

# Institution for Girls, Hay

28 July 1961 – 1974

**Other Names:**

- Hay Institution for Girls
- Hay Girls Institution

## Details

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The Hay Institution for Girls was opened in the old Hay Gaol in 1961. It was an annexe of Parramatta Girls Training School, and held 12 girls aged 15 to 18 who had committed offences, including rioting to protest their treatment, while they were in Parramatta. They were officially sent to Hay for three month terms, but this was often extended, and girls could be sent between Hay and Parramatta multiple times. The Hay Institution for Girls became the subject of widespread community condemnation and closed in 1974.

The Hay Institution for Girls was proclaimed in the old Hay Gaol on 28th July 1961 as a 'school for the reception, detention, maintenance, discipline, education and training of children and young persons committed to such institution to be known as Institution for Girls, Hay'. Its establishment came after a series of riots that had taken place at the Parramatta Girls Home in early 1961. The girls sent from Hay from Parramatta were considered 'incurable'.

The first girls were transferred from Parramatta in September 1961. Transfers occurred at night with girls escorted by officers on the long train journey to Narrandera, then placed in a lockup van. Girls were usually sedated with largactil or valium during the journey. On arrival they were issued with institutional clothes, had their hair cropped short and were locked in a 'scrubbing' cell, usually for a period of 10 days. After this they were placed in another cell, known as 'cabins', for the remainder of their stay. Each cell was furnished with a single bad, thin mattress, a blanket, sheets, pillow, Bible and a night can.

Discipline at Hay was brutal, with girls' every movement, action and word controlled and directed by officers. The daily routine was designed to humiliate and control. All communication occurred via a reporting procedure, where girls remained silent, standing six feet apart, with 'eyes to the floor'. Girls had no privacy and did not receive visitors, schooling or mail.

Education and training amounting to hard labour: smashing concrete paths; digging; scrubbing; hand sewing leather, and other repetitive tasks, interspersed with physical exercises known as 'practices'.

Parragirls founder Bonney Djuric said in 2012:

*Hay was intended to break a girl's spirit and for most it did – leaving many with severe post traumatic stress disorder and other physical and mental health problems.*

Hay Girls Institution closed on 30th June 1974, due to community concerns about the treatment of girls and after protests by leaders of Sydney women's movement.

Hay's existence was what ABC TV journalist Sharon O'Neill has described as a state secret, known to very few until 2004, when former inmate Christina Green returned to the site in the company of the ABC. The first reunion of the Hay Girls Institution took place on the 3- 4 March 2007 at which time a memorial plaque with the words 'Let no child walk this path again' was placed in the grounds.

Records of Hay Institution are part of Parramatta Training School for Girls records.

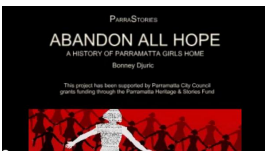
Institution for Girls, Hay was investigated by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Case Study 07: Parramatta Training School for Girls.

## Gallery



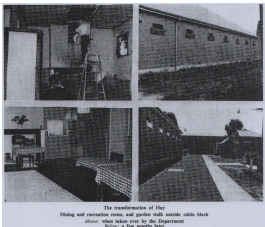
**Girls working in the garden, watched over by officers, Hay Institution for Girls, 1965.**

**Description:** This image was included in the National Museum of Australia's Inside blog, originally provided by Community Services New South Wales, Human Services.



**Abandon All Hope - a history of Parramatta Girls Home**

**Description:** Caption taken from YouTube: Abandon All Hope is the first documented history of the Parramatta Girls Home - a project made possible through the Parrastories Heritage and Stories fund, Parramatta City Council. Until now the story of this State operated welfare institution has remained relatively unknown. The document examines the site's archaeological heritage together with an overview of the statutory and societal forces and the individual and collective experiences of the young people who once resided within its walls.



**The transformation of Hay: Dining and recreation room, and garden walk outside cabin block. Above: when taken over by the Department. Below: a few months later**

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1962.



**Institution for Girls, Hay. Morning parade for the nine girls in residence.**

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1966.

## More info

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, State Government of New South Wales \(1970 - 1973\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1973

- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1975\)](#)  
Date: 1973 - 1974
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)  
Date: 1961 - 1970

### Related Events

- [Case Study 07: Parramatta Training School for Girls, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(2014\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Parramatta Girls Training School \(1946 - 1974\)](#)  
Hay Institution for Girls was an annexe of Parramatta Girls Industrial School.  
Date: 1961 - 1974
- [Parragirls \(2006 - 2023\)](#)

## Resources

- Rapley, Judy, [Creating a Space: The Life of Bessie Guthrie](#), 28 October 2007
- Matthews, Bernie, [Reap as you sow](#), Griffith Review: Unintended Consequences, May 2007
- Stockell, Poppy, [Bonney Djuric on Parramatta Girls' Home 2009](#), Dictionary of Sydney, 2009
- Robb, Wilma, [Hay Institution for Girls](#), Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions blog, 20 May 2010
- Killens, Sharyn and Lewis, Lindsay, [The Inconvenient Child](#), 2010
- Killens, Sharyn, [Hay Institution for Girls](#), The Inconvenient Child, 2010
- Robb, Wilma, [Forgotten Australians: Wilma's Story - 'No eye contact'](#), Forgotten Australians: Life Stories, 2011
- Robb, Ms Wilma, [Submission no 280 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Report of Case Study No. 7: child sexual abuse at the Parramatta Training School for Girls and the Institution for Girls in Hay](#), October 2014
- Laurent, Nicola, [Let no child walk this path again...](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 29 April 2016
- Green, Christina, [The Life of Riley](#), 2014
- Giles, Maree, [Girl 43](#), 2014
- Robb, Wilma, [One day in Hay](#), No date
- Matthews, Bernie, [Unintended Consequences for State Raised Children](#), No date
- Atkinson-Phillips, Alison, [Not a Celebration](#), 2017
- [Effie Ray interviewed by Joanna Penglase in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 28 November 2010 - 29 November 2010
- [Wilma Robb interviewed by Susan Marsden in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 27 October 2009

## Records

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

### Records

- [Hay Institution for Girls Admission and Discharge registers, State Archives NSW \(1961 - 1974\)](#)
- [Records of Girls' Industrial and Training Schools, State Archives NSW \(1867 - 1983\)](#)
- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)

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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/institution-for-girls-hay/>