

# St John's Homes for Boys and Girls Board of Management

1926 – 1997

**Other Names:** • St John's Home for Boys Board of Management

## Details

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St John's Home for Boys Board of Management was established by the Synod of the Church of England Diocese of Melbourne in 1926. The St John's Board of Management took over the running of St John's Home for Boys from a provisional committee set up by the Church of England in 1919. In 1958, its name changed to St John's Homes for Boys and Girls. As well as running the institution located in Canterbury (which was also known as St John's Home for Boys and Girls) the Board of Management ran a number of other homes, including hostels and family group homes and was also involved in provision of foster care. In 1997, St John's Homes for Boys and Girls Board of Management became part of Anglicare Victoria.

In her 50 year anniversary history of St John's, Reseigh writes about the formation of the Board of Management in 1926:

*Following the official opening of the combined St Martin's and St John's in 1926, the Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne resolved that the Home should receive their own Constitution and that a permanent Board of Management be established. Until then the Homes had been guided by the Provisional Committee formed in 1919 to examine ways and means of establishing a boys' home and to collect funds ... Accordingly a Board of Management was set up, with Mr WJ Roberts, who earlier had been chairman of the provisional committee, as the first Chairman (Reseigh, p.3).*

In 1940, the Rev. Neale Molloy became the Director at St John's and remained in the role until 1976. Molloy was also a member of the Family Welfare Advisory Council, Chairman of the Church of England Boys' Society for 21 years. When Molloy retired as the Chairman of the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria in 1976, he was described as a 'practical visionary'.

In 1944, St John's opened a hostel for boys, called St Martin's House. It was first situated in Auburn and moved onto the campus at Canterbury in 1953.

Molloy was instrumental in St John's moving from institutional models of 'care' towards smaller cottages and family group homes. In 1951, St John's established a pilot cottage home at Sandringham, known as St John's by the Sea.

In the 1960s, St John's continued to build new smaller Homes on the Canterbury site. It also established a number of family group homes or cottages, accommodating boys and girls, in the suburbs of Doncaster and Nunawading.

In the annual report for 1962, the organisation reported that work had recently been completed on its third cottage at Nunawading, and was underway on a fourth cottage on the Rochester Road frontage of the Canterbury site. Chairman of the Board of Management, C. Mervyn Morgan wrote: "Although to any child there can be no place like one's home, we believe our new cottage system is proving to be the next best thing".

In the early 1960s, St John's established a holiday house in an old mill at Narbethong, where the children could "go bush" (Reseigh, 1971). Another holiday house was built by the children and staff at Lorne, with the help of a local builder, Bob Norton. The Narbethong home was destroyed by vandals, and subsequently the Lions Club of Camberwell provided funds for a new holiday home on the Boulevard in Warrandyte ("St John's by the River"). In 1962, the Lions Club was erecting a fourteen square house with accommodation for twelve children at Warrandyte (Annual Report 1962).

The 1960 Annual Report shows that St John's Home for Boys had by this time also started to provide foster care placements.

St John's Homes moved into the provision of residential 'care' to young people on Children's Court probation with the opening of Molloy House and Fernhurst hostels in 1968. Another hostel, 'Shrublands', for working boys from the country, was located on the Canterbury site. St John's ran these hostels in conjunction with the Church of England Boys' Society (Reseigh, 1971).

St John's established Field House in Camberwell in 1969, for boys over the age of 13 with academic potential.

In 1971, Hindson House, comprising three cottages (known as the Watermillock, Bellamy and Seacombe Units), opened on the seafront at Sorrento, on the Mornington Peninsula. Each of the 3 self-contained units housed up to 6 children.

In 1971, three more family group homes (known as Wilson, Butler and Reynolds) were opened on the Canterbury site.

In 1974, St John's established Ruthven House, a hostel in Reservoir in the northern suburbs, run in conjunction with Church of England Boys' Society.

In 1976, it opened the George Hall Hostel for School Leavers in Bell Street, Box Hill.

In 1978, St John's launched a new program called Care-Force, featuring community based care rather than institutional care and emphasising preventative rather than substitute care. The first Care-Force was located in Preston, and offices were also established in Hawthorn and Croydon. Social workers, welfare officers and family aides provided support to families (*Hops, Steps and Jumps*, August 1978).

In its annual report for 1986, Care-Force North East stated that it had begun a 'Community accommodation and support scheme' that placed adolescents in board with families. In 1987, the scheme was supporting 8 placements in the community "with the potential to expand to 15". The 1991 annual report stated that this program had been recognised as an Adolescent Community Placement program, meaning that hopefully St John's could provide a more extensive service in the future.

From 1976, St John's ran North East Foster Care in conjunction with the Mission to the Streets and Lanes. From 1989, St John's auspiced its Preston office, and the Mission to the Streets and Lanes auspiced its office in Greensborough.

In 1978, St John's proposed the closure of 'Shrublands', the original building on the site at Canterbury which was being used as a hostel for working boys from the country. The building was converted into a 'resource unit' for the St John's organisation.

