

Boys' Reformatory

1869 – 1876

Other Names:

- Boys' Training School
- Training School for Juvenile Offenders
- Reformatory for Males

Details

The Boys' Reformatory, run by volunteers, opened in the Female Factory at Cascades, South Hobart, in 1869. It provided an alternative to gaol for boys who were homeless or had broken the law. The boys were about school age. The Reformatory closed in 1876.

The Boys' Reformatory was run by volunteers under the provisions of the *Training Schools Act 1867*. Boys could now spend a maximum of 10 days in gaol and then go to the Reformatory, where they received a basic education, worked on the attached farm or were apprenticed. The Reformatory received 43 boys in its first year of operation.

The Reformatory was in a block of separate cells in the eastern section of the third yard. The male Invalid Depot occupied the rest of the yard.

The boys worked from six am to 3:30 pm with breaks of 45 minutes for breakfast at eight am and an hour at noon for lunch. Some trained in farm-labouring, carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, and glazing. However, most do not appear to have learned a trade. Instead, they did farm work. The boys did about two hours of schooling, after work, in a school room that doubled as a dining room for the male invalids. For recreation, the boys had a band and did a drill as part of their daily routine. They were apprenticed directly from the institution, usually as farm labourers.

In the early 1870s, the government made improvements to the Reformatory. A mess and school room were erected and later, a schoolmaster and scripture reader appointed.

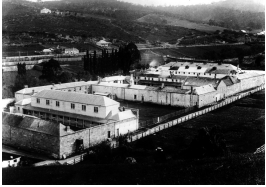
In 1874, the sisters, Rosamund and Florence Hill, English social reformers and advocates of the boarding out system, visited the Reformatory. In their book, *What we saw in Australia*, one of the sisters wrote that 30 boys lived there in a separate section to the rest of the prison's occupants. The boys went to school and cultivated land outside the prison. They slept in their own cells. Boys were locked in their cells at seven pm and got up at five am.

The boys were at play when I saw them; they looked healthy but presented a dirty and uncared-for appearance. Its location in a gaol is a great disadvantage, and may induce the feeling I noticed among the boys, that they are brought to the institution to be punished rather than reformed; individuals among them, in answer to questions, spoke of the offences which had caused them admission to the reformatory as deeds they felt somewhat proud of having accomplished.

She also noted that because Tasmania was poor, it was tempting to reuse old buildings rather than put up new ones especially designed for their purposes.

On 9 October 1876, the government withdrew the Certificate of the Reformatory. It closed on 31 December 1876. After that, the Hobart Gaol once again housed young male offenders until, in 1884, a Boys' Training School opened on the same site.

Gallery



Female Factory Cascades from the east

Description: The photograph of the Female Factory Cascades, South Hobart, from the east is part of ER Pretyman's collection of photographs and glass plate negatives, 1880 - 1920

More info

Chronology

- **Boys' Reformatory (1869 – 1876)**
 - Boys' Training School (1884 - 1926)
 - Ashley Home for Boys (1926 - 1999)
 - Ashley Youth Detention Centre (1999 - current)

Related Entries

Related Legislation

- [The Training Schools Act 1867, Tasmania \(1867 - 1896\)](#)
The Boys' Reformatory was established under the *Training Schools Act 1867*.

Related Organisations

- [Cascades House of Correction \(1856 - c. 1877\)](#)
- [Launceston Gaol \(1827 - 1917\)](#)
Boys could be sent to the Boys' Reformatory as an alternative to prison.
- [Campbell Street Gaol \(1821 - 1960\)](#)
Boys could be sent to the Boys' Reformatory as an alternative to prison.

Resources

- Parry, Naomi, ['Such a longing': black and white children in welfare in New South Wales and Tasmania, 1880-1940](#), 2007
- Evans, Caroline, [A 'Pink Palace'? Risdon Prison, 1960-2004](#), 2004

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/boys-reformatory/>