

Toongabbie

1948 – 1960

Other Names:

- Good Shepherd Farm
- Toongabbie Convent Home
- Loreto Training School
- Home of Good Shepherd Toongabbie

Details

Toongabbie was established by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in 1948 in Toongabbie in western Sydney. It appears that it was established as a holiday home and farm school, with the farm supporting the Home of the Good Shepherd, Ashfield. In 1953, the The Loreto Training School was established at Toongabbie, as an adjunct to the Home of the Good Shepherd, Ashfield. Toongabbie closed in 1960.

A farm property on the site of the first Government House farm was purchased at Toongabbie in 1948 by the Good Shepherd Sisters. The building had been built by convicts and was one of the first convict settlements. The Good Shepherd Sisters appear to have opened Toongabbie as a holiday home and farm school.

Toongabbie was established in response to the need for more accommodation for school age girls under the care of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Sydney. The Home of the Good Shepherd, Ashfield, had seen a dramatic increase in the number of girls it cared for and it was felt the farm at Ashfield was increasingly unsuitable in a growing suburb.

Upon the opening of Toongabbie, the Ashfield farm was transferred to Toongabbie to supply farm produce to Ashfield Convent and the Home of the Good Shepherd, Ashfield. The link between the two children's homes remained strong with the *Catholic Weekly* reporting a few girls at a time were sent to Toongabbie from Ashfield for two week holidays.

Loreto Training School was established at Toongabbie in 1953, as an adjunct to the Home of the Good Shepherd in Ashfield. In 1954, the *Catholic Weekly* reported "...girls aged on average between 14 and 15, usually committed by the Child Welfare Department, are maintained, educated and adjusted. There are about 17 such girls at Toongabbie today."

The first teacher at Loreto Training School, Sister Madeleine Casey, was considered an innovative educator, who was brought over from New Zealand specifically to open the school with a focus on collaborative learning and open place environments.

Toongabbie closed in 1960 as a result of increased costs making it no longer economically viable for the Good Shepherd Sisters to run their own farm.

Below is an extract from the *Good Shepherd Sisters Sydney 1913-2013: A brief history* discussing Toongabbie:

The property served also as a new home for a small number of women with a disability. After a few years the Loreto Training School was established at Toongabbie, as an adjunct to Ashfield. Here, young girls of

school age (14-15) were educated and trained successfully in the Open Plan System. They profited by the fresh air and open surroundings of Toongabbie and a large number of girls were transferred from Ashfield in the ensuing years. Girls were also sent to Toongabbie by the Children's Court, Child Welfare Department, Catholic Welfare Department or placed privately.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Sisters of the Good Shepherd \(1863 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Home of the Good Shepherd \(1913 - 1969\)](#)

Resources

- Good Shepherd Sisters Sydney, *Good Shepherd Sisters Sydney 1913-2013: A brief history*, 2013
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, [A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families](#), November 1999

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Records of the Good Shepherd Sisters, New South Wales \(1913 - 1981\)](#)

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