

Immigrants' Home

c.1853 – 1902

Details

The Immigrants' Home was the name that early colonists gave to ramshackle buildings on either side of St Kilda Road south of Princes Bridge (Swain). This was where the Immigrants' Aid Society provided aid to new arrivals to the colony of Victoria, later expanding its activities beyond this. Over time, the Immigrants' Home came to serve a similar function to an English workhouse, operating a night shelter, convalescent hospital and providing shelter for deserted wives, single mothers, the disabled and neglected and orphaned children.

Victoria had no legislation relating to the care of neglected children until 1864. Before this date, under the *Criminal Law (Infants) Act* 13 Vic., No.21 1849, children could be assigned by the Supreme Court to persons willing to undertake their 'maintenance and education'. Through these means, the Immigrants' Aid Society was responsible for hundreds of neglected children before the 1864 *Neglected and Criminal Children Act* came into being. In 1857, the Victorian government authorised the Immigrants' Aid Society to accept children from the courts and maintain them at the Princes Bridge institution.

The *Argus* reported in May 1860 that the government had handed over buildings to the Immigrants' Aid Society to be used as a reformatory for boys and girls. Formerly, these buildings were the barracks for soldiers of the 40th Regiment. The new reformatory in the eastern portion of the barracks was intended to house 200 children. The newspaper further reported that a boys' and girls' school for neglected and orphaned children was already being run by the Immigrants' Aid Society, with nearly 100 pupils (*Argus*, 20 May 1860). In September 1863, it was reported that the Immigrants' Home was holding 400 children.

A newspaper article in 1864 described the Immigrants' Home as an "extraordinary conglomeration of iron, wooden and brick sheds" (*The Age*, 20 July 1864).

In 1864, when the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act came into being, 463 children were transferred from the care of the Superintendent of the Immigrants' Aid Society to the newly-established Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools. The two sections of the Immigrants' Home already housing children were proclaimed as industrial schools, with separate accommodation for boys and girls. Harcourt was appointed as Superintendent. In the next four months, the Immigrants' Home received 190 children from the courts. The site became known as Princes Bridge industrial school.

In 1870, the institution changed its name to the Immigrants' Aid Society's Home for Houseless and Destitute Persons.

Gallery



St. Kilda Road

Description: This image of Melbourne viewed from south side of the Yarra river shows in the foreground the Immigrants Aid Society Depot on left and Immigrants Home on right.



Immigrants' Home, and swamp near Princes Bridge

Description: This is a copy of a drawing showing the Immigrants' Home in Melbourne, dated 1883.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Immigrants' Aid Society \(1853 - c.1902\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Princes Bridge Industrial School \(1853 - 1876\)](#)

The Immigrants' Home and the Princes Bridge Industrial School were located on the same site

Records

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

Records

- [Records of the Immigrants' Aid Society \(c. 1878 - c. 1902\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/immigrants-home/>