

Country High School Hostels Authority, State of Western Australia

1960 –

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20170421013630/http://det.wa.edu.au/boarding/country/detcms/portal/>

Details

The Country High School Hostels Authority governs the operations of education hostels throughout regional Western Australia. It was not uncommon for children who were Wards of the State to be boarded in one of the Authority's hostels, and the hostels governed by the Authority were facilities eligible for Redress WA applications. While the Authority has ultimate responsibility for the hostels, day-to-day operational management and governance is usually delegated to a local management committee or, in previous years, to a church body.

In 2012, the historical operations of the Authority were closely examined by the Special Inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel, Katanning, to see why reported sexual abuse was not stopped. The Inquiry identified a number of systemic failures in the Authority's operations from 1975 to 1990: failure to provide guidelines to board members; failure to provide adequate oversight of hostels; and failure to implement its own policy for investigating complaints of a sexual nature. The Special Inquirer acknowledged that there had been improvements in the Authority's operations since 1990, but made a number of recommendations to further improve practices. These recommendations were accepted by the Government on 19 September 2012 with the Premier also giving 'in principle support' to closing the Authority and bringing its responsibilities under the Department of Education.

Since 1960, the Country High School Hostels Authority has governed the operations of Aboriginal education and employment hostels in regional Western Australia through the powers conferred on it by the Country High Schools Authority Act 1960. The formality of the governance processes evolved over time, with a 'letter of arrangement' between the Authority and each of the hostels in place by the end of the 1970s.

This letter specified the responsibilities of each local board in the day-to-day management of its hostel but also recognised that the Authority had ultimate control. In this regard the CHSHA Act conferred on the Authority the power to appoint a local committee (vis board) in respect of any hostel and to delegate to that committee all or any of its powers. In the event of any such delegation of powers the local board was able to exercise those powers as if they had been directly conferred by the Act. (St Andrew's Hostel Katanning report, p.24)

In December 2011, the Government appointed the Hon. Peter Blaxell, a former Supreme Court Judge, as Special Inquirer to examine the conduct and response of relevant public officials and government agencies to allegations of sexual abuse at St Andrew's Hostel in Katanning, and related organisations. The report, *St Andrew's Hostel Katanning: How the system and society failed our children* detailed the governance and operational processes of the Country High Schools Hostel Authority. In particular, the Authority's processes for appointing and removing staff, its oversight of hostels and its willingness to act on students' allegations of abuse were examined:

- Prior to 1975, there had been 'a number of instances' where hostel staff were 'dismissed or removed from their employment for inappropriate conduct' which are likely to have included 'allegations of sexual misconduct against students'. All new appointments at school hostels (country and metropolitan) had to be 'vetted' by the Secretary of the Authority. At this time, the Authority kept a 'forbidden' list of previous staff who could not be re-employed at a school hostel because of 'events during their employment'. The Secretary of the Authority was authorised to share this list with the Department for Community Welfare. By 1982, this forbidden list was no longer used.
- The Authority was found to have only once used the Education Department's processes for investigating an allegation of sexual misconduct, so the Inquiry examined 'the various ways' the Authority handled these matters between 1975 and 1990. In relation to four allegations of sexual misconduct in the years 1985 to 1990, the Inquiry found that there were inadequate processes to deal with the allegations, though some hostel staff had acted appropriately on their own initiative. In two cases (St Andrew's Hostel 1989 and Narrogin Hostel 1990) the Authority failed to take required action.
- In general terms, the Authority was found to have a number of 'systemic failures': the failure to provide guidelines to board members; failure to provide adequate oversight of hostels; and failure to implement its own policy for investigating complaints of a sexual nature.

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Note: This webpage is no longer in operation. This URL is taken from the Wayback Machine and is dated 21 April 2017.

More info

Related Entries

Ran

- [Adamson House \(1938 - 1990\)](#)
Date: 1969 - 1990
- [St Christopher's Hostel, Northam \(1941 - 2002\)](#)
- [Craig House \(1949 - 1978\)](#)
Date: 1973 - 1978
- [Merredin Residential College \(1954 - current\)](#)
The Country High School Hostels Authority was required by s7(1)(b) of its Act to 'supervise and maintain' this residential college.
Date: 1962 -
- [The Priory Hostel, Albany \(1955? - 1988?\)](#)
Date: 1961? - 1988?
- [Narrogin Residential College \(1963 - current\)](#)
- [St Andrew's Hostel \(1964 - 2009\)](#)
- [Carnarvon High School Hostel \(1964 - 1980s\)](#)
- [Hardie House, South Hedland \(1964? - 1990?\)](#)
- [St Andrew's Hostel, Esperance \(1968 - 2000?\)](#)
The Country High School Hostels Authority was required by s7(1)(b) of its Act to 'supervise and maintain' St Andrew's Hostel, Esperance.
Date: 1975 - 2000?
- [Albany Residential College \(1974? - current\)](#)
The Country High School Hostels Authority was required by s7(1)(b) of its Act to 'supervise and maintain' this residential college.
- [St James Residential College, Moora \(c. 1977 - current\)](#)
- [Kartanup \(1987 - 1990\)](#)

- [Esperance Residential College \(2000? - current\)](#)
- [Geraldton Residential College \(2002 - current\)](#)
- [Northam Residential College \(2003 - current\)](#)

The Country High School Hostels Authority is required to 'supervise and maintain' this residential college. It delegates the day to day running of the hostel to a local management committee.

- [Broome Residential College \(2008 - current\)](#)

Related Events

- [Redress WA, State of Western Australia \(2008 - 2011\)](#)

The WA Government's scheme for people who were abused or neglected in 'care' as children, Redress WA, Guidelines list a number of 'Facilities Operated Subject to the Country High School [Hostels] Authority Act 1960 - Past and Present' (18 May 2011).

- [Special Inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel \[Katanning\], Western Australia \(December 2011 - August 2012\)](#)
- [Apology to the victims of abuse at St Andrew's Hostel, Katanning, Government of Western Australia \(19 September 2012\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [Country High School Hostels Authority Act 1960, Western Australia \(1960 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Swanleigh \(1960 - 2010\)](#)

When Swanleigh was established as a hostel in 1960, it was responsible to the Country High School Hostels Authority, State of Western Australia.

- [Dellahale House \(1964 - 2001\)](#)
- [John Frewer House \(1968 - 2001\)](#)

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