

Geelong Orphan Asylum

c. 1854 – 1862

Details

The Geelong Orphan Asylum was established in 1854. In 1862, the name of the orphanage changed to Geelong Protestant Orphanage, to clarify the asylum's religious connections, although there was no formal connection between the Orphanage and the church.

The Geelong Orphan Asylum came into being as a result of a public meeting in 1854, called by William Hingston Baylie, Mayor of Geelong, 'to promote the establishment of an Orphan Asylum in the town of Geelong.' As a result of the meeting, a committee was formed and work commenced immediately.

Community concerns about orphaned, abandoned and neglected children in Geelong led to the campaign for the town to have its own orphan asylum. The supporters of the Geelong Orphan Asylum largely came from Geelong's Protestant community, however it had no formal affiliations with the church or other religious groups.

Just as had occurred in Melbourne and other large provincial towns, the gold rushes had caused major social upheaval, leading to concern about the number of destitute, 'neglected', abandoned or orphaned children and the lack of public facilities for them.

The community of Geelong regarded the establishment of its own orphanage as fulfilling a social and moral responsibility to children and their families. A Geelong businessman, James Austin contributed to the Orphan Asylum as a co-founder and patron alongside William Baylie, and many other local residents made contributions to local fundraising efforts.

The Geelong Orphan Asylum was established in a bluestone building at Herne Hill, recently used as a museum for the Geelong Cement Works. The foundation stone for the Geelong Orphan Asylum was laid in March 1855 after the Committee received notification that the Government had allocated funds for the project. The building was completed in June 1885 and was ready to accept children from October 1855.

In 1862, the name of the orphanage changed to Geelong Protestant Orphanage, to clarify the asylum's religious connections and support base (distinguishing it from the Catholic orphanage in Geelong, St Augustine's, established in the mid 1850s). However there was no formal connection between the orphanage and the church.

Glastonbury Child and Family Services is the custodian of records from Geelong Orphan Asylum.

Gallery



Old Geelong Orphanage Asylum and Common School

Description: This building was first classified by the National Trust in 1975. The Statement of Significance reads: 'A substantial two storey bluestone orphanage with sandstone trim, built in 1855 in the Scottish style and significant as an important early social institution of the Geelong district'.

More info

Chronology

- **Geelong Orphan Asylum (c. 1854 – 1862)**
 - Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum (1862 - 1909)

Resources

- Australian Heritage Council, [A thematic heritage study on Australia's benevolent and other care institutions](#), 2016
- Glastonbury Community Services, [History of Glastonbury Community Services](#), Barwon Child, Youth and Family website, No date
- Jaggs, Donella, *Advancing This Good Work: a history of Glastonbury Child & Family Services*, 1988
- James Jenkinson Consulting, [Guide to out-of-home care services 1940-2000 - Volume One: Agency Descriptions](#), November 2001
- O'Neill, Cate, [Reflecting on the past through memorials](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 23 July 2015
- [Geelong Orphan Asylum](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Geelong Orphan Asylum
- [Former Protestant Orphan Asylum and Common School, 150-220 McCurdy Road, Fyansford, Greater Geelong City](#), Victorian Heritage Database, No date
- Barnard, Jill, [Stronger together: a history of the founding agencies of Barwon Child, Youth & Family 1855-2018](#), 2018

Records

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

Records

- [Glastonbury Community Services Records \(1853 - 2015\)](#)
- [Glastonbury and Geelong Orphanage Records \(c. 1855 - 1992\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/geelong-orphan-asylum/>