

Lachlan Park Special School

1959 – 1968

Details

Lachlan Park Special School, run by the Education Department, opened in 1959 following lobbying from the New Norfolk Branch of the Retarded Children's Welfare Association. It was located within the walls of Lachlan Park Hospital, in a former hospital ward. Education at Lachlan Park had more or less stopped by 1965.

Margaret Reynolds, the former Senator, taught at the School, which had 16 students, in 1963. She had two assistants. One woman patient worked in the kitchen while another cleaned the classroom.

In the 1960s, it was widely believed that children with intellectual disabilities could not benefit from education. This slowed the introduction of improvements at the School. Even so, without much educational equipment, Reynolds was able to brighten the classroom and provide some educational stimulus to the children. In addition, she managed to persuade the children's carers to send more of them to school for at least an hour a day.

Reynolds also set up a classroom for boys aged between 11 and 21. They learned reading and writing, cookery, woodworking, art, sport, and how to take some responsibility for the younger children.

When Reynolds left the School at the end of 1963, her improvements apparently lapsed. By 1965, when a member of the Retarded Children's Welfare Association visited it there was little evidence of educational activity.

In 1966, a speech therapist, Muriel Knight, was sent to Lachlan Park to assess the children's speech. She found that, owing to a complete lack of stimulation, few of the children could speak. Knight obtained voluntary help and funding from organisations such as Rotary to start a Child Development Unit with activities for the children.

More info

Related Entries

Related Organisations

- [Lachlan Park Hospital \(1937 - 1968\)](#)
Lachlan Park Special School was at Lachlan Park Hospital.
- [Retarded Children's Welfare Association \(1952 - 1982\)](#)
The Retarded Children's Welfare Association lobbied the government for Lachlan Park Special School.

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