

McNally Training Centre

1967 – 1979

Details

The McNally Training Centre opened at Magill in 1967 in new buildings on the site of the Boys' Reformatory, Magill. Run by the government, it provided secure care for boys aged 15 to 18 sentenced by the Juvenile Court for committing offences. Younger boys were sent to Brookway Park. In the 1970s McNally also took in boys on remand. In 1979 the McNally Training Centre became the South Australian Youth Training Centre.

The McNally Training Centre was officially opened as a secure residential centre on 22 November 1967 in new buildings on the site of the Boys' Reformatory, Magill. It was named after Mr Frederick John McNally who had been Chairman of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board and head of the Department from 1946 until his retirement in 1961.

McNally took in boys aged 15 to 18 who were sentenced to the care of the State by the Juvenile Court for committing offences. Younger boys were sent to Brookway Park at Campbelltown which was also known as the Junior Boys' Reformatory.

In 1968, when the new buildings were completed, the old Magill Reformatory building was demolished. The new building contained large recreation areas, workshops, a kitchen and dining areas, offices and staff areas.

In its 1968 Annual Report, the Department of Social Welfare described the layout of the Centre:

The new buildings comprise two long wings which follow the land contours in a north-south direction approximately. One is for sleeping and the other for activities and administration. At the northern end the long wings are joined by the kitchen, dining and sick bay sections. Within the boundary formed by these buildings will be constructed an extensive playground and outside assembly areas not entirely enclosed but open at its southern end.

McNally initially accommodated 164 boys in 10 four-bed dormitories, 14 cubicles and 10 single rooms. However by 1969, 174 boys were living at the Centre. Two Education Department teachers ran classes at the Centre and boys were also trained in various trades and crafts. They also worked in the farm, garden, dairy, poultry run and piggery which were all part of the Magill site. Involvement in sport and church services was encouraged. A separate chapel was built on the site and services for each denomination were regularly held.

McNally Training Centre also had a Security Section for boys whose behaviour required them to be separated. This section also included a solitary confinement cell, known as 'The Cabin'. In December 1969, the absconding of 10 boys from McNally prompted the Department to add extra security measures including grilles on all dormitory windows. The Superintendent of the Centre also requested the re-introduction of corporal punishment in the form of public caning, for boys that absconded. Despite the objections of the Director of Social Welfare who regarded caning as 'degrading' and 'contrary to modern methods of treatment of offenders', the Minister approved the policy. From 1969 to 1970, boys who absconded were either publicly caned or placed in the Cabin for 48 hours. The Cabin was also used for potential absconders, boys with behavioural problems and boys who

were distressed.

Most boys committed to McNally stayed for two years or until they turned 18. Once they had completed a program of training at the Centre many were released into the community under the supervision of a Probation Officer for the remainder of their sentence.

In 1972 the Department of Community Welfare took over control of the institution. As a result of the requirements of the Juvenile Courts Act of 1971, it introduced new assessment procedures. A 'Programme Panel' was also set up to develop an individual training program for each boy and a Review Board made a monthly assessment of his progress.

That same year unit-style living was introduced at the Centre with boys allocated to one of the six available units, or to the Security section, based on their initial assessment. By the late 1970s three living units were providing short-term accommodation for boys in temporary police custody or on remand. The other three units were designated for boys committed to the institution for longer term training. Normally between 12 and 18 boys were housed in each unit. A separate maximum security unit was used for boys regarded as disturbed.

In 1973 a consultant psychologist who observed conditions at the McNally Training Centre for six months provided a report to the Director of the Department of Community Welfare. He described accommodation at the Centre as a series of 'locked units of incarceration'. Boys in the security section were 'locked up' under 'grossly anti-therapeutic' conditions and boys on remand were 'bewildered and bored', as well as feeling 'anxiety and apprehension due to ignorance about their fate'.

