

Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children

1953 – 1988

Other Names:

- Methodist Peace Memorial Homes for Children
- Orana Homes

Details

Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children, were established in 1953 in Burwood. They were previously the Methodist Homes for Children in Cheltenham. Orana Homes offered residential-style accommodation in units with 'cottage parents'. In 1988 it became Orana Family Services.

Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children, were established in 1953 in Burwood. Formerly, dormitory-style accommodation had been provided to children at the Methodist Homes for Children in Cheltenham.

The 1944 Annual Report for the Homes outlined a proposal to rebuild family style accommodation cottages on the Cheltenham site 'as soon as economic and social conditions permitted'.

At the Annual Methodist Conference in 1945 approval was given to a larger scheme involving the reconstruction of the whole of the buildings on a cottage plan.

The Chaplain General of the Army, Rev T C Rentoul, had plans for the new developments at Cheltenham to be built following the 'garden settlement' model. This model drew more heavily on the environmentalist theories of the Garden City movement than on child development theories. By the early post-war period, this model was giving way to having small homes in a suburban setting.

Committed to a new garden settlement and a peace memorial, Rentoul forged ahead with his plans and took an option on a twenty one acre orchard in Elgar Road. Burwood alongside Wattle Park. This became known as Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children.

The move to Burwood was accompanied by a shift towards smaller, residential-style accommodation in units with 'cottage parents'.

Keith Mathieson (who had been superintendent at the Methodist Homes for Children, Cheltenham) was the Superintendent at Orana from 1953 to 1972.

In November 1955, the Methodist Peace Memorial Homes was declared an approved children's home under the Children's Welfare Act 1954.

On 20 February 1987, there was a ceremony at the Burwood site for the redeveloped 'Orana Homes'. It was stage one of the re-development of the Burwood site. Orana Homes consisted of a mixture of 35 detached houses, town houses and flats, designed for families and the elderly. The Orana administration complex was on the site. It was a base for Orana's non-residential programmes of support for children and families, as well as its well established residential programmes.

Despite this re-development, in 1988 the organisation began a relocation to Coolaroo, in Melbourne's north-west, where it became Orana Family Services.

Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children was mentioned in the Lost Innocents Report (2001) as an institution involved in the migration of children to Australia.

Gallery

COTTAGE HOME FOR CHILDREN



Cottage home for children [editor's note: Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children, Wattle Park]

Description: This is a copy of an image from an article published in the *Argus* in 1948. The caption reads: "The Kindergarten Cottage for the new Methodist Children's Home, Wattle Park; Bates, Smart and McCutcheon, architects".



A family group cottage, "Orana", Burwood

Description: This is a copy of an image which was published in Superintendent Mathieson's PhD thesis titled *The Institutional Care of the Dependent Child*



Entrance to the children's chapel, "Orana", Burwood

Description: This is a copy of an image which was published in Superintendent Mathieson's PhD thesis titled *The Institutional Care of the Dependent Child*



The children's council in session, "Orana", Burwood

Description: This is a copy of an image which was published in Superintendent Mathieson's PhD thesis titled *The Institutional Care of the Dependent Child*. The 'Children's Council' was an increasingly common feature of children's homes by the 1950s. The Children's Council was a forum for children and staff to work together and to discuss matters related to children's interests. In his PhD thesis, Mathieson (Superintendent of Orana) contended that a policy of giving children a say 'holds promise of more adequate opportunity for good and positive relationships between staff and children and among the children' (p.643).



Orana Methodist Peace Homes for Children, 87 Elgar Road, Burwood

Description: [From SLV catalogue]; Shows chapel, homes and drinking fountain and bench on corner of street; woman with toddler in pram walking on path.



And so to bed

Description: Shows children at 'Orana' in bed.



Family Cottages at 'Orana'.

Description: This is an image of Orana at Burwood. It shows six children standing in the grounds of the Orana complex, with four of the cottages visible in the background.



Methodist Peace Memorial Homes for British Children

Description: This is a copy of a photograph in the collection of the National Archives of Australia's Immigration Photographic Archive collection.

More info

Chronology

- Methodist Homes for Children (1891 - c. 1953)
 - **Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children (1953 – 1988)**
 - Orana Family Services (1988 - 2011)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Family Group Homes run by Orana \(1967 - 2000s\)](#)

Run by

- [Methodist Church of Victoria and Tasmania \(c. 1851 - 1977\)](#)

Related Events

- [Interstate movement of Northern Territory children \(1930s - 1970s\)](#)
- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Methodist Babies' Home \(1929 - c. 1974\)](#)

In 1959 the Methodist Babies' Home merged with the Boards of the Methodist Homes for Children to form the Methodist Department of Childcare, which subsequently merged with the Presbyterian Church's Department of Social Services to carry out the placement of babies and children.

Date: 1959 -
- [Presbyterian and Methodist Child Care Service \(1971 - 1977?\)](#)

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Immigration Museum, [Stolen childhoods](#), 2012
- Australian Heritage Council, [A thematic heritage study on Australia's benevolent and other care institutions](#), 2016
- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, *Uniting Church in Australia: agencies in Victoria delivering substitute care services*, April 2008
- Gordon, Michael, [Sorry not enough for stolen generations](#), The Age, 13 February 2010
- Shingles, Stephen, [Submission no 188 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005

- *Annual reports: Methodist Department of Child Care*, 1961 - 1970
- [Cottage home for children](#), The Argus, 25 September 1948
- [Our children are lucky: "the Creek" helps fund](#), The Argus, 13 December 1954
- Slatterie, Patricia and Blick, Jeanette, [Suffer the little children](#), Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions blog, 26 October 2010
- Mathieson, JKW, *The institutional care of the dependent child*, 1959
- [Orana Methodist Peace Memorial Home](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance*: See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children

Other Resources



Title: Methodist Department of Child Care Babies' Home and "Orana", Annual Report, 1961

Type: Image

Date: 1961

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Records held by Uniting Church Archives \(1923 - 1994\)](#)
 - [Private and Professional Papers of Leonard Tierney \(1933 - 1992\)](#)
Private and Professional Papers of Leonard Tierney contain records relating to Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children in the 'Child Welfare History' series.
 - [Orana UnitingCare Records \(1888 - 2011\)](#)
 - [Child and Youth Migration Records \(1901 - 1983\)](#)
 - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
-

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/orana-the-peace-memorial-homes-for-children/>