

# Four Flats Hostel

1977 – 1981

**Other Names:**

- Four Apartments Hawthorn Limited
- Four Flats Youth Services Limited
- Four Flats

## Details

---

Four Flats Hostel was established in Power Street, Hawthorn in 1977 by the Jesuit Social Services. This hostel provided accommodation for young, homeless offenders aged between 17 and 21 years who were released from Victoria's correctional institutions. The hostel closed towards the end of 1981. Four Flats moved to a non-residential centre in Collingwood.

Four Flats offered the only after-care program for this age group in Victoria. The Department of Social Welfare provided funding. Referrals came from the Youth Training Centres at Parkville, Langi Kal Kal and Malmsbury as well as from Pentridge.

The name 'Four Flats' was chosen because the old home had been divided into four separate flats. Two Jesuit priests occupied one flat. The other three were allocated for the residents, the first of which arrived from Malmsbury in January 1977.

According to the annual report of the Youth Parole Board in 1977, Four Flats was established 'to take trainees who would otherwise be paroled but who, if it were not for the project, would be deferred by the Board for lack of accommodation'.

The report described Four Flats:

*... it is staffed by Fr Norden of the Society, and two fully qualified social workers, and is funded by the State. It must be borne clearly in mind that the type of parolee who is taken on at Four Flats is probably the most difficult. Either they have no homes to go to and probably never had and so are 'institutionalised' or their parents have totally rejected them ...*

It went on to say that the object was for Four Flats to provide 'some form of halfway house – some cushioning effect – between the security of an institution and the loneliness and insecurity of the outside world'.

The young people at Four Flats sometimes offered handyman services to local parishioners. Tragically, a resident of Four Flats murdered a woman in her own home in September 1977. Following his conviction in May 1978, there was media interest in the story and controversy about the service. The murdered woman's family attempted to have Four Flats closed, but the halfway house remained open, and received 'enormous support' from the Hawthorn community, according to a history of The Brosnan Centre (Norden, 2017).

Towards the end of 1981, Four Flats set up a new office in Cambridge Street, Collingwood, from which the organisation arranged accommodation for young people in nearby suburbs.

In 1983 it was renamed Four Flats Youth Services and in 1987 it was renamed the Brosnan Centre.

## Gallery

---



### Four Flats Hostel, Power Street, Hawthorn

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that was published in a 2017 history of the Brosnan Centre. It had the caption: 'The original residence at 56 Power Street, Hawthorn, where the Brosnan Centre was established in 1977.'

---

## More info

---

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Jesuit Social Services \(1976 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1977 - 1981

### Resources

- Dunin, Josephine, [Doing Justice: Reflections from thirty years of Jesuit Social Services 1977-2007](#), 2009
- 

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/four-flats-hostel/>