

St John the Baptist Home for Boys

1898 – 1941

Other Names:

- St John's Home
- The Roman Catholic Boys Reformatory
- Boys Home, Brooklyn Park Inc
- St John's Boys Home
- St John's Boys Town

Details

St John the Baptist Home for Boys was established in 1898 in Brooklyn Park. Run by the Brothers of St John the Baptist and under the control of the government, it took in Catholic boys from the Boys' Reformatory, Magill. In 1941 the Home became a private Catholic reformatory known as St John's Boys Town.

St John the Baptist Home for Boys opened at Marshall Terrace, Brooklyn Park in 1898. It was established by Father John Healy of the Thebarton parish who had also founded the Order of St John the Baptist in 1892. The concept behind the establishment of the Home was to provide alternative accommodation for Catholic boys committed to the Boys' Reformatory at Magill. The Home was officially proclaimed as a reformatory which meant that although run by the Brothers, it operated under the control of the government welfare department, the State Children's Council and then its successor, the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department.

Initially nineteen boys were placed at the home but by 1903 the number had increased to 33. In 1919 the Home was incorporated as the Boys Home, Brooklyn Park although it was still referred to as St John the Baptist Home for Boys. It was described as an institution for 'the education and training of uncontrollable boys'.

The number of boys residing in the Home remained consistent until the late 1930s when the government began to place a smaller number of boys. By 1941, only five boys remained in the Home. That year the Home ceased to be a government controlled reformatory and became a privately run Catholic Home. Instead of taking in boys who had been sentenced to a reformatory, the Home aimed to provide shelter for orphaned and other boys in need of care. Arrangements were made for the Brothers of St John the Baptist to take in boys aged 12 years of age or older, while younger boys were sent to the St Joseph's Orphanage at Largs Bay or to the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage at Goodwood. To reflect the Home's change of focus St John the Baptist Home for Boys was renamed St John's Boystown in 1941.

In 2015 and 2016 the home's dormitories were demolished and a retirement village was built on the site, however the chapel remains and has been incorporated into the village.

Gallery



The Boys Town Chapel and Hall

Description: This is an image from the former site of St John's Boys Town and St John the Baptist Home for Boys.

More info

Chronology

- **St John the Baptist Home for Boys (1898 – 1941)**
 - St John's Boys Town (1941 - 1954)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Brothers of St John the Baptist \(c. 1892 - c. 1941\)](#)

Brothers of St John the Baptist ran St John's Boys Town under the control of the State Children's Council and its successor, the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board.

Date: 1898 - 1941

Related Organisations

- [St Vincent de Paul Orphanage \(1866 - 1975\)](#)

In 1941 St John the Baptist Home for Boys took boys aged 12 years of age or older, while younger boys were sent to the St Joseph's Orphanage at Largs Bay or to the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage at Goodwood.
- [State Children's Council \(1886 - 1927\)](#)

Brothers of St John the Baptist ran St John's Boys Town 1898-1942, under the control of the State Children's Council and its successor, the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1898-1941

Date: 1898 - 1927
- [Boys Reformatory, Magill \(1891 - 1967\)](#)

St John the Baptist Home for Boys was established to provide alternative accommodation for Catholic boys committed to the government Boys' Reformatory at Magill
- [St Joseph's Orphanage Largs Bay \(1907 - 1960s\)](#)

In 1941 St John the Baptist Home for Boys took boys aged 12 years of age or older, while younger boys were sent to the St Joseph's Orphanage at Largs Bay or to the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage at Goodwood.
- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)

Brothers of St John the Baptist ran St John's Boys Town 1898-1942, under the control of the State Children's Council and its successor, the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board 1898-1941

Date: 1927 - 1941

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Resources

- Walsh, Dave, [Life in Magill Youth Training Centre](#), Weekend Notes, 18 April 2014
- 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

- [Records of St John's Boys Town \(1941? - 1984?\)](#)
- [Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)

- [Minutes - State Children's Council, later the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1886 - 1965\)](#)
Held by State Records of SA. These 20 volumes of handwritten and typed minutes include some entries relating to St John the Baptist Home for Boys.
 - [Annual Reports of the State Children's Council and the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department \(1887 - 1960\)](#)
Held by State Records of SA. These six volumes of bound yearly reports contain updates on developments at Homes under the control of the State Children's Council, including St John the Baptist Home for Boys.
 - [Correspondence files \('SCD' files\) - State Children's Department \(1887 - 1927\)](#)
Held by State records of SA. This series of correspondence files covers all aspects of the Department's business and include correspondence related to Homes run by the Catholic Church.
 - [Correspondence files \('CW & PRD' and 'SW' files\) -Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department and successors \(1927 - c. 1979\)](#)
Held by State Records of SA. This series of correspondence files relate to many different subjects and include correspondence related to Homes run by the Catholic Church.
 - [Register of Admissions to the Roman Catholic Boy's Reformatory, Brooklyn Park \(1895 - 1908\)](#)
Held by State Records of SA. This register is a large volume containing admission information from 1895 to 1908.
 - [Miscellaneous correspondence and reports, St John's Boys Town \(1893 - 1962\)](#)
Held by Professional Standards Office Records Service of the Catholic Church. These miscellaneous documents include items relating to the establishment and the rules and regulations of the Home.
 - [Former Residents' Folders \(1900s - current\)](#)
The Former residents' folders, held by the Professional Standards Office, may contain information relating to the St John the Baptist Home for Boys.
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