

# St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst

1867 – 1975

**Other Names:** • St Joseph's Girls' Home

## Details

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St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst was operated by the Sisters of Mercy from 1867 to 1975, and cared for girls. It was initially located next to the Bathurst Cathedral, and in 1912 re-located to 'Holmhurst', a large house on William Street, Bathurst. It closed in 1975.

After the closure of St Joseph's Orphanage in 1975, some girls were transferred to Croagh Patrick Orphanage in Orange. Mainly these girls were siblings of boys already living at Croagh Patrick.

One former resident of St Joseph's made a submission to the 2004 'Forgotten Australians' inquiry, and wrote about her experiences of cruelty and abuse. She wrote: 'Waking up day after day, year after year, in that orphanage was always a struggle for me' (Submission 114).

In 2010, a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry, Review of Government Compensation Payments, described the abuse that the woman's mother had suffered at St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst in the 1940s.

*I remember mum ... telling us of the St Joseph Catholic Girls Orphanage Bathurst NSW. Mum was placed in St Josephs in 1942 when she was 3 years old until she was 8 years old with her two older sisters ... Mum and her sisters told us stories of them scrubbing floors on their knees, being put into solitary confinement and severe punishments with leather belts and cat o 9 tails floggings if they did anything wrong. They often put to work, made wash their own sheets and clothing in the freezing cold, which caused them to suffer frostbite every winter. There often wasn't enough food to eat. According to my aunty ... apparently she was horrified at what the Nuns did to my mum because mum's fighting spirit used to anger the Nuns and she was often punished by them just because of it (Submission 126, 2010).*

In 2019, the former orphanage is a guest house called Holmhurst. Its website has many photographs of the interior and exterior of the building, and an image of a plaque that reads:

'Holmhurst was known as St Joseph's Orphanage or St Joseph's Girls' Home, from 1915 until 1975. This plaque is dedicated to the memory of the many children and young women who spent part or all of their formative years in this building. They came here, often as small children, suffering from the loss, for whatever reason, of their family. They cried and laughed, worked and played, and eventually moved on as young adults to make life for themselves'.

## Gallery



### St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst

**Description:** This is a copy of an image of Holmhurst Guest House which is situated in the former buildings of St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst.

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### Momma [St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage, Bathurst and St Michael's Church of England War Memorial Children's Home]

**Description:** This is a video of a song called 'Momma' by Leanne Hawkins. The video features Leanne revisiting the site of St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst, where her mother was placed in 1942, and St Michael's Church of England War Memorial Children's Home in Kelso, where Leanne and her sister were placed in 1966.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Sisters of Mercy, Bathurst Congregation \(1867 - 12 December 2011\)](#)  
Date: 1867 - 1975

#### Related Organisations

- [Croagh Patrick Orphanage \(1969 - 1986\)](#)  
When St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst closed in 1975, some girls were transferred from there to Croagh Patrick Orphanage in Orange.  
Date: 1975 -

### Resources

- [The Cry of the Children: Mr P McGarry Introduces a Deputation: The Chief Secretary's Sympathetic Words](#), Freeman's Journal, 25 November 1915
- [Holmhurst](#), State Heritage Register, 2014

## Records

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

### Records

- [Admission Registers, St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst \(1867 - 1938\)](#)
  - [Roll Books, St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst \(1924 - 1975\)](#)
  - [Notification of Reception Books, St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst \(1915 - 1936\)](#)
  - [Notice of Reception, Discharge, Death or Admission to Hospital of a Child Books, St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst \(1964 - 1975\)](#)
  - [Record Cards, St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst \(5 January 1962 - 7 January 1968\)](#)
  - [Certificates, St Joseph's Orphanage, Bathurst \(24 April 1914 - 14 November 1970\)](#)
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