

# St Vincent de Paul Orphanage

1866 – 1975

**Other Names:** • Goodwood Orphanage

## Details

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St Vincent de Paul Orphanage was established by the Catholic Church in 1866 in Gilberton. In 1867 it took in Catholic children from the Grace Darling Hotel. The Orphanage moved to Adelaide in 1868, to Mitcham in 1872, Burnside in 1875 and Millswood in 1888. The Orphanage was run by the Orphanage Board from 1866 to 1872, The Sisters of St Joseph, 1872 to 1889 and the Sisters of Mercy, 1889 to 1975. Between 1949 and 1957, 54 migrant girls were brought to the Orphanage from England and Malta. The St Vincent de Paul Orphanage closed in 1975 and was replaced by a number of cottage homes known as the St Vincent Group Homes.

The St Vincent de Paul Orphanage was first established by the Catholic Church in 1866. In the mid 1800s some members of the Catholic Church became concerned that orphans of the faith under government care were often placed with non-Catholic families. They believed that these children's spiritual welfare needed to be protected through the establishment of a Catholic orphanage. The orphanage was funded via a statewide appeal and a large house in Gilberton, known as Oberlin House, was secured for the purpose. Situated on the corner of Walkerville and Park Terraces, directly opposite the Buckingham Arms Hotel, the house had a large dining hall, two downstairs rooms for dormitories, two upstairs bedrooms and a large kitchen. There was also a paddock adjacent to the building, approximately one acre in size.

The Orphanage officially opened on 16 August 1866 and was managed by a board which included Catholic priests and laymen. A lay matron took charge of the first children sent to the Orphanage. A newspaper of the time reported the rules for the management of the Institution as follows:

*1. Children to rise from bed at 7 o'clock a.m.; 2. Breakfast at 8 o'clock, an hour being allowed for washing, dressing, and prayer; 3. School to commence with prayer at 9.30 a.m., and to close also with prayer at 3 p.m. ; Dinner at 12 o'clock, the previous half-hour being allowed for play; 5. Supper to be served at 5 o'clock p.m. – young children allowed food when necessary; 6. Bed-hour (after prayer) for children of four years and over at 9 o'clock and 8 o'clock for those under that age; 7. Girls to be instructed in needlework, cookery, and other necessary domestic employment; 8. Boys to be employed at useful work, and to be carefully educated as to fit them for trades and other employment; 9. The matron shall neither receive nor allow any children to be taken out of the Orphanage unless by a written order from the Board signed by the Secretary; 10. Domestic servants and all others residing in the Orphanage to be strictly obedient to the command of the matron.*

In 1867 the government approached the Catholic Church and pressured them to give shelter to Catholic children from the badly overcrowded state orphanage situated at that time in the Grace Darling Hotel at Brighton. In May of that year the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage was gazetted as an industrial school so that the government could pay a subsidy for each child admitted. In the first half of 1867 thirty-eight children moved from Brighton to Walkerville. As the government sent more children to the Walkerville home, it was soon found to be too small for the demand. A building known as Boston Cottages on King William Street South was leased and opened as a

branch orphanage for the girls. Children accommodated there, although under the direct care of a lay matron, were supervised by of the Sisters of St Joseph. In June 1868 the girls moved again to a row of cottages on the corner of Franklin and Grey Streets in the City. At this time a number of the Sisters moved in to care for them. The boys were also moved to these premises in August 1868.

During this period government sponsorship became intermittent and in 1872 ceased completely. However, the orphanage continued to run supported entirely by the church. In 1872 the children were moved from the City to a house in Mitcham, recently vacated by St Joseph's Refuge, which provided grounds as well as a building.

