

Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home

1934 – 1980

Other Names:

- Sister Kate's Children's Home
- Queen's Park Children's Home
- Sister Kate's Home
- Children's Cottage Home, Queen's Park

Details

Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home was established in Queen's Park by mid-1934 when Sister Kate Clutterbuck moved with seven Aboriginal children from the Children's Cottage Home at Buckland Hill in Cottesloe. The Home was funded by the Aborigines Department to house 'fair skinned' Aboriginal children. During World War II the children at the Home were evacuated to Greenbushes Hostel and Memorial Cottage Roleystone. From 1935 it was run by non-denominational management committees and from 1955 by the Presbyterian Church. In 1947, Kenwick Farm was established as a branch of the Home. In 1980, Sister Kate's amalgamated with the Methodist Training Centre at Mogumber and became Sister Kate's Child and Family Services.

Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home, Queen's Park was established by mid-1934 by Sister Kate Clutterbuck, when she moved with seven Aboriginal children from the Children's Cottage Home. By July 1935 all children remaining at Children's Cottage Home had moved to Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home. From the outset, the Home received grants and children from the Aborigines Department and subsequent departments responsible for Aboriginal matters in Western Australia. The focus of the Home was on light-skinned children.

In 1935, a non-denominational management committee, Children's Cottage Home Incorporated, was formed to govern the Home.

In his 1936 Annual Report (p.16), the Chief Protector of Aborigines gave some history about the development of the Home (which he called the 'Children's Cottage Home Queen's Park): there were two cottages, with 'dormitories, staff rooms, sitting room, bathrooms, verandahs and sleeping-out places' with room for 17 children in each cottage. Promotional material for the home states that the home also included a kitchen, laundry, hospital, chapel, and kindergarten.

In 1939, the Commissioner for Native Affairs (Annual Report 1938, p.15) challenged the belief that children at Sister Kate's were 'mostly the offspring of our trained girls sent out to service and returned to us in trouble'. Such beliefs were, he said, 'hopelessly incorrect to say the least of it'. His next remarks give an insight into removal of children who were sent to Sister Kate's and the authorities' justification of it: 'The fact is that these children come mainly from pastoral stations and have been gathered in often with their mothers to give the little ones a better chance in life than their mothers have had'. This better chance was disputed by 'Millicent' in the *Bringing them home* report (pp.99-102). Millicent found being placed in Sister Kate's left her with 'an unrepairable scar of loneliness, mistrust, hatred and bitterness'. Oral histories from other people who were placed at Sister Kate's relate a range of experiences, good and bad.

In 1938 there were 90 children in the home, 93 in 1939, 86 in 1940, and in 1941 there were a total of 96 children at the home, 80 of whom were under 16 years old. Publicity material for the home from this era stated that girls at the home were trained as domestic servants and the boys trained as farm hands and gardeners. Once they had

reached working age children would then be sent out to work on farms or in private homes. Children at the cottage home received education at local state schools, and in some cases attended college rather than being sent out to service.

During World War II, children were evacuated to the Greenbushes Hostel from February 1942 until 1946 and Memorial Cottage, Roleystone from May 1942 until 1944. Caretakers remained at the Queen's Park site and children later returned there.

Writing in 1945, the Commissioner for Native Affairs (Annual Report, 1944 p.12) gave a description of the Home. And the assimilation policy it followed:

The Home is more commonly known as Sister Kate's Home. It undertakes the care of quadroon children, and rears them according to white standards. During the year fourteen quadroon children were admitted to the Home, making a total of 146 admissions since the Home was established. Thirteen of these have been withdrawn for various reasons, mainly because of their unsuitability, and seven of the older children are now paid assistants at the Home. Besides these, one child has been adopted, four are in the Forces, and eleven are now engaged in outside employment, leaving a total of 110 children at the Home at the 30th June, 1944, exclusive of the seven paid assistants. Of the 110 inmates, 84 were supported by subsidies from the Department, eight were maintained by the Child Welfare Department, and 18 were maintained by parents either by Court Maintenance Orders or by voluntary payments.

Sister Kate died in 1946. After her death, the Home continued under the leadership of Ruth Lefroy. In 1947 a farm school for older boys from Sister Kate's opened. It was called 'Kenwick Farm', was located on Spring Road and closed in 1961.

In 1948, 'Sister Kate's Children's Home Inc' was the new legal name given to the Children's Cottage Home Incorporated to honour its late founder.

