

Struan Farm School, Naracoorte

1947 – 1969

Details

Struan Farm School was established by the government in 1946 at Naracoorte, South Australia as a farm training school for boys over school age. Initially eight boys from the Edwardstown Industrial School and the Boys' Reformatory Magill were transferred to the school. Although able to accommodate 30 boys, in the 1950s and 60s it averaged 18 to 20. In 1969, due to low numbers and rising costs, Struan Farm was closed in 1969.

Struan Farm School, Naracoorte was established on land purchased by the South Australian Government in 1946. The land was to be developed into a 'rural colony for the better class of delinquent boy and youth' from the government reformatory, as well as boys committed as neglected or destitute. Struan Farm was not proclaimed as an institution to which the court could commit boys, instead the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board took responsibility and transferred boys from other institutions. In 1947 a superintendent was appointed along with a small number of staff. A group of eight boys, selected from the Edwardstown Industrial School and the Boys' Reformatory Magill, were the first boys transferred to the new Farm School.

As well as working in the gardens on school land, boys also trained in various farming tasks and on farming equipment with local landowners. They were also educated through lectures and practical experience in care of stock and dairying. Experts from various departments of the government also visited to provide advice and assistance in rural matters, and teach maintenance of farm machinery and equipment.

In 1950 it was reported that the school could accommodate 30 boys, although during the 1950s and 1960s it was home for usually around 18 to 20 over school aged boys. Most boys were selected for training at the farm because of interest in, or experience of, rural life and if their general behaviour was satisfactory. Many city boys also trained at the school and were then able to move into farming jobs. After completing their education at the school, boys were placed in rural positions locally or in other areas of the State.

Boys were allowed a limited amount of freedom to attend church, picture theatres, sporting and other recreational events. Visitors were allowed with permission and boys occasionally returned to their own homes.

In 1969 the Department reported that it had been finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the required number of boys at the farm and that therefore the costs of maintaining boys there was very high. It recommended that the Farm School be discontinued. It was closed as a departmental institution in October 1969. The property was taken over by the Department of Agriculture and became a research station.

Struan Farm School was one of the institutions that came under scrutiny for allegations of abuse during the Children in State Care Inquiry 2004-2008. The majority of the reported incidents at Struan Farm School were from the 1960s.

Gallery



Struan

Description: This image shows Straun Farm School. The library description states: Exterior views of the double storey farm school with square tower, return veranda, quoin stonework and arched entrance portico.



Struan House has recently undergone \$2 million worth of upgrades

Description: This is a recent image of Struan Farm School at Naracoorte, now known as Struan House.



Struan

Description: This image shows Straun Farm School. The library description states: Exterior views of the double storey farm school with square tower, return veranda, quoin stonework and arched entrance portico.



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Struan Farm School

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: Portion of the swimming pool, 1947.



Struan Farm School

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: Rear of the Home, showing newly erected water tower, 1948.



Struan Farm School

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: The old and new homestead.



Struan Farm School, Aerial

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: 'Struan Farm School, near Naracoorte, a training school for boys, mainly on self-control, improved work character, and training in pastoral and agricultural work. 1.159 acres opened in 1947. Picture of homestead and portion of the garden from the air.'



Struan Farm School, Assembly room fireplace

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: Beautiful white marble fireplace in the Assembly Room.



Struan Farm School, Christmas dinner table

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: Boys' dinner table, Christmas 1949.



Struan Farm School, Dormitory

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: Typical dormitory accommodation for the boys.



Struan Farm School, Entrance hall

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: The entrance hall and stairway 1947.



Struan Farm School, Stables

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: The old stables, 1947.



Struan Farm School, Upper room

Description: This is a a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 2, the original caption states: The Upper Room.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)

Date: 1947 - 1966

- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)

Date: 1966 - 1969

Related Events

- [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, South Australia \(2004 - 2008\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Boys Reformatory, Magill \(1891 - 1967\)](#)

A group of eight boys from the Edwardstown Industrial School and the Boys' Reformatory, Magill, were the first boys to be sent to Struan Farm School, Naracoorte

- [Edwardstown Industrial School \(1898 - 1949\)](#)

A group of eight boys from the Edwardstown Industrial School and the Boys' Reformatory, Magill, were the first boys to be sent to Struan Farm School, Naracoorte

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Child Welfare Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors, South Australia \(1862 - 2000\)](#)
- [Records of the Aborigines' Office and Successor Agencies \(1866 - 2003\)](#)
- [Government Child and Social Welfare Client Files, State Records of South Australia \(1900 - 2014\)](#)
- [Photographs of Departmental institutions, Social Welfare Department and Predecessors \(1945 - 1970\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
Item B438 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Struan Farm School
- [Agreements and correspondence with doctors for the medical treatment of State Children and wards of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department \(1904 - 1952\)](#)

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