

Merrilama Cottage, Glenelg

1960 – 1979

Details

Merrilama Cottage was the first suburban cottage home established by the government. It opened in 1960 at Glenelg. The Cottage accommodated up to ten State children in a family-style setting under the supervision of a cottage mother. Children attended local schools and churches. In 1979 Merrillama Cottage was renamed the Southern Region Group Home.

Merrilama Cottage was the first of six suburban cottages to be established by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board in the 1960s. It opened at 36 Gordon Street, Glenelg in 1960. The other cottages were Stirling Cottage at St Peters, Clark Cottage at Clarence Park, Spence Cottage at Kensington Gardens, Colton Cottage at Thorngate and Hay Cottage at Lockleys.

The Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board for 1960 explained that 'Merrilama' was an Aboriginal word meaning 'making'. The report also stated that the name was given to reflect the Board's hope that 'the home will be the means of making useful happy citizens of the children who pass through it'.

As early as 1887 the State Children's Council had discussed the possibility of establishing cottage homes for State children. Although some smaller homes were erected and operated within the grounds of departmental institutions, such as the Girls Reformatory at Edwardstown, Merrillama was the first completely independent cottage. Its development was inspired by the growing number of children who were being placed under the care of the State and the increased time they were spending in large institutions because of difficulty in finding foster homes.

Merrilama accommodated up to ten children under the supervision of a cottage mother. The first cottage mother appointed was Miss O Mitchell and she initially cared for six children. One other full-time staff member and a part-time helper assisted her. During long school vacations holiday placements were arranged for the children, so that cottage staff could also take their annual leave.

Children placed at the Home were those who were under the care of the State. Departmental Annual Reports from the 1960s stress the belief that cottage style care enabled greater individual attention to be given to each child. The Department also felt that children living in cottage style accommodation and attending local schools would be less conspicuous as 'State' children, making it easier for them to become part of the local community. The cottage system aimed to simulate a form of family life with children sleeping in bedrooms rather than dormitories. It also allowed for brothers and sisters to be placed together. It was expected that children would attend church and other social activities as members of the cottage family.

Departmental reports also noted that providing cottage style care was less costly for the government than running large institutions.

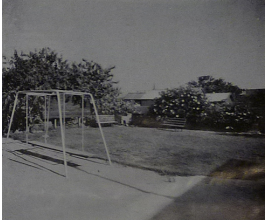
In 1979, as part of a restructuring of departmental facilities, Merrillama Cottage was renamed the Southern Region Group Home.

Gallery



Merrilama Cottage

Description: This is a copy of an image that was published in the Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1960.



Merrilama Cottage - lawn and play area

Description: This is a copy of an image that was published in the Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1960.



Merrilama Cottage - sitting room

Description: This is a copy of an image that was published in the Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1960.

More info

Chronology

- **Merrilama Cottage, Glenelg (1960 – 1979)**
 - Southern Region Group Home (1979 - 1990)
 - Glandore Community Unit (1990 - 1994)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)
Merrilama Cottage was run by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board and its successors.
Date: 1960 - 1966
- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)
The South Australian government created six Cottage Homes in the 1960s.
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 - 1980

Related Events

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

Records

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

Records

- [Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)
 - [Records of the Department for Community Welfare and Successor Agencies \(1972 - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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