

St Vincent's Orphanage

1867 – 1935

Other Names:

- St Vincent's Home, Nudgee
- Nudgee Orphanage

Details

The St Vincent's Orphanage, in Nudgee, was operated by the Order of the Sisters of Mercy. It was established in 1867 when children were transferred from New Farm St Vincent's to the property at Nudgee. In 1935 the name was changed to St Vincent's Children's Home.

In the 1860s orphaned and homeless children were living in the General Hospital in George Street, Brisbane. The Sisters of Mercy took on the care of the Catholics among these children, accommodating them in Cairncross House and other rented cottages in New Farm.

The orphanage transferred from New Farm to Queens Road, "Nudgee by the Sea", on 11 November 1867. The first buildings were constructed of timber felled on the property. These were slab huts erected to house the men who were felling the timber on the property. The huts when vacated provided the first accommodation for the children and were the beginnings of what became commonly known as Nudgee Orphanage. Forty-seven children were admitted on the opening day, and during St Vincent's first century, 10,500 children found a home in the orphanage.

St Vincent's had its own herd of dairy cattle. In "The Dairy", butter for the children was made and the cream kept cool between meal times. All milk and cream consumed at the institution came from the St Vincent's herd. On 05 December 1905, a cyclone destroyed a number of St Vincent's buildings and unroofed others.

The 1999 report of the Commission of inquiry into abuse of children in Queensland institutions explains the reasoning behind the government's decision to provide funding to St Vincent's Orphanage in 1867. There had been an economic collapse in 1866, with the result that the government-run institution, the Diamantina Orphanage, was 'bursting at the seams with destitute children'. Providing funding to a denominational institution was a cheaper alternative to wholly financing another new institution (p.36).

Gallery



St Vincents Orphanage Girls Dormitory, Queens Road Nudgee

Description: This is a photograph of the Girls' Dormitory at the St Vincent's Orphanage, taken 1910. It shows a range of several single and double storey buildings bordering a grass field. A caption printed at the bottom of the image reads "St. Vincent's Orphanage, Nudgee. Girls' Quarters and Playground No. 1"



Small children waiting to be immunised at Nudgee Orphanage, Brisbane

Description: This description was supplied with the photograph and included on the library website: Groups of children from Nudgee Orphanage were immunised against Diphtheria. They totalled 600 and there were no ill effects. As a result of the favourable report, immunisation against Diphtheria was established in Queensland.



Children at Nudgee Orphanage

Description: The library catalogue includes this description: These children have just been immunised against Diphtheria.



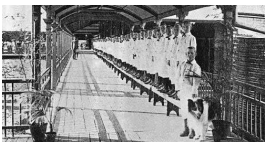
St Vincent's Orphanage

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



Nursery, St Vincent's Orphanage Nudgee

Description: This image was included in Annual report of the Director of the State Children Department for the year 1911.



St Vincent's Orphanage, inspection of boys by Director

Description: This image was included in Annual report of the Director of the State Children Department for the year 1914.



Buildings at St. Vincent's Orphanage, Nudgee, Brisbane, ca. 1900

Description: The library catalogue includes this description: The stables and the car-house at St. Vincent's Orphanage.



Storm damaged buildings at St. Vincent's Orphanage, Nudgee, 1905



Entrance gate to St Vincent's

Description: The boys residing at the orphanage assisted in building the gate.



St Vincent's Chapel soon after completion



Wash room at St Vincent's Orphanage



Visitors cottage, St Vincent's Orphanage

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



Chook House, St Vincent's Orphanage



Back of big boys dormitory, St Vincent's Orphanage

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

More info

Chronology

- New Farm St Vincent's (c. 1861 - 1867)
 - **St Vincent's Orphanage (1867 – 1935)**
 - St Vincent's Home for Children (1935 - 1971)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Sisters of Mercy, Brisbane Congregation \(1861 - current\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [State Children Act 1911, Queensland \(1911 - 1966\)](#)
- [Orphanages Act 1879, Queensland \(1879 - 1911\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Industrial School for Girls, Nudgee \(1903 - 1942\)](#)

The Industrial School for Girls, Nudgee was co-located with St Vincent's Home for Children.

Resources

- Australian Heritage Council, [A thematic heritage study on Australia's benevolent and other care institutions](#), 2016
- [Catholic Church schools and homes with the most child abuse claims revealed](#), ABC News, 17 February 2017
- [St Vincent's Orphanage, Nudgee](#), Brisbane Courier, 9 January 1988

- [Research Guide to orphanage and children's home records at Queensland State Archives](#), Queensland State Archives website, February 2022
- Goldman, L, *Child Welfare in Nineteenth Century Queensland 1865-1911*, 1978
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999

Records

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

Records

- [St Vincent's Orphanage Records \(1872 - 1983\)](#)
 - [Indexes to State Children's Allowances \(1910 - 1914\)](#)
 - [Admission Registers, St Vincent's Home, Nudgee \(14 December 1866 - 13 February 1908\)](#)
 - [Heritage photographs of Queensland children's homes, buildings and people \(1848 - 1979\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/st-vincent's-orphanage-2/>