

# St Joseph's Preventorium

1929 – 1976

**Other Names:** • Kellerberrin Preventorium

## Details

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St Joseph's Preventorium was established in Kellerberrin in 1929 by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. It was intended as a Home for sick and undernourished children aged 5-12 years, particularly those with asthma. Admissions also included children who were Wards of the state, child migrants, private admissions and children who boarded there while going to school in Kellerberrin. St Joseph's Preventorium closed in 1976.

St Joseph's Preventorium was opened by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Kellerberrin on 17 November 1929, as a result of donations from a childless couple in the town, Mr and Mrs Patterson. The Pattersons equipped and maintained the Preventorium for many years.

In 1953, Sister Michael Xavier, Provincial, included information about the Preventorium in her report to the Congregation Chapter. Improved medical treatment of children, particularly asthma, meant that fewer children were sent to the Preventorium for health-related reasons. The Sisters therefore agreed to take some children from the Catholic Child Migration Scheme.

There are no admission registers for the early years of the Scheme (1947-1956), but there is evidence that around 7 boys who were unaccompanied child migrants were sent to the Preventorium under the Catholic Immigration Scheme. The girls who were expected to be admitted to the Preventorium may have been sent elsewhere:

*In a letter written probably in the mid-50s, the Sisters at Kellerberrin asked the Brothers at the Catholic Agricultural College to take the last six English boys at the Preventorium. One of the Brothers also remembers taking the boys to a football match in 1958 and they called in to see Srs Veronica and Lauriana (who were at the Preventorium together 1953-57) at New Norcia on the way home and were treated with great hospitality. A printout of 'Register of Children sent to Australia via CCWC (Catholic Child Welfare Council) 1938-1963 (To Srs St Joseph Sacred Heart)' lists 7 girls and 7 boys, some sailing on 21/08/1952, the rest 28/01/1953. It would seem from this that these were the only migrants the Sisters of St Joseph received. In her Footsteps, footnote, p.83*

Notably, the CCWC Register was developed in the United Kingdom, using information held by authorities there. It is likely, but not certain, that not all children destined for St Joseph's Preventorium were actually sent there. *Signposts*, 2004, could not find evidence of any migrant girls being sent to St Joseph's Preventorium.

In 1968, after the Meckering earthquake caused structural problems in the convent at Kellerberrin, the Sisters, along with boarders from the convent, moved into the Preventorium.

By 1973, the Preventorium was classed as a 'boarding school' rather than as a Home for sick or needy children. However, children continued to be sent to the Preventorium from Princess Margaret Hospital until 1975.

In 1976, St Joseph's Preventorium for Asthmatics (as it was then called) closed. The final children to stay there were boarding students.

St Joseph's Preventorium is Place Number 11885 on the State Heritage list. In 2017 the property was operating as a hospitality venue known as 'The Prev'.

## Gallery



**St Joseph's Preventorium, Kellerberrin**

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the 'Izzy Orloff collection' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows the driveway and front of the Preventorium.

## More info

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart \(1866 - current\)](#)

#### Related Events

- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association \(1947? - 1970\)](#)  
Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association [CEMWA] was responsible for children who were sent as unaccompanied child migrants to St Joseph's Preventorium.
- [Princess Margaret Hospital for Children \(1909 - 10 June 2018\)](#)  
Children were sent to St Joseph's Preventorium from the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children.  
Date: 1929 - 1975

## Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Immigration Museum, [Stolen childhoods](#), 2012
- Western Australia. Child Welfare Department, [Annual Report of the Child Welfare Department](#), 1928 - 1972

## Records

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

### Records

- [St Joseph's Preventorium, Records \(1929 - 1975\)](#)

- [Kellerberrin Preventorium \(1930 - 1930\)](#)
  - [PHIND Personal History Index \(1938 - 1965\)](#)
  - [UK fact finding mission 1956 part 2, National Archives of Australia \(1955 - 1956\)](#)
  - [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
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