

Bedford Hostel

1971 – 27 February 2009

Other Names:

- Bedford Youth Hostel
- Bedford House
- Bedford Park Hostel
- Girls Hostel
- DCW Hostel, Bedford

Details

Bedford Hostel opened in 1971 and provided accommodation to young Aboriginal women attending Edwards Business College. At first it was managed on behalf of the Department of Native Welfare by Edwards Business College before becoming government-run, probably by 1972. By the 1980s, Bedford Hostel was used for assessments and emergency placement and became one of the community support hostels (a new model implemented by the Department of Community Welfare) in 1984. It was closed during between 1983 to 1984 but reopened in 1985. Bedford Hostel was destroyed by fire in February 2009.

On 23 June 1970 the Department of Native Welfare purchased an existing house at Lot 38 Grand Promenade, Bedford. Architectural renovations were subsequently undertaken by the Public Works Department. In 1971, it opened as a hostel for young Aboriginal women. It was known as Bedford Hostel (sometimes as 'Bedford House').

Bedford was initially managed by the Edwards Business College on behalf of the Department of Native Welfare, accommodating young Aboriginal women who went to the business college. It was one of the Aboriginal Education and Employment Hostels. From 1972, the Department for Community Welfare had taken over all Native Welfare facilities so Bedford was likely to have been government-run from about that time.

By 1984, Bedford was providing short-term emergency accommodation, mostly for children and young people involved in Children's Court proceedings. It became part of a network of community support hostels in Western Australia in 1984, institutions for children with complex needs who could not be easily placed in foster care.

In 1994, Bedford had become the Crisis Assessment Centre for the McCall/Community Support Hostel Network. Children aged 8-16 years stayed at Bedford for up to four weeks while they were assessed.

Signposts holds a description of the history and operation of Bedford House, written in 1971:

The house mother and first groups of residents moved in somewhere around the commencing date of the 1971 school term (no one is quite sure of the dates...). The garden was dead when they moved in, and the house had not been cleaned....

The house mother has no relief, and no domestic assistance. She does all the cooking and domestic washing. Although her room had a built in cupboard there was no desk or dressing table. The residents' rooms had no cupboards, dressing tables or desks.

There was only one small bathroom, with its only ventilation being a window onto an enclosed verandah on which two girls were sleeping. At the end of this verandah was an extra shower recess and the only WC for the entire building.

There is only one room which serves the house mother and residents as dining room, TV room, living room, and it is directly next to the house mother's room. When she wanted to write letters, or 'have some peace and quiet', she retired to an old shed at the back of the garden, and used a kitchen chair and two packing cases as desk and chair. When the TV broke down, the hostel was 'lent' a stereogram designed for another hostel, until the other hostel should be ready for occupation.

Although the house mother attempted to revive the garden, she pointed out that she had no tools, that the hose did not reach across the entire garden and that she had asked for assistance, and been told not to bother too much about the garden. Local residents had told her how this place had been the pride of the street, but was so no longer.

The hostel residents pay board to the [Edwards Business College] Principal...

The hostel at Bedford Park has been occupied by several Edwards Business College students since the commencement of the 1971 academic year. The original aim of the organisation was to provide a central hostel for Aboriginal girls attending the College (although it has, in the past, operated hostels for 'white' children, it felt it desirable to segregate Aboriginal students for reasons not made quite explicit to us). On this basis, the College would have the final say in day-to-day administration and overall policy, whilst the Department's role was envisaged as supportive. For several reasons, these aims are not being fulfilled and there is a possibility that the College will withdraw from the scheme entirely.

[Edwards Business College is then quoted as saying] 'There are too many others involved. Nobody knows who is in control; the Native Welfare, Child Welfare, etcetera, etcetera. We cannot supervise the girls as we had hoped. There are just too many people involved. This introduces problems of running, especially with the girls' behaviour. We tell them to do one thing and they say 'the Department says we don't have to.' I wonder who I am working for... The Department should leave the running entirely to Edwards... Hostels should be one or the other. We now feel that Bedford Park is not worth continuing with. We have no say in placement – we initially thought it would be left to us and we would place all the girls, and we were prepared to lose if we thought the girls were benefiting from a hostel environment.' Wilson and Robinson, in Signposts 2004, pp.100-101

In January 1984, Bedford became a Community Support Hostels and young people who had been at Cawley House (on the corner of Lord and Walcott Streets) moved in. Bedford was to provide 'skilled care' for young people who were unable to live in a foster care placement.

The Bedford Park Hostel was closed during the 1983/84 year but reopened in 1985 and in that year it had 361 admissions. Bedford's main function, according to *Signposts* was to provide short-term, emergency accommodation for children and young people involved with the Children's Court and other youth justice programs. More than 90% of children and young people were referred to Bedford by the police, the Courts or via transfer from departmental 'secure institutions'.

The Bedford Hostel was housed at Innaminka House in Greenmount during renovations at one stage.

More info

Chronology

- Cawley House (1983 - 1984)
 - **Bedford Hostel (1971 – 27 February 2009)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Edwards Business College](#)
Date: 1971 - 1972?
- [Department for Child Protection, State of Western Australia \(1 July 2007 - 16 May 2013\)](#)
Date: 2007 - 2009
- [Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia \(1 October 1992 - 1 July 1995\)](#)
- [Department for Community Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1972 - 1985\)](#)
Date: 1972? - 1985
- [Department for Family and Children's Services, State of Western Australia \(1 July 1995 - 1 July 2001\)](#)
- [Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia \(1 July 2001 - 30 June 2007\)](#)
- [Department for Community Services, State of Western Australia \(1 January 1985 - 1 October 1992\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Innaminka Hostel, Greenmount \(1972? - 2004?\)](#)
Bedford Hostel residents and programs were relocated to Innaminka Hostel, Greenmount during times when renovations were being undertaken at Bedford.
- [Department of Native Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1955 - 1972\)](#)
Bedford Hostel was run by Edwards Business College on behalf of the Department of Native Welfare, State of Western Australia.
Date: 1971 - 1972

Resources

- Wilson, Katrin and Michael V. Robinson., *Aboriginal Hostels in Perth : A Comparative Survey*, 1971
- Western Australia. Department for Community Welfare, [Annual Report: Department for Community Welfare](#), 1973 - 1984

Records

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

Records

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
 - [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
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