

W. R. Black Home

24 November 1928 – 1965

Other Names:

- WR Black Children's Home
- Presbyterian Home for Children
- W R Black Home for Girls

Details

The W. R. Black Home in Chelmer opened in 1928. It was a home for girls run by the Presbyterian Church. In July 1938 it gained approval for children in State care to be admitted – the first intake of State children happened in September that year. Following the closure of Blackheath Home in May 1963, children of both sexes were admitted to W.R. Black Home. It closed on 31 July 1965.

W. R. Black Home was in a building located on the banks of the Brisbane River at Chelmer. The house, originally called Hurlton, was built for John Sutton, proprietor of an ironworks and shipbuilding business at Kangaroo Point. When the Suttons moved out, the building was rented out to the Church of England Grammar School for use as a boarding facility.

W R Black, mine-owner and philanthropist, made many bequests to the Presbyterian Church throughout his life. Black purchased Hurlton following the death of Mrs Sutton in 1928 and gave it to the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Home for Children opened on 24 November 1928.

The home was licensed as a private institution under *The State Children Act* on 21 March 1929. The Home was licensed under *The Infant Life Protection Act* on 27 September 1938.

In 1942, the W. R Black Home was relocated to Killarney due to concerns about safety during World War II. The building at Chelmer was used as a factory, and children attended the Killarney State School. Funding was provided by the State Children's Department to transport the children to Killarney. The girls stayed in Killarney until around September 1945, when they moved back to the Chelmer location.

From 1944 until 1961, the children living at W. R. Black Home attended Ann Street Sunday School.

Multiple submissions to the Forde Inquiry and the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care note the difficult and abusive conditions at W.R Black, with many people highlighting the “severe and cruel punishments inflicted by the Matron” (Forde Inquiry p. 76), the lack of food (the Forde Inquiry noted that former residents “described supplementing their diet with clover and grass”, Forde Inquiry p. 67) and inadequate clothing.

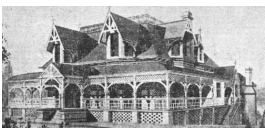
In 1963, following the closure of Blackheath Home, in Oxley, its residents were transferred to W.R. Black. This led to difficulties for W.R.Black's matron – according to a departmental report cited in the 1999 report of the Forde Inquiry:

The combining of these two homes with some 60 children presents in my opinion a real problem requiring a large staff under a Matron of long experience and strong personality ... The new Matron is attempting to cope with it with few untrained staff and not a very effectual personality (p.94).

The report states that the Presbyterian Church's solution was to establish family group homes in various suburbs. Children were progressively transferred from W.R. Black Home to the new family group homes or to temporary foster homes. In May 1965 only 12 children remained at the home, and it closed on 31 July 1965. At this time, some children were transferred to the Treacher Family Group Home, in Aspley.

A publication from 1968 stated that the Home was being renovated to accommodate children not suited to the family group unit" (Social Services Queensland, 1968, p.97). Chelmer Children's Home later opened on the site.

Gallery



Presbyterian Home for Children, also known as W. R. Black Home, Brisbane

Description: This description was supplied with the photograph and included in the library website: Originally the residence of the late J. W. Sutton, purchased by W. R. Black and opened on 24 November 1928 as the Presbyterian Home for Children.



WR Black Home at Chelmer, operated by the Presbyterian Church - Inquiry photograph

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Presbyterian Church of Queensland \(1849 - current\)](#)

Related Events

- [Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions \(1998 - 1999\)](#)
W.R. Black Home was an institution mentioned by a number of witnesses to the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions.
- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
W. R. Black Home was mentioned in submissions 87, 88, 101, 120, 230, 242, and 409 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Related Organisations

- [Blackheath Home, Oxley \(c. 1924 - 1963\)](#)
Children of both sexes were admitted to W. R. Black Home following closure of Blackheath Home in May 1963.
- [Treacher Family Group Home \(1965 - 1995\)](#)
When W. R. Black Home closed in 1965, some children were transferred to the Treacher Family Group Home.
- [Chelmer Children's Home \(1968? - 1995\)](#)

Resources

- [The W R Black Girls' Home](#), Brisbane Courier, 18 August 1930
- [For Children](#), Brisbane Courier, 28 September 1928
- Porter, Warren and Scott, Glyn (editor), *A Tormented Life*, 2010
- Porter, Warren, [Living a Tormented Life \[excerpts\]](#), 28 April 2010
- Social Work Staff, Faculty of Education, University of Queensland, [Directory of Social Services Queensland](#), 1958

Records

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

Records

- [Presbyterian Children's Homes Records \(October 1922 - May 1977\)](#)
 - [W. R. Black Home and Blackheath Home Records \(c. 1923 - c. 1951\)](#)
 - [UnitingCare Queensland Records \(1910 - current\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/w-r-black-home/>