

Mount Blatherskite Hostel

1946 – 1947

Other Names:

- St Mary's Home for Children
- St Mary's Hostel
- Mount Blatherskite Institution

Details

The Mount Blatherskite Hostel was established in 1946 by the Australian Board of Missions at Mount Blatherskite near Alice Springs. It provided accommodation and training for Aboriginal children who were studying or doing apprenticeships in Alice Springs. Parents paid board for their children placed in the Hostel. The Mount Blatherskite Hostel was renamed the St Mary's Hostel in 1947.

The Mount Blatherskite Hostel was established in 1946 when the Australian Board of Missions (ABM) purchased the former Lady Gowrie Rest Home at Mount Blatherskite, six and a half kilometres from Alice Springs. A large building of 12 rooms on a 325 hectare site, it had been built as a leave house and recreation club for service women. In 1946, sixteen children were reported to be resident in the hostel. Sister Eileen Heath was the superintendent of the Hostel. A December 1946 letter from the secretary of the ABM described the 'Objects of the Home':

1. *To provide a home for half-caste children attending school at Alice Springs.*
2. *To train girls from the school-leaving age in:*
 - a. *Domestic service*
 - b. *Business assistance*
 - c. *Dressmaking*
3. *To accommodate boys during training or apprenticeship for the building, electrical and mechanical trades etc.*
4. *To form a welfare centre for all half-caste people where they may resort in their leisure for friendship, guidance and recreation.*

In the majority of cases parents of the children placed in the Home paid for their accommodation and maintenance. During 1947-1948 the ABM applied for assistance from the Commonwealth Government to support the work at the Home. While the minister agreed to pay some money to assist children at the Hostel whose parents could not afford the fees, he also stated that the Hostel should not be encouraged to accept any children whose parents could not pay their way. He also reiterated the then government policy to send all Aboriginal people of the Church of England faith, deemed by the government to be 'half-caste', to Church Missionary Society run Missions in the North.

The Mount Blatherskite Hostel was officially renamed the St Mary's Home for Children in 1947, but was often still referred to as the Mount Blatherskite Hostel until late in 1948.

More info

Chronology

- **Mount Blatherskite Hostel (1946 – 1947)**
 - St Mary's Hostel (1947 - 1972)
 - St Mary's Children's Village (1972 - 1980s)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Australian Board of Mission \(1850 - 1995\)](#)

Resources

- [Eleanor Barbour's Pages for Country Women](#), The Chronicle, Adelaide, 16 May 1946

Records

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

Records

- [St Mary's Hostel - Alice Springs - Australian Board of Missions - Institution for half-caste children \(1946 - 1954\)](#)
 - [Life of Sister Eileen Heath \(1994 - 1996\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/mount-blatherskite-hostel/>