

The Orphan Home

1860 – 1935

Details

The Orphan Home was established in Stepney in 1860 by a group of members of the Church of England. Run by an independent management committee that reported to the Diocese of Adelaide, the Orphan Home was for girls of primary school age. In 1861 it moved to Carrington Street, Adelaide and then in 1908 to Fullarton Road, Upper Mitcham. In 1935 the Home was renamed Farr House.

In 1860 a small group of members of the Church of England who were disturbed by poor conditions in the Destitute Asylum in Adelaide planned the establishment of a small institution to house neglected children in a more home-like environment. That same year six girls were brought together at the Stepney home of an infant teacher and church member, Mrs Gamble.

Shortly afterwards, the committee took over the run-down former British and German Hospital in Carrington Street which they refurbished and opened in 1861 with a sign above the gate, Orphan Home. Seven girls, most of primary school age, were placed in the Home. They attended daily and weekly worship and were trained in the domestic arts as they were expected to leave the home at sixteen and enter service.

The Orphan Home remained in Carrington Street until 1908 when the deterioration of the building forced the management committee to seek an alternative premises. In 1908 it purchased the former home of Mr O'Halloran Giles on Fullarton Road at Upper Mitcham and seventeen girls were moved there.

The Mitcham building had 16 rooms, a laundry and 'excellent lavatories'. With more extensive grounds, there was room to develop a playground and plant a vegetable garden. Space was also available for keeping a cow and hens.

A newspaper report on the official opening in August 1909, concluded that:

Altogether the lot of the poor orphans ought to be made an exceedingly happy one in the beautiful home nestling at the foot of the hills and overlooking the beautiful scenery of the plains and gulf, for which Mitcham is renowned.

The management committee decided to advertise the Home so that clergymen in country areas would become aware of its existence. As a result of this, during its later years of operation the number of girls in the Home rose to an average of thirty.

In 1935, when the Orphan Home was incorporated, it was renamed Farr House after Mrs Julia Farr whose hard work had been integral to the establishment and continued operation of the home.

Gallery



Carrington Street

Description: This image shows the premises of the former Church of England Orphan Home, which operated in Carrington Street between 1861 and 1908.



Orphan Home, Mitcham

Description: The library description states: The gate of the picket front fence stands open showing a man and woman standing at the entrance of this twin gabled house with a group of girls. This photograph was possibly taken during the 69th annual meeting of the Orphan Home in August 1928.

More info

Chronology

- **The Orphan Home (1860 – 1935)**
 - Farr House (1935 - 1982)

Related Entries

Related Events

- [Way Commission, Province of South Australia \(1883 - 1885\)](#)
- [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, South Australia \(2004 - 2008\)](#)

Related Organisations

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

The Orphan Home reported to the Church of England, Adelaide Diocese
- [Destitute Asylum \(1851 - c. 1917\)](#)

Following the Destitute Persons Relief Act 1867, some children were moved from the Destitute Asylum to The Orphan Home.
- [Brighton Industrial School \(1867 - 1869\)](#)

Due to overcrowding at the Brighton Industrial School a number of children were sent to the Orphan Home and St Vincent de Paul Orphanage.
- [St Mary's Mission of Hope \(1904 - 1953\)](#)

During the 1930s St Mary's Mission of Hope operated in conjunction with the Orphan Home and, as it was later known, Farr House. St Mary's took charge of toddlers and teenagers and the Orphan Home took mostly children of school age.

Resources

- Dickey, Brian, [Farr, Julia Warren \(1824-1914\)](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography, 2005

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Farr House Records \(1906 - 1983\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. Monthly reports from the matron of the Orphan Home and, as it was later known, Farr House.
 - [Orphan Home Admissions \(1898 - 1925\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. This register contains children's admission details for the Orphan Home.
 - [Admission Forms, Orphan Home/Farr House \(1918 - 1938\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. This series of records contains folders of admission forms for the Orphan Home and as it was later known, Farr House.
 - [Admission Register, Farr House \(1934 - 1944\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. This register is a large hardback volume of admission information for the Orphan Home and, as it was later known, Farr House.
 - [Minutes of Management Committee, Farr House \(1880 - 1966\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. These minutes include admissions, discharges, adoptions, reports, news clippings and rules from the Orphan Home and, as it was later known, Farr House.
 - [Matron's Reports, Farr House \(1914 - 1980\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. Monthly reports from the matron of the Orphan Home and, as it was later known, Farr House.
 - [Annual reports of the Orphan Home, Farr House \(1899 - 1979\)](#)
Held by the State Library of South Australia. These annual reports contain yearly overviews of activities and developments at the Orphan Home and , as it was later known, Farr House.
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