

Lutheran Children's Home

1950 – 1973

Other Names: • Lutheran Peace Memorial Children's Home

Details

The Lutheran Children's Home (also known as the Lutheran Peace Memorial Home) was established in 1950 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia. The Home, located in Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills, housed the children of widowed post-war immigrants, to enable the women to work. In 1955, the Home relocated to a larger property in Sackville Street, Kew. This Home was closed in 1973. The Lutheran Church continued to operate family group homes in eastern Melbourne in the 1970s and 1980s, and also moved into foster care in the Glenelg region of south west Victoria from the 1980s.

The Lutheran Children's Home was officially opened on 22 October 1950. Its first location was at 760 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills, in 'a fine brick house, in a pretty garden', as it was described by *The Age* in 1954.

The Home, which could accommodate around 40 children at a time, was established to care for the children of widows who migrated to Australia following the Second World War, to enable the women to work. There were children of many nationalities, mainly from Eastern Europe – in 1954, *The Age* reported that its residents were Latvian, Estonian, White Russian (Ukrainian), Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and Polish, and 'today two Arabian children are coming' (3 April 1954, p.11). The article reported that the children, aged from 4 to 15, all had working mothers who were 'trying to rehabilitate themselves in a new country'. The residents of Lutheran Children's Home attended local schools, such as Surrey Hills State School and Swinburne Technical School.

In 1952, the Hospital and Charities Commission registered the Home as a charitable organisation, on condition that a number of improvements be made. A decision was made instead to sell the home and purchase a larger property.

A suitable property was purchased at 52 Sackville Street, Kew and officially opened on 5 May 1955. This Home was an old two-storey mansion-type home, set in a well-kept garden with two downstairs dormitories for girls and two dormitories upstairs for boys. At the time of the opening three-quarters of the children were Lutheran; about half of these were children of immigrant parents.

In June 1956 the Home was gazetted as an approved Children's Home by the Children's Welfare Act 1954. At that time, the Home had total bed accommodation for 42 children between the ages of 4 to 14 (in the mid 1960s, the age limit was raised to 15). As the number of migrant children decreased, the Home began taking in other children needing care, including children who had been made wards of the State.

Following concerns from the Social Welfare Department, the Family Welfare Advisory Council assessed the Home in 1966. Changes were made on the basis of the Council's recommendations, including renovations to the Kew property, increasing staff/children ratios, increasing staff training and moving towards the family group home model of care.

In 1968 the majority of children placed were state wards and 'private placements' of children. Holiday Hosts (Lutheran families) living in the city and country were approved to take the children to their homes over the school

holiday period.

In March 1971, the Lutheran Teenage Family Care Home at 755 Station Street Box Hill was established, to continue the care of teenage children too old to remain at the Children's Home in Kew. It operated until 1980, when it was closed and converted to an administrative and welfare centre for Lutheran Social Services.

In 1973, the Lutheran Church proposed a shift from 'congregate care' in the Children's Home, towards family group home care. The Lutheran Children's Home in Kew was closed in 1973 and the Church began to acquire new 'cottage home' properties in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, operated by the agency called Lutheran Children's Homes.

Gallery



Lutheran Children's Home

Description: This is an image of the Lutheran Children's Home, 52 Sackville St, Kew.



Matron Buivids with some of her 'family' of migrant children at the Lutheran Peace Memorial Home

Description: This is a copy of a photograph published in *The Age* in 1954, showing a group of residents and the Matron, posing in the garden of the Lutheran Children's Home.

More info

Chronology

- **Lutheran Children's Home (1950 – 1973)**
 - Lutheran Children's Homes (c. 1973 - 2002)

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Lutheran Church of Australia \(1838 - current\)](#)

Resources

- [Would you like to be ... a boy without a book?](#), The Argus, 8 December 1954
- [The Final Magic Touch](#), The Argus, 23 December 1954
- [Lutheran Children's Home \(1950-76\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Lutheran Children's Home

Records

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

Records

- [Lutheran Children's Home records held by the Victorian Government \(c. 1950 - c. 1980\)](#)
 - [Lutheran Children's Home Records \(1950 - 1972\)](#)
 - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
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