

Seaforth Convalescent Home

1921 – 1946

Other Names:

- Sea Forth Home
- The Convalescent Home, Somerton

Details

Seaforth Convalescent Home was opened by the government at Somerton Park in 1921 as a convalescent home for children. Many came from the Adelaide Children's Hospital. From 1928 Seaforth was a receiving Home for girls and young boys while older boys were sent to Edwardstown Industrial School. In the mid 1940s the Home accommodated 60 children. In 1946 the name of the institution changed to Seaforth Home.

Seaforth Convalescent Home was opened by the South Australian Government at Somerton Park in 1921 as a convalescent home for children. Situated not far from the beach, the original idea behind the Home was to provide a seaside residence for children recuperating from illness or hospitalisation. It was also to be used as a holiday home for children who had been placed out in service. The original main two-storey building was surrounded by four acres of land.

In 1924 the State Children's Department appointed a Kindergarten teacher to provide lessons for the pre-school girls and boys at Seaforth. The following year a playroom was added to the building for use by the teacher. School age children were taught at the Home by a staff member who was also a school teacher. Lessons followed the normal Education Department curriculum. Older girls learned sewing and dressmaking and carried out many of the domestic duties in the Home. Girls over the age of 14 spent much of their time working in the laundry which was part of the institution.

Between 30 and 50 children lived at the Home during the 1930s. Most of the children were girls because from 1928, Seaforth was also used as a receiving Home for all girls and for boys under the age of six who had been brought into State care. The Edwardstown Industrial School, which had previously taken all children, was restricted to older boys only.

The 1938-39 government 'Inquiry into Delinquent and other children in the care of the State' was critical of the conditions in many government Homes including Seaforth Convalescent Home. It found that Seaforth appeared to be 'used partly as a dumping ground for adolescent girls' returning from failed domestic service placements. It suggested that it was not a suitable place for older girls, and that they required 'a separate home or institution'. The report was also concerned that the girls were expected to work in the laundry day after day and questioned whether there was 'a danger that the inmates may be exploited in the interests of the successful running of the institution'.

The report, however, concluded that in other aspects the Home was 'attractive, well run, and well organised and therefore ideal for babies and younger children'. After the release of the report, improvements were made to Seaforth Convalescent Home, including a separate sleep-out for small boys and a playroom with new toys. The Annual Report for 1940 noted that efforts were also being made to raise the 'tone and efficiency' of the institution.

As numbers reached over 60 by the mid 1940s, additional dormitory accommodation and staff quarters were built. To improve the situation for children in the Home, outings were arranged and a cinema area was

established within the Home. Children's birthdays were celebrated on Sundays and each child received a small gift from the Department. Voluntary helpers visited the home to provide religious services.

In 1946 the name of the institution was changed from Seaforth Convalescent Home to Seaforth Home.

Seaforth Convalescent Home came under scrutiny during the 2004-2008 Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry. A number of women came forward to give evidence about abuse. A number of deaths at the Home were also investigated.

Gallery



Seaforth Home, Entrance

Description: This is a copy of a photo from the archival series 'Photographs of Departmental Institutions', Volume 1, the original caption states: The entrance to the property in 1954

More info

Chronology

- **Seaforth Convalescent Home (1921 – 1946)**
 - Seaforth Home (1946 - 1975)

Related Entries

Run by

- [State Children's Council \(1886 - 1927\)](#)
Date: 1921 - 1927
- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)
Date: 1927 - 1946

Related Events

- [Inquiry into Delinquent and other children in the care of the State, State of South Australia \(1938 - 1939\)](#)
- [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, South Australia \(2004 - 2008\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Adelaide Children's Hospital \(1876 - 1989\)](#)
Some children recovering from illness were sent from the Adelaide Children's Hospital to Seaforth Convalescent Home
- [Edwardstown Industrial School \(1898 - 1949\)](#)
From 1928 boys over the age of six went to Edwardstown Industrial School and girls and younger boys were sent to Seaforth Convalescent Home.

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

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 \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)
 - [Vaccinations and infectious diseases log - Seaforth Home \(1941 - 1973\)](#)
 - [Returns of children in the care of the Department, Social Welfare Department and Predecessors \(1927 - 1928\)](#)
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