

St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home

1967 – 1997

Other Names: • St Vincent's Boys' Home

Details

The St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home was renamed from St Vincent de Paul Orphanage for Boys in 1967. It was run by the Christian Brothers and located in South Melbourne. The St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home closed in 1997. Since closing, the St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home has been the subject of many submissions where former residents' have outlined their experiences of physical, psychological and sexual abuse in the Home.

In 1967, when the Home was renamed, several other changes were made. While the Christian Brothers continued to manage the Home, they no longer taught the boys. Lay women were employed to teach at the internal school and also to care for the younger boys.

Finding Records documents other changes at the Home:

By 1968 the home had refitted its internal school premises, introduced uniforms for those in the school, improved its system of records for children and began a process of breaking up its large dormitories into small units with indoor play spaces, and a library attached.

By 1969, older boys had their own private cubicle, dormitories had been divided with partitions, and each boy given their own locker. Most boys went to a local school, however the internal school continued to operate for grades four, five and six who needed extra assistance before beginning secondary education. Life skills were now also taught including banking and cooking, with the boys making their own breakfasts.

In 1973 there was still 133 boys at the Home, however by 1979 it had reduced to 66 boys. Excursions and camps remained as part of the schedule of activities for the boys, and the Orphanage band continued. In 1978, the band toured Tasmania, and they went on regular regional tours to country towns. In 1980 the band celebrated its centenary.

Finding Records describes by 1983 “there were about 60 boys with siblings together in six self-contained units. About a third of the boys went to the campus school, the remainder in local state and Catholic schools.”

Holding onto Hope describes how the Home was funded as a state-wide service and by 1991 the 23 boys in residence had each had an average of 7.8 placements before arriving in the Home. Their average age was just under 12 years. They were accommodated in three separate units, and cared for by rostered staff, with most attending the on-site school in the morning and undertaking special activities in the afternoon.

A former social worker employed in the Home described how the building “didn’t lend itself to working with children”, and in 1992 a family group home at St Joseph’s, Flemington became St Vincent’s Independent Living Unit.

St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home closed in 1997, and the service came under the control of MacKillop Family Services.

The St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home is the subject of many submissions to several inquiries. The submissions outline former resident's experiences and detail physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

Gallery



St Vincent's Boys' Home, South Melbourne, Donation Box

Description: This is an image of the St Vincent's Boys' Home "Build A Boy" donation box.



Former St. Vincent de Paul Boys' Orphanage

Description: Orphanage located at 231-241 Cecil St and 199-201 Napier St and 34 Church St, South Melbourne. This image is one of a series of photographs available from the Victorian Heritage Register.

More info

Chronology

- St Vincent de Paul Orphanage for Boys (1874 - 1967)
 - **St Vincent de Paul Boys' Home (1967 – 1997)**
 - MacKillop Family Services (1997 - current)

Related Entries

Run by

- [St Patrick's Province \(Victoria and Tasmania\), Christian Brothers \(1967 - 2007\)](#)

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
- [Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations, State of Victoria \(17 April 2012 - 2013\)](#)

Resources

- Twigg, Karen, [St Vincent de Paul Orphanage](#), eMelbourne: the city past and present, 2008
- [Heritage Display](#), MacKillop Family Services website, 2013
- [St Vincent de Paul Orphanage/Home \(1854-1997\)](#), Finding Records, No date

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [MacKillop Family Services Records, Victorian institutions \(1857 - current\)](#)
 - [Private and Professional Papers of Leonard Tierney \(1933 - 1992\)](#)
Private and Professional Papers of Leonard Tierney contain records relating to St Vincent de Paul's Boys' Home in the 'Child Welfare History' series.
 - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
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