In November of 1872 the Orphanage Board ceased operating and the running of the Orphanage fell to the Sisters of St Joseph. Three years later, when the ownership of the Mitcham property changed hands, a larger premises known as Knightsbridge House was secured in Burnside and the children moved once again. In 1883 the Board was reconstituted as the Orphanage Committee, and they began the search for a more suitable property. This was found in 1888 and the children made their final move to a 12-13 acre (5 hectares) property secured by the Adelaide Archbishop on the corner of Mitchell Street and Goodwood Road, Millswood. The residence was renovated and new buildings added. One year later, by the order of Archbishop Reynolds, the Sisters of Mercy took over the running of the orphanage from the Sisters of St Joseph.

During the early 1900s further additions were made so that the home could accommodate up to 120 children. Another new wing was opened in 1924.

In 1947 the Archbishop of Adelaide, Archbishop Beovich, requested that 50 Catholic migrant English girls be brought to Adelaide to be accommodated at the St Vincent De Paul Orphanage. Renovations and improvements were made to the Orphanage buildings in order to accept the girls. The United Kingdom and Commonwealth Governments recognized St Vincent De Paul Orphanage, Goodwood, as an 'approved organisation' for the introduction of child migrants under the free and assisted passage schemes in August 1948. On 17 December 1948 twenty-eight girls between the ages of 6 and 14 years left England on the 'Ormonda'. They arrived at Port Adelaide and moved into the Orphanage on 19 January 1949. In May a further 14 girls arrived on the 'Mooltan', and in June 1950 four more on the Otranto. Although this fulfilled only 46 of the originally 50 girls that were to make up 'Group Nomination S.G. 10' it was later agreed that the nomination had been fulfilled.

In September 1950 Archbishop Beovich began negotiations for 12 Maltese girls to come to St Vincent De Paul Orphanage, Goodwood. It was not until April 1954, however, that the first 3 girls arrived from Malta aboard the 'Surriento'. In October of that year 3 more girls arrived aboard the 'Fairsea'. Only two more girls were sent from Malta, 1 arriving on the 'Arosa Star' in January 1955 and the last on the 'Castel Felice' in February 1955.

By 1960 ninety-nine children were resident in the orphanage. This number dropped to 52 in 1970 and at its closure in 1975, only 20 children were in residence. The role of St Vincent de Paul Orphanage was replaced by a number of suburban cottage homes know as the St Vincent Group Homes.

The Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry in South Australia heard allegations from women about being sexually abused as girls living at St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, from the 1940s to the 1970s.

## Gallery



**Children outside the Goodwood Orphanage**

**Description:** The library description states: Children of the St.Vincent de Paul's Orphanage (Sisters of Mercy) and their priest photographed at the entrance to the orphanage building on Goodwood Road, Goodwood, South Australia.



### Spectators listening to an address at Goodwood Orphanage

**Description:** The library description states: A crowd of spectators listening to an address delivered by a clergyman from the entrance to St. Vincent de Paul's Orphanage at Goodwood, South Australia, possibly during a fete held in the grounds of that Institution.

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### A group of men and boys at the Orphanage, Goodwood

**Description:** The library description states: A large group of men and orphaned boys at the St. Vincent de Paul's Orphanage, Goodwood Road, Goodwood, South Australia

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### Children waiting for a ride on a merry-go-round

**Description:** The library description states: Children with adults waiting for a ride on a merry-go-round during a fete held at Goodwood Orphanage.

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### Goodwood Orphanage - Old Building



### Goodwood Orphanage



### Goodwood Orphanage



### Children outside the Orphanage at Goodwood, South Australia

**Description:** This image shows children in the grounds of the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, which was also known as Goodwood Orphanage.

