

Morialta Protestant Children's Home

1924 - 1972

Details

The Morialta Protestant Children's Home was established in 1924 at Norton Summit. It was run by an independent Board of Management. In 1930 the Home accommodated 109 children under the supervision of 10 staff. School aged children at Morialta attended the Norton Summit Primary School. The Board of Management opened the Toorak Gardens Boys' Hostel in 1967. The Hostel and the Children's Home were together renamed Morialta Children's Homes Incorporated in 1972.

The Morialta Protestant Children's Home opened in 1924 at Norton Summit in the Adelaide Hills. The building was the former family home and station of a pioneer pastoralist, John Baker. Known as Morialta, it had been built in 1847. In May 1924 a public meeting was held at the Adelaide Town Hall to raise funds for the establishment of a children's home. Many prominent members of Adelaide society made contributions. As a result, the South Australian Protestant Federation purchased Morialta in June 1924. The incorporated body formed in 1925 was called the Federated Protestant Children's Home. The Board of Management's stated purpose was "To make a real home for the children, where they could be really and truly happy. The ambitions, plans and work of the associated organisations are to provide these children with a decent chance in life, to give them all the benefits and blessings of a good Protestant home, to take them from various stages of destitution, attend their proper upbringing, their education, their physical and moral welfare, and to start them out in life with every opportunity of making good" (Morialta Charitable Trust, 2023).

The Morialta Charitable Trust website states that the Home accommodated more than 2500 children over 50 years of operation. The first eight children moved into the Home shortly after it opened in October 1924. Six months later, on 30 April 1925, the Home was incorporated. By 1928 a Board of Management was in charge of the institution, comprising representatives of a number of religious and philanthropic organizations including the Independent Order of Oddfellows (IOOF), the Congregational Union, Churches of Christ, the South Australian Protestant Federation, the Baptist Union and the Presbyterian Church.

At the time of incorporation 25 children aged between 4 and 13 years were residing in the Home. School aged children attended the local Norton Summit Primary School. By 1928, 43 boys and 22 girls were accommodated at the Home and in 1929 a new separate block of dormitories for the boys was erected. Once more beds were available the number of children admitted to the home increased. By 1930 the home was full with 109 children living under the supervision of ten staff members.

During 1948-1949 a documentary film, called The Open Door, was filmed at the Home in order to make the work of Morialta more widely known and to appeal for donations to support the building of cottage homes on the site. According to the catalogue of State Records of South Australia, The Open Door is a documentary film shot in 1948-49 to publicise the work being done at the Morialta Protestant Children's Home, and appeal for donations to fund the building of cottage homes at Morialta. The film follows Peter and Joan (fictional characters) from childhood through to adulthood depicting what living as residents at Morialta entailed for all ages and stages of life. It also contains footage of Morialta residents going about their daily lives. This film is not available on public access, however people depicted in the film have the right to request access from the Department.

In 1966 the Board became concerned that many boys leaving the home to start work had difficulty finding suitable accommodation. In 1967 it purchased a property at Toorak Gardens and opened a hostel for boys who were studying or working. The establishment of the hostel took place at a time when the South Australian government was advocating for organisations to move away from large institutional models in favour of smaller facilities, such as cottage homes.

As Morialta's approach changed with the times, there was a name change. From 1972 the original Home and the Hostel together became known as the Morialta Children's Homes Incorporated.

National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

The South Australian government has agreed to be a funder of last resort for this institution. This means that although the institution is now defunct, it is participating in the National Redress Scheme, and the government has agreed to pay the institution's share of costs of providing redress to a person (as long as the government is found to be equally responsible for the abuse a person experienced).

Gallery



"Morialta", Norton Summit

Description: This image shows the building where the Morialta Protestant Children's Home was later run.



Protestant Children's Home

Description: The library description includes: Protestant Children's Home, Morrialta Estate, Norton Summit on Opening Day October 1924.

More info

Chronology

- Morialta Protestant Children's Home (1924 1972)
 - Morialta Children's Homes Incorporated (1972 1974)

Related Entries

Run by

Morialta Protestant Children's Home, Board of Management (1924 - 1974)

Morialta Protestant Children's Home was run by a board of management comprising representatives of the Independent Order of Oddfellows [IOOF], the Congregational Union, Churches of Christ, the SA Protestant Federation, the Baptist Union, the Presbyterian Church and Public Subscribers.

Date: 1924 - 1974

Related Organisations

• Presbyterian Church of Australia (1901 - current)

Representatives of the Presbyterian Church formed part of the Board of Management of Morialta Protestant Children's Home.

• Congregational Union of South Australia (1837 - 1977)

Representatives of the Congregational Union formed part of the Board of Management of Morialta Protestant Children's Home.

Date: 1924 - 1974

Churches of Christ in South Australia and the Northern Territory (1840s - current)

Representatives of the Churches of Christ formed part of the Board of Management of Morialta Protestant Children's Home.

Date: 1924 - 1974

• SA Protestant Federation (c. 1920 - current)

Representatives of the SA Protestant Federation formed part of the Board of Management of Morialta Protestant Children's Home.

Date: 1924 - 1974

Baptist Union of South Australia (1863 - current)

Representatives of the Baptist Union of South Australia formed part of the Board of Management of Morialta Protestant Children's Home.

Date: 1924 - 1974

Toorak Gardens Boys' Hostel (1967 - 1972)

The Toorak Gardens Boys' Hostel was run by the Board of Management of the Morialta Protestant Children's Home and together they were renamed the Morialta Children's Homes Inc in 1972

Related Concepts

Stolen Generations

Resources

- Jim Dawes interviewed by Karen George in the Bringing them home oral history project (2001), 1 January 1970
 current
- King, Malcolm, The boy, 1981
- Scottney-Turbill, Peter, Morialta: Fire in the Mist, 1994

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)
- Morialta Protestant Children's Home Records, State Records of South Australia (1924 1976)
- Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' [Child Endowment] prefix (1904 1974)

You can view this page online by visiting https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/morialta-protestant-childrens-home/