

Aboriginal Women's Home, North Adelaide

1926 – c. 1975

Other Names: • Boarding Home for Aboriginal Women

Details

The Aboriginal Women's Home opened at North Adelaide in 1926 as a boarding house for Aboriginal women and children. The Adelaide City Mission ran the Home with financial assistance from the government. The Home accommodated up to 22 women and children, many from country areas who were in Adelaide for medical treatment. The Home closed in 1975 and its functions were taken over by the Klemzig Family Home.

The Aboriginal Women's Home opened in Sussex Street, North Adelaide in 1926 in a building that had previously been the old City Mission Hall. The Aborigines' Friends' Association had approached the committee of the City Mission 18 months earlier about the need for a boarding house for Aboriginal women and children, particularly those from country areas, coming to the city for medical treatment (*The Register*, 30 June 1926). The Association and the Chief Protector of Aborigines had great difficulty finding suitable accommodation for these visitors to Adelaide (*The Advertiser*, 30 June 1926). Some visitors were apparently reduced to sleeping in parklands (*News*, 5 July 1939).

The Adelaide City Mission and the Aborigines Department worked together to refurnish the old Mission Hall and the new Home opened on 29 June 1926. The Home's first matron was Mrs Alice A. Owen, a former missionary (*News*, 23 December 1926). The big hall was converted into dormitories, with a kitchen and dining room at one side. Mothers with children had their own small rooms. An article from 1927 stated that the Home had 9 beds, "in constant use". The average length of stay was a few days, with residents not staying longer than two weeks (*News*, 7 June 1927).

The government subsidised the running of the Home, covering the cost of board and lodging and the salary of one Aboriginal staff member. Members of the City Mission took responsibility for food preparation and general management. The Aborigines Friends Association was also involved, with a representative on the Advisory Board of the Home. The Chief Protector of Aborigines, Mr Garnett, was said to be showing a "keen, sympathetic interest" in the work done at the Home (*The Register*, 20 July 1927).

Most of the women who came to the home were from the Far North and West, and being treated as outpatients in Adelaide hospitals. The Home also provided shelter for local Aboriginal people in emergency situations. A full-time matron was employed as well as other domestic staff. Another object of the institution was to make it "a domestic training ground" for young Aboriginal women (*News*, 7 June 1927).

An article from 1934 mentions one child from Alice Springs who, after spending 2 and a half years in Children's Hospital with infantile paralysis, came to live at the Home for more than 2 years so that he could attend a private school in Adelaide (*The Mail*, 14 July 1934).

An article from 1940 stated that 40 women and children had stayed at the Aboriginal Women's Home that year (*News*, 20 August 1940).

The Home was still operating in the early 1970s when it came under the control of the Department for Community Welfare. At that time the Department reported that up to 22 women and children and seven babies could stay in the home at one time.

The Aboriginal Women's Home closed in 1975 and its functions were taken over by the Klemzig Family Home. By 1981 the former Women's Home building had been leased to the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department for Community Welfare, South Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)
Date: 1972 - 1975
- [Adelaide City Mission \(1867 - 1996\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)
The Adelaide City Mission ran the Aboriginal Women's Home with financial assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs.
- [Klemzig Family Home \(1973 - 1980\)](#)
Klemzig Family Home took over the function previously provided by the Aboriginal Women's Home, North Adelaide
Date: 1975 -
- [Aborigines' Friends' Association \(1858 - 2000\)](#)
The Aborigines Friends Association had a representative on the Advisory Board of the Aboriginal Women's Home
Date: 1926 - 1972
- [Aborigines Department, South Australian Government \(1912 - 1962\)](#)
The Adelaide City Mission ran the Aboriginal Women's Home with financial assistance from the Aborigines Department.

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Resources

- [At the City Home for Aboriginal women: no idle hands](#), *The Mail* (Adelaide, SA), 14 July 1934
- [City Mission](#), *News* (Adelaide, SA), 20 August 1940

Records

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

Records

- [Records of the Aborigines' Office and Successor Agencies \(1866 - 2003\)](#)
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