

Hobart Receiving Home

1898 – 1958

Other Names:

- Argyle Street Receiving Home
- Issuing Department and Receiving Home

Details

The Hobart Receiving Home, run by the government, opened in 1898. It provided accommodation for wards of the state until a more permanent foster home could be found for them. The Home closed in 1958.

The Hobart Receiving Home was in a stone building at 77 Argyle Street on the intersection with Melville Street. It was originally known as the Issuing Department and Receiving Home. Most of the stone building was demolished in 1912 to make way for a new brick receiving home. What remained of the stone building became a ration store.

James Pearce, the Inquiring Officer, was the first Superintendent. His wife, who also fostered a few children, probably did most of the work.

In the financial year ending in June 1937, 88 children went through the Home. In 1944, there could be up to nine children in the Home at any one time.

The Department appears to have kept the Receiving Home Keeper on a tight budget. For instance, it did not supply clothes for the children. She was forced to rely on donations or put the children in old clothes of her own.

The Receiving Home was apparently fairly run down. In 1938, the Receiving Home Keeper asked for new linoleum pointing out that it had been old when she arrived 14 years ago. It had been turned several times and its edges were sharp enough to cut children's fingers. In 1941, the Inspecting Nurse drew the attention of the Secretary of the Social Services Department to the situation at the Receiving Home. The blinds had been up for 17 years and were in 'torn and worn out condition'. The blankets were 'moth-eaten, worn and patched'. Two old-fashioned cots with 'flock-tick' mattresses had bedding that consisted of a 'piece of blanket, old coats and bags'. The walls in all the rooms were 'dirty and stained' and the plaster broken in many of them. The bathroom was upstairs and the water had to be heated in a copper downstairs and carried up in buckets. The hot water system consisted of a series of pipes run through a wood stove, installed in 1925. It was still in use in 1950.

These deficiencies may in part have been due to the Receiving Home Keeper who, according to a 1942 report made by the Inspecting Nurse, was reluctant to ask for improvements. She had been:

a wonderful servant, and has worn herself out in the service of the Home, with no suitable convenience. Probably, however, some fault lies with her, as she admits that whatever she has asked from the Department, has been supplied. She is now sick and aged, and seems to cherish the belief that any new system suggested is intended to be used as a means of getting rid of her, but no such action is intended by me, as I fully appreciate the marvellous service she has rendered.

The Receiving Home Keeper retired in 1949. She was 70 years old and had been in charge of the Home since 1924. Before that, she had been a foster mother with the Department for 12 years. Her daughter and son-in-law, who ran the Cottage Home in Edward Street, Glebe took over the management of the Receiving Home. The former Receiving Home Keeper was allowed to live there with them.

The Home remained run down. The Boys' Room was at the top left of the stairs. In 1952, it was furnished with three stretcher beds and two cots. The Inspecting Nurse wrote that: 'The walls are in a shocking condition – dirty, holes and dark green – and the furniture is shabby. No wardrobe or sufficient cupboards for clothes'. The Girls' Room was to the right at the top of the stairs. It had two double beds, one cot, two 'old' lockers, one dressing table, and one 'worn' floor mat. Its condition was 'as bad as the boys' room'.

The following year, an inspection found that: 'Sink and draining board in kitchen in bad state of repair, practically no enamel left on sink, draining board badly worn and needs a new one'. In addition there was a hole in the kitchen ceiling and a loose leg on the bath.

By 1955, the Department had decided to find new premises. Kanangra Receiving Home in Mount Stuart replaced the Receiving Home, Hobart in 1958. The Receiving Home Keeper and her husband moved there.

More info

Chronology

- **Hobart Receiving Home (1898 – 1958)**
 - Kanangra Receiving Home (1958 - 1975)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Neglected Children's Department, Colony of Tasmania \(1896 - 1901\)](#)
- [Neglected Children's Department, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1918\)](#)
- [Children of the State Department, State of Tasmania \(1918 - 1934\)](#)
- [Children of the State Branch \(1936 - c. 1953\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Division \(c. 1953 - 1980\)](#)

Resources

- Copleman, Frederick A, *Not of my choice*, 1994

Records

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

Records

- [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)

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