

# Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, Glebe

c. 1923 – 1978

**Other Names:**

- Metropolitan Girls' Remand Centre
- Glebe Girls' Shelter
- Glebe Detention Centre
- Bidura Girls' Shelter

## Details

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The Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, Glebe was located next to Bidura in a separate building that was entered from Avon Street. It was run by the Child Welfare Department as a shelter for girls awaiting hearings in the Metropolitan Children's Court. It opened some time between 1923 and 1936 and closed in 1978.

While located at Bidura, the Metropolitan Girls' Shelter moved to a separate building on the same site some time between 1923 and 1936.

The Catholic Women's Association visited children's homes and hospitals regularly. The Association reported its visit to the Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, Avon Street Glebe in *The Catholic Weekly* of 10 September 1936:

*Girls are only here for a short period, and rarely number more than five. On Friday no Catholic was at the home, due, no doubt, to the excellent work of the Catholic visitors to the Children's Court. This place is visited alternately by Misses Prunty and Bowes.*

The number of girls in the shelter was possibly higher than five, but the Catholic Women's Association tended to report only the number of Catholic children in children's homes.

In September 1960 the Glebe Girls' Shelter, as the Metropolitan Girls' Shelter was then known, was held up by a shotgun-wielding man, who was seeking a 15 year old girl. The girl had been on the run in the bush in Terrey Hills with the man, but the man's brother convinced her to leave and she was remanded in the shelter on a charge of being exposed to moral danger. Four terrified female staff members told the man the girl was not there, and he left.

Louise Ellis, who spent time at the Girls' Shelter around 1970-1972 and knew it as Glebe Detention Centre, wrote to Find & Connect to share her memories of her time there, and the building:

*Glebe Detention Centre was a two stor[ey] old brick building that I wish I could look at today. I remember the dormitory was up some steep steps, and the dining room was just a long room with tables but the building was so beautiful I thought. I remember the laundry the most because I worked in there. The walls had copper pipes running along which we had to keep polished, there was an old copper boiler, sinks with a mangle and an electric spin drier I thought was pretty nifty ... and a small bricked in back yard. It was an old brick terrace building with great character.*

In the 1970s the shelter was targeted by the women's liberation movement for abuses against young women, as Parramatta and Hay had been. The Glebe Shelter closed in 1977 and was demolished in 1978 to make way for new Children's Court buildings.

## Gallery

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**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.

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**Dormitory, Metropolitan Girls' Shelter**

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1965.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [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, Ethnic and Community Affairs, State Government of New South Wales \(1975 - 1976\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1976 - 1988\)](#)  
Date: 1976 - 1992

#### Related Glossary Terms

- [In Moral Danger \(c. 1939 - c. 1980\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Children's Court of New South Wales \(October 1905 - current\)](#)
- [Metropolitan Children's Court \(1911 - 1983\)](#)
- [Bidura \(1920 - 1977\)](#)

The Metropolitan Girls' Shelter was located on the Bidura site, but was a separate building.

## Resources

- Green, Christina, [The Life of Riley](#), 2014
- [\[No title\]](#), Tharunka, 1 August 1974

## Records

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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 \(1964 - 1977\)](#)
  - [Metropolitan Girls' Shelter records, State Archives NSW \(1968 - 1979\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/metropolitan-girls-shelter-glebe/>