

# Country High School Hostels Authority, State of Western Australia

1960 – 2017

## Details

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The Country High School Hostels Authority governed the operations of education hostels throughout regional Western Australia. These were hostels set up for children in rural and regional areas, who boarded at the hostel to attend school. It was not uncommon for children who were state wards to be boarded in one of the Authority's hostels. While the Authority had ultimate responsibility for the hostels, day-to-day operational management and governance was usually delegated to a local management committee or a church body.

The Country High School Hostels Authority also governed the operations of Aboriginal education and employment hostels in regional Western Australia through the powers conferred on it by the Country High Schools Authority Act 1960. The formality of governance processes evolved over time, with a Letter of Arrangement between the Authority and each of the hostels in place by the end of the 1970s. These Letters "specified the responsibilities of each local board in the day-to-day management of its hostel but also recognised that the Authority had ultimate control". (*St Andrew's Hostel Katanning* report, p.24)

In 2012, the historical operations of the Authority were closely examined by the Special Inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel, Katanning, to see why reported sexual abuse was not stopped. The Inquiry identified a number of systemic failures in the Authority's operations from 1975 to 1990: failure to provide guidelines to board members; failure to provide adequate oversight of hostels; and failure to implement its own policy for investigating complaints of a sexual nature.

The Inquiry also noted that prior to 1975, there had been "a number of instances" where hostel staff were "dismissed or removed from their employment for inappropriate conduct" which was likely to have included sexual misconduct against students. All new appointments at hostels had to be approved or vetted by the Secretary of the Authority, and the Authority kept a list of previous staff who could not be re-employed at a school hostel because of "events during their employment" (*St Andrew's Hostel Katanning* report, p.263). The Secretary of the Authority was authorised to share this list with the Department for Community Welfare. By 1982, this list was no longer used.

It was acknowledged that there had been improvements in the Authority's operations since 1990, but the Inquiry still made a number of recommendations to further improve practices. These recommendations were accepted by the Government on 19 September 2012 with the Premier also giving support to closing the Authority and bringing its responsibilities under the Department of Education. Additionally, all hostels governed by the Authority were facilities eligible for Redress WA applications.

The Country High School Hostels Authority closed in 2017, and was replaced with student residential colleges under the responsibility of the Minister for Education.

## More info

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## Related Entries

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- [Albany Residential College \(1974? - current\)](#)  
The Country High School Hostels Authority was required by s7(1)(b) of its Act to 'supervise and maintain' this residential college.
- [Broome Residential College \(2008 - current\)](#)
- [Esperance Residential College \(2000? - current\)](#)
- [Geraldton Residential College \(2002 - current\)](#)
- [St Andrew's Hostel \(1964 - 2009\)](#)  
The Country High Schools Hostels Authority governed St Andrew's Hostel, with the day to day management of the Hostel overseen by a Board.
- [Merredin Residential College \(1954 - current\)](#)  
The Country High School Hostels Authority was required by s7(1)(b) of its Act to 'supervise and maintain' this residential college.  
Date: 1962 -
- [Narrogin Residential College \(1963 - current\)](#)
- [St Christopher's Hostel, Northam \(1941 - 2002\)](#)
- [St James Residential College, Moora \(c. 1977 - current\)](#)
- [Northam Residential College \(2003 - current\)](#)  
The Country High School Hostels Authority is required to 'supervise and maintain' this residential college. It delegates the day to day running of the hostel to a local management committee.
- [Adamson House \(1938 - 1990\)](#)  
Date: 1969 - 1990
- [The Priory Hostel, Albany \(1955? - 1988?\)](#)  
Date: 1961? - 1988?
- [Craig House \(1949 - 1978\)](#)  
Date: 1973 - 1978
- [Carnarvon High School Hostel \(1964 - 1980s\)](#)
- [Hardie House, South Hedland \(1964? - 1990?\)](#)
- [Kartanup \(1987 - 1990\)](#)
- [St Andrew's Hostel, Esperance \(1968 - 2000?\)](#)  
The Country High School Hostels Authority was required by s7(1)(b) of its Act to 'supervise and maintain' St Andrew's Hostel, Esperance.  
Date: 1975 - 2000?

### Related Events

- [Redress WA, State of Western Australia \(2008 - 2011\)](#)  
The WA Government's scheme for people who were abused or neglected in 'care' as children, Redress WA, Guidelines list a number of 'Facilities Operated Subject to the Country High School [Hostels] Authority Act 1960 - Past and Present' (18 May 2011).
- [Special Inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel, Katanning, Western Australia \(December 2011 - August 2012\)](#)
- [Apology to the victims of abuse at St Andrew's Hostel, Katanning, Government of Western Australia \(19 September 2012\)](#)

### Related Legislation

- [Country High School Hostels Authority Act 1960, Western Australia \(1960 - 2017\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Swanleigh \(1960 - 2010\)](#)  
When Swanleigh was established as a hostel in 1960, it was responsible to the Country High School Hostels Authority, State of Western Australia.
- [Dellahale House \(1964 - 2001\)](#)
- [John Frewer House \(1968 - 2001\)](#)