

Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory

1920 – 1955

Other Names:

- Seaforth Industrial Section
- Seaforth Boys' Home (Industrial Section)
- Seaforth Boys' Industrial School
- Seaforth Boys' Home, Gosnells

Details

The Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory was run by the Salvation Army on a large site in Gosnells from 1920 until it closed in 1955. The reformatory was co-located with the Seaforth Boys' Home (1920-1955), the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home (1920-1942) and the Seaforth Todders' Home (1945-1949). Since 1955, the Seaforth site has been used by the Salvation Army for adult residential facilities.

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The Reformatory section was set towards the rear of the Seaforth site, on the northern side of the Canning River, and accommodated boys aged 14 to 18 years. The reformatory was described in the Salvation Army newspaper, *War Cry* on 26 November 1921: the existing homestead on the estate housed three dormitories (with room for ten, three and nine boys each), a vegetable garden in the 'swamp land' north of a five acre citrus orchard; and a schoolhouse that was in process of being erected, with boys having lessons in the dining-hall behind the administration block.

In 1925, an article in the *War Cry*, reported that there were two dormitories, 'a little reading-room where the lads spend their evenings', a patch of land for football and a cricket pitch. The boys from the reformatory were 'the farmers' of Seaforth, being trained and working on agricultural pursuits. When the boys had learned some farming skills and 'the greater art of mastering themselves', they were placed on farms and stations. The wages these boys earned were banked by the Seaforth Manager and held in trust. The article reported that there was £3,000 in the account in December 1925.

In 1943, the Royal Commission appointed to Inquire into the Care and Reform of Youthful Delinquents inspected Seaforth and observed that there was a need for a trades school because 'all boys are not adapted' to just learning about farming. A Trades School was built at Seaforth in 1945, with boys making around 15,000 bricks in four months. The Trades School was dedicated by Commissioner WR Dalziel, Territorial Commander, on 1 September 1945.

In 1953, the Premier of Western Australia commissioned RH Hicks, Director of Child Welfare and Social Services in New South Wales, to review Western Australian child welfare facilities, including the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory. Hicks' report was never released by the government but certain elements were published in the press, including information that condemned the conditions at Seaforth.

The Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory closed on 10 August 1955.

Gallery



Display of cane furniture made by the boys at Seaforth Boys' Home, Gosnells, 1930

Description: This is a digitised copy of a photo and is part of the group of 35 images titled 'Canework, woodwork and other goods made by the boys at Seaforth Boys' Home, Gosnells [picture]'.



Seaforth Reformatory 1931

Description: 'Seaforth Reformatory 1931' a digital copy of an image held in the *Seaforth Boys closed social work* file at the Salvation Army Heritage Museum WA. A typed caption dates the image to 1931.

More info

Chronology

- Salvation Army Industrial School for Boys [Collie] (1901 - 1920)
 - **Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory (1920 – 1955)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory \(1921 - 2018\)](#)
- [The Salvation Army, Australian Territory \(1880 - 1921\)](#)

Related Events

- [Investigation into the Administration of the Child Welfare Department, State of Western Australia \(1953\)](#)
The Investigation into the Administration of the Child Welfare Department of Western Australia by RH Hicks reviewed the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory.
Date: 1953 -
- [Royal Commission appointed to Inquire into the Care and Reform of Youthful Delinquents, State of Western Australia \(1943\)](#)
The Seaforth Salvation Army Boys Reformatory was inspected by members of the Royal Commission appointed to Inquire into the Care and Reform of Youthful Delinquents.
Date: 1943 -

Related Organisations

- [Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Homes, Gosnells \(1920 - 1955\)](#)
- [Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home \(1920 - 1942\)](#)
- [Seaforth Toddlers' Home \(1945 - 1946\)](#)

Resources

- Cleland, Sharon, [Caring for the Children: A history of institutional care provided by The Salvation Army for Australian children and youth \(1893-1995\)](#), August 2012
- Information Services, Department for Community Development, [Signposts: A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920](#), 2004. *Relevance:* Table 49: Young People at the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Home (Industrial Section), 1922 - 1955

- Hetherington, Penelope, [Reformatories](#), Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia, 2009
- [Vote - Child Welfare £329,100](#), Hansard Archive 1870 to 1995, 23 November 1955. *Relevance:* 'Vote – Child Welfare ŉ,100' contains speeches from the Western Australian Parliament that give information about the closure of the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory and the establishment of the Hillston reformatory at Stoneville
- [Cabinet Takes Action On The Hicks Report](#), The West Australian, 19 August 1954. *Relevance:* 'Cabinet Takes Action On The Hicks Report' documents criticisms of the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory
- [Welfare Chief Is Shocked In W.A.](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 August 1954. *Relevance:* 'Welfare Chief Is Shocked In W.A.' reports on criticisms of the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory by the Director of Child Welfare in New South Wales
- [Question - Child Welfare Act. Delinquent Children](#), Hansard Archive 1870 to 1995, 28 November 1940
- [Motion - youthful delinquents, detention conditions](#), Hansard Archive 1870 to 1995, 2 March 1943. *Relevance:* pp.2608-2609
- [Address-in-reply \[Royal Commission on Child Delinquency 2\]](#), Hansard Archive 1870 to 1995, 26 August 1943. *Relevance:* p.136
- *West Australia*, The Victory, 1 September 1921
- *The Seaforth Homes in West Australia*, The War Cry, 26 November 1921
- *Happy lads at Seaforth WA*, The War Cry, 9 October 1926
- *Seaforth Boys' Homes*, The War Cry, 15 December 1923

Other Resources

Title: Seaforth History

Type: Image

Date: 1920s - 1950s

[Details](#)

Title: Seaforth WA Children's Homes 1920's

Type: Image

Date: 1920s - 1950s

[Details](#)

Title: Seaforth MacKenzie Home at Seaforth Boy's Home, 1951

Type: Image

Date: 1951

[Details](#)

Title: Seaforth Boys Home 1947

Type: Image

Date: 1947

[Details](#)

Title: Seaforth School and Reformatory Boys

Type: Image

Date: 1954?

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Historical records and memorabilia of Salvation Army institutions, Southern Territory](#)
 - [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Southern Territory \(c. 1889 - c. 1988\)](#)
 - [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
 - [Children's Homes Files, Western Australian Salvation Army Homes \(1897 - 2012\)](#)
 - [Seaforth Boys' Home \(Gosnells, W.A.\) Photographs \(1926 - 1932\)](#)
 - [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/seaforth-salvation-army-boys-reformatory/>