

Myra House

1945 – c. 1970

Details

Myra House was established by the Catholic Church in 1945 and run by the Legion of Mary. It was a Home for girls aged 14 to 18. It could accommodate up to 12 residents, and the average stay was between 3 and 5 months. Myra House was located in Kew until 1954 when it moved to the suburb of Malvern. It closed around 1970.

When it opened in 1945 Myra House was located in a house originally called Kalimna, in Sackville Street, Kew. (This building was next door to the Salvation Army Catherine Booth Girls' Home.)

The Legion of Mary was a Catholic lay apostolate of women which was established in Ireland in 1921. The Legion first established itself in Australia in 1933. It established the Regina Coeli hostel in North Melbourne in 1939, a Home for "derelict" or "unfortunate women" (Institute of Sisters of Mercy, 29 August 2018).

The opening of Myra House was announced in January 1945. Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, stated that girls trained by the Legion of Mary at Myra House "would be able to face the world with every confidence" (The Argus, 15 January 1945).

Sister Justice was the matron of Myra House as well as the president in Australia of the Legion of Mary. She told the press that "Myra House will be a home for rehabilitating young girls who have been in a 'spot of bother' ... So many of these are very nice little girls, who just need helping on the right track again to become good citizens of the future. Our aim is to provide them with a happy home, not an institutional type of place, and to give them occupations which will encourage them to make a fresh start. They will be taught to make their own frocks, and to put pretty individual touches on them, to do millinery and other useful occupations" (The Age, 13 January 1945).

An article in the *Herald* stated that the average age of girls at Myra House was 18 and the average stay was 3 to 5 months. It reported that some residents were referred to Myra House by the Children's Welfare Department, and others by court probation officers. It described the institutions "airy dormitories with pink, green or blue coverlets and pretty furniture" (The Herald, 13 October 1945).

One article from 1946 stated that adoptions were arranged at Myra House and that the girls' babies were also cared for in the Home (The Advocate, 23 October 1946).

Members of the Legion of Mary ran and staffed Myra House without remuneration and the Home was maintained by voluntary contributions (The Herald, 10 May 1950). In 1951, an article stated that more than 200 girls had passed through Myra House since it opened in 1945 (The Advocate, 26 April 1951).

By 1954 Myra House had moved from the property in Sackville Street to Stanhope Street, Malvern. The house in Kew became known as Belloc House, an institute run by Jesuit Fathers.

A Department of Human Services publication from 2001 described Myra House as being "aimed at young people who had to move to the city for work or study".

The closing date of Myra House is not known, however the building in Malvern was demolished in 1970.

Gallery



Preshil (formerly 'Kalimna'), 12 Sackville Street, 1988

Description: This is a copy of a photograph of the building at 12 Sackville Street, Kew, which was Myra House from 1945 until 1954.

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- [The Legion of Mary \(1921 - current\)](#)

Resources

- [Myra House Opened](#), The Argus, 15 January 1945
 - [House Party at Myra House](#), Advocate, 18 March 1954
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