

Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home

1920 – 1942

Other Names:

- Salvation Army Girls' Home, Gosnells
- Salvation Army Girls' Reformatory

Details

The Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home opened in 1920 in Gosnells (Kelmscott), with girls transferred from the Salvation Army Girls' Home, Collie. In 1921 there were 30 girls. It closed in 1942, and some girls with an intellectual disability were transferred to Graceville. By 1945, the building became the Seaforth Toddlers' Home (1945-1949) and it was later used as an aged care facility.

The Salvation Army opened a reformatory Home (industrial school) for girls at Seaforth, Gosnells in 1920. The girls' reformatory had previously been at Collie. The Home was described in the Salvation Army newspaper, *War Cry* on 26 November 1921: it was on 200 acres of land with a frontage to the railway and the Perth to Albany Road (Albany Highway); it was the first of three Homes built on the Seaforth estate, the others being for boys; the buildings had white fencing and trellises, pale yellow walls and red roofs; there was a workroom, dining-hall and two dormitories for the girls, a quadrangle containing a swing and a 'giant stride', musical instruments such as a piano and a 'pathophone'; the site also had a vegetable garden and river swimming pool. At this time, there were 30 girls living in the Home and their daily program was also described: The girls were woken at 6.30am in summer and 7am in winter; breakfast was at 8am, and 'dinner' (lunch) at noon; 'tea' at 5.30pm and bed at 8.30pm. There were 'brief religious exercises each day' and a 'full service' on Sundays either at the Home or at the Salvation Army Hall in Gosnells; some of the girls entertained the public with 'musical evenings'. The staff included a Matron, one male officer and three 'Lasses' (female officers).

The *War Cry* on 2 April 1927 reported that there were 15 girls aged around 14-19 years living at Seaforth; the girls wore 'neat blue overall dresses'; there was a workroom where the girls sewed; 11 girls were in an orchestra and played violin, banjo and guitar; and a piano had recently been purchased. In this article, a case study of one of the girls was given, describing how she was sent by the government to Seaforth to prevent her becoming a 'menace' to society and reporting on her conversion to Christianity at the institution. Seaforth was described in this article as a 'moral hospital', offering girls the opportunity to become good and useful citizens.

Part of the girls' training in citizenship included producing items for sale to raise funds for Salvation Army Homes. *The West Australian* reported that the girls had made 'fancy work, jams and pickles, woolen novelties and animals, painting, produce, cake, sweets, baby wear, refreshments and ice creams' for sale at the 1938 Seaforth Garden Fete and Work Display. The Secretary of the Child Welfare Department attended that fete and was quoted as saying that departmental officers regularly inspected the Home and 'had no complaint to find' with it, except for improvements which could not be made because of a lack of money.

The Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home closed in 1942. At that stage, there were some girls with intellectual disabilities at Seaforth. These girls were transferred to the Salvation Army's Graceville Centre in Highgate.

By July 1945, the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home building was renovated to accommodate boys aged 2-6 years in the Seaforth Toddlers Home (1945-1949). When the Toddlers Home closed, it became an aged care facility.

The Seaforth Home was mentioned in the Lost Innocents Report (2001) as an institution involved in the migration of children to Australia.

Gallery



Unidentified group at Seaforth Boy's Home, Gosnells, 1926-1932

Description: This is a digitised copy of a photo and is part of the collection of 30 images titled 'Activities at Seaforth Boys' Home, Gosnells [picture]'. Although the title refers to the Seaforth Boys' Homes, it is likely that this image may have been taken in the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home, which was on the same piece of land.



Salvation Army Homes - Seaforth, Gosnells, 1928

Description: 'Salvation Army Homes - Seaforth, Gosnells, 1928' is an image included (after p.6) in the *Annual Report of the Child Welfare Department, 1928*. This image shows a field of haystacks, with a range of what appear to be cottages and dormitory buildings visible in the background.



Seaforth Reformatory Girls

Description: 'Seaforth Reformatory Girls' is a digital copy of an image held in the *Seaforth photos* file at the Salvation Army Heritage Museum WA. A typed caption says that the image was published in the *War Cry* on 26 November 1921, and names the 'Lassie Officers'.



Penal ward before leaving

Description: 'Penal ward before leaving' is a digital copy of an undated photograph held in the *Seaforth photos* file at the Salvation Army Heritage Museum WA. A handwritten caption reads, 'Penal ward before leaving'. This image is attached to a piece of paper with another image showing a female Salvation Army officer with a toddler in her arms. It is unlikely that the image relates to the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory, as the conditions there had been condemned in a 1953 investigation. It is more likely that the image shows the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home, which had closed by 1945. It is also possible that the image is from the Salvation Army's maternity home, Hillcrest, the Salvation Army Girls' Home, Cottesloe, or the Salvation Army Boys' Home, Nedlands. The inclusion of the words, 'before leaving' in the caption suggest that there was a staged attempt to introduce young people to different conditions before they left the institution.

More info

Chronology

- Salvation Army Industrial School for Girls, Collie (1901 - 1920)
 - **Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home (1920 – 1942)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army, Australian Territory \(1880 - 1921\)](#)
- [The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory \(1921 - 2018\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Graceville Centre \(1903 - current\)](#)
When the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home closed, some girls with intellectual disabilities were transferred to the Graceville Centre.
Date: 1942 -
- [Methodist Girls' Home \(1917 - 1924\)](#)
When the Methodist Girls' Home closed, girls were transferred to Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home.
- [Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Homes, Gosnells \(1920 - 1955\)](#)
Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Homes, Gosnells was co-located with the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home on the Salvation Army's property at Gosnells.
- [Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Reformatory \(1920 - 1955\)](#)
- [Seaforth Toddlers' Home \(1945 - 1946\)](#)
Seaforth Toddlers' Home used the buildings once occupied by the Seaforth Salvation Army Girls' Home.

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- Cleland, Sharon, [Caring for the Children: A history of institutional care provided by The Salvation Army for Australian children and youth \(1893-1995\)](#), August 2012
- The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territorial Headquarters (Vic), [Submission No. 46 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care: Appendix A: Children's Homes - A list of openings, closings and function](#), July 2003
- *West Australia*, The Victory, 1 September 1921
- *The Seaforth Homes in West Australia*, The War Cry, 26 November 1921
- *Seaforth Boys' Homes*, The War Cry, 15 December 1923

Other Resources



Title: Saving a Nation's Daughters

Type: Image

Date: 2 April 1927

[Details](#)



Title: Seaforth History

Type: Image

Date: 1920s - 1950s

[Details](#)



Title: Seaforth WA Children's Homes 1920's

Type: Image

Date: 1920s - 1950s

[Details](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Historical records and memorabilia of Salvation Army institutions, Southern Territory](#)
- [Children's Homes Files, Western Australian Salvation Army Homes \(1897 - 2012\)](#)
- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
- [Seaforth Boys' Home \(Gosnells, W.A.\) Photographs \(1926 - 1932\)](#)
- [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Southern Territory \(c. 1889 - c. 1988\)](#)
- [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
- [Files - Departmental \[Education Department\] \(1 January 1885 - 31 December 2000\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/seaforth-salvation-army-girls-home/>