

Bidura

1920 – 1977

Other Names:

- Bidura Home
- Metropolitan Girls' Shelter
- Bidura Depot
- The Depot
- Bidura Receiving Home
- Glebe Depot
- Burdura

Details

Bidura in Glebe was a historic house that was acquired by the New South Wales Government in 1920. It was converted to a depot and receiving home, holding children while they awaited foster placements, children's court hearings or transfer to other establishments. Many children stayed for extended periods. In 1923 it was named the Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, although this moved to a separate building on the same site. Bidura closed as a children's home in 1977.

Bidura was used as a depot for children involved in hearings in the Children's Court, which was located at Albion Street in Surry Hills. Bidura housed children prior to children's court hearings and held those who had been committed to state care and were awaiting placement in foster care or institutions, or were returning from placements.

In 1923 Bidura was designated the Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, but this seems to have moved to a separate building, that was entered from Avon Street, by 1936.

By 1939 Bidura housed boys up to six years of age and girls up to 18 years, with an attached school operated by a governess. The school was required because residents of Glebe opposed the attendance of state children in local schools. Bidura was also, until at least the 1950s, the site of the Child Welfare Department's clothing store.

Bidura is one of the finest houses in Glebe. It was designed by Edward Blacket and built between 1858 and 1860. However, by the time it was used by the Child Welfare Department it was aging and, as early as the 1930s, reports into the operations of the Department questioned whether it was appropriate for the accommodation of children.

Many female state wards and children attending court in the Sydney area passed through Bidura a number of times. The submissions to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Inquiry into Institutional Care record degrading experiences, such as having their hair doused in kerosene and bound in rags, and that girls were submitted to humiliating internal examinations, that would be repeated at the next institution they were sent to. They also report much sadness at being separated from their male siblings.

According to research done by the staff of the Northern Territory Department of Health, it was a place where children from the Northern Territory were sent, prior to being placed at Winbin in Strathfield.

Bidura was restored by New South Wales Public Works in the 1980s and is currently occupied by the Department of Community Services' Centre for Parenting and Research. The property is classified by the National Trust.

Gallery



Bidura House

Description: Bidura, historical house, Glebe Point Road, Glebe, Sydney



International Women's Day, 1974. Women's liberationists storm the roof at the Bidura Shelter for Girls in Glebe

Description: This image was contributed to The Dictionary of Sydney by the Australian History Museum at Macquarie University.



The Dining Room - Bidura

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1968.



Bidura Receiving Home

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1959.



Lessons in the sun at Bidura School

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1963.



School building at Bidura

Description: This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1959.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)

Date: 1920 - 1923

- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)

Date: 1923 - 1970

- [Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, State Government of New South Wales \(1970 - 1973\)](#)
Date: 1970 - 1973
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1975\)](#)
Date: 1973 - 1975
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1976 - 1988\)](#)
Date: 1976 - 1977

Related Legislation

- [Child Welfare Act 1923, New South Wales \(1923 - 1939\)](#)
Date: 1923 - 1939
- [Child Welfare Act 1939, New South Wales \(1939 - 1987\)](#)
- [Children \(Care and Protection\) Act 1987, New South Wales \(1987 - 2010\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Ormond House \(1884 - 1923\)](#)
The Metropolitan Girls' Shelter moved from Ormond House to Bidura in 1923.
Date: 1923 -
- [Royleston \(1922 - 1983\)](#)
Boys who were awaiting placement or court hearings were sent to Royleston, while girls were sent to Bidura (siblings were separated).
- [Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, Glebe \(c. 1923 - 1978\)](#)
The Metropolitan Girls' Shelter was located on the Bidura site, but was a separate building.
- [Winbin \(1954 - 1975\)](#)
Children from the Northern Territory were sent to Bidura prior to being sent to Winbin.
- [Thornbury Lodge \(c. 1958 - c. 1990\)](#)
Thornbury Lodge was opened by the Child Welfare Department to ease capacity at Bidura, which was becoming overcrowded. It is likely children were transferred between the two institutions.
- [Winbin \(1975 - 1992\)](#)
Children from the Northern Territory were sent to Bidura prior to being sent to Winbin.
- [Bidura Children's Court \(1983 - 2017\)](#)

Related Places

- [Ormond House \(1824 - current\)](#)
The functions of depot and shelter moved from Ormond House to Bidura when the Child Welfare Department was created in 1923.
Date: 1923 -

Resources

- Mancuso, Diane, [Billy Billy](#), Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions blog, 5 September 2011
- [They'll All Enjoy Christmas Parties](#), The Australian Women's Weekly, 9 December 1933
- Davey, J. Michael, *Journey of Hope: a remarkable true story*, 2011
- Hughes, Dianne, [Submission 272 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Gretchell, Ivy May, [Submission 377 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 2005
- Department of Justice, [History](#), Children's Court of New South Wales, 2012
- Carroll, Caroline, [Finally, we Forgotten Australians are believed](#), 16 November 2009
- [Catholic Women's Association: Charitable and Social Activities](#), The Catholic Press, 14 May 1936
- Kenneally, Christine, [The Forgotten Ones: half a million lost childhoods](#), The Monthly, August 2012
- Green, Christina, [The Life of Riley](#), 2014
- Boyle, Brian, *The Child Welfare Schools: Recollections of these unique schools and the men and women who taught in them often under considerable difficulty*, 1996
- Parry, Naomi, [Bidura](#), The Dictionary of Sydney, 2015
- [Glebe Care Homes for Children](#), The Glebe Society, 23 June 2013
- [Caroline Carroll interviewed by Karen George in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), June 2010 - August 2010
- [Yoonthalla Close interviewed by Anne Monsour in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 5 July 2011

- [*Marie Wood interviewed by Ann-Mari Jordens in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]*](#), 13 May 2010
- [*Patrick Sephton interviewed by Ann-Mari Jordens in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)*](#), 2001
- [*\[No title\]*](#), Tharunka, 1 August 1974

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
- [Records held by Surry Hills Children's Court \(1912 - current\)](#)
- [Bidura records, State Archives NSW \(1964 - 1977\)](#)
- [Thornbury Lodge records, State Archives NSW \(1957 - 1979\)](#)

Some of the records of Thornbury Lodge relate to children who were initially admitted to Bidura prior to being transferred to Thornbury Lodge.

- [Depositions \[Metropolitan Children's Court\] \(15 July 1937 - 16 December 1941\)](#)
Bidura Children's Court manages access to this archival series.

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/bidura/>