

Kalimna Vocational Centre for Girls

1962 – 1977

Details

The Kalimna Vocational Centre for Girls, in Toowong, opened in December 1962. Run by the Salvation Army, it was on the site of the former Salvation Army Girls' Home, Toowong (which was demolished in around 1962). It closed 29 October 1977.

In the 1960s, Kalimna was one of 3 denominational (ie, non-government) institutions in Queensland for the reception of 'delinquent girls', who were sometimes referred to as 'incorrigible'.

A former staff member from Kalimna gave evidence to the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, stating that the time period a girl would stay at Kalimna was about 9 to 12 months. This period was determined at the discretion of the institution, not the court. The staff member said:

There was no order of the Court saying how long [the girls] would be incarcerated for. It was purely, as I said, at the discretion of the Army and I don't think there was any input or I don't think the Department had very much influence in determining when a child would be released. Therefore the Department did not have the discretion to release the girls, and this attitude seemed to be tolerated by the Department (p.105).

Evidence was given to the Commission of Inquiry about the use of solitary confinement at Kalimna, which was known as 'pop' to the girls who lived there. Kalimna had 3 solitary confinement rooms located near the main building. The 1999 report stated that 'It would appear that at Kalimna some girls were required to spend significant periods in solitary confinement, usually for offences such as absconding or being violent' (p.145).

The report noted that 'the difficulty of confirming or discounting the claims of former residents has been compounded by the paucity of surviving records held by the Salvation Army administration (p.146).

The report also stated that until the 1970s, residents of Kalimna received no formal education, as most girls were above school leaving age. It did introduce a full-time education program in the early 1970s. The Education Department closed the school facility in September 1977, prompting the closure of the Kalimna institution a month later (p.148).

Reflecting on the institutions for juvenile offending girls, the 1999 report of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions concluded:

For much of their histories, the denominational training schools were large, impersonal institutions where the labour demanded of the girls was both arduous and monotonous, and not likely to significantly enhance their future employment prospects, and where solitary confinement was used to discipline recalcitrant inmates. The emphasis was on punishment, with little or no effort made to assist in the rehabilitation of the girls. However, these were institutions that received little government funding, which made it virtually impossible to implement a more individually focused treatment program or to employ staff more attuned to

the problems and sensitivities of the girls. These institutions were components of a wider system that survived on a limited budget, and had done so for many years, and they quickly became redundant as essential improvements were made to that system in the 1970s. It is not surprising that many of the residents believed they were damaged by their experiences at these institutions (pp.148-149).

Gallery



Kalimna Vocational Centre at Toowong, operated by the Salvation Army

Description: This image is from page 141 of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse in Queensland institutions and the image is an Inquiry photograph.



Kalimna - dark hallway on lower level (note doorways are staggered)

Description: This image is from page 146 of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse in Queensland institutions and the image is an Inquiry photograph.

More info

Chronology

- Salvation Army Girls' Home, Toowong (1956 - c. 1961)
 - **Kalimna Vocational Centre for Girls (1962 – 1977)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army Australia Eastern Territory \(1921 - 2018\)](#)

Related Events

- [Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions \(1998 - 1999\)](#)
The Commission of inquiry into abuse of children in Queensland institutions visited the site of Kalimna Vocational Centre for Girls.
- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)
Kalimna Vocational Centre for Girls was mentioned in Submissions 222 and 532 to the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Related Legislation

- [Children's Services Act 1965, Queensland \(1965 - 2000\)](#)
The Kalimna Vocational Centre was licensed under the *Children's Services Act 1965* on 4 August 1966.

Resources

- The Salvation Army Australia Eastern Territory, [*Submission No. 46 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care: The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territorial Headquarters \(VIC\), Appendix B, Eastern Territory Social Centres, A list of openings, closings and function*](#), June 2003
- Cleland, Sharon, [*Caring for the Children: A history of institutional care provided by The Salvation Army for Australian children and youth \(1893-1995\)*](#), August 2012

Records

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

Records

- [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Eastern Territory \(c. 1891 - 1990s\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/kalimna-vocational-centre-for-girls/>