

Woorabinda Hostel (and Campsite)

1968 – 1993

Details

Woorabinda Hostel (and Campsite) was established by the government in 1968 at Woorabinda Lake near Stirling. It operated as a temporary hostel for boys who were wards of the State and a holiday camp for disadvantaged children and families, including Aboriginal children from Northern South Australia. It later also operated as a respite home for families in need. In 1993 Woorabinda ceased to operate as a Home for children. It was sold to Stirling Council in 1995.

In 1966 the Government purchased 23 acres (9 hectares) of land near Stirling in the Adelaide Hills with the idea of establishing a permanent departmental campsite for children who were wards of the State. This campsite was set on Woorabinda Lake which had been constructed in 1922 by the South Australian Railways Department to supply water to the Aldgate Station for steam trains. In 1968 a small cottage on the site was remodelled in order to make it suitable for use as a temporary hostel for working boys. Boys and staff from the McNally Training Centre completed much of the remodelling work and campsite development. The first children moved into the Woorabinda Hostel at the end of 1968. Mrs E V Johnston, the first superintendent of the home, and her husband were not salaried staff of the Department but were provided with accommodation in the furnished cottage and a subsidy for each of the boys placed under their care.

From 1970, after the erection of camp huts and an ablutions block, children from various institutions run by the Department also attended holiday camps at Woorabinda. This included boys from Brookway Park. Woorabinda was later used as a respite home for families in need and also continued as a holiday camp run by the Department for disadvantaged children, families and community groups. This included many Aboriginal children from the north of the state. Woorabinda was offered for sale to the Stirling Council in July 1993. The Council leased the property in May 1994 and bought it in June 1995.

Gallery



Former Hostel Building at Lake Woorabinda



Woorabinda Campsite under construction

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in the 1969 Annual Report of the Social Welfare Department. It was captioned: 'Development of the camp site, including erection and maintenance of some buildings, has been carried out by boys and staff from the McNally Training Centre'.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)
Woorabinda Hostel (and Campsite) was run by the Department of Social Welfare and its successors.
Date: 1968 - 1993

Related Organisations

- [Brookway Park \(1965 - 1978\)](#)
Boys from Brookway Park attended annual camps at Woorabinda Hostel and Campsite
Date: 1965 - 1978
- [McNally Training Centre \(1967 - 1979\)](#)
Boys from McNally Training Centre assisted with the remodelling and campsite development of Woorabinda Hostel (and Campsite)

Resources

- Walsh, Dave, [Life in Magill Youth Training Centre](#), Weekend Notes, 18 April 2014

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 \(1866 - 2003\)](#)
 - [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/woorabinda-hostel-and-campsite/>