

# Clarendon Children's Home

1922 – 2004

- Other Names:**
- Clarendon Children's Home and Home of Mercy
  - Clarendon Children's Home and Home of Mercy and Babies' Home
  - Clarendon Home
  - Mount Royal Children's Home
  - Mount Royal
  - Mount Royal Church of England Children's Home

## Details

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Clarendon Children's Home, run by the Anglican Church, opened in 1922 in New Town, on the same site as the Home of Mercy (the two Homes were jointly run by the Church of England). Clarendon Children's Home accommodated children over the age of three (babies and younger children were at the Home of Mercy). In 1945, Clarendon moved to Mount Royal in the suburb of Kingston Beach. St Nicholas Cottage opened in 1948 in the grounds of Mount Royal. In 1953, the Home of Mercy closed and Clarendon Children's Home housed toddlers and babies from this time onwards. More cottage accommodation was built at Clarendon Children's Home in the 1970s and 1980s. Clarendon Children's Home closed in 2004. The proceeds were put into a trust fund managed by Clarendon Children's Home Inc.

In 1922, a donation from Mrs JF Walker of Clarendon at Gretna funded the building of Clarendon Children's Home on the New Town site of the Home of Mercy, a rescue and maternity home that also took in babies. The purpose of the new Home was to accommodate up to 50 children three years and older who the Committee considered too old to remain in the Home of Mercy. The children attended the local school and took part in other community activities such as Brownies or Girl Guides and singing in the St John's Church choir.

A committee from the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania ran Clarendon and the Home of Mercy jointly.

The 1940 Annual Report for Clarendon Children's Home states that during that year there were, on average, 42 children in the home at a given time. 17 children had been admitted throughout the year and 14 discharged, 5 of whom were adopted out.

In 1941, following a bequest from Elizabeth Rose, a new wing opened, comprising bathrooms, dressing rooms, and a large dormitory. At the same time, the Home was completely renovated with new paintwork, curtains, wash basins, and beds.

In 1945, the Clarendon Committee purchased Mount Royal, a guest house with 35 rooms set on 20 acres that overlooked Kingston Beach. The children moved there in September and the Bishop blessed it on 5 October 1945. The Home took in girls aged three to 16 and boys from three to 6, the age when they transferred to Roland Boys' Home in Sheffield.

After the move, the youngest children attended kindergarten in Kingston while those aged between six and 11 went to Kingston or Albuera Street Primary Schools.

In 1948, work began on a cottage known as St Nicholas on the grounds of Mount Royal. It opened in 1953. The cottage was partially funded by the sale of the Home of Mercy in New Town. St Nicholas Cottage was built to cater for migrant children, and for a short period it accommodated some migrant girls. It later became accommodation for primary school-age children.

A new Home of Mercy was built at Kingston Beach in 1957 to cater for toddlers. On 9 November 1958, the Home of Mercy Cottage for babies and toddlers opened. From this time, the Home was often referred to as the Clarendon Children's Home and Home of Mercy. Later the Cottage took babies rather than toddlers.

Financially, Mount Royal appears to have struggled. It received a grant from the Tasmanian government and the Commonwealth child endowment. There was practical and fundraising support from the women's auxiliary formed in 1948. The Canterbury Tea Rooms run in Church House, Hobart by Anglican women, also provided some funds. However, this was not enough and the Home nearly closed in 1959. It was temporarily saved by an increase in the grant received from the Tasmanian government, some legacies, and the sound financial management of the then Secretary and Treasurer, Canon George Crouch. This improvement did not last and there were further crises.

In 1949, the Board of the Home asked the Director of Public Health for some advice from the Department's nutritionist about the children's diet. Her report provides some insights into routines at the Home and the food the children ate.

The Home had a cook. She had some help from a young kitchen maid and waitress. After school, the older girls prepared the vegetables and packed lunches for the next day. On Sundays, the Matron took over the cooking with the help of the older girls.

The Home produced much of its own food. There was a large vegetable patch that supplied all the vegetables except potatoes. Chickens produced up to 40 eggs a day when they were laying, and a couple of cows provided nearly all the milk the children needed. There were also apples, apricots, plums, pears, and a few berry fruits.

