

Westwood

1965 – 1979

Details

Westwood, at Bowral, was a residential education centre for girls over sixteen years old with mild intellectual disabilities that opened in 1965. It was run by the Methodist Department of Christian Citizenship, and commenced operation in April 1965 with an initial intake of nine girls. By 1968 Westwood held up to 90 girls and women. It was transferred to the Uniting Church in 1977 and closed down in 1979.

The aim of Westwood was to prepare each resident for independent living by training them for appropriate employment and in relevant life skills. The institution ran a day programme for girls who lived nearby.

In 1977 the Uniting Church was formed from congregations of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. The Uniting Church took over the management of Westwood and the Heighway House Project. Children who were thought to be capable of independent living or supported independent living were transferred from Westwood to Heighway House. Around 1979 the residential programmes of the Heighway House Project were closed down.

Reverend Harry Herbert, the Executive Director of UnitingCare NSW/ACT, has said that the level of institutionalisation at Westwood was 'shocking', with up to 90 girls and women being housed there by 1968. Gordon Trickett, the head of the Board of Social Responsibility of the Uniting Church, was opposed to the dehumanising institutionalisation of the sick, aged, disabled and incarcerated. He closed Westwood, Tahmoor, landra and Heighway House in the late 1970s.

Reverend Herbert says these closures, and the closure of the 'unsuitable model' at St Andrew's Leppington, were 'a necessary course of action', and that, since the Senate Enquiry into the Forgotten Australians, he has personally dealt with cases from all these homes, including sexual assault.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Methodist Department of Christian Citizenship \(1965 - 1977\)](#)
Date: 1965 - 1977
- [Uniting Church Board of Social Responsibility \(1977 - current\)](#)
Date: 1977 - 1979

Related Organisations

- [Uniting Church Synod Archives \(1977? - current\)](#)
Uniting Church Archives manages the records of Westwood
- [Heighway House Project \(1960 - 1979?\)](#)
When Westwood was closing residents who were assessed as capable of independent or supported independent living in Sydney were transferred to the Heighway House Project's property at Thornleigh.

Records

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

Records

- [Former residents' files \(incomplete\), Westwood \(1965 - 1979\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/westwood/>