

Dalmar

1900 –

- Other Names:**
- Dalmar Out of Home Care
 - Wesley Dalmar Services
 - Dalmar Children's Homes
 - Dalmar Child and Family Care
 - Dalmar Children's Home
 - Dalmar Methodist Children's Home
 - Dalmar Babies Home
 - Wesley Dalmar
 - Central Mission Home for Neglected Children
 - Wesley Dalmar Children's Services

URL: <https://www.wesleymission.org.au/about-us/history/historic-sites-and-locations/wesley-dalmar/>

Details

Dalmar began its life as the Central Mission Home for neglected children in Woolloomooloo. The Home moved to Croydon in 1900, then changed its name to Dalmar. In 1923 Dalmar moved to Carlingford where a babies home and cottages were established. Dalmar has been known by many names over time, reflecting shifts in the style of out-of-home care it offered, and the evolution of the Central Methodist Mission. Dalmar stopped serving as a children's home in the 1980s, but, as Wesley Dalmar Children's Services and part of Wesley Mission, continues to operate foster care programs and residential care facilities.

Dalmar was set up as a children's home by the Central Methodist Mission. It started as the Central Mission Home for Neglected Children in Woolloomooloo. Having outgrown those premises by 1898 the House Committee sought a suitable property. The Woolloomooloo property was sold to fund for the purchase of a house in Dalmar Street, Croydon. In January 1900 the children moved into the new premises, and not long afterwards, the children's home was named Dalmar. Whilst at Croydon, the children attended school at Five Dock.

In 1917, the Mission's superintendent hinted that he wanted to see the children's work develop along the lines of the Burnside Presbyterian Homes model, with a number of cottages rather than one large building. For a number of years, however, nothing was done and the home continued to operate at Croydon until 1923.

In April 1923, the children were relocated from Croydon to the new Dalmar site at Carlingford on fifteen acres of land in a purpose-built residence and one cottage. Dalmar grew to consist of a number of cottages, together with a hospital, an orchard and vegetable gardens. The new complex included the provision that between sixteen and twenty children would be accommodated in each cottage. The school-aged children attended Carlingford Public School. The main building appears to have been used as a babies' home. By the 1930s it held more than 150 babies and children.

The reasons why children were admitted to Dalmar were many and varied. Some required only short-term accommodation due to temporary disruptions to their normal family life. Others were admitted as long-term residents. Some children were placed voluntarily by their parents or guardians, while others were found abandoned and yet others were referred by the courts.

From 1962 Dalmar began running foster care and adoption programmes. In 1982, there were 90 children in various residential units and 35 in foster care. Dalmar Child and Family Care included five cottages in Carlingford, family group homes at Burwood and West Pymble, emergency centres in Lewisham and Ashfield, as well as Francis St annexe for Vietnamese boys accommodating 94 homeless teenagers.

In 1977 the Central Methodist Mission changed its name to Wesley Methodist Mission, as it became part of the Uniting Church. The children's homes and organisations that had been part of the Central Methodist Mission often added the word Wesley to their names. Dalmar probably began being referred to as Wesley Dalmar around this time. By that stage Dalmar held 134 children at Carlingford, and ran the Bernard-Smith Home at Pymble and the Wesley James Home at Burwood.

According to the Reverend Gordon Moyes, Superintendent of Wesley Mission at that time, all the homes were struggling with poor finances and crumbling architecture. A bequest from the Cottee family the Cottee Orchard in South Australia provided a source of income to support children's homes, and Mrs Lois Cottee supported the foundation of Cottee Lodge, a service for homeless youth in a former convent in Ashfield.

In 1986 Dalmar began a process of regionalisation, opening new offices in various parts of New South Wales, often in cooperation with local Uniting Church parishes. However, the general administration and overall supervision of the programmes run by what was then known as Dalmar Child and Family Care were located at Carlingford.

