

Diamantina Orphanage

1865 – 1910

Details

The Diamantina Orphanage was established at Roma Street, Brisbane in 1865. The Queensland government assumed control following the passing of the *Orphanages Act 1879*. The Orphanage moved location twice, to South Brisbane in 1883 and to the Brighton Hotel, Sandgate in 1893. In 1910, it underwent another name change and moved again to Woolloowin, at which time it became the Diamantina Receiving Depot and Infants' Home.

Mary Ann Douglas, wife of Queensland Legislative Assembly member John Douglas, founded Diamantina Orphanage in 1865. The Orphanage was named after Lady Diamantina Bowen, wife of the Queensland Governor George Bowen. She stimulated the founding of a number of charitable organisations in Queensland, including the Lady Bowen Lying-in Hospital and the Diamantina Orphanage.

The Queensland State Archives provides the following history of the Diamantina Orphanage:

ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS:

From 1865 children were admitted to the Diamantina Orphan School, and a Visiting Inspector and Managing Committee were appointed on 1 Feb 1866. No precise date for the opening of the orphanage has been located in any primary source.

The orphanage was charged with the care and training of children whose circumstances included death of one or both parents, abandonment by parents, or qualification as a "neglected child" under Sec. 6 of the Industrial and Reformatory School Act 1865. The Orphanages Act 1879 provided for the boarding-out, hiring-out, and apprenticing of State children, and the systematic visiting of them by members of the Ladies' Committees.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE:

From 1866 the Matron, teaching and other staff of the Diamantina Orphanage were employed by, and were responsible to the Managing Committee of six ladies and two visiting inspectors. An Inspector of Orphanages was appointed on 1 Apr 1875, and in 1876 responsibility for orphanages was transferred from the Colonial Secretary's Office to the Public Instruction Department. This was given legislative status under The Orphanages Act of 1879, and the Public Instruction Department, Orphanages Branch was established. Orphanages remained subject to Inspection while members of the Ladies' Committees reported on the well-being of children who were boarded-out or hired-out.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

The Diamantina Orphanage closed as an orphanage in 1893 (circa year), but the re-named Diamantina Receiving Depot continued its role of reception, care and boarding-out of children to foster homes. In Jan 1910, the Depot re-located to Woolloowin and occupied the same building as the Infants Home. On 17 Dec 1964 the Diamantina Receiving Home was renamed "Warilda" which became the Receiving and Assessment Centre for children in southern Queensland. Increasingly, by the end of the 1980s, Warilda became a centre for placement breakdown children, and on 1 Jan 1989 ceased operating as a departmental institution.

Gallery



On the verandah at the Diamantina Hospital, ca. 1925

Description: This is an image of the Diamantina Hospital, which, from 1883 to 1893, had been the Diamantina Orphanage. The description published by the State Library of Queensland alongside this photo reads: "Established as an orphanage in 1883, after several changes of function it became a hospital for chronic diseases in 1897. It was renamed the South Brisbane Auxiliary Hospital in 1942, and after a major rebuilding programme completed in 1956, it was renamed the Princess Alexandra Hospital in 1959. (Description supplied with photograph.)"



Site of first Diamantina orphanage, Roma St. Brisbane



Three gentlemen standing near two vintage cars outside the Brighton Hotel, Sandgate, ca. 1929

Description: This description was supplied with the photograph and included in the library catalogue: Situated in Brighton Terrace, Sandgate, the Brighton Hotel was first licensed under this name, ca. 1864. Between 1893 and 1910 the hotel served as a receiving depot for orphans from the Diamantina Orphanage. The hotel recommenced trading in 1910.

More info

Chronology

- **Diamantina Orphanage (1865 – 1910)**
 - Diamantina Receiving Depot and Infants' Home (1910 - 1962)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Colonial Secretary \(10 December 1859 - 6 August 1896\)](#)
Date: 1865 - 1896
- [Public Instruction Department, Orphanages Branch, State Government of Queensland \(2 October 1879 - 1 December 1911\)](#)
Date: 1879 - 1910

Related Legislation

- [Orphanages Act 1879, Queensland \(1879 - 1911\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys \(1 October 1899 - 5 May 1900\)](#)
Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys was located in the former Diamantina Orphanage

Resources

- Australian Heritage Council, [A thematic heritage study on Australia's benevolent and other care institutions](#), 2016
- Queensland. Dept of Children's Services, [Centenary of care for children 1879-1979](#), 1979
- Gilchrist, Hugh, [Bowen, Diamantina \(1833-1893\)](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography, No date
- Forde, Leneen et. al., [Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse in Queensland institutions](#), May 1999
- [Our Orphanages](#), Brisbane Courier, 29 September 1875
- [Research Guide to orphanage and children's home records at Queensland State Archives](#), Queensland State Archives website, February 2022
- Goldman, L, *Child Welfare in Nineteenth Century Queensland 1865-1911*, 1978

Records

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

Records

- [Operational Registers, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1870 - c. 2001\)](#)
 - [Client Files, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1865 - 2001\)](#)
 - [Institution Files, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1871 - c. 2001\)](#)
 - [Administrative Records, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1865 - 2001\)](#)
 - [Heritage photographs of Queensland children's homes, buildings and people \(1848 - 1979\)](#)
 - [Admission Cards - Diamantina Orphanage/Diamantina Receiving Depot/Diamantina Receiving Depot and Infants Home \(1888 - 1911\)](#)
 - [Admission Registers to Diamantina Orphanage and Diamantina Receiving Depot \(1865 - 1908\)](#)
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