

Hobart Girls' Training School

1881 – 1905

Other Names:

- Girls' Training School Reformatory
- Girls' Reformatory

Details

The Hobart Girls' Training School, started by the Ladies' Christian Association, opened in 1881. The School was for girls aged 10 to 17 who had been sentenced by a magistrate to go there for between two months and five years. The Training School was closed in June 1905, as the government was not prepared to subsidise it with such low numbers of inmates.

The Hobart Girls' Training School was located in the Old Gaol Building at the Anglesea Barracks which, since the British Army left Tasmania, had a number of vacant buildings. This was despite a protest in 1879 from the Ladies' Committee of the Industrial School for Girls – Hobart, which was already at the Barracks. The Committee feared that the girls at the Training School would be a bad influence on those at the Industrial School. Other individuals feared that the Volunteer Band, also at the Barracks, would undermine discipline at the Training School.

As made clear in a newspaper article from 1887, the Training School and the Industrial School, 'although situated closely together, the two schools have divergent interests. One is for destitute girls, and the other is a reformatory school for such as have been convicted of crimes or offences' (The Mercury, 18 April 1887).

Hobart Girls' Training School was a certified children's Home under the Youthful Offenders, Destitute and Neglected Children's Act 1896.

When the School opened it only accepted Protestant girls. Later Catholic girls went there also.

In 1887, *The Mercury* described the School as a place of 'reclamation'. It made the best of its location in a former prison reporting that:

The fact of the main rooms being divided into small apartments has turned to a useful advantage. It affords each inmate a separate room, and very tidy, snug rooms they are, each inmate seeming to vie with her neighbour in making her apartment look pleasant and pretty. The walls of each little room are tastefully decorated with pictures...illustrations cut from current serials and periodicals. These illustrations, plain and coloured, frequently form the only picture gallery in the homes of the poor, and when tastefully arranged they impart a pleasant cheerful appearance to walls, otherwise dull and dismal. In this case the pictorial illustrations with the addition of bunches of flowers in season transform the rooms into bright cheery apartments.

Girls at the Training School were locked in the cells each night.

The girls were trained to become domestic servants and did laundry work to support the School. The laundry took in washing from Hobart households. A soldier named Gunner Dyer maintained its steam boiler. The School was the only institution of its type in Tasmania to make a profit from the laundry. This was apparently at the expense of the girls' education which only took up one hour a week.

In May 1905, it was reported that the Tasmanian government was 'not disposed' to subsidise the Training School, which at that time had only 4 inmates. The paper reported that 'it is evident that, in consequence of there being less crime prevalent than hitherto, the necessity for the institution has ceased' (Examiner, 17 May 1905).

The closure of the Training School was announced in June 1905. In September that year, Hobart City Mission reported that it had received donations of 'a number of useful appliances' from the Girls' Reformatory and its intention to establish a laundry to aid poor and respectable women in making a living'. (The Mercury, 8 September 1905).

Gallery



Hobart - Anglesea Barracks

Description: This image shows the Old Gaol building of the Hobart Anglesea Barracks. From 1881 to 1905 the Hobart Girls' Training School was located in this building.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Ladies' Christian Association \(1878? - 1930?\)](#)

A Committee of the Ladies' Christian Association appear to have run the Hobart Girls' Training School.

Related Organisations

- [Hobart Girls' Industrial School \(1862 - 1945\)](#)
- [Hobart City Mission \(1852 - current\)](#)
- [Launceston Gaol \(1827 - 1917\)](#)

Girls could be sent to Hobart Girls' Training School as an alternative to prison.

Related Legislation

- [The Training Schools Act 1867, Tasmania \(1867 - 1896\)](#)

Resources

- [Treat to children of the charitable institutions](#), 22 May 1900
- [Demonstration at Hobart; the children entertained](#), Examiner, 22 May 1900

Records

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

Records

- [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 \(1869 - 1898\)](#)
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