

St Anthony's Home

1943 – 1976

Details

St Anthony's Home was the new name given in 1943 to St Anthony's Children's Home, in Kew. It was run the Sisters of St Joseph, and accommodated boys aged between 3 and 6. In 1976, the Home closed and services were transferred to St Anthony's Family Service, in Footscray.

In November 1955, St Anthony's Home was declared an approved children's home under the Children's Welfare Act 1954.

Ryszard Szablicki was admitted to St Anthony's Home in 1956, an experience he writes about in his book, *Orphanage Boy*. He describes some of his first impressions of the physical features of the Home:

Another nun appeared and took me through a doorway to the courtyard ... Surrounded on three sides by a tall, grey, double-storeyed building, we headed towards a wide gap between one end of the building and another cream-coloured building ... Upon nearing the broad gap I heard children's voices and saw an open air enclosure. A dark grey timber fence, about six feet high, ran the rectangular length of the play area. Wire mesh extended a further six feet above that. The only break in the fence was for a gate. We entered and I stood beside the nun as I watched children running and playing.

Some time after the evening meal, I went with all the boys and followed a nun up a stairway in the big grey building. We came to a wide veranda, our little footsteps sounding along the well-worn timbered decking. On my left, at about my head height, a wooden barrier enclosed the walkway. This too was topped with wire mesh, closing the gap to the eaves. The open courtyard lay below. On my right ran a wall punctuated with windows at regular intervals. We came to a door which led into a dormitory. Evenly spaced rows of cream coloured iron-framed beds were arranged on the wooden floor, filling the room to capacity. I was allocated a bed in the second row alongside a window near the door. Snuggled in my bed, I was content. My world was as it had always been: dormitories, big buildings, many others like me and my nuns (Szablicki, pp.22-23).

In 1958 St Anthony's purchased a residence next door to the existing Home and established a family group home for 8 children.

In the 1960s the Home again changed its admission policy so that girls were accepted so long as they were siblings to boys in the Home's care. The age range was also extended so that boys did not normally leave, usually for St Vincent's Boys Home, until they were 10 years old.

By the late 1960s the capacity of the Home had been reduced to accommodate approximately 70 children. In the main Home children were accommodated in groups of 15 to 18, while a group of 8 children lived in the family group home.

In 1972 Sisters of St Joseph who had also trained as social workers, supported professional child care staff to improve the standard of care in the Josephite Homes. The Sisters began to review their child care services- including St Anthony's, St Joseph's Broadmeadows and St Joseph's Surrey Hills- as a whole and moved towards smaller group care. This included providing family group homes, foster care, adoption and fostering of babies, the occasional adoption of older children, and a 24 hour a day emergency care service for children.

By 1976 the Order moved from the Wellington Street Kew site to focus more fully on child care needs in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Gallery



St Anthony's Home, Kew, building



St Anthony's Home, Kew, buildings [rear]



St Anthony's Home, Kew, bedroom



St Anthony's Home, Kew, children in cars



St Anthony's Home, Kew [title altered from original]

Description: This is a digital copy of an image that appears in K.E. Burford's *Unfurrowed Fields*. It was initially published here with the title "The original 'Roslyn House' given to the sisters by Mr and Mrs Stuart Patterson in 1925 for an orphanage, St Joseph's Liverpool Road Croydon", however it has since been identified as a picture of St Anthony's Home in Kew, Victoria, not of St Joseph's Home for Children, Croydon, New South Wales.

More info

Chronology

- St Anthony's Children's Home (c. 1921 - 1943)

- **St Anthony's Home (1943 – 1976)**
 - St Anthony's Family Service (1976 - 1997)
 - MacKillop Family Services (1997 - current)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Family Group Homes run by St Anthony's, Victoria \(1972 - 2000s\)](#)

Run by

- [Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart \(1866 - current\)](#)

Date: 1943 - 1976

Related Organisations

- [St Joseph's Home for Children, Sisters of St Joseph \(1967 - 1991\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Nursery \(1959 - 1976?\)](#)

St Joseph's Nursery was situated nearby to St Anthony's Home, Kew.

Resources

- Davis, William, [Submission no 227 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Sheedy, Anthony James, [Submission no 283 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Walker, Charlie, *Charlie, the ratbag orphan : an orphan survivor in Australia*, 2010
- Kennedy, Isobel, *Where Little Boys Live*, The Sun Women's Magazine, 4 June 1947
- [Heritage Display](#), MacKillop Family Services website, 2013
- [St Anthony's Home \(1921-97\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance*: See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to St Anthony's Home
- *St Anthony's on the move*, Hops, Steps and Jumps: quarterly news from the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria, 1976
- [Charlie Walker interviewed by Rob Willis in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 23 February 2010
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999

Records

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

Records

- [MacKillop Family Services Records, Victorian institutions \(1857 - current\)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/st-anthonys-home/>