

Kennerley Boys' Home

1869 – 1969

Other Names:

- Hobart Boys' Home and Industrial School
- Boys' Home
- Boys' Industrial School
- Kennerley Boys' Industrial School
- The Kennerley Home

Details

Kennerley Boys' Home opened in West Hobart in 1869. As an industrial school, it provided accommodation and training for boys considered to be neglected. In 1969, it became Kennerley Children's Home.

On 20 March 1876, the wealthy businessman, philanthropist, and Premier, Alfred Kennerley (1810-97), issued a Deed of Gift to enable 'The Boys' Home', established a few years before, to keep going. By the Deed, Kennerley donated land and buildings to four Trustees. The property could only be used for the Home which was to be renamed 'The Kennerley Home'. It had seven Governors who had to be re-appointed every three years.

The Home had accommodation for 30 boys. It was established under the auspices of the 1867 *Industrial Schools Act*. As an industrial school, it differed from a training school in that the boys had not broken the law. According to the Deed, boys deemed to be delinquent could not be accommodated at the Home. The boys received a limited schooling and training in work that was supposed to prepare them for jobs as farm labourers.

The Deed stated that the boys must be raised as members of the Church of England, even if they belonged to another Protestant religion. Every Sunday, they attended a Church of England service and Sunday School. Catholic boys could not be admitted to the Home. However, the Church of England did not run Kennerley.

Kennerley Boys' Home was a certified children's Home under the Youthful Offenders, Destitute and Neglected Children's Act 1896. Later it became an approved children's home under the Child Welfare Act 1960.

In 1907, according to Naomi Parry, the Chief Health Officer, JSC Elkington, inspected Kennerley. He found that the accommodation, sleeping arrangements, sanitation, and lay out were not satisfactory.

Early 1920s to mid 1940s

In 1922, Captain and Mrs Kallend, became Superintendent and Matron. Captain Kallend had served in the war and supervised cadets in England, while Mrs Kallend had nursing experience and had looked after boys in England. The couple apparently encouraged the boys to call them 'Mum' and 'Dad'.

Captain and Mrs Kallend taught the boys hand bell ringing and to sing in parts. They gave quite a few concerts and entertainments. For instance, in 1941, the boys did a broadcast from 7ZR radio station of singing and hand bell ringing which helped pay for a new washing machine. The boys also raised money for charity. In 1944, they did a concert at the Town Hall for the Australian Comforts Fund and another at the Home for a church at Fort Direction.

From the 1920s onwards, the boys had an annual holiday every year. Between 1929 and 1935, the holiday was on the north-west coast, with Wynyard being the main hosts. The holiday included a test cricket match and sports carnival with the local boys, followed by prizes, sweets, cakes, and cordial. The boys gave a concert of duets, solos, choruses, and hand bell ringing every year at the Prince's Theatre. They donated the proceeds to a local charity. Families in the area put them up and the Kallends stayed at the Commercial Hotel, where they gave an official dinner. In 1930, the Launceston *Examiner* wrote: 'The lads have firmly established themselves in the hearts of the public, and various remarks regarding their conduct during their stay reveal their popularity'. The Wynyard holidays stopped sometime after 1935 and the boys started going to other places. For instance, in 1944, they went to Middleton which is in the Huon, where the Kallends were buying a property. The following year, some of the boys camped at Southport where they visited Hastings Caves and the tepid baths.

After the boys left Kennerley, they usually went to work for farmers or orchardists. The Governors continued to supervise them. They saved a proportion of the boys' wages to give to them at the age of 21 when they became independent. The Annual Report of 1933 claimed that the training at the Home, followed by outdoor employment, contributed to the 'satisfactory development' of the boys. The report gave the height of seven old boys, most of whom were over six foot. For a few boys, there were other options. For instance, in 1929, two boys studied book keeping at the Metropolitan Business College. In the 1940s, a number were on active service.