A number of Homes remained on the Canterbury site: Birch and Read Cottages as well as three self contained units called Wilson, Reynolds and Butler. St John's continued to run Appleby Hostel in Mont Albert and St

Martin's Hostel, Canterbury. St John's also established family group homes in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, including Moonee Ponds, Pascoe Vale South and Ivanhoe.

The 1986 annual report of Care Force North East shows that St John's Homes for Boys and Girls ran foster care programs, as well as its Cottages and Hostels.

The late 1980s was a time of expansion of St John's smaller residential units. In 1988 St John's established an early adolescent unit in the suburb of Glenroy. That year, St John's was providing residential care in 15 "cottages", located on the Canterbury site as well as in Melbourne's eastern and northern suburbs. It also had 5 hostels. The 1989 annual report listed 19 cottages, 2 adolescent units in Glenroy and Parlington, and 5 hostels: St Martin's House, Appleby House (Mont Albert), Molloy House, Broadhurst House and Ramsay Mailer House.

The 1990 annual report stated that, in the previous 4 years, the organisation had established 9 more family group homes, 5 emergency care units, 2 adolescent units, 1 emergency accommodation and support program for teenagers, 10 houses and units providing shared accommodation and outside support for teenagers.

The 1990 annual report listed 7 "Homeless Youth Houses": Deeko House, Preston (funded by Bowater Deeko Pty Ltd); Russell Clark House, Deepdene; Jenny Craig House, Hawthorn (also known as "Jenny's House", funded by Jenny Craig Weight Loss Centres and the Victorian government; Balwyn Rotary House, Balwyn; Petersville Sleigh Units 1 & 2, Hawthorn; and Victoria Units 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, Brunswick. In 1991, these facilities were described as part of St John's "Springboard Emergency Accommodation Program". It provided supported medium term housing for young people in transition between emergency accommodation and independent living.

In 1990, St John's described its family group homes as its "core service". It stated that they had reduced the number of children in each Home to 4.

The annual report described 1993 as a "year of change", with the organisation moving from a central management structure into four separate regions: Outer East, Inner East, North East and North West/Central. During this period, it would seem that St John's was struggling to keep up with changing state government policies and reduced funding due to a recession. For example, in 1993, the government announced a plan to substantially replace residential group homes with expanded foster care and preventive services.

The 1993 annual report listed 6 Group Homes in its Inner East Region: Birch, Boxleigh, Clark, Read, McKinna and Lindsay Field. In the Outer East, there were 5 family group homes in Mitcham, Nunawading, Forest Hill, East Burwood and Vermont South. The North West/Central region had six group homes providing out-of-home care for over 20 young people, as well as 3 emergency reception units. The North East Region comprised family services, foster care, the adolescent community placement service, Gardenia (temporary emergency care unit for children), Boomerang family group home and the Broadhurst House youth hostel.

By 1995, St John's had continued in the shift towards home based, foster care placements, which the annual report described as "less stigmatising". There remained the need for residential care for "those unhappy young people who are not appropriate for foster care".

In 1997, St John's Homes amalgamated with the Mission of St James and St John and the Mission to the Streets and Lanes to form Anglicare Victoria. In the 1996 annual report, St John's stated that it strongly supported the decision to amalgamate the 3 Anglican child and family welfare agencies.

At this time, records of St John's were transferred to Anglicare Victoria. These included records of the various orphanages, homes and other residences run by St John's. The custodian of these records is Anglicare Victoria.

## More info

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## Related Entries

## Ran

- [George Hall Hostel for School Leavers \(1973? - 1976?\)](#)
- [St John's Home for Boys \(c. 1924 - 1958\)](#)
- [Ramsay Mailer Hostel \(1983 - 1990?\)](#)
- [Molloy House \(1968 - c. 1983\)](#)

St John's Homes for Boys and Girls opened Molloy House in 1968 to provide residential care for young people on Children's Court probation.

- [Fernhurst \(1968 - 1978?\)](#)  
St John's Homes for Boys and Girls opened Fernhurst in 1968. It was a hostel that provided residential care for young people on Children's Court probation.
- [St Martin's House \(1944 - 2000?\)](#)
- [St John's Homes for Boys and Girls - Canterbury \(1958 - c. 1997\)](#)
- [North East Foster Care \(c. 1976 - 1997?\)](#)

St John's Home for Boys and Girls auspiced North East Foster Care jointly with the Mission to the Streets and Lanes from c.1976 to 1989. From 1989, St John's auspiced the Preston office, and the Mission to the Streets and Lanes auspiced the Greensborough office.

Date: 1976 - 1989

- [Ruthven Hostel \(1974 - c. 1983\)](#)
- [St John's by the Sea \(1951 - 1958?\)](#)
- [Family Group Homes run by St John's Homes for Boys and Girls, Victoria \(1950s - 2000s\)](#)

## Related Organisations

- [Church of England Boys' Society \(1914 - current\)](#)

The Church of England Boys' Society ran some Hostels in conjunction with St John's Homes for Boys and Girls.

## Resources

- James Jenkinson Consulting, [Guide to Out-of-Home Care Services 1940-2000 - Volume Two: Data Base](#), November 2001

## Records

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### Records

- [Anglicare Victoria Records \(1886 - current\)](#)
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