

Straight View Farm Reformatory School

1895 – 1919

Details

Straight View Farm Reformatory School was established in Harcourt, Victoria in 1895. It accommodated Roman Catholic boys from the ages of 11 to 17. It closed in 1919.

The Straight View Farm Reformatory School was a private reformatory established to accommodate Roman Catholic boys at Harcourt. Their housing in this small cottage farm school, where there was an attempt to replicate the conditions of home life, 'amid country surroundings and occupations and absolutely beyond the reach of city associations', was a preparation for placement in a country foster-home. Their routine included lessons every evening and during the day they were employed on various kinds of farm work such as milking, fruit-picking, hay making, shearing and working in the garden. It housed four boys at a time, with a number of others placed in service homes when they were deemed ready to undertake the transition.

In 1909, an article in the Bendigo Independent criticised the Victorian government's approach to dealing with 'neglected and reformatory children', stating that private institutions were being paid 10 shillings a week by the government towards a boy's 'keep', and also benefiting from the boy's labour. It gave the example of a boy who had been committed by the children's court to go to Straight View Reformatory. The article claimed that the owner of the Harcourt Reformatory, Mr McMahon, was being paid 'twice over – once in actual cash, and once in the equivalent by the youth's labour. This is only one of many cases' (*Bendigo Independent*, 30 August 1908).

By 1912 the Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools Report stated that further provision needed to be made for reformatory boys who were Roman Catholic as Straight View was unsuitable for boys of 'absconding tendencies'.

By 1918 one boy was housed in the Reformatory, with four placed out. Straight View closed in 1919.

More info

Related Entries

Related Legislation

- [The Juvenile Offenders' Act 1887, Victoria \(1888 - 1890\)](#)

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