

Probationary Farm Home, Dora Creek

1900 – 1913

Other Names: • Private Probationary Farm Home

Details

The Probationary Farm Home, Dora Creek, was established at Dora Creek in 1900 by the State Children's Relief Department as a special institution for boys whose behaviour was such that they might otherwise have been institutionalised in Newcastle Hospital for the Insane. Dora Creek was a farm home, under the supervision of a private farmer, who provided individual guidance to the boys. It closed in 1913 and was replaced by the Raymond Terrace Home for Feeble-Minded Boys.

Dora Creek Probationary Farm Home was set up for boys who could not be placed with other children. The State Children's Relief Board explained the reasoning behind the home in its Annual Report:

Among the thousands of State children who come under the control of the [State Children's Relief Board], there is naturally a proportion of lads who are of a degenerate type, possessing habits which render them a source of contamination to other children.

Rather than institutionalise such boys, the Board thought the boys might do better under the guidance if they worked and lived with a farmer. The farmer was paid a high rate of the boarding out allowance to keep several boys at once.

In 1907 the Board reported on the Home, making it clear its officers held a dim view of the boys it sent there. However, it did seem most boys survived, and were able to go on to have normal lives:

This Home is in the nature of an industrial school, and is conducted on lines similar to those of the Boys' Home at Mittagong ... Its purpose is the reformation of refractory older boys – other than those received by the Board direct from the Children's Court – whose persistent misconduct, either by repeated absconding, habitual idleness, aggravated insolence, or inveterate mendacity, renders it impossible for them to succeed with ordinary foster parents. The Superintendent of the Home is not a salaried officer of the Board, but a private farmer who receives 10s a week for each lad. He feeds and clothes the lads at his own home at Dora Creek, and in their reformation, while displaying due qualities as a disciplinarian, exercises a compassionate consideration for their failings; and by kind, yet necessarily firm influence, awakens in them a proper sense of right and wrong. Corporal punishment is rarely resorted to, appeal being directed into their reason, and an effort made to stimulate their self-respect.

Twenty-six boys were admitted into the Home last year, and 18 discharged. Three of the latter were boarded-out, and 1 discharged to his uncle, the remainder being placed with farmers, dairymen, &c., and 2 were sent to sea.

Since the inception of the Home on 22nd April, 1900, 60 boys have been treated there, of whom 44 have been discharged and 16 remain. With the exception of those who have been placed with relatives or sent to sea, the lads are visited once a month by the Superintendent, who counsels and encourages them in their conduct and work; and his reports and those of guardians show that they are doing well.

More info

Chronology

- **Probationary Farm Home, Dora Creek (1900 – 1913)**
 - Raymond Terrace Home (1913 - 1930?)

Related Entries

Run by

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

Related Organisations

- [Probationary Farm Home, Toronto \(November 1909 - 1912?\)](#)

The Probationary Farm Home at Toronto was similar in function to Dora Creek Probationary Farm Home.

Related Concepts

- [Probation \(c. 1905 - current\)](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)

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