

Parkerville Children's Home

1909 – 2005

- Other Names:**
- Parkerville Orphanage
 - Parkerville Orphanage, Parkerville
 - Parkerville Orphanage for Infants, Parkerville
 - Parkerville Orphanage and Parkerville Homes
 - Parkerville Waif's Home
 - The Children's Home, Parkerville
 - Waif's Home
 - Children's Home, Parkerville
 - Parkerville Home

Details

The Parkerville Children's Home continued the Waifs' Home, Parkerville from 1909. It was run by the Community of the Sisters of the Church from 1909 to 1925 and from 1925 to 2005 by the Parkerville Children's Home Incorporated. Over time, Parkerville developed a range of youth care and family services, including non-residential programs. In 2005 Parkerville Children's Home became Parkerville Children and Youth Care (Inc).

Although the institution that became known as the Parkerville Children's Home opened in 1903 as the Waif's Home, Parkerville, it wasn't until 1909 that Parkerville was scheduled as a subsidised institution under the *State Children Act 1907*. This enabled Parkerville to receive some government subsidy for the children who lived there. Sister Kate Clutterbuck was the person who was most widely known as the instigator of Parkerville, but histories acknowledge the combined effort of members of the Anglican religious order, Community of the Sisters of the Church, and other volunteers in establishing the Home.

Parkerville was unusual in Western Australia because it began with a desire to keep children in family groups, with boys and girls together, in cottages rather than large dormitories. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children were sent to Parkerville by child welfare authorities, their families and the children's courts.

Located in a bushland setting in the hills east of Perth, Parkerville was also very isolated from the city in its early years. The location later became known as Beacon Road, Parkerville.

A letter of appreciation of the *The Daily News* Orphans' Christmas Cheer Fund in 1915 gives an insight into life at Parkerville, where the children lived mostly within the grounds of the Home. The letter shows that donations enabled the children to occasionally go on outings and have other experiences:

warmest thanks and gratitude to you for the Christmas gift, which enabled us to take the children in parties to the seaside at Cottesloe Beach, and a party of the boys to camp out at Crawley Bay...It also means health and strength for the coming year. The days spent on the beach made the time fly only too quickly...we all want to send you our heartfelt thanks for giving the children this beautiful time. Letter, 12 February 1916 published in The Daily News 2 December 1916, p.10

Government reports (*Signposts* 2004 pp.414-422) give a glimpse of the size of Parkerville in its second decade: 22 children at year end in 1920, 39 children in 1922, 14 children in 1929. It is unclear how reliable these numbers are, because in 1935, the annual report of the Child Welfare Department stated that 800 children had lived at Parkerville in its first 32 years and that when Sister Kate was forcibly retired in 1933, there were 130 children in residence. Possibly, the government reports concerned mainly children who were wards of the State and children under 6 years of age. From the 1920s to the 1940s, records also show that some of the working-age children from Parkerville were placed out 'at service' with employers. This was an arrangement where a child was sent to work with an employer, under a legal agreement.

In 1925, the Parkerville Children's Home Incorporated was established to run the Home, though they did not manage the day to day operations of the Home.

Whittington (*Sister Kate* 1999) records the instability in managing and governing Parkerville from the 1930s to the 1950s. In 1933, the Community of the Sisters of the Church withdrew from Parkerville and the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent worked at Parkerville until 1941, when the Community of the Sisters of the Church again returned to work at Parkerville. By 1949, the Community of the Sisters of the Church had again withdrawn from Parkerville at the request of the Parkerville Children's Home Incorporated. Parkerville was subsequently managed by the Anglican Orphanages Board of Management from 1949 until 1954 and then by the Anglican Homes Board for the remainder of the 1950s, after which the Parkerville Children's Home Incorporated took a more active role in the governance and management of the Home.

Until 1953, reports (*Signposts*, p.417) show that children went to primary school in the grounds of Parkerville and to the Midland Junction or Mt Helena high schools. By 1954 all children were going to government schools.

