

# Lochiel Park Boys' Training Centre

1958 – 1995

## Details

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Lochiel Park Boys' Training Centre at Campbelltown opened in 1958. It was the first government institution to provide accommodation and training for boys with mild intellectual disabilities. Some children requiring longer term care were sent to Seaforth Home, and later the Strathmont Centre and Ru Rua Nursing Home. From the 1970s Lochiel Park also provided secure care for young offenders. In 1995 it became a community living unit for children with intellectual disabilities and was renamed Lochiel Park Community Unit.

In 1947 the Government purchased a fifty-two acre (21 hectares) market gardening and fruit growing property, on the banks of the River Torrens at Campbelltown. Initially a small number of staff supervised selected boys from the Boys' Reformatory, Magill, who were brought to the farm each day to maintain the property and learn gardening. However, Lochiel Park was intended to be a secure care facility for boys with mild intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties and behavioural problems. Although calls were made for permanent accommodations to be constructed at Lochiel Park for this purpose from the late 1940s, no construction began until 1956.

In 1957-58 a cottage was finally completed at Lochiel Park ready to accommodate twelve boys. A Superintendent and matron, Mr and Mrs J Cocks, were appointed. They remained in charge of the centre until their resignation in 1971. The first boys were admitted to Lochiel Park Boys' Training Centre in May 1958. By June of that year, six boys aged between 14 and 17 were in residence. Numbers soon increased to eleven.

Boys slept in a special dormitory consisting of twelve individual cubicles. The cottage also provided a kitchen, dining room, hobbies room and sitting room. By 1962 a two-storey building near the cottage had been converted to provide three more dormitories for boys, as well as further accommodation for staff.

While resident at the centre, boys trained and worked in the citrus orchard and market garden. They cared for poultry and later dairy cows. As well as regular elementary schooling, boys learned handicrafts and took part in sport. As described in the 1962 Annual Report, 'considerable attention' was given to the boys' 'personal appearance, speech, hygiene and social development'.

Boys were allowed group excursions and some occasional individual outings. They were also granted leave on weekends and holidays to visit family.

By 1970 Lochiel Park was home to 36 boys, a small number of whom had been transferred from other Departmental institutions under a hostel-type arrangement. They attended the local Technical High School or other special classes. Other boys placed there had been committed to the care of the department following conviction for an offence.

According to the report of the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, some boys from the Salvation Army Boys' Home, Eden Park were also sent to Lochiel Park. A staff member who gave evidence to the Inquiry said this was a problem because these boys were 'hardened' by their experiences of 'congregate care' at Eden Park and were in close contact with more vulnerable, younger boys.

During the 1970s, when institutions came under the control of the Department for Community Welfare, boys underwent thorough psychological testing before being placed at Lochiel Park. Once committed to the institution, an individual training program was established for each boy. As boys completed their training, they were placed in suitable outside employment, leaving and returning daily. This aimed to gradually adapt them to life in the general community. There were generally around 20 boys aged between 12 and 18 accommodated at the centre.

While Lochiel Park was providing temporary care and accommodation for boys who were able to return to living in the community, from 1971 children with disabilities requiring long-term care were sent to the Strathmont Centre or to the Ru Rua Nursing Home.

In 1977 residential care at Lochiel Park was divided into two units. The first was a secure unit for new residents who had yet to adjust to life at the centre, and the second was an open unit. A third unit was established in 1979 to assist boys with the transition to independent living.

In the 1990s the open style of residential care at Lochiel Park became a concern because young and vulnerable children were living in close proximity to young offenders. Lochiel Park came under scrutiny during the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, particularly in relation to the issue of boys absconding to the city for long periods of time during the 1990s.

Lochiel Park continued to operate until 1995 when it was converted into a community living unit for intellectually disabled children, the Lochiel Park Community Unit, also known as The Lodge.

## Gallery

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### Lochiel Park - main building

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that was published in the Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1958.

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### Lochiel Park - kitchen

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### Lochiel Park - bedroom cubicle

**Description:** This image was published in the Annual Report of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1958.

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### Lochiel Park - dormitory with bedroom cubicles

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## More info

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# Chronology

- **Lochiel Park Boys' Training Centre (1958 – 1995)**
  - [Lochiel Park Community Unit \(1995 - 2008?\)](#)

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)  
Date: 1947 - 1966
- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)  
Date: 1966 - 1970
- [Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1972
- [Department for Community Welfare, South Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)  
Date: 1972 - 1990
- [Department for Family and Community Services, South Australian Government \(1990 - 1998\)](#)  
Date: 1990 - 1995

### Related Events

- [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, South Australia \(2004 - 2008\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Boys Reformatory, Magill \(1891 - 1967\)](#)  
Selected boys from the Boys' Reformatory, Magill, were brought to Lochiel Park daily to maintain the property before the training centre opened.
- [Glenside Hospital \(1967 - 2007\)](#)  
Some boys from Glenside Hospital were transferred to Lochiel Park Boys' Training Centre
- [Strathmont Centre \(1971 - 2014\)](#)  
While boys with mild intellectual disability came to Lochiel Park, some children requiring more long term care were sent the Strathmont Centre
- [Seaforth Home \(1946 - 1975\)](#)  
While boys with mild intellectual disability came to Lochiel Park, children requiring more long term care were sent to Seaforth Home.

### Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

## Resources

- [Dwelling, 'Lochiel Park'](#), SA Heritage Places Database, 2018

## Records

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

### Records

- [Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)
- [Records of the Department for Community Welfare and Successor Agencies \(1972 - current\)](#)
- [Records of the South Australia Youth Remand and Assessment Centre \(c. 1961 - c. 1999\)](#)
- [Photographs of Departmental institutions, Social Welfare Department and Predecessors \(1945 - 1970\)](#)
- [Admission/intake cards - South Australia Youth Remand and Assessment Centre \(SAYRAC\) \(1972 - 1994\)](#)

- [Minutes - State Children's Council, later the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1886 - 1965\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files \('CW & PRD' and 'SW' files\) -Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department and successors \(1927 - c. 1979\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/lochiel-park-boys-training-centre/>