

Bridgewater Care and Assessment Centre

1969 – 1983

Other Names: • Bridgewater

Details

The Bridgewater Care and Assessment Centre opened in 1969 as a government-run residential facility in Applecross, for children and young people aged 3-18 years. Bridgewater admitted children who were wards and private children. At first, Bridgewater provided pre-placement assessments and short-term accommodation, later offering therapeutic, family reunification and pre-adoption programs. Local children attended the kindergarten on the Bridgewater site. Bridgewater's residential programs closed in 1983.

The Bridgewater Care and Assessment Centre was officially opened on 5 February 1969. It was established by the Child Welfare Department in January that year as a short-term residential facility for children and young people aged from 3 to 18 years. Bridgewater was to serve two purposes: professional pre-placement assessment and short-term accommodation for children who temporarily could not live at home or in their current placement.

Bridgewater was situated on 4.5 hectares of land in Applecross near the Swan River, developed around a cottage home model, with a kindergarten on site, which local children attended. During the 1970s an increasing number of teenage children were being admitted to Bridgewater, and many Aboriginal children with health issues were placed there. Reports from the 1970s comment on the increasingly complex issues experienced by children admitted to Bridgewater. In liaison with the Child Life Protection Unit, Bridgewater provided services for children who had experienced sexual and other abuse.

Where possible, children at Bridgewater kept attending their original schools.

From 1982, as part of a 'permanency planning' policy, Bridgewater provided accommodation for people engaged in pre-adoption and family reunification programs. With declining admissions and only four of the eight cottages in use, Bridgewater became a crisis-care unit in September 1983 and from January 1984 was the administration centre for the new Community Support Hostels system.

Since the closure of Bridgewater, former residents have spoken out about the abuse suffered there and difficulties accessing records about their time at Bridgewater. Many former residents provided evidence during the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care that they experienced physical and sexual abuse, and also described discrepancies, incorrect information and missing parts of their files of their time at Bridgewater.

Gallery



Bridgewater, playroom assessment

Description: 'Bridgewater, playroom assessment' is a digital copy of an image included (p.43) in the *Annual Report 1974* of the Department for Community Welfare. The caption reads, 'Playroom assessment at Bridgewater'.



Bridgewater, prospective foster parent

Description: 'Bridgewater, foster parent introduction' is a digital copy of an image included (p.43) in the *Annual Report 1974* of the Department for Community Welfare. The caption reads, 'Prospective Foster Parent visits Bridgewater'.



Bridgewater playground

Description: 'Bridgewater playground' is a digital copy of an image included (p.42) in the *Annual Report 1975* of the Department for Community Welfare. The caption reads, 'Bridgewater is planned to replicate suburban living'.



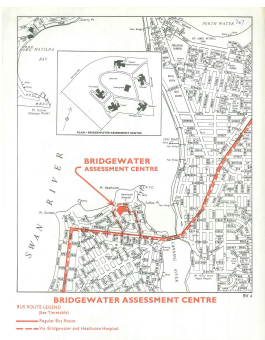
Bridgewater group

Description: 'Bridgewater group' is a digital copy of an image included (p.42) in the *Annual Report 1975* of the Department for Community Welfare. The caption reads, 'Bridgewater is planned to replicate suburban living'.



Bridgewater

Description: 'Bridgewater' is a digital copy of an image included (p.32) in the *Annual Report 1978* of the Department for Community Welfare. The caption reads, 'One of the nine cottages at Bridgewater'.



Bridgewater Assessment Centre [Site Map]

Description: This image shows a map of Applecross and surrounds, highlighting the site of the Bridgewater Care and Assessment Centre and bus routes to the Centre. It includes an inset of a more detailed map of the Bridgewater site, showing the locations and names of buildings, including four cottages, the kindergarden, and administration building. This map was published by the Department for Community Welfare in 1968, in preparation for the opening of the Centre in February 1969.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Child Welfare Department, State of Western Australia \(22 December 1927 - 15 June 1972\)](#)
Date: 1969 - 1972
- [Department for Community Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1972 - 1985\)](#)
Date: 1972 - 1983

Related Organisations

- [Oceanview \(1970 - 1995?\)](#)
Oceanview was run as an annexe of Bridgewater Care and Assessment Centre. Teenage schoolchildren were placed there after assessment at Bridgewater.
Date: 1976 - 1983?

Resources

- Western Australia. Department for Community Welfare, [Annual Report: Department for Community Welfare](#), 1973 - 1984
- Western Australia. Child Welfare Department, [Annual Report of the Child Welfare Department](#), 1928 - 1972
- Methodist Homes for Children, Western Australia, *The 'Homes' Herald*, 1964 - 1978
- Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia, [Submission No 55 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), July 2003
- Hetherington, Penelope, [Reformatories](#), Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia, 2009
- WINGS (Inc), [Submission No 259 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), August 2003

Records

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

Records

- [Bridgewater Admissions Register \(1969 - 1983\)](#)
- [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
- [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/bridgewater-care-and-assessment-centre/>