Although Parkerville was established with the idea of keeping children together in family groups, the reality of this in the 1940s was brought into question at the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care (*Forgotten Australians* 2004, p.43):

When we arrived at Parkerville, we were separated...I hardly got to see my sister at Parkerville. She got very sick with rheumatic fever and because she didn't get treatment early enough, spent 6 months in Royal Perth Hospital...medical treatment was almost non-existent at the Home...There were about 30 kids per cottage. We slept on the veranda and in winter up in the hills it was freezing...Beltings were common for all the kids and mostly were not deserved.

From 1957, government reports (*Signposts*, p.417) show that Parkerville continued to be a large home, admitting children who were wards of the State and also children who were 'private admissions' (placed in Parkerville by family or others). From 1957 to 1962, there were on average about 130 children at Parkerville each year. By 1961, there were 79 children who were wards and 68 who were private admissions. From 1963 to 1966 (p.418), the number of children who ran away were reported as 'abscondings'. These were few, but the figures reported may not be reliable.

By 1975, Parkerville became smaller. It was described in that year (*Signposts*, p.418) as having 23 children aged 5 to 17 years old living there, with the children's families being involved in some programs. There were 6 cottages, with playgrounds, bikes and a range of sporting equipment. Holiday and foster placements were 'actively sought' for the children and outside recreations such as Police and Citizens Youth Groups, Girls' Brigade and local sports were encouraged, according to government reports.

By at least 1982, Parkerville had houses (known as 'scatter cottages' or 'group homes') in the suburbs of Perth and the campus at Parkerville continued to also house children. In 1988, reports (*Signposts*, p.421) show that just over 10% of the children had been at Parkerville for more than two years.

Through the 1990s, Parkerville continued to provide medium to long-term accommodation and programs for children and young people in cottages at its Parkerville campus and in suburban houses.

On 1 June 2005, Parkerville was incorporated as Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc.

There is a bush cemetery about 3 kilometres west of the site of Parkerville Children's Home, where approximately 30 children are buried. The wooden crosses that once marked the graves were burnt in a bushfire and replaced by concrete ones. In 2010, a plaque was erected at the cemetery, listing the names of 24 of these children.

Gallery



Parkerville Gravesite (1)

Description: This is a digital copy of a photograph held in the Parkerville Children and Youth Care (Inc) archives. It shows part of the children's gravesite, including a decorative sculpture of children's building blocks.



Bush Cemetery Plaque

Description: This image shows one of the plaques at the cemetery of the Parkerville Children's Home.



Children's party, 2 December 1944

Description: This is a digitised copy of a negative and is part of the group of 10 images titled 'WAAAF supporting orphans [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows children and some adults around a large table with drinks and food.



The Parkerville Waif's Home: A General View of the Home

Description: 'The Parkerville Waif's Home: A General View of the Home' is a picture from the *Sunday Times* newspaper, which was published on 8 September 1912. It is one of three images published in the paper showing the home and the children living there. The images were published as part of a fundraising appeal for the home.

Parkerville Children and Youth Care celebrates 110 years of caring

Description: 'Parkerville Children and Youth Care celebrates 110 years of caring' is a video that outlines a history of the agency from the time when it began as a Home for 'waifs' in 1903 to 2013. The video includes photographs and re-enactments.



Parkerville Children and Youth Care celebrates 110 years of caring [Wattle Cottage]

Description: 'Parkerville Children and Youth Care celebrates 110 years of caring [Wattle Cottage]' is a frame from the video, *Parkerville Children and Youth Care celebrates 110 years of caring*. Wattle Cottage was built in the 1930s.