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## More info

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## Chronology

- **St Vincent de Paul Orphanage (1866 – 1975)**
  - Yoorana Cottage, St Vincent de Paul Group Homes (1975 - 1989)
  - Bon Agor House, St Vincent de Paul Group Homes (1975 - 1989)
  - Orana Cottage Home, St Vincent de Paul Group Homes (1975 - 1980)

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart \(1866 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1868 - 1879
- [Sisters of Mercy, Adelaide Congregation \(1880 - 2011\)](#)  
Date: 1890 - 1975

### Related Events

- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)
- [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, South Australia \(2004 - 2008\)](#)
- [Child Migration Programmes Investigation, UK Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(2017 - 2018\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [St John the Baptist Home for Boys \(1898 - 1941\)](#)  
In 1941 St John the Baptist Home for Boys took boys aged 12 years of age or older, while younger boys were sent to the St Joseph's Orphanage at Largs Bay or to the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage at Goodwood.
- [Destitute Asylum \(1851 - c. 1917\)](#)  
Following the Destitute Persons Relief Act 1867, some children were moved from the Destitute Asylum to St Vincent de Paul Orphanage.
- [Brighton Industrial School \(1867 - 1869\)](#)  
Due to overcrowding at the Brighton Industrial School, a number of children were sent to the Catholic St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage and the Church of England's Orphan Home, also known as Farr House.
- [Waverley Hostel \(1972 - 1988\)](#)  
Some girls from the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage were accommodated at Waverley Hostel after they left school and were seeking employment.
- [St Joseph's Orphanage Largs Bay \(1907 - 1960s\)](#)  
From 1941 all girls at St Joseph's Orphanage, Largs Bay, were sent to St Vincent de Paul Orphanage at Goodwood.  
Date: 1941 - 1969
- [St Joseph's Refuge \(1868 - c. 2001\)](#)  
St Vincent De Paul Orphanage was situated at former premises of the St Joseph's Refuge, Mitcham
- [St Joseph's Junior Boys' Home \(1960s - 1969\)](#)  
While St Joseph's Junior Boys Home at Largs Bay took in boys between the ages of 3 and 12 all girls were sent to St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, Goodwood.

### Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

## Resources

- Immigration Museum, [Stolen childhoods](#), 2012
- [On their own: Britain's child migrants](#), Australian National Maritime Museum website, 2010
- [Opening of the New Orphanage of St. Vincent De Paul](#), South Australian Weekly Chronicle, 18 August 1888
- [Catholic Church schools and homes with the most child abuse claims revealed](#), ABC News, 17 February 2017
- Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, [Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report](#), March 2018
- Foale, Marie Therese, *Think of the Ravens: The Sisters of St Joseph in Social Welfare*, 2001
- McLay, Anne, *Women on the Move: Mercy's triple spiral: a history of the Adelaide Sisters of Mercy, Ireland to Argentina 1856-1880 to South Australia 1880*, 1996
- Robertson, Beth M., [Orphaned in South Australia: Oral histories about growing up at Goodwood Orphanage](#), Oral History Association of Australia Journal, 1995
- O'Neill, Cate, [Responding to the film 'Once my mother'](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 24 July 2015
- 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

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

## Records

- [Records of St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, Professional Standards Office Collection \(1866 - 1975\)](#)
  - [JD Somerville Oral History Collection \(1904 - current\)](#)
  - [Records of St Vincent De Paul Orphanage, Adelaide Catholic Archdiocesan Archives \(1866? - 1975?\)](#)
  - [Records created by the Destitute Board \(c. 1845 - 1927\)](#)
  - [Records held by the Sisters of St Joseph Archives, Adelaide \(1866? - current\)](#)
  - [Child Migration - Methodist Children's Home - Magill SA \(1948 - 1955\)](#)
  - [Child Migration - St Vincents de Paul Orphanage - Goodward, SA - Catholic \(1947 - 1960\)](#)
  - [Children forwarded to the Roman Catholic Orphanage 1867-1869 \(index\) \[Admission Register\] \(1867 - 1869\)](#)
  - [Goodwood Orphanage Oral History \(1993 - 1994\)](#)
  - [Former Residents' Folders, Catholic Children's Homes \(1900s - current\)](#)
  - [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/st-vincent-de-paul-orphanage-2/>