Breakfast consisted of oatmeal or cereal with bread and butter three times a week and bread and dripping the rest of the time. The children at school in Kingston went home for a cooked lunch, consisting of meat or fish, potatoes, and one or two other vegetables. Dessert was usually a milk pudding or a steam pudding with custard. Occasionally the children had an apple pie or sponge. The older children had the same meal at night while the younger ones had a lighter meal of carrot, raisin or marmite sandwiches, or bread and butter with honey or jam.

According to Laura Williams, in the early 1950s, Mount Royal was an unhappy place for the children. There was a rapid turnover of Matrons, six in six years. A report made by a recently dismissed Matron in 1953 stated that corporal punishment was widely used. The children were inadequately clothed and in poor health. They ate separately from the staff and had different food. They either 'ran wildly through the house or sat quietly rocking'.

Clarendon was the first home in Tasmania to be approved for child migrants and the only one to take girls. It received five British child migrants, aged between three and 13, in 1950. They lived in St Nicholas. Clarendon's full quota of migrant children was 12 per year but although more came, the Home hardly ever reached this number. This may have been because it mostly offered institutional accommodation and in Britain the preference was for cottages. In 1951, John Moss, a British delegate inspecting institutions for child migrants in Australia, said that Clarendon was 'not up to standard' and that other children would be better off left in Britain. The situation apparently improved because in 1955 to 1956, when there was another visit from a John Ross, he did not criticise Clarendon. In 1954, in order to boost numbers, the Home accepted children under the parent following scheme. The last child migrant left Clarendon in 1960. By then there had been 18, seven of whom rejoined their parents when they arrived and one of whom was adopted.

The Friends of Clarendon formed in 1958 to support girls when they left the Home.

Clarendon Children's Home was an approved children's Home under the Child Welfare Act 1960.

The numbers of children in Clarendon fell as the emphasis in child welfare policy moved from child removal to better support for families. Accommodating children in big institutions also lost favour. In 1976, Upton, the Secretary of the Clarendon Board described Mount Royal as 'too big, too difficult and expensive to heat, needs too many staff, and worst of all it's an institution, not a home, for the children that live there'.

This change in attitude led the Board to investigate a cottage style accommodation for boys and girls that would simulate family life, known as Project Cottage Care. It reached fruition in 1978, following the demolition of Mount Royal, with the opening of two new cottages, one named Fletcher Walker, and the other, de Bavay after Clarendon's architect. Two more opened in 1981. Each cottage had a foster parent known as the house mother.

Around this time the old Mount Royal building was demolished. By 1983, at Kingston Beach there were 4 cottages caring for 4 to 5 children each, a transition flat for teenagers and 2 crisis accommodation units. Foster care was also provided off-site.

In the 1980s, Clarendon provided accommodation under the Domestic Service Assistance Scheme. It was for children whose parents could not look after them temporarily, usually because of illness.

By 1990, Clarendon no longer provided long term accommodation for children. Instead the aim was to keep the family together wherever possible. In 1997, Clarendon received funds from the Sydney Myer and Ian Potter Trusts to run a pilot early intervention program known as Reconnections. The aim was to keep families together so that children did not come into the Home. Funding came to an end in 1999 so the program had to be wound up.

When Clarendon closed, the land was subdivided and sold as house blocks. Funds from the sale of the Kingston Beach property were reinvested to form Clarendon Children which, in 2013, offers early intervention programs for families. Clarendon Children holds the records of Clarendon Children's Home.

## Gallery

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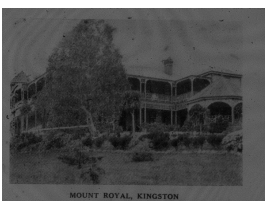


### Home of Mercy, Midwood Street, New Town

**Description:** *Church News*, March 1953, p. 6 The *Church News* is published by the Anglican Church in Tasmania.



### St Nicholas Cottage accommodates 12 children



### Clarendon Children's Home, Mount Royal, Kingston Beach

**Description:** The *Church News* published this photograph of Clarendon Children's Home at Mount Royal in their November 1945 edition on page 8.



### Mount Royal - Clarendon Children's Home

**Description:** This is a copy of an image of the former guest house at Kingston Beach that became the Clarendon Children's Home in 1945.

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### Mount Royal [Clarendon Children's Home]

**Description:** This is a copy of an image of the Clarendon Children's Home in Kingston Beach.

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### Enclosed verandah, Mt Royal [Clarendon Children's Home]

**Description:** This is a copy of a slide showing an enclosed verandah at the Clarendon Children's Home in Kingston Beach.

