

The Children's Home at Walkerville

1886 – 1904

Details

The Children's Home at Walkerville was established in 1886 to accommodate children of the Church of England (Anglican) faith in the state welfare system. It was run by an independent management committee that reported to the Diocese of Adelaide. In 1903 the decision was made to admit only boys. The last girl left in 1904 and the Home then became known as the Church of England Boys' Home.

The Children's Home at Walkerville was established in 1886 by the Reverend George Dove, rector of the Walkerville Parish, along with a band of Church of England parishioners. All were concerned about the fate of Church of England children in the state welfare system. Regarded as Protestant, they could be placed in an institution with children from mixed Protestant denominations or placed in foster care, not necessarily with Church of England foster parents. Initially a six room cottage in Smith Street, Walkerville was selected and rented for the purpose. Shortly afterwards, Mr Robert Barr Smith donated 500 pounds for purchase of the premises. The first boy was admitted to the Home in December 1886. He was just over three weeks old. A 5 year old girl was taken in the following month. By the end of the first year, thirteen boys and girls were accommodated in the Home. Not long after, two adjoining cottages were rented and then purchased to provide more room. By 1896 the number of children admitted had risen to 34 and the Home was becoming overcrowded. Donations from the community allowed the Home to be extended during 1897. Renovations included building a new dining room, an upstairs dormitory and bringing the bathroom, laundry washhouse and kitchen under one roof.

The Home was run by a management committee working under the auspices of the Church of England. They managed every aspect of the running of the Home, including the control of admissions. In conducting research for a history of the Home, historian, Elizabeth Bleby, accessed the minute books and admission registers of the Home. These records revealed the strict control of the committee over the children who were admitted and how often parents were allowed to visit. She notes that the management committee appeared to be:

fiercely protecting the children whom it took into its care...Requests by parents to take their child out for a weekend or holiday were almost invariably refused.

School-aged children in the Home attended the St Andrew Church and St Andrews Day School which was next door. When children reached the age of 14, they were discharged. Girls were almost always employed as domestic servants and boys as unskilled labourers.

In 1903 the management committee decided to restrict the home to boys only. The minutes of April 1903 suggest that the Home was having some difficulty housing boys and girls in the same premises. The committee therefore 'Resolved that every effort be made to get rid of the girls'.

By July 1903 the majority of girls had been transferred out and the girls' dormitory changed into a play room. The last girl left in March 1904. From that time, the home became known as the Church of England Boys Home at Walkerville.

Gallery



Walkerville Boys' Home

Description: This image shows The Church of England Boys' Home at Walkerville. The library description states: Reproduced in the 'Observer', February 28th, 1925.

More info

Chronology

- **The Children's Home at Walkerville (1886 – 1904)**
 - The Church of England Boys' Home at Walkerville (1903 - 1955)

Related Entries

Related Events

- [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, South Australia \(2004 - 2008\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Anglican Diocese of Adelaide \(1847 - current\)](#)

Resources

- Dickey, Brian, *Giving a hand: A history of Anglicare SA since 1860*, 2003

Records

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

Records

- [Kennion House Records \(1886 - 1983\)](#)
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