There were close ties between the government and the Home. For instance, in the 1930s, CF Seager, the Director of the Social Services Department, was a Governor and Trustee. Like other privately run Homes, the government gave Kennerley subsidies and included their Annual Report in that of the Department's. The closeness of the relationship did not necessarily offer the boys protection. The records of the Chief Secretary's Department document a case of physical abuse occurring in 1923. Government doctors, who were also Governors, managed to prevent the police from laying a charge.

The Kennerley Old Boys Association formed in 1938 with CF Seager as President. In April, the Association held a reunion at which the old and current boys played a cricket match and then sat down to a high tea followed by games until seven. The Association ended in 1944 because quite a few boys had joined up for World War Two and the Kallends were about to retire.

The mid 1940s to the mid 1960s

A former police officer and bush nurse, another married couple, replaced the Kallends..

The boys attended school outside the Home. In 1950, two went to Ogilvie Commercial High School, 13 to Lansdowne Crescent School, eight to Elizabeth Street Modern, and three to the Boys' Welfare School.

The Rotary Club ran an Elder Brother Scheme for Kennerley boys. The 'elder brother' was intended to be a "Guide, philosopher and friend". Rotary gave parties for the boys in the Rotary Club Room and presents to younger brothers at Christmas. The West Hobart Progress Association also gave a party at Christmas.

In winter, hockey was the main sport and Kennerley boys did well at it. In 1950, they reached the semi-final. Four boys were selected for the State Schools Hockey Carnival in Melbourne. Kennerley had a 'top' team in 1953. The following year, it defeated the University hockey team.

The boys had annual holidays in Middleton, Southport, and Ulverstone. In 1952, eleven of the boys built a shack at Pittwater, near Sorell, using donated materials supplemented with money raised by the women's auxiliary, an organisation which raised money to fund treats, furnishings for the Home, and so on.

In 1947, the old part of the Home needed rebuilding. The Home launched an appeal for £10,000 for this purpose.

By 1949, the Home had fallen into debt by about £1500. It made a public appeal to pay off the debt and to have some funds in reserve. The Governors hoped that the appeal would also raise enough money to eventually build a hostel for boys over the age of sixteen.

Kennerley needed a hostel because, by the 1950s, the range of work that the boys could obtain had broadened. More of them now worked in the city. In 1945, three boys employed in the city were boarded at Kennerley until they earned enough to pay for their accommodation. Others boarded in private homes. According to the Annual Report of 1950, six boys who left Kennerley found work but not 'suitable' accommodation. The following year, a hostel with accommodation for 12 boys, opened on the grounds of the Home. The idea was to make the transition from the Home to independence easier. Each boy had his own cubicle. Preference went to those who had obtained apprenticeships. They paid one third of their wages towards their board. The Premier opened the Hostel on 1 September 1951.

The mid 1960s to 1969

In the late 1960s, as part of the research for her thesis entitled 'The Correctional Agencies of Tasmania', Mary Dauntion-Fear visited Kennerley. She found that by then children considered to be neglected were more likely to be placed in foster care. This made it harder to keep the numbers up and explains why Kennerley now accepted boys who had committed minor offences. At the time of Dauntion-Fear's visit, there were 25 boys in the Home, with their ages ranging from seven to 16.

Seventeen of the boys attended the local High School, one a special school, and the rest were in primary schools.

The routine on a school day was as follows:

- 6:30 am – The boys got up, washed and made their beds.
- 7:00 am – Breakfast time.
- 7:30 am – The boys did jobs according to a roster.
- 8:15 am onwards – The boys left for school.
- 3:15 pm – The boys returned from school and did home work or had some recreation time.
- 5:30 pm – Tea time followed by more homework or recreation.
- 6:30 pm onwards – Bed time.

The boys could have visitors at the weekends.

According to Dauntion-Fear, Kennerley was an open institution. Boys who absconded or had behaviour problems were usually sent somewhere else, probably Ashley Home for Boys. Punishment was by withholding privileges or having to do an unpleasant task. Corporal punishment was a 'last resort'.