In 1955, Ruth Lefroy arranged for Sister Kate's to be transferred to the Presbyterian Church. The first official step in this direction was achieved in 1955 when a provisional council was appointed by the Presbyterian Church and in May 1956 the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church became the controlling body. At that time, there were nine cottages on a 23 acre site at Queen's Park.

In June 1977, all Children's Homes controlled by the Presbyterian Church came under the control of the Uniting Church. Sister Kate's Home was one of these. In 1980, Sister Kate's amalgamated with the Methodist Training Centre at Mogumber and became Sister Kate's Child and Family Services.

Sister Kate's Home was mentioned in the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) as an institution that housed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families.

Gallery



Nursery at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home, Queens Park, Western Australia

Description: This is a photo of children outside the Nursery building at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home, Queens Park. A group of 17 toddlers and young children can be seen standing in front of a large cottage. Two women, one dressed in what appears to be a white nurses uniform, stand behind the children on the cottage verandah.



Nursery at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home, Queens Park, Western Australia

Description: This is a photo of the Nursery building at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home in Queens Park. It shows a large wooden cottage with verandahs on each end.



Sister Kate and children, ca.1930

Description: This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the Photographs of Miss P.K. Lefroy and people at or connected with Sister Kate's Parkerville series held at the the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows Sister Kate Clutterbuck exchanging a document surrounded by children of various ages. This image was likely taken around 1936 after the establishment of the Home in Queen's Park.

More info

Chronology

- Children's Cottage Home (26 August 1933 - July 1935)
 - **Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home (1934 – 1980)**
 - Sister Kate's Child and Family Care Services (1980 - 1988)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Presbyterian Church \(1879 - 1977\)](#)
In May 1956 the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church became the controlling body of Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home.
Date: 1955 - 1977
- [Children's Cottage Home Incorporated \(1935 - 1948\)](#)
Date: 1935 - 1948
- [Sister Kate's Children's Home Inc \(1948 - 1955\)](#)
Date: 1948 - 1955
- [Uniting Church Child and Family Care Services \(1977 - 1984?\)](#)
Date: 1977 - 1980

Related Organisations

- [Chief Protector of Aborigines \(1898 - 1936\)](#)
The Chief Protector of Aborigines was the legal guardian of Aboriginal children at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home.
- [Community of the Sisters of the Church \(1908 - current\)](#)
Sister Kate Clutterbuck, founder of Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home, was a member of the Anglican order, Community of the Sisters of the Church.
- [Moola Bulla Station \(1910 - 1955\)](#)
Children from Moola Bulla Station were sometimes placed at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home.
Date: 1935 - 1955?
- [Moore River Native Settlement \(1918 - 1951\)](#)
Children were transferred to Sister Kate's Children's Cottage from Moore River Native Settlement.
Date: 1934 - 1951
- [Aborigines Department, State of Western Australia \(1926 - 1936\)](#)
Aborigines Department, State of Western Australia was responsible for Aboriginal matters to place children at

Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home.

Date: 1934 - 1936

- [Greenbushes Hostel \(1942 - 1946\)](#)

Greenbushes Hostel was the Home for some children and staff from Sister Kate's Children's Cottage when it was evacuated during World War II.

Date: 1942 - 1946

- [Memorial Cottage, Roleystone \(1942 - 1944\)](#)

Memorial Cottage, Roleystone was the Home for some children and staff from Sister Kate's Children's Cottage when it was evacuated during World War II.

Date: 1942 - 1944

- [Kenwick Farm \(1947 - 1961\)](#)

Kenwick Farm was a farm school for older boys from from Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home.

Date: 1947 - 1961

- [Mogumber \(1951 - 1974\)](#)

Some children were transferred to Sister Kate's Children's Cottage from Mogumber.

Date: 1954 - 1974?

- [Mogumber Training Centre \(1974 - 1980\)](#)

Sister Kate's Children's Cottage amalgamated with the Mogumber Training Centre.

Date: 1980 -

Related Concepts

- [Commissioner for Native Affairs \(1936 - 1954\)](#)

The Commissioner of Native Affairs was the legal guardian of Aboriginal children at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home.

- [Assimilation Policy \(1950s - 1960s\)](#)

- [Commissioner of Native Welfare \(1954 - 1972\)](#)

The Commissioner of Native Welfare was the legal guardian of Aboriginal children at Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home until 1963 when he could regulate the 'care' of those Aboriginal children.

