

# Home of Hope for Destitute Children

1880 – 1927?

**Other Names:**

- Homes of Hope for Destitute Children
- Homes of Hope Orphanages
- Cherbury Homes of Hope

## Details

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The Home of Hope for Destitute Children, Collingwood was established by Charles M. Cherbury in 1880. It housed about 45 children at a time. From 1890, the Home also operated a 'sanatorium' in Ocean Grove, where children went for regular 'holidays'. Both properties were sold in the 1920s, and Home of Hope closed in around 1927.

The Home of Hope for Destitute Children opened in 1880, in Sackville Street, Collingwood. Its founder, Charles M. Cherbury described the Home as a 'Christian philanthropic movement, having for its object the deliverance of destitute young from vice and crime'.

From 1890, it also operated a 'sanatorium' in Ocean Grove, where children went for regular 'holidays'. The Ocean Grove property was sold in the 1920s, and the Collingwood Home (which had relocated to Easey Street in 1890) was auctioned in July 1926.

The Homes of Hope were run by a group of trustees, with Cherbury as its 'honorary superintendent'. Its philosophy was set out in 1892:

*It was a condition of the Homes that no child was permitted to work for food and raiment, and no child went out to employment until it had received its proper share of schooling.*

Cherbury wrote to the *Argus* to explain that the Home was 'entirely dependent on voluntary help' and was not funded by any government or religious fraternity'.

At the Homes' annual meeting for 1893, the Governor of Victoria was applauded when he commended the Homes on its object 'to teach religion to the children without introducing any denominational jealousies'.

In 1890, the Home in Collingwood moved from Sackville Street to a new house in Easey Street. Rev. Cherbury remained involved with the Sackville Street Tabernacle (a Baptist church).

In 1890, Cherbury reported that on average, 45 children at a time lived at the Home in Collingwood. He stated that several of the children had been adopted, or gone into service from the Home.

In 1892, the Committee was proud to report that there had not been a death of a child since the Home was established in 1879. The good health of the children was largely attributed to their regular stays at the 'sanatorium' in Ocean Grove. Children from Collingwood were sent for holidays at the cottages in Ocean Grove

from around 1890.

In the early 1890s, the child rescue activities of the Homes grew rapidly. In 1890, they were caring for 48 children, in 1891 for 62 children and in 1892, the Committee reported that 113 children were in its care.

These children were divided into two groups – those living at Collingwood or Ocean Grove, and those who were boarded out until they were 'of an age' to enter the Homes. Also, there were some children receiving only occasional support from the institution.

At the annual meeting for the Homes of Hope in July 1893, Cherbury reported that the institution was undergoing financial difficulties. For this reason, they had decided to cut costs by closing the home at Ocean Grove over the winter. Cherbury stated that funds and support were urgently needed.

At a meeting in September 1904 at the Sackville Street Tabernacle, the trustees reported that the organization was considering establishing a babies' home and a 'home shelter for unfortunate early motherhood'. It would seem that nothing came of these plans.

In 1908 and 1909, the Homes of Hope were the subject of unfavourable reports by the Inspector of Charities. He described the Homes as a 'surplus institution' in 1908 and questioned the steep rise in management costs. In 1909, the subsidy paid to the Homes by the Victorian government was withdrawn after another report by the Inspector of Charities. It was claimed that the salary the secretary of the Homes, Boyde R. Patey, was paying himself was 'greatly in excess' of what was paid to staff in other Victorian institutions. Questions were also raised about Patey's accounting practices.

The Homes continued to operate from 1909 without any aid from the Victorian government. In January 1922, there was more controversy when the *Argus* published claims about the 'squalid, uncomfortable, dreary' surroundings in which the children lived at Easey Street. The paper declared that 'From top to bottom the home needs complete renovation and repairs'.

Subsequent issues of the newspaper contained more allegations and calls for reform at the Homes. The trustees admitted to the *Argus* that the Homes were 'somewhat behind the times', and that there was not enough staff to take care of the children and keep housekeeping under control.

Subsequent letters to the Editor defended the management of the Homes of Hope. One such letter was written by D. Nicholls of West Richmond, a widow working to support her children, who had been at the Homes for 18 months. She wrote, 'I have access to the home at any time and have always found it clean and comfortable.'

Another letter-writer, C. Downing of Clifton Hill (who described herself as a member of a Dorcas Society of a city church), also defended the homes. She claimed that the Homes needed 'a committee of honorary workers (women)' to improve conditions.