Moyes, Superintendent of Wesley Mission at that time, has described the process on his blog:

... We knew that we had to move right away from the large institutions at Carlingford and Pymble and move to smaller houses. Here children in groups of 3 or 4 could be cared for. We would also develop large scale fostering programs where foster parents would concentrate on caring for one or two children at the most. This concentrated care would bring better results then what we had been achieving try to care for too many in one place.

In 1983 I opened our first house at Mount Druitt and then another one at Whalan and very quickly houses at Blaxland, Penrith, Quakers Hill, Castle Hill, Riverstone, Grantham Heights, Blacktown, Lindfield, Killara, Dulwich Hill, Tuggerah, Rouse Hill, Lakemba and many other places. As our fundraising improved we got more family group homes.

Besides this we recruited hundreds of families, many of whom had already grown children and who now still wanted to provide a second chance for children where their own families could not care for them.

This foster work is now the backbone of all that we do.

The Dalmar Home at Carlingford stopped housing children around this time.

In 1993, Wesley Methodist Mission changed its name to Wesley Mission. Since then, the organisation has restructured its services a number of times, and Dalmar's name has changed, although the services it provides have not. By 2011 the organisation was known as Dalmar Child and Family Services or Wesley Dalmar.

Dalmar's name was changed again by 2014 to Wesley Dalmar Children's Services, which is still part of Wesley Mission.

Wesley Mission has an Aftercare Program, for people who once lived at Dalmar and other children's homes, or were in its foster care programs. This service helps people to access their files and provides an opportunity to talk about experiences in care. Dalmar also provides a free assessment and treatment program through Wesley Private Hospital's psychology service.

Dalmar was mentioned in the Lost Innocents Report (2001) as an institution involved in the migration of children to Australia.

Gallery



Dalmar



Wesley Dalmar celebrate 120 years in foster care

Description: This is a video produced by Wesley Dalmar in 2014. It contains archival footage from the Home including film of children working on the farm and playing games. It also includes interviews with former residents and current Dalmar staff.



Children's Home, Dalmar, Paramatta Road, Croydon

Description: This is an image of Dalmar Children's Home, Croydon. It shows children outside a large two-storey house. The children appear to be wearing uniforms. This image was published in *The Methodist* on 28 December 1901.

More info

Chronology

- Central Mission Home for Neglected Children (1893 - 1900)
 - **Dalmar (1900 –)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Central Methodist Mission, Sydney \(1885 - 1977\)](#)

The Central Methodist Mission set up Dalmar in 1900, and supported the operations of the home throughout the period 1900 to 1977.

Date: 1900 - 1977

- [Wesley Central Mission, Sydney \(1977 - 1993\)](#)
- [Wesley Mission \(1993 - current\)](#)

Dalmar is an agency of the Wesley Mission that is responsible for out-of-home care and children's services. Wesley Mission also holds and manages the records of Dalmar.

Related Events

- [Interstate movement of Northern Territory children \(1930s - 1970s\)](#)
- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)

John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report

Related Organisations

- [Gateway Children's Home \(1964 - 2017\)](#)

- [Wesley James Home \(1976 - 1990?\)](#)
Wesley James Home was part of Dalmar Children's Homes

Related Concepts

- [Child Migration \(1800s - 1970s\)](#)

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Matthews, Bernie, [Wilma's Story](#), 22 August 2007
- Robb, Wilma, [Forgotten Australians: Wilma's Story - 'No eye contact'](#), Forgotten Australians: Life Stories, 2011
- Robb, Ms Wilma, [Submission 280 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Vernon, Ms Pamela, [Submission 203 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Vernon, Pamela, [Forgotten Australians: Pamela's Story - On life's terms](#), Forgotten Australians: Life Stories, 2011
- Benns, Matthew, [Rees offers apology to casualties of care system](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 September 2009
- [Dreams of pets, milkshakes and ironed clothes](#), Sydney Morning Herald, 1 September 2004
- [Michael Snell interviewed by Rob Willis in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 17 November 2009
- Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, [Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report](#), March 2018

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Records held by Wesley Mission \(1893 - current\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/dalmar-2/>