

Hillcrest Children's Home

1966 – 1984

Details

Hillcrest Children's Home, run by the Christian Brethren, opened in West Hobart in 1966. It was an approved children's Home that took wards of state and children under the Residential Domestic Assistance Scheme. It closed in 1984.

The Chief Secretary, Brian Miller, officially opened Hillcrest Children's Home on 1 April 1967 before a crowd of 150 people. It had been an approved children's home under the Child Welfare Act 1960 since October 1966. About seven children already lived there.

A Committee of five to nine members, one of whom was the Superintendent, ran the Home. They were all members of the Christian Brethren. In consultation with the Committee, the Superintendent and Matron accepted children into the Home. The Committee appointed residential staff but the Superintendent could appoint and dismiss casual staff.

The Superintendent and Matron were also known as houseparents. They had two children of their own and planned to adopt another. The Superintendent worked full time at an insurance company. The houseparents were the only residential staff. Later they employed some people to help with the cleaning so that the Matron could spend more time with the children. Members of the Christian Brethren baby sat and did other voluntary work at the Home. According to the Child Welfare Officer who assessed it, the houseparents did not want any additional residential staff in case it upset the 'family atmosphere'. The Officer noted that this might be 'idealistic', but less so than it seemed because they had already run another children's home.

According to the Child Welfare Officer's report, the Home was in a large two storey weatherboard house built in about 1900. It was not 'ideal' but 'adequate and comfy'. The house had one main staircase and nine rooms with accommodation for a total of 11 children, not counting those belonging to the houseparents. On the ground floor, there were three children's bedrooms, including one on the verandah. Upstairs, the Home had two children's bedrooms. The houseparents slept downstairs close to the babies and younger children. Outdoors, there was a concrete area for wheeled toys, swings and bars, a lawn, flower beds, and 'a wild area for more adventurous play'.

Old and new clothing came from donations to the Home. The Child Welfare Officer wrote in her report that:

We discussed the necessity of teaching children how to choose clothes wisely, but shopping with adults' assistance. The [houseparents] were impressed by this idea and promised to consider how ways and means could be devised to ensure this part of their training.

The houseparents also followed the Child Welfare Officer's suggestion that the children go to a variety of schools so that they were not one easily identifiable group.

Visiting was at 'specified' times with 24 hours notice. Each child or family within the Home could have a maximum of three visitors at a time. Visitors could not give the children gifts directly. Instead they had to hand them over to the houseparents who then used them 'at their discretion for the benefit of the children'.

According to the Constitution, the Home had two main objectives:

- 1. The prime object of the Home is that each child in its care shall not only experience family love but also learn to love the Lord Jesus Christ and read the Bible. Each child in the Home shall be treated as a family member and accordingly worship together as a family with the assemblies of the Christian Brethren.*
- 2. The temporal object of the Home is to provide family care for children of either sex, preferably under 10 but consideration will be given to children of all ages in keeping with the circumstances at the time. Children who need the care of the Home may be accepted without regard to colour or creed.*

When the Home closed, the houseparents took the remaining 'family members' who appear to have grown up, with them to their new home in Gordon which is in the Huon Valley. The house was auctioned on 18 February 1984. The *Mercury* advertisement for the auction described the house as:

Used as a large family residence for some years ... Obtaining excellent outlook over Hobart city to harbour, requiring some maintenance but offering very substantial accommodation as a large family home, or potential for conversion subject to council approval.

In 2013, Hillcrest is a private home.

No records of Hillcrest appear to have survived.

Gallery



The former Hillcrest Children's Home - front view



The back of the former Hillcrest Children's Home



Hillcrest Children's Home - the concrete area to the side where children played with wheeled toys



An outbuilding at the former Hillcrest Children's Home



Hillcrest Children's Home- showing the verandah where some children slept



Hillcrest Children's Home - the concrete area where children played with wheeled toys



The former Hillcrest Children's Home - the clothes line

Description: The clothes line jutted out over a slope on its own narrow piece of concrete, an extension to the concrete playing area.



The former Hillcrest Children's Home at the front from the right hand side



The back gates at the former Hillcrest Children's Home



The kitchen at the former Hillcrest Children's Home

Description: In 2013, the structure of the kitchen is the same as when the building was a children's home.



The staircase at the former Hillcrest Children's Home



The verandah where some children slept at the former Hillcrest Children's Home



Hillcrest Children's Home when it opened

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory \(1921 - 2018\)](#)
- [Christian Brethren in Tasmania \(1869 - current\)](#)

Related Glossary Terms

- [Domestic Service Assistance Scheme - Tasmania \(1947 - c. 1989\)](#)

Hillcrest Children's Home accommodated children under the Domestic Service Assistance Scheme.

Related Organisations

- [Glenhaven Children's Home \(1959 - 1988?\)](#)

Hillcrest and Glenhaven Children's Homes were both run by the Christian Brethren.

- [Glendel Children's Home \(1970? - c. 1992\)](#)

Hillcrest and Glendel Children's Homes were both run by the Christian Brethren.

Resources

- Hanson, Dallas, *Why are they in children's homes: report of the ACOSS children's home intake survey, 1979*

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Southern Territory \(c. 1889 - c. 1988\)](#)
- [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)

Item B721 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Hillcrest Children's Home

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