After the story broke, the Chief Secretary requested the Department of Neglected Children to investigate the Homes of Hope. The officer who reported back to the government stated that the situation at Easey Street was 'not quite as bad' as *The Argus* reports would appear to indicate. He did state that the buildings were out of date and in need of repair.

The report went further than the situation at the Homes of Hope, and contained recommendations for legislative change to the system of voluntary children's homes in Victoria. It called for amendments to be made to Victoria's Neglected Children's or Charities Act to provide for government supervision and inspection of children's homes. The author made the point that 'until amending legislation is passed the government has no control over the homes'.

The furore surrounding the Homes of Hope was one element of a broader campaign for legislative change to effect better government regulation of children's homes. One letter writer to the *Argus*, Sidney R. Cole, condemned the conditions at Easey Street as 'dreadful in the extreme'. He called on the Premier to appoint a

committee, not only to investigate Homes of Hope, but 'all other homes and the Government Home in Royal Park'. Cole's vision was for small institutions like Homes of Hope to be amalgamated, and the establishment of one 'big institution' in the country.

J.A. Levey, president of the Charity Organisation Society, had his letter to the editor published on 17 January 1922. Levey asserted that the disclosures about the Homes of Hope 'lend strong support to the years of agitation of the Charity Organisation Society in favour of more comprehensive legislation for the better supervision and control of philanthropic work'.

The Homes of Hope survived the negative publicity of 1922. The property at Ocean Grove was sold off in the early 1920s. In July 1926, the Easey Street property was sold at auction.

## Gallery

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### Home of Hope, Ocean Grove

**Description:** This sketch is published in A.J. Campbell's *Tourists' Guide to Geelong and the South Watering Places*, published in 1893. The caption reads: 'One of the most interesting buildings here is "Hopetoun Cottage", belonging to the Homes of Hope conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Cherbury in Collingwood, and used as a Sanatorium for the rescued children from time to time. The cottage stands on about an acre of ground, and has accommodation for 25 children, and the necessary attendants. Hitherto the Rev. M. Cherbury has been honorary superintendent, giving his time and means for the past 13 years without fee or reward, being also pastor of the Tabernacle, Collingwood. We understand he is in future to devote the whole of his energies to the great philanthropic work, which his heart, and that of his dear wife so truly loves. The objects of the Homes of Hope is set forth in the annual report of the institution, which can be obtained on application, and no one should visit Ocean Grove without seeing the bright and happy children so well cared for in Cherbury Vale. The view of the cottage is taken from the side of the hill leading from the terrace. Anyone interested in the welfare of such a noble work as the rescuing of helpless and homeless orphans will find a welcome from the matron. According to the last report 113 children are being provided for, and they are sent in batches to the seaside home as circumstances allow, staying from two to three months each visit. Their education is well looked after, and their religious training is quite undenominational'.



### Baptist Tabernacle [editor's note: Sackville Street, Collingwood]

**Description:** This is an image of the Tabernacle in Sackville Street, Collingwood, which was the base for Rev. Cherbury, founder of the first Home of Hope.

## More info

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## Related Entries

### Related Legislation

- [Neglected Children's Act 1915, Victoria \(1915 - 1929\)](#)

Under the Neglected Children's Act 1915, the Victorian government had very little powers of supervision over voluntary children's homes like the Homes of Hope. A series of articles in the *Argus* newspaper in 1922 put forward the case for legislative change, sparked by reports of squalid conditions at the Homes of Hope.

## Resources

- *Home of Hope for Destitute Children*, The Argus, 12 March 1881
- [The Second Anniversary of the Home of Hope for Destitute Children](#), The Argus, 5 April 1882
- [Homes of Hope for Destitute Children](#), The Argus, 1 July 1891
- [Homes of Hope. Management defended.](#), The Argus, 7 February 1922
- *Homes of Hope. State has no control. Legislation required.*, The Argus, 16 January 1922
- *'A Surplus Institution'. Homes of Hope. State Subsidy Withdrawn.*, The Argus, 22 April 1909
- [Neglected Children. Re-organising the Department.](#), The Argus, 31 January 1922
- Care Leavers Australia Network, [Geelong and District Orphanages](#), No date
- [Ocean Grove](#), Geelong Advertiser, 23 September 1905

## Records

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

### Records

- ['Closed' Agency and General Correspondence Files \[Charities Board of Victoria\] \(1923 - 1983\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/home-of-hope-for-destitute-children/>