More info

Chronology

- St Peter's Boys' School, Fremantle (1903)
 - Waif's Home, Parkerville (1903 - 1909)
- **Parkerville Children's Home (1909 – 2005)**
 - Parkerville Children and Youth Care (Inc) (2005 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Parkerville Children's Home Incorporated \(1925 - 2005\)](#)

Related Events

- [Royal Commission on State Children's Department and Charities Department, State of Western Australia \(1920 - 1921\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Anglican Diocese of Perth \(1856 - current\)](#)

Since 1941, the Anglican Diocese of Perth has had a formal role in the management of Parkerville Children's Home, usually via participation in a management committee.
Date: 1941 - 2005
- [Belmont Cottage \(1979? - current\)](#)
- [Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent \(1933 - 1941\)](#)

The Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent had a governance role at Parkerville, which was run by a management committee.
Date: 1933 - 1941
- [Anglican Orphanages Board of Management \(1940 - 1954\)](#)

The Anglican Orphanages Board of Management had a management role at the Parkerville Children's Home.
Date: 1949 - 1954
- [The Anglican Homes Board \(1955 - 1970\)](#)

During the 1950s the Anglican Homes Board had a management role at Parkerville Children's Home.
Date: 1955 - 1959?
- [Community of the Sisters of the Church \(1908 - current\)](#)

The Community of the Sisters of the Church founded and ran Parkerville Children's Home from 1909 to 1925, from 1925 to 1933 they managed the Home and they managed it again from 1941 to 1949.
Date: 1909 - 1949
- [Fremantle Cottage \(1978? - current\)](#)
- [Girls' Friendly Society \(Western Australia\) \(1888 - current\)](#)

The Girls' Friendly Society was actively involved with fundraising for Parkerville Children's Home.
Date: 1941 -
- [Jenny House \(1994 - 2008\)](#)
- [Seaside House, Coogee \(1931 - 1968\)](#)

Some children were transferred to Parkerville Children's Home when the Seaside House at Coogee closed.
Date: 1968 -

Resources

- Stolen Generations' Testimonies Foundation, [Stolen Generations' Testimonies](#), 2009. *Relevance:* See testimony of Nita Marshall
- [Kathleen Mack interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)](#), 16 January 2001 - 18 January 2001
- [Lorraine Rogers interviewed by Karen George in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 26 June 2000
- Battye, JS, [The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia \(1912\)](#), 1912. *Relevance:* p.505-506

- Heritage Council of Western Australia, [The Chapel of the Guardian Angel](#), inHerit: our heritage places, 8 February 2015
- McDonald, Ashley, [Are We Family? And if so, Can I Still Sue You?](#), Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law, March 2000
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, [It's an honour](#), 2012
- Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia, [Submission No 55 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), July 2003
- Cook, Thelma, [Submission No 180 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 15 August 2003
- Name withheld, [Submission No 363 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 17 March 2005
- *Survivor returns the favour*, The West Australian, 5 March 2011
- Doncaster, Edward William, *The Sisters of the Church in Kalgoorlie 1902-1916: a record*, 1998
- Baldwin, Angelica, *Interview with Angelica [Annie] Baldwin* [sound recording] / [interviewed by Patricia Barrett-Lennard], Australian 1938 Oral History Project, 1983
- Fraser, Bronwen, *History of the Parkerville Children's Home, 1902-1993*, 1993
- McCracken, Jenni, *A penny for the ponies: the work of the Community of the Sisters of the Church at Parkerville Children's Home (1903-1933)*, 1990
- [Parkerville Children's Home & Cemetery](#), inHerit: our heritage places, No date
- [Cemetery 5612 - Parkerville Children's Home Bush](#), Australian Cemeteries Index, No date
- McGuire, Bob, [Lonely graves](#), Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions blog, 27 July 2010

Records

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

Records

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
 - [Parkerville Children's Home, Records \(1903? - current\)](#)
 - [Anglican Diocese of Perth, Western Australia, Records \(1880s - 2010\)](#)
 - [School Journals \[Parkerville Primary School\] \(1949 - 1991\)](#)
 - [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
 - [Files - Aborigines Departments \(1 January 1926 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
 - [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
 - [Files - Departmental \[Education Department\] \(1 January 1885 - 31 December 2000\)](#)
 - [Files - General \[Health Department\] \(1899 - 1987\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/parkerville-childrens-home/>