

Mowbray Park

1929 – 1959

Other Names:

- Barnardo Farm School for Boys at Picton
- Barnardo Farm School
- Dr Barnardo's Farm School, Picton
- Home Training Farm, Mowbray Park
- Harry Cuzens House
- Mowbray Park Home for Barnardo Boys
- Mowbray Park Home

Details

Mowbray Park was a farm training school for child and youth migrants run by Dr Barnardo's Homes (Australia Branch) at Picton. The school was initially for boys and girls aged six to fifteen years, but was later used only for boys. Around 200 children could be accommodated within the 6 cottages that were built at Mowbray Park. It closed in 1959, and was replaced by a smaller farm school at Scone on the Upper Hunter River.

Mowbray Park had been the country home of Sir Frederick and Lady Waley and was used by the Red Cross Society during World War II before being purchased for a Barnardo's Home in 1928. The home was organised by AW Green, who was a committee member of Dr Barnardo's Homes and had been the last president of the State Children's Relief Department. Green was also president of the Church of England Children's Homes and was involved with the Masonic Welfare Hostel at Lewisham and the Masonic School at Baulkham Hills.

The Home was officially opened in November 1929 by the Governor of New South Wales, though 41 boys from England had already been in residence for some time.

When Mowbray Park opened children split their time between the school built on the property, and practical work, learning farm skills if boys or domestic service if girls. Later on children attended a larger central school in a nearby town.

Some time in the 1930s the home was named Harry Cuzens House, in memory of a previous treasurer of Dr Barnardo's who had served as an honorary inspector.

The Home was for children under the age of 16. Once boys reached the age of 16 they became farm trainees for six months and then were placed out as labourers on farms. Girls were transferred to Dr Barnardos Girls' Home, Burwood once they reached the post-primary standard in education at the local state school. In 1931 Mowbray Park held 75 boys under the age of 15. While in 1938, 32 young girls were in residence.

Until Mowbray Park closed, reunions were held every year at farm school for people who had lived in Barnardos' Homes as children.

In the 1950s Mowbray Park came under scrutiny for sexual abuse being committed against the boys there. In 1955 a housemaster was dismissed on suspicion of abusing boys at the school. In 1958 the manager of Barnardo's Australia raised concerns that up to 23 boys at Mowbray Park had been sexually abused by staff, other boys at the home, and neighbouring farmers who some of the boys worked for. These reports resulted in

the suspension of Barnardo's child migration program in July 1958 while the matter was investigated by Barnardo's, the Child Welfare Department, and the New South Wales Police. Several arrests were made as a result of these investigations. Following these arrests the child migration program was resumed in August 1956, however the matter ultimately resulted in the closure of Mowbray Park in 1959.

Mowbray Park was sold by Dr Barnardos Homes (Australia branch) in 1960. In 2012 Mowbray Park was in private ownership and was being used as a farm stay accommodation venue.

Gallery



Education - Agriculture schools - Boys working in the garden, Barnardo Farm School, Mowbray Park, New South Wales



Boys getting refreshments from the Tuck Shop, Barnardo Farm School, Mowbray Park, New South Wales

More info

Chronology

- **Mowbray Park (1929 – 1959)**
 - Scone Farm School (c. 1959 - 1982)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Dr Barnardo's Homes \(Australia Branch\) \(1883 - 1966\)](#)

Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report

Related Organisations

- [Dr Barnardos Girls' Home, Burwood \(1938 - 1957\)](#)
Girls were transferred from Mowbray Park to Dr Barnardos Girls' Home, Burwood once they reached the post-primary standard in education.

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Lyon, Doreen, *With the Best of Intentions: Stories from Dr Barnardo's Farm School At Mowbray Park, near The Oaks, NSW 1929-1959* / collected by Doreen Lyon for The Oaks Historical Society, 2010

- National Archives of Australia, [Destination: Australia - sharing our post-war migrant stories](#), No date
- [On their own: Britain's child migrants](#), Australian National Maritime Museum website, 2010

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Barnardos Australia, Records \(c. 1883 - current\)](#)
 - [Dr. Barnardo's in Australia, records \(c. 1921 - 1985?\)](#)
 - [Immigration Photographic Archive 1946 - today \(1946 - current\)](#)
 - [School Files \(1876 - 1979\)](#)
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