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### Mount Royal [Clarendon Children's Home], showing St Nicholas Cottage

**Description:** This is a copy of a slide showing buildings at the Clarendon Children's Home in Kingston Beach, including St Nicholas Cottage which was built in 1948.

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### St Nicholas Cottage [Clarendon Children's Home]

**Description:** This is a copy of a slide showing St Nicholas Cottage which was built in 1948, at Clarendon Children's Home in Kingston Beach.

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **Clarendon Children's Home (1922 – 2004)**
  - Clarendon Children's Home Inc. (c. 2004 - current)

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Anglican Diocese of Tasmania \(1842 - 1981\)](#)  
Date: 1923 - 1981

#### Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
- [Listen to the children: review of claims of abuse from adults in state care as children, Ombudsman Tasmania \(2003 - 2006\)](#)
- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)

#### Related Glossary Terms

- [Domestic Service Assistance Scheme - Tasmania \(1947 - c. 1989\)](#)  
Clarendon Children's Home accommodated children under the Domestic Service Assistance Scheme.

## Related Organisations

- [St John's Park \(1936 - 1994\)](#)  
Clarendon Children's Home sometimes sent children to St John's Park.
- [Roland Boys' Home \(1951 - c. 1993\)](#)  
When boys at Clarendon Children's Home turned six, they were transferred to Roland Boys' Home.
- [Home of Mercy \(1890 - c. 1953\)](#)  
For many years, Clarendon Children's Home and the Home of Mercy were on the same site at New Town. A committee from the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania jointly ran the two Homes. Children aged 3 and over usually lived at the Clarendon Children's Home, and babies and toddlers lived at the Home of Mercy.
- [The Children's Society, United Kingdom \(1881 - current\)](#)  
Child migrants from The Children's Society homes were sent to Clarendon Children's Home

## Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)
- [Child Migration \(1800s - 1970s\)](#)

## Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Hill, David, *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and its betrayal of Australia's child migrants*, 2007
- Immigration Museum, [Stolen childhoods](#), 2012
- [Debra Chandler interviewed by Lyn McLeavy in the Bringing them home oral history project \[sound recording\] \(2001 - 2002\)](#), 16 May 2000
- Rimon, Wendy, [Children's homes](#), The companion to Tasmanian history, 2005
- Joint Select Committee, Parliament of Tasmania, [Adoption and Related Services 1950-1988](#), 1999. *Relevance:* p.18
- [Annual reports, Clarendon Children's Homes](#), 1976 - 2004
- [Children at Clarendon Home](#), The Mercury, 13 August 1940
- [Wants families to aid child migrants](#), The Mercury, 26 September 1951
- [Mutual Trust](#), The Mercury, 26 May 1953
- [Tasmania their home now: young migrants take arrival calmly](#), The Mercury, 4 August 1950
- [Little maids had proud moments](#), The Mercury, 18 May 1953
- [New Curtains for Home Dormitory](#), The Mercury, 16 July 1951
- [After-School Activity at Kingston Home](#), The Mercury, 4 August 1950
- [Happy Children: Clarendon Home's Work](#), The Mercury, 23 August 1939
- Evans, Caroline, *Growing Gracefully and Usefully: Glenview 1948-2010*, 2011
- *Mrs. Renney Receives Award*, Church News, February 1991
- *Mrs. Renney Honoured*, Church News, August 1978
- *Children learn the art of community living*, The Mercury, 14 December 1950
- *Clarendon progress and appeal*, Church News, December 1975
- *Clarendon growing*, Church News, August 1976
- *Around the diocese*, Church News, April 1977
- *[no title]*, The Mercury, 21 March 1977
- Hanson, Dallas, *Why are they in children's homes: report of the ACOSS children's home intake survey*, 1979

## Records

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

## Records

- [Clarendon Children's Home Kingston Tasmania Financial Assistance by Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments: Accommodation for Child and Youth Migrants \(1949 - 1953\)](#)
- [Register of the Admission of 'Mental Defectives', New Town Infirmary \(1926 - 1965\)](#)

- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)
  - [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
  - [General Correspondence \(4\), Education Department \(1906 - 2010\)](#)
  - [General Correspondence-Hospital and Health Administration \(1932 - 1987\)](#)
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