The staff encouraged boys to take an active interest in sport, especially hockey, cricket and physical training. The Trustees owned a shack at Penna which the boys went to at weekends to swim, go for walks, and fish. Some of the boys had Saturday jobs. There was a television. As a punishment, staff could withdraw the privilege of watching it.

Dauntion-Fear wrote that when she visited Kennerley, 'there were clear indications of its financial problems. The buildings had fallen into disrepair. The staff shortage was serious'. There was only two resident staff, the Superintendent and the Matron. A laundress, seamstress, and a domestic worker did not live in.

In 1969, the *Kennerley Children's Home Act* authorised the sale of the site in Hamilton Street so that the money could be used to establish homes for boys and girls somewhere else. The new name would be Kennerley Children's Homes. Nine acres of the land at the Lady Clark Hospital was to be transferred to Kennerley and, in turn, its Trustees would sell the site in West Hobart to Mr AA Lord, the benefactor of AA Lord Homes Inc, to build units for elderly people. The building in West Hobart was demolished. However, the Glenorchy City Council zoned the land at Claremont in such a way that Kennerley could not use it. The Trustees bought another site from the Minister for Housing.

In 2005, a *Mercury* article based on an interview with two residents of the 1940s and 1950s told about their mistreatment at Kennerley. One man said 'I was bashed every day of my life and I was stuck in that place until I was 17'. He also complained of having to do excessive physical work such as breaking up bluestone, chopping wood, and 'hauling' coke when he was only eight. The man remembered the 'kindness' of some of the older boys.

Both men described their experiences to the Ombudsman during the inquiry that led to the *Listen to the Children* report. In all, it received 24 complaints about Kennerley Children's Home. Its follow up *Final Report*, received 44. Some of these allegations related to sexual abuse within the Home.

Gallery



Boys working in the vegetable patch at Kennerley Boys' Home

Description: Landscape view of the Kennerley Boys' Home at Lansdowne Crescent, West Hobart.



Group photograph of the boys from the Boys Home in Lansdowne Crescent, West Hobart, in October 1911



Kennerley boys build spacious seaside holiday home

Description: This is a digital copy of an illustrated article published in the *The Mercury* on Wednesday 31 December 1952. The image shows boys from Kennerley Boys' Home in front of their beach house at Pittwater.

More info

Chronology

- **Kennerley Boys' Home (1869 – 1969)**
 - Kennerley Children's Home (1969 - current)

Related Entries

Related Events

- [Listen to the children: review of claims of abuse from adults in state care as children, Ombudsman Tasmania \(2003 - 2006\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Ashley Home for Boys \(1926 - 1999\)](#)

If staff at Kennerley Boys' Home could not manage a boy, they might send him to Ashley Home for Boys.

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Resources

- [The Boys' Home](#), Launceston Examiner, 31 October 1905
- [Tony Young interviewed by Caroline Evans in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), 18 February 2011. *Relevance:* Tony Young spent time in Kennerley Boys' Home
- [Playmates](#), Advocate, 16 January 1952
- [Treat to children of the charitable institutions](#), 22 May 1900

- [*Demonstration at Hobart; the children entertained*](#), Examiner, 22 May 1900
- [*Kennerley boys build spacious seaside holiday home*](#), The Mercury, 31 December 1951

Records

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

Records

- [Kennerley Children's Homes Records \(1869 - current\)](#)
 - [General Correspondence-17-41, Chief Secretary's Department \(1923 - 1923\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
 - [Building Applications, Hobart City Council \(1919 - 1990\)](#)
 - [General Correspondence-Hospital and Health Administration \(1932 - 1987\)](#)
 - [Register of children at Boys Home Lansdowne Crescent; Girls Industrial School, Hobart Training School for Females, St Josephs Orphanage for whom a Government Allowance is Payable \(1869 - 1898\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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