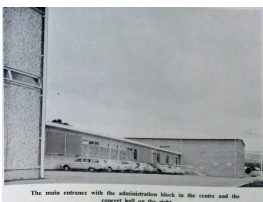
Despite changes to the methods of accommodating boys, absconding remained a problem. In a 1976 report on a number of escapes from the security section, a supervisor suggested that the way in which boys in secure care were treated at McNally was:

very little changed from that of many years ago...the prevailing ethic is still one which speaks of 'if you do the right thing by me, I will do the right thing by you'.

In 1975 a separate unit of the McNally Training Centre – a working boys' hostel known as the Glandore Unit – was opened on the site of the Glandore Children's Home. This unit provided non-secure residential accommodation for boys who were working in the community.

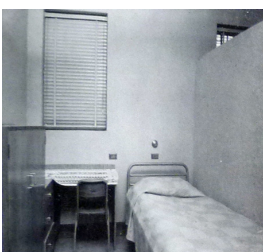
In 1979 the name of McNally Training Centre was changed to the South Australian Youth Training Centre.

Gallery



McNally Training Centre

Description: This is a copy of a picture of McNally Training Centre that appeared in the 1969 Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare, with the caption: 'The main entrance with the administration block in the centre and the concert hall on the right'.



McNally Training Centre - single boys quarters

Description: This is a copy of a picture of the interior of the McNally Training Centre that appeared in the 1969 Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare.



McNally Training Centre - motor workshop

Description: This is a copy of a picture of the motor workshop at the McNally Training Centre that appeared in the 1969 Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare.



McNally Training Centre - boot and upholstery workshop

Description: This is a copy of a picture of young men working in the boot and upholstery workshop at the McNally Training Centre that appeared in the 1969 Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare.

More info

Chronology

- Boys Reformatory, Magill (1891 - 1967)
 - **McNally Training Centre (1967 – 1979)**
 - South Australian Youth Training Centre (1979 - 1993)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)
Date: 1966 - 1970
- [Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)
Date: 1970 - 1972
- [Department for Community Welfare, South Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)
Date: 1972 - 1979

Related Organisations

- [Brookway Park \(1965 - 1978\)](#)
McNally Training Centre provided secure care for boys aged 15 to 18 sentenced by the Juvenile Court for committing offences. Younger boys were sent to Brookway Park.
- [Woorabinda Hostel \(and Campsite\) \(1968 - 1993\)](#)
Boys from McNally Training Centre assisted with the remodelling and campsite development of Woorabinda Hostel (and Campsite)
- [Reception Cottage, Glandore/Somerton Park \(1973 - 1979\)](#)
In 1975 the former Reception Cottage and Slade Cottage buildings at Naldera Street, Glandore, both became part of a separate unit of McNally Training Centre called the Glandore Unit.
- [Slade Cottage, Glandore/Somerton Park \(1973 - 1988\)](#)
In 1975 the former Reception Cottage and Slade Cottage buildings at Naldera Street, Glandore, both became part of a separate unit of McNally Training Centre called the Glandore Unit.
- [Glandore Unit \(1975 - 1980\)](#)
Glandore Unit operated as a non-secure community unit for boys released from McNally Training Centre

Related Legislation

- [Juvenile Courts Act 1971, South Australia \(1971 - 1979\)](#)

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Resources

- Walsh, Dave, [Life in Magill Youth Training Centre](#), Weekend Notes, 18 April 2014
- O'Neill, Cate, [More photographs unearthed](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 19 January 2016

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)
 - [Records of the South Australian Youth Training Centre \(1940 - 1999\)](#)
 - [Records of the Department for Community Welfare and Successor Agencies \(1972 - current\)](#)
 - [Records of the South Australia Youth Remand and Assessment Centre \(c. 1961 - c. 1999\)](#)
 - [Personal disposition advice forms - Magill Training Centre \(1940 - 1996\)](#)
The series Personal disposition advice forms - Magill Training Centre, held by State Records of SA, contains some records relating to McNally Training Centre
 - [Index to admissions - Boys Reformatory, McNally Training Centre, Magill \(1877 - 1975\)](#)
Held by State Records of SA. The volumes in this series provide an index to the Registers of Admissions to the Boys Reformatory Magill and the McNally Training Centre.
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/mcnally-training-centre-2/>