

# Swinborn Lodge

1957 – 1979

## Details

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Swinborn Lodge, South Yarra, was established by the Melbourne City Mission in 1957. It was formerly the Elizabeth Fry Retreat. It accommodated girls aged from 14 to 18. In 1974 the Lodge moved to Carlton, and in 1979 it became a hostel known as Swinborn.

Swinborn Lodge was formerly the Elizabeth Fry Retreat (1884-1957) in South Yarra. It was taken over by the Melbourne City Mission in 1943, and by the 1950s, the Mission began to change the focus of the Retreat.

In 1957 Elizabeth Fry Retreat was renamed Swinborn Lodge to prevent residents being stigmatised by the associations with the Retreat. The laundry operations ceased and the space was used for new bedrooms. Work focussed on the emerging needs of vulnerable young women in the 1950s and '60s.

By the 1960s and early 1970s, Swinborn Lodge was providing hostel accommodation for girls, often coming from Winlaton, and often disturbed and alienated by their life experiences. Living in the hostel setting was difficult for the girls and for the staff, and staff turnover was high.

Girls were referred by the Youth Welfare and Female Probation and Parole Divisions of the Social Welfare Department, policewomen, the Children's Court and other agencies. The centre also provided emergency accommodation for girls who were not Wards of State.

In 1972, the Community Welfare Foundation (the name of the Melbourne City Mission from 1970 to 1979, when it reverted to its original name) proposed a new focus and new location for the hostel.

The Mission's old central office in Carlton was modified and the new hostel opened in 1974. Swinborn Lodge now functioned as a 'specialist hostel' providing professional residential and support services for girls on Children's Court orders with quite serious personal or social challenges. In 1979 the facility's name was changed to 'Swinborn' and the term 'Lodge' dropped.

In 2014, there is a children's playground (Argo Reserve) on the Elizabeth Fry Retreat/ Swinborn Lodge site in South Yarra. The bricks from the main building were reused as part of the playground, retaining walls, boundary walls and a fountain. The 'stables' building at the rear of the site which was used as a morgue is still standing.

## Gallery

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**Elizabeth Fry Retreat (later Swinborn Lodge), South Yarra**

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## Elizabeth Fry Retreat (later Swinborn Lodge), South Yarra

**Description:** Photograph of Elizabeth Fry Retreat (later Swinborn Lodge), South Yarra, viewed from the street.

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## More info

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### Chronology

- Elizabeth Fry Retreat (1884 - 1957)
  - **Swinborn Lodge (1957 – 1979)**
    - Swinborn (1979 - 1986)

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Melbourne City Mission \(1854 - 1970\)](#)  
Date: 1957 - 1970
- [Community Welfare Foundation \(1970 - 1979\)](#)  
The Melbourne City Mission changed its name to the Community Welfare Foundation from 1970 to 1979.  
Date: 1970 - 1979

### Resources

- James Jenkinson Consulting, [Guide to out-of-home care services 1940-2000 - Volume One: Agency Descriptions](#), November 2001
- University of Melbourne Archives, [Records of Melbourne City Mission](#), 12 July 2005
- Malone, Betty, *Bonds of care: Elizabeth Fry Retreat and its founders*, 1991

## Records

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

### Records held by other organisations

- [Melbourne City Mission \[Records\] \(1856 - 1995\)](#)
  - [Melbourne City Mission Records \(c. 1900 - current\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/swinborn-lodge/>