at Osler House at age 13 and told her story in an oral history interview for the book *Goodna Girls* (2020):

The first day I got out of the car at Wolston Park, the head doctor was standing outside Osler House, smoking his pipe and said to me, 'If I put you into an open ward, will you stay here or run away and go home to your mother?' All I did was shrug my shoulders and for that I was put into Osler House ... Every

night we were locked up in separate, isolated cells with a bucket ... We hardly saw the Patient's Friend. If we spoke out I would be stripped naked and given a Paraldehyde injection. So what the hell was she there for if we weren't allowed to speak to her? We were wards of the state and the state was supposed to look after us. Child safety and mental health really fucked up. A judge used to come to Osler House once a month to see if there was anything wrong with the place and to see if anything was needed. The hospital would get a call from head office saying that the judge was coming. There were no toilets in the cells. When the judge was going to come, we had to clean out our buckets and then they'd be put away. So the judge wouldn't have known that we only had buckets for a toilet. Did the judge write any reports? Are these on file? ... That was my life for eight years until I was 21—being treated like a dog in a cage (Goodna Girls, pp.88-90).

Teenagers were also admitted to [Noble House](#), an open ward. Another woman remembered being admitted to the Barrett Centre.

... I was in Ward 16 at Lawson House [an adult mental health ward at Brisbane Hospital] for about three days and then they just took me. They came and got me and I didn't know where we were going. I had no idea. They took me out to Wolston Park. They called it 'Goodna' then—Goodna mental hospital. They took me into the Barrett Centre. Dr Barrett was in charge. Everyone knew what Goodna was. At school we'd talk about it. All the nutters lived out there but I never thought I was going to go up there.

I was first taken into the admission ward. Now for some strange reason they kept me in the admission ward for six months because I think they realised that I wasn't mental. There was absolutely nothing wrong with me (Judy, Goodna Girls, p.62).

After escaping from the institution, Judy was put in Ward 8 “with the criminally insane. There were mostly adults in there. They were poor buggers but it was also called ‘J. D. Ward’—juvenile delinquent ward. There were only about four or five of us girls in there. There was a big garden out the front where you'd have your visitors, if you ever did have a visitor. At the back there was a big caged-in area with chairs that they would tie us to” (p.64).

In 2010, the Queensland Government issued an apology to those who, as children under the care of the state, were inappropriately placed in adult mental health facilities including Wolston Park.

In October 2017, the Queensland Government provided payouts to former state wards who had been placed in Wolston Park, in recognition of their wrongful detainment in an adult mental health facility.

The Wolston Park Hospital Complex is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register, as a “distinctive example of a substantial public mental health institution”.

Gallery



Wolston Park Hospital Complex - Bostock

Description: This image is included in the gallery of images for Wolston Park Hospital Complex in the Queensland Heritage Register.



Noble 2

Description: This image is included in the gallery of images for Wolston Park Hospital Complex in the Queensland Heritage Register. It shows the building known as Noble House.

More info

Chronology

- Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum (1865 - c. 1880)
 - Goodna Asylum for the Insane (c. 1880 - 1898)
 - Goodna Hospital for the Insane (1898 - c. 1940)
 - Brisbane Mental Hospital (c. 1940 - 1963)
 - Brisbane Special Hospital (1963 - 1969)
- **Wolston Park Hospital (1969 – 2001)**
 - The Park Centre for Mental Health (2001 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Health Department, State Government of Queensland \(26 September 1963 - 3 April 2012\)](#)
Date: 1969 - 2001

Related Events

- [Apology to children who were wards of the state placed in adult mental health facilities, Parliament of Queensland \(2010\)](#)
- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
Wolston Park Hospital was mentioned in Submission 228 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Resources

- Senate Community Affairs References Committee, [Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 29 February 2012
- [Sue Treweek interviewed by Frances Rush in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \(2010\)](#), 4 December 2010 - 5 December 2010
- Wolston Park Centenary Cricket Club, [Wolston Park Site History: Overview](#), 2013
- Treweek, Susan, [Submission No 218 to the Senate Inquiry into the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 2012
- Remeikis, Amy, [Recitations of 'sorry' are no help to this survivor](#), Sydney Morning Herald, 19 August 2012
- Queensland Government, [Reconciliation Plan: For children who as wards of the State were placed in adult mental health facilities](#), 2017
- Condon, Matthew, *Wolston Park hospital left to rot as former patients continue fight*, Courier Mail, 8 March 2017
- Condon, Matthew, *Wolston Park abuse victims: "We're finally free"*, Courier Mail, 17 October 2017
- Gillespie, Eden, [Former patient at Wolston Park Mental Hospital calls for truth commission as he details his alleged abuse for the first time](#), 5 August 2024

Records

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

Records

- [Registers of Patients and Admission Books - Wolston Park / Ipswich Special Hospital / Challinor Centre, Ipswich \(23 March 1861 - 18 March 1994\)](#)
 - [Case Books - Wolston Park Hospital \(1860 - 1951\)](#)
 - [Special Batches \[Correspondence Files of the Colonial Secretary's Office and Health Departments\] \(1852 - 1975\)](#)
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