Resources

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, [Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families](#), 1997. *Relevance:* Sister Kate's Home was mentioned in the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) as an institution that housed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families
- [Edith Willoway interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 13 December 2000
- [Gerard Warber interviewed by W. John E. Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 26 March 2000
- [Glenys Collard interviewed by Marnie Richardson in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 19 March 2000
- [Kathleen Mack interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)](#), 16 January 2001 - 18 January 2001
- [Ken Lindley interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(1999\)](#), 27 November 1999
- [Lorraine Rogers interviewed by Karen George in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 26 June 2000
- [Margaret Robinson interviewed by Marnie Richardson in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)](#), 13 June 2001
- [Marie Hart interviewed by Lilly Kauler in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)](#), 22 October 2001
- [Marjorie Van de Berg interviewed by W. John E. Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 27 March 2000
- [Mary Terszak interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(1999\)](#), 4 November 1999
- [Sandra Hill interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(1999\)](#), 30 November 1999

- [Sue Gordon interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(1999\)](#), 12 October 1999
- Western Australia. Department of Native Affairs, *Annual Report: Department of Native Affairs, 1937 - 1954*. Relevance: Annual Report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs for the Year Ended 30th June, 1944, p.12; 1938, p.15
- McDonald, Ashley, [Are We Family? And if so, Can I Still Sue You?](#), Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law, March 2000
- Uniting Church in Australia (WA Synod), Department of Media, *Western Impact*, 1977 - 2007
- [Sister Kate Finds a Haven for her Kiddies](#), Sunday Times, 1 March 1942
- Graham, WT, [Sister Kate](#), Western Mail, 7 November 1946
- [What Women are Doing: Cottage Homes](#), The West Australian, 24 June 1942
- [Mary Ferber: Sister Kate](#), The Daily News, 17 September 1942
- 'Virgilia', [Thanks from Sister Kate](#), Western Mail, 26 November 1942
- [Farm Wanted](#), The Daily News, 27 September 1946
- [Farm for Boys](#), The West Australian, 4 March 1947
- [Suggested closing of the Sister Kate Kitchen Fund](#), Western Mail, 13 February 1947
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- [Hostility to sending boy to country](#), Sunday Times, 18 May 1952
- [Letters poured in - most want 'Square' to stay](#), Sunday Times, 25 May 1952
- [Square gets work - as a city apprentice!](#), Sunday Times, 1 June 1952
- [Cheque for Kenwick Farm School](#), Western Mail, 19 July 1951
- [Virgilia's Friendly Corner](#), Western Mail, 27 March 1947
- [A Farm his Future](#), The Daily News, 25 September 1946
- [Virgilia's Friendly Corner: Corner Generosity](#), Western Mail, 26 July 1951
- [Sister Kate Fete](#), Western Mail, 23 October 1952
- [Farm boys grow vegetables which Virgilians sell](#), Western Mail, 25 November 1954
- Millicent, [Bringing them Home - Millicent story](#), Australian Human Rights Commission, Website, 2 December 2001
- [Sister Kate's Child & Family Services, later known as Manguri \[Manuscript Note\]](#), State Library of Western Australia website, 2011
- [Half-castes happy in W.A. home](#), The Australian Women's Weekly, 5 March 1949
- Foster, Darren J, [Submission No 347 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 3 April 2004
- Foster, Darren J, [She called her coral because it was 'a perfect pink day': The neglecting of Coral Suzanne Dickerson](#), Journal of Australian Studies, 1998
- Morgan, Sally; Mia, Tjalaminu; France, Victor, *Echoes of the past : Sister Kate's home revisited*, 2002
- [Motion - Child Welfare Department. Maintenance of Children](#), Hansard Archive 1870 to 1995, 4 December 1940. Relevance: pp. 2563-2564
- O'Neill, Cate, ['It smacks of slavery...'](#), Find & Connect web resource blog, 1 June 2015
- [Education: Aborigines Living away from home](#), Hansard Archive 1870 to 1995, 6 November 1973
- Kirsti Melville, [The brutal legacy of Sister Kate's, a children's home with a mission to 'breed out the black'](#), ABC News online, 29 July 2018
- Melville, Kirsti, [Sister Kate's: the whitewashing of black children \[sound recording\]](#), ABC Radio National - The History Listen, 24 July 2018

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Sister Kate's Child and Family Services records, 1934-2002 \[manuscript\], State Library of Western Australia \(1934 - 2002\)](#)
- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
Item B92 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home
- [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)

- [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
 - [Files - Aborigines Departments \(1 January 1926 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
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