

Dorrie Black Children's Home

1955? – 1970?

Other Names: • Mrs Dorrie Black Children's Home

Details

The Dorrie Black Children's Home operated in Synnot Street Werribee from the mid-1950s until approximately 1970. It was a state-registered Home for children aged under 5, run by Mrs Dorothy Black.

An article published in The Age in 1997 provided details of the cruel treatment of babies and children at Dorrie Black Children's Home. Former staff members recalled 'toilet training' that involved tying children to poles, and pinning the children to their beds to keep them confined at night. Former social worker Donna Jaggs was quoted in the article, saying that the Dorrie Black Home was typical of 'backyard baby farms' in Victoria during the 1950s and 1960s. She described these privately-run Homes as the 'black holes' of Victoria's child-care system.

The article in The Age stated that Dorrie Black Home was for temporary care of children, and many children were placed there by their mothers during times of difficulty. However, if parents missed making support payments for four weeks in a row, the children were automatically made state wards.

In a submission to the Victorian Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisation, the Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) stated that Dorothy Black was awarded an MBE in 1969 for her work in 'child welfare'. CLAN wrote, 'it is astounding that these torturous and cruel practices were not only accepted at the time, but were rewarded' (CLAN, 2010 p.10).

Gallery



Dorothy Black and Pat Condon

Description: This is a copy of a photograph held by the Werribee and District Historical Society. The description for the image in Picture Victoria is: Description: Location: Synnot Street,,Werribee. c.1960's? Dorothy Black MBE and her assistant Pat Condon with children at her Baby's Home. Original not mounted 17.5 x 13cm. Copy of original held by Historical Society. Hospitals, Private; Clothing and dress - Australia; black, dorothy mbe condon, pat

More info

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