

Kumanka Boys' Hostel

1946 – 1980

Details

Kumanka Boys' Hostel was opened in North Adelaide by the government in 1946 to provide shelter and assistance to working boys who had been State wards. Most boys came from the Boys' Reformatory at Magill, and some from other government institutions or foster-care. In 1948 there were 23 boys accommodated at Kumanka, ranging in age from 13 to 18 years. In 1966 the average number was 18. Kumanka closed in 1980.

Kumanka Boys' Hostel in North Adelaide was purchased by the government in 1945. It was designed to provide shelter and assistance to working boys who had been State wards and who could find no other suitable accommodation on leaving the government run Boys' Reformatory, Magill. A superintendent, Mr H A Lyndon was appointed in September 1945 and alterations and additions were made to the premises to provide improved bathroom facilities, a workshop and a sports room. The Hostel was named Kumanka, meaning 'comrades', and opened in January 1946 with the superintendent's wife as matron. By June of that year 14 boys were in residence.

Intended to give boys the means to develop skills for living in the wider community, boys at Kumanka were given freedom to come and go daily without restrictions, subject to the approval of the superintendent. They paid an amount of board, calculated in relation to their wages, and followed a compulsory system for banking other monies. Attendance at church was expected and outside activities, classes and voluntary work encouraged. The home provided a workshop, a piano, sporting equipment and a library. The 1948 Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board provided a long list of activities in which the boys took part, including singing, first-aid, wrestling, weight-lifting, model aeroplane building, wireless set construction, as well as various team and individual sports, leather work and other general craft work. The home also aimed to provide 'comradeship' and 'respect for the law as the basis of training in citizenship'.

In 1948 there were 23 boys accommodated at Kumanka, ranging in age from 13 to 18 years. Most came to the hostel from the Boys' Reformatory at Magill. Some came from other governmental institutions and foster homes or were on probation.

In the 1950s some girls from Vaughan House carried out occasional domestic work at Kumanka Boys' Hostel.

From 1962 older school aged boys who could not find suitable accommodation were also admitted to Kumanka. Their progress at school was monitored by the superintendent. In 1966 the average number of boys at Kumanka was 18.

By the mid 1970s Kumanka was one of five hostels for children between 12 and 18 years of age operating in the metropolitan area. As well as Kumanka these included Nindee Hostel, Luprina Hostel, Stuart House Boys' Hostel and Allambi Girls' Hostel. Kumanka closed in 1980.

Kumanka Boys' Hostel 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 Kumanka Boys' Hostel were from the 1960s and 1970s.

Gallery



Kumanka Boys' Hostel

Description: This is a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: 'Kumanka Boys' Hostel, North Adelaide. Opened in 1945 for working wards of the State who, generally speaking, have no suitable homes.'



Kumanka Boys' Hostel

Description: This is a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: A closer view of the front of the main building.



Kumanka Boys' Hostel, Dining room

Description: This is a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: 'The dining room, showing tasteful table amenities, coloured table cloths and serviettes, etc.'



Kumanka Boys' Hostel, Recreation room

Description: This is a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: The recreation room indicating sports and leisure-hour-activities equipment.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)
Kumunka Boys' Hostel was run by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board and its successors.
Date: 1946 - 1966
- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)
Date: 1966 - 1970
- [Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)
Date: 1970 - 1972
- [Department for Community Welfare, South Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)
Date: 1972 - 1990

Related Events

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

Related Organisations

- [Boys Reformatory, Magill \(1891 - 1967\)](#)
Most boys came to Kumunka Boys' Hostel from the Boys' Reformatory at Magill.
Date: 1946 - 1967

- [Allambi Girls' Hostel \(1947 - 1977\)](#)

In the mid 1970s five Hostels for children between 12 and 18 years were operating. These included Kumanka Hostel, Nindee Hostel, Luprina Hostel, Stuart House Hostel and Allambi Girls' Hostel.

- [Luprina Hostel \(1971 - current\)](#)

In the mid 1970s five Hostels for children between 12 and 18 years were operating. These included Kumanka Hostel, Nindee Hostel, Luprina Hostel, Stuart House Hostel and Allambi Girls' Hostel.

- [Nindee Hostel \(1971 - current\)](#)

In the mid 1970s five Hostels for children between 12 and 18 years were operating. These included Kumanka Hostel, Nindee Hostel, Luprina Hostel, Stuart House Hostel and Allambi Girls' Hostel.

- [Stuart House Boys' Hostel \(1964 - 1990\)](#)

In the mid 1970s five Hostels for children between 12 and 18 years were operating. These included Kumanka Hostel, Nindee Hostel, Luprina Hostel, Stuart House Hostel and Allambi Girls' Hostel.

- [Vaughan House \(1947 - 1979\)](#)

Some girls from Vaughan House carried out domestic work at Kumanka Boys Hostel

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Child Welfare Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors, South Australia \(1862 - 2000\)](#)
 - [Records of the Department for Community Welfare and Successor Agencies \(1972 - current\)](#)
 - [Records of the Aborigines' Office and Successor Agencies \(1866 - 2003\)](#)
 - [Photographs of Departmental institutions, Social Welfare Department and Predecessors \(1945 - 1970\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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