

The Menzies Home for Children

1961 – 2000

Details

The Menzies Home for Children was the new name given in October 1961 to the former The Menzies Home for Boys. From this time Menzies allowed girls to be admitted and increasingly housed children in family group homes in the Frankston and Dandenong areas. The organisation became Menzies Inc. in 2000.

The Menzies Home for Children was established in October 1961. The name change meant the Home started to accept girls so that siblings could stay together. Around this time, The Menzies' model of care shifted away from institutionalised care towards family group homes in the Frankston and Dandenong areas.

At the end of 1961 the State School No. 4136 that had operated at the Home since the 1920's was shut and all students were enrolled in the local Davey Street State School. This was done to encourage the boys social skills by ensuring they had interaction with both sexes and other members of the community.

In May 1963 the first family group home was opened in Neil Street, Frankston. It housed eight siblings, seven boys and one girl, with houseparents, Mr and Mrs Corney. Following its success another home was purchased in Clarendon Street, Frankston with seven siblings living under the care of Mr and Mrs Cox. A further family group home for seven boys was run by Mr and Mrs Sinclair at Heatherton Rd, Dandenong and Mr and Mrs Hunt were the houseparents for a home on Namur St, Noble Park, which also housed seven boys. During this time a holiday hosts scheme was established for boys still living in the Home. This meant that families in the community housed the boys in school holidays and took them on outings as a way to integrate them into a family lifestyle.

Over the two years from 1963 to 1965 all the boys who lived at the "Home on the Hill" were rehoused in family group homes and the Home was shut in early 1965. The original building for the Menzies Home on Oliver's Hill was demolished and the land subdivided and auctioned off in 1965.

In 1966 the decision was made to close the William(s) Street Hostel and to focus purely on the family group homes. Seaford Home was established in February 1965, Cornell Court, Karingal in February 1966. William Street, Frankston, a conversion of the old hostel, opened in May 1968, Ince Court, Frankston in April 1969 and Frankston home in October 1969.

In 1970 Mount Eliza Cottage was established for children with physical handicaps. Dame Elizabeth Murdoch opened the cottage in May 1970.

By 1970 ten family group homes had been established and all children cared for by The Menzies Home for Children lived in one of these homes. The children often had contact with their parents and relatives and if they did not have any they were encouraged to accept holiday hosts. The average length of time a child spent in care with The Menzies Home for Children was 3 -4 years.

In 1981 a replica of the gateway that had been at the Home on Oliver's Hill was erected at the head offices, now stating The Menzies Home for Children as the name.

By 1983 all the handicapped children from Mount Eliza Cottage had been discharged. In November 1983 the Neil Street property was closed and all the children who had been located there were moved into the Mount Eliza Cottage as a family group home. In the year 1983/84 residential care was provided for 61 children, with the ages varying from five to seventeen.

Minton Emergency Unit was established to assist the State in housing children in need at short notice. Hillview House was opened in 1989 to provide more emergency accommodation as Minton was at capacity. Menzies soon discovered that most of the 'emergency' cases ended up with children staying long term and therefore an emergency case was taken into any family group home that had a vacancy and not just an emergency unit.

In 1994 the organisation opened Seaford Flats, these were a supervised group of one bedroom flats for homeless fifteen to seventeen (and later up to nineteen) year olds. The supervisor was there to provide counselling and support the young people in gaining independent living skills.

The organisation became known as Menzies Inc. in 2000.

Gallery



A family group home at Karingal, later sold

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in 'One Thousand White Onions': a history of caring for children since 1865 on p.149.



Administration office Frankston with Bob Walter who built replica Gateway and Fred Harcourt who built the original Gateway at Olivers Hill

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in 'One Thousand White Onions': a history of caring for children since 1865 on p.174.



Attractive flats for homeless young people [editor's note: this is the original caption]

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in 'One Thousand White Onions': a history of caring for children since 1865 on p.190.



Children at play at Williams Street

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in 'One Thousand White Onions': a history of caring for children since 1865 on p.147.



School No.4136 in the grounds of the Home staffed by members of the Education Department

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in 'One Thousand White Onions': a history of caring for children since 1865 on p.114.



The Home on the Hill at the top of Olivers Hill

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in 'One Thousand White Onions': a history of caring for children since 1865 on p.141.

More info

Chronology

- Seaside Home, Frankston (1901 - 1924)
 - Minton Boys Home (1924 - 1943)
 - The Menzies Home for Boys (1943 - 1961)
- **The Menzies Home for Children (1961 – 2000)**
 - Menzies Inc. (2000 - current)

Resources

- Rowland, E. C., *Inasmuch: a history of the homes*, 1980
- *Childcare newsletter / the Menzies Home for Children*, 1993 - 1999
- *Newsletter / the Menzies Homes for Children Inc.*, 1999 - 2000
- *Annual reports: the Menzies Homes for Children*, 1964 - 1999

Records

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

Records

- [Menzies Inc. Records \(1886 - current\)](#)
- [Menzies Homes - Client Records \(c. 1914 - c. 2014\)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/the-menzies-home-for-children/>