

Nazareth House, Geraldton

1941 – 1979?

Details

Nazareth House in Bluff Point, Geraldton was established in 1941 and run by the Poor Sisters of Nazareth. Its first residents were children from 1 year old who were private admissions, and 'destitute' aged people. Nazareth House also housed child migrants sent from Britain and Malta (1947-1966), who often lived there for many years. At times, there were between 50 and 75 migrant children living at Nazareth House along with Australian-born children. From 1961, young boys were admitted and from 1965 some Aboriginal children were also placed there. From the late 1970s, no children were admitted to Nazareth House but it continued as an aged care facility.

Nazareth House, situated on Bluff Point in Geraldton, opened in October 1941. It was initially built in to house children sent as child migrants from Britain. However, as it became unsafe to transport children during the war, the large buildings were used to accommodate children, from the age of 12 months, and old people who were deemed 'destitute'.

Government reports (*Signposts* 2004, p.367) show that there was an intention, in 1941 at least, to use Nazareth House as a place to house 'Roman Catholic children other than delinquents' from the Geraldton area who were committed to an institution. Nazareth House was licensed to provide 'care' for children under 6 years old, and would be subsidised for admitting children referred through the child welfare authorities or children's court who may have been deemed neglected or removed from their families for other reasons.

From 1947, girls who were sent as unaccompanied child migrants from Britain and Malta were accommodated at Nazareth House, and went to school on the premises. Occasionally, certain girls were chosen to attend the Stella Maris Convent school in Geraldton. The Child Welfare Department administration files for 1953 state that the girls boarded there during term time and returned to Nazareth House for their holidays. However, former residents have also reported attending the Convent school as day students, returning to Nazareth House each night.

Photographs taken through the years when the migrant girls were at Nazareth House show that the boys from Tardun (one and a half hours east of Geraldton) occasionally visited. These visits must have been particularly important for boys and girls who were siblings.

The admission details provided for Nazareth House in government reports are scant (*Signposts* pp.367-369) until 1957 when a clearer picture starts to emerge of the number of girls living at Nazareth House.

By 1957, there were 67 girls, some of whom were migrants and others who were 'private admissions' (girls placed by family or others). In some years, girls who were wards of the State were also admitted to Nazareth House. The number of children admitted privately increasingly outweighed the number of girls who were child migrants. In 1961, reports to child welfare authorities documented the number of boys at Nazareth House. These few boys would have been pre-school age in most cases. In 1965, Aboriginal children classified as 'native wards' were shown in admission figures as a small minority of total children accommodated.

There are no published admission figures after 1970, and Nazareth House closed its child accommodation program in the late 1970s. The Catholic guide, *A Piece of the Story* says that Nazareth House ceased child care activities in 1977, but research for *Signposts* in 2004 found a reference to Nazareth House in Commonwealth

statistics collated in 1979. This could be because Nazareth House was still gazetted as a child care institution, rather than because it actually housed children.

There have always been aged people in residence at Nazareth House (in a separate wing from the children) and in 2014 it continued as an aged care facility.

Gallery



Nazareth House Geraldton

Description: This is a copy of an image of Nazareth House Geraldton, published on its website. In 2019, Nazareth House is an aged care facility.



Nazareth House on the Chapman River, Geraldton, 1946

Description: This is a digitised copy of a photograph of a photographic print and is part of the Government Photographer collection held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows the isolated location of Nazareth House, out on Bluff Point near the Chapman River.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Sisters of Nazareth \(1888 - current\)](#)

Related Events

- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)
Ross Fact-Finding Mission [British child migration] The Ross Fact-Finding Mission was interested in the welfare of British child migrants sent to Nazareth House.
- [Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, Northern Ireland \(19 January 2013 - 2017\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Catholic Child Welfare Council, United Kingdom \(1929 - 2003\)](#)
The Catholic Child Welfare Council was involved in sending unaccompanied child migrants to Nazareth House from Britain.
Date: 1947 - 1957
- [Father Hudson's Society, United Kingdom \(1902 - current\)](#)
Father Hudson's Society was one of the Homes in Britain that sent child migrants to Nazareth House.
Date: 1947 - 1957
- [Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association \(1947? - 1970\)](#)
The Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association [CEMWA] was the organisation that coordinated the placement of child migrants to Nazareth House.
Date: 1947? - 1966

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Immigration Museum, [Stolen childhoods](#), 2012

- Coldrey, Barry, [Good British stock: child and youth migration to Australia](#), 1999
- [On their own: Britain's child migrants](#), Australian National Maritime Museum website, 2010
- [Margaret Stride interviewed by Marilyn Rock for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), 16 June 2012
- Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, [Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report](#), March 2018
- [Child Migration](#), National Archives of Australia, No date
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999
- [Child Migrants Trust \[website\]](#), 2011
- Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia, [Submission No 55 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), July 2003
- House of Commons Health Committee, [Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 11 June 1998 \(Health - Third Report\)](#), 11 June 1998
- The International Association of Former Child Migrants and Their Families, [Submission No 129 to the Senate Inquiry into Child Migration](#), 2001
- Family Care Society, [Memorandum by the Family Care Society](#), Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 11 June 1998, 11 June 1998
- Foster, Darren J, [Submission No 347 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 3 April 2004
- Foster, Darren J, [She called her coral because it was 'a perfect pink day': The neglecting of Coral Suzanne Dickerson](#), Journal of Australian Studies, 1998
- Thompson, Ann, [Submission No 410 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 26 July 2004
- Coldrey, Barry, [Submission No 15 to the Senate Inquiry into Child Migration](#), 2001

Records

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

Records

- [Tuart Place Historical Photos Collection](#)
- [Father Hudson's Society, Records \(1902 - current\)](#)
- [Catholic Archdiocese of Perth CEMWA and CMC Files \[Former Child Migrants\], Catholic Archdiocese of Perth \(c. 1928 - 2008\)](#)
- [Nazareth House Geraldton, Records \(1941? - 1977?\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Child and Youth Migration Records \(1901 - 1983\)](#)
- [PHIND Personal History Index \(1938 - 1965\)](#)
- [John Moss C.B.E. U.K. Child Welfare Expert. Visit to Australia. Part II, National Archives of Australia \(1951 - 1952\)](#)
- [UK fact finding mission 1956 part 2, National Archives of Australia \(1955 - 1956\)](#)
- [Former Child Migrants Referral Index \(1913 - 1968\)](#)
- [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
- [Indentures \(Guardianship\) \(1947 - 1960\)](#)
- [Former Child Migrants Blue Index Cards \(1947 - 1968\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)

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