

# Yalambee Hostel

1958 – 1994

**Other Names:** • Yallambee

## Details

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Yalambee Hostel opened in Glenorchy in 1958. At first, the Retarded Children's Welfare Association ran it with the Retarded Citizens' Welfare Association taking over in 1982. Oakdale Services Tasmania replaced them in 1992. The original purpose of the Hostel was to accommodate country children with intellectual disabilities so that they could attend a special school in Hobart. Later, it accepted wards of state and city children whose parents needed practical support. Yalambee closed in 1994.

Yalambee Hostel opened in new buildings belonging to the Retarded Children's Welfare Association in August 1958. They were on the south-east side of Tolosa Street, Glenorchy. The Association oversaw the Yalambee Hostel Board of Management. This Home was an approved children's home under the terms of the *Child Welfare Act 1960*.

Initially the Hostel had 24 children. Some were there from Monday to Friday and went home at the weekends while others stayed for the full term. During the holidays, wards of state remained at the Hostel or were placed with foster mothers.

Applications for a place at Yalambee Hostel came from the parents who paid a fee for their child's accommodation. At first, the Board did not accept children with health or behavioural problems that might prevent them from attending school. That policy appears to have changed although some staff would have resisted it.

During the early 1980s, Yalambee offered respite care under the Domestic Service Assistance Scheme.

In 1984, funding and staffing problems caused by the structure of the Retarded Children's Welfare Association led to the decision to close the Hostel at weekends and on public holidays. The Department of Community Welfare immediately became aware of the decision because two of the residents were wards of state. This led to a Review of the hostel.

The Review found that the Hostel was institutional in its management of the children with too much emphasis on tidiness and not enough on an individual approach. The children slept in dormitories, lined up for showers, did not choose what they wanted to wear or eat, all went to bed at the same time, and had no personal possessions. The staff took little interest in what they did at school. The children were supposed to help with small tasks such as washing-up but were seldom allowed because the staff considered them slow. One boy told the Review Team that he misbehaved because the staff "growled at you whether you did the right thing or not".

The staff kept inadequate records of the children's progress and frequently gave parents conflicting information.

There were disputes between members of staff who supported an old fashioned regimented approach and those who wished to be more 'flexible and innovative'. Some refused to look after children with more challenging problems which meant that they could not be admitted. The Yalambee Board did not support the Matron's attempts to discipline staff.

The Hostel claimed to have a 'home-like atmosphere' but the Review Team dismissed this as a 'synonym for an amateurish and unprofessional approach'.

The Review Team quoted Ben Marris, who wrote:

*It is unreasonable to suggest that any residential child care institution deliberately set out to harm a child, although most would recognise that this can be an unintended consequence of their activity. A common and well documented feature of all organisations, however, is that they tend to concentrate overmuch on their own maintenance and wellbeing to the detriment of progress towards their stated goals. They can become so concerned with the day-to-day problems of their own operation that, in the extreme, they lose all sight of their original purposes.*

## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Retarded Children's Welfare Association \(1952 - 1982\)](#)  
The Retarded Children's Welfare Association oversaw the Yalambee Hostel Board of Management.
- [Retarded Citizens' Welfare Association \(1982 - 1992\)](#)  
The Retarded Citizens' Welfare Association oversaw the Yalambee Hostel Board of Management.
- [Oakdale Services Tasmania \(1992 - 2011\)](#)  
Oakdale Services Tasmania ran Yalambee Hostel.

#### Related Legislation

- [Handicapped Persons Assistance Act 1970, Tasmania \(1970 - 1992?\)](#)  
Yalambee Hostel benefited from funding under the *Handicapped Persons Assistance Act*.

### Resources

- Hanson, Dallas, *Why are they in children's homes : report of the ACOSS children's home intake study*, 1979

## Records

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

### Records held by other organisations

- [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
- [General Correspondence-Hospital and Health Administration \(1932 - 1987\)](#)
- [Correspondence Files, Public Health Department \(1940 - 1989\)](#)

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