

Moreland Hall

1936 – 1946

Other Names: • Central Mission Girls' Home

Details

Moreland Hall was a reformatory and female rescue home for young women and girls operated by the Wesley Central Mission from 1936 to 1946. It was a continuation of The South Yarra Home, with residents and staff being transferred to Moreland on the closure of The South Yarra Home in 1936. Residents at Moreland Hall received domestic training in areas such as cooking, sewing, laundry and gardening. Moreland Hall accepted young adult women as well as younger girls, with the ages of the residents ranging from young teens up to 35 years old. Moreland Hall closed as a reformatory in 1946, with the building instead being used by the Wesley Central Mission as a women's hostel.

The Central Mission Report for 1940, published by the Wesley Central Mission, contains an entry on Moreland Hall, describing it as a home for "problem girls". It states that at this time the home was at full capacity, with 33 residents, 10 of whom were wards of the state, and eight under 15 years old. The report also states that, in addition to their domestic training, girls at the home were able to study first aid and nursing through a program run by the Red Cross Society.

According to Howe and Swain (1993), the South Yarra Home moved to Moreland Hall due to concerns regarding the condition of the South Yarra building. Moreland Hall itself was not deemed to be entirely suitable, and required renovations, such as the addition of a substantial laundry, before it could be used to accommodate the girls. One addition to Moreland Hall that was recommended prior to its use as a reformatory was the use of cyclone wire around the perimeter to prevent absconding.

Further renovations to Moreland Hall were completed in 1940 and 1942, such as the addition of two large wings with separate bedrooms for up to 50 residents, although it is not known if this number of girls ever lived at the reformatory. Domestic training facilities, such as the kitchen and sewing room, as well as recreation facilities, such as the tennis court and library, were also updated.

Howe and Swain (1993) state that despite the modernising renovations it appears that the home still followed an old institutional model, with a focus on laundry work and domestic training and no freedom of movement beyond the grounds of Moreland Hall for the residents. Girls at Moreland Hall were not always allowed to use their own names, and any girl coming to the home with the same name as another already in the home, or with a 'boys' name, had to use another name. The laundry work performed by the residents made up a significant proportion of the financial income of the home, and girls were paid a small wage for the work they did. However, over time this source of income was found to be insufficient to maintain the home, and in 1946 the Moreland Hall girls' reformatory was closed.

Gallery



The Old, Bluestone Moreland Hall

Description: This is an image of Moreland Hall, which was used by the Wesley Central Mission as a reformatory for girls and young women. It shows a large, two-storey, bluestone house with an ornate verandah and a large rear extension. This image was published in *The Central Mission Report for 1940*. The title was taken from this publication.



The New Wing at Moreland. We urgently need another Wing like it

Description: This is an image of the "new wing" Moreland Hall, which was completed around 1940. It shows a two-storey brick building with large windows. This image was published in *The Central Mission Report for 1940*. The title was taken from this publication.



The Laundry at Moreland Hall

Description: This is an image of residents of Moreland Hall working in the laundry. It shows 17 young women working at various stations in the laundry. They are being supervised by a member of staff.

More info

Chronology

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

Related Entries

Run by

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

Resources

- James Jenkinson Consulting, [Guide to Out-of-Home Care Services 1940-2000 - Volume Two: Data Base](#), November 2001

Records

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

Records

- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)

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