

The South Yarra Home

c. 1878 – c. 1936

Details

The South Yarra Home was an institution for 'friendless and fallen' women and girls was established around 1878 by Matthew Burnett, an evangelist who conducted a mission in Wesley Church. It was located at 17-19 Lang Street, South Yarra. In 1895, Wesley Central Mission took over responsibility from a local committee for running the South Yarra Home. In the 1920s, the Home changed its policy so that it could accommodate younger women and girls, and reduce the number of older women living there. In 1936, the institution was moved to Moreland Hall in Brunswick (where it continued until the end of 1946).

According to Howe and Swain (1993), the South Yarra Home sometimes housed women who were pregnant, but 'usually managed to dispatch them to a more appropriate institution before they were confined' (p.91). (Wesley Central Mission established its own maternity home, the Girls' Memorial Home in Fairfield, in 1922.)

In the Central Mission's annual report for 1924, it was stated that nearly 1100 women had 'passed through' the Home since 1895:

Of these, about 265 have been restored to their friends, and 334 sent to service in respectable homes. The fact that a large proportion of these have 'made good' has provided the only adequate recompense possible to the many self-denying and devoted women who, on the staff of the institution, have given years to the service of God and their unfortunate sisters (p.8).

The annual report referred to the work done by the women in the South Yarra Home's laundry.

It also reported on an 'important change of policy' at the South Yarra Home. The Mission applied for the Home to be registered under section 8 of the Neglected Children's Act, which would enable it to accommodate younger women and girls. Howe and Swain write that, during this period, the South Yarra Home 'seemed to be stuck in a backwater', faced with a declining number of older women needing institutional care (p.134).

By 1930, the majority of residents at South Yarra Home were aged under 25, however the institution was experiencing difficulties, one of which was the state of the old building in Lang Street. The Mission decided to sell the South Yarra site in around 1936, and 'the girls' were moved to new facilities at Moreland Hall in Brunswick.

Gallery



The South Yarra Home

Description: This is a copy of page 30 from the Central Mission annual report for 1924, showing the 'Main building fronting Lang Street' and another image captioned 'At work in the laundry'.

More info

Chronology

- **The South Yarra Home (c. 1878 – c. 1936)**
 - Moreland Hall (1936 - 1946)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Wesley Central Mission \(1893 - 1977\)](#)
Date: 1895 -

Resources

- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, *Uniting Church in Australia: agencies in Victoria delivering substitute care services*, April 2008

Records

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

Records

- [Wesley Mission Victoria Records \(1902 - current\)](#)

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