

# Cooinoo Home for Destitute Children

1924 – 1971

**Other Names:**

- Cooinoo Home for Destitute Girls
- Cooinoo Home for Children
- Cooinoo Home for Destitute Children

## Details

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Cooinoo Home for Destitute Children was established in 1924 at Burwood then moved to Enfield in 1938. It was administered by a Board connected with St Thomas' Anglican Parish, Enfield. It housed up to 25 children aged two to 13 years. While it was established as a children's home it also served as a girls' home for a time. Cooinoo closed around 1970.

Cooinoo was set up and administered by a Board connected with St Thomas' Anglican Parish, Enfield. The committee's patron, from 1924, was Sir Frederick Stewart.

The first Cooinoo, in Burwood, opened in a rented house in December 1924. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that:

*The [Board's] annual report stated that the home, which was opened 12 months ago, now had 18 inmates, whose ages ranged from two to 13 years. The aim of Cooinoo, the report stated, was to provide comforts and training, which through force of circumstances have been denied the children received under its care.*

Over the next 14 years the Board raised funds to buy a property in King Street Enfield and establish a new home, which had extra play space. This was officially opened by Sir Frederick Stewart on Saturday 11 June 1938.

Joanna Penglase's book *Orphans of the Living* quotes the memories of Marigold Kendall, who lived at Cooinoo from 1946-1952. Marigold remembers that the home was run by the Ladies Auxiliary of the local parish, and that the home had to be scrubbed clean, and all the brass polished, on Saturdays, when inspections were likely. She told Joanna 'We hated Saturdays because we did more work.' Sunday afternoons were occupied entirely with Sunday school and church, and the girls could not make a sound.

*To this day my sister hates the cooing of doves – it reminds her of Sunday afternoons in the home, when you couldn't do anything.*

The home, a remodelled nineteenth century mansion, was run by two unmarried elderly ladies, 'Matron' and her sister Miss B – who were from a 'good' country family and, according to Marigold, 'very strict, bigoted. We had a Victorian upbringing: children must be seen and not heard.'

Marigold remembered that the girls in the home were of 'every nationality under the sun'; migrants, refugees, German, Polish, Lithuanian, English, Scottish, Greek, Aboriginal and South Sea Islander. This diversity reflects the makeup of post-war society in inner-western Sydney at the time, and its hardships, as children of struggling families were taken into charitable institutions. Marigold remembers that many of these children had no visitors during the meagre hour when, on alternate Sundays, family was allowed to visit.

Another former resident, Maxine Harrison, contacted the Find & Connect web resource in 2015 to share her memories and provided a copy of a flyer: "Cooinoo – Home for Destitute Girls" which has information about the Home and photographs of residents and staff.

About the flyer, Maxine commented:

*'I have to say all these pictures were "staged". The doll had to be brought up from a garage that was full of donated toys, we were not allowed access to any toys. Even the dining room was altered to "suit" the pictures, we sat at a long table for meals and were not allowed to talk. If you look closely at the pictures you can see how unhappy we really were ...'*

When Cooinoo was closed in 1971 its assets, including any records, were transferred to the Church of England Homes. The Home was sold in 1973. Cooinoo's building was converted to an aged care home for a time, but all buildings have been demolished. In 2015, there is a public reserve on King Street called "Cooinoo Reserve".

## Gallery

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**Cooinoo Home for Destitute Children on the corner of Emu Street and Liverpool Road, Burwood, New South Wales, ca. 1925**

**Description:** This image shows the large, two-storey building that housed Cooinoo Home for Destitute Children between 1924 and 1938. There is a sign on the front verandah that reads "Cooinoo Home for Children".

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Related Organisations

- [Church of England Homes \(c. 1884 - 1984\)](#)

After Cooinoo Home for Destitute Children closed, its assets were transferred to the Church of England Homes.

### Other Resources

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**Title:** "Cooinoo" - Home for Destitute Girls - Your Money is the Answer to this Prayer

**Type:** Image

**Date:** 1938? - 1970?

[Details](#)

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# Records

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

## Records

- [Anglicare Children's Homes, Foster Care and Out-of-Home Care Records \(1932 - 2010s\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/cooinoo-home-for-destitute-children/>