

Pyrton

1966 – 1997?

Other Names:

- Lockridge Hospital for Children
- Lochridge Hospital for Children
- Guildford Training Centre
- Pyrton Training Centre

Details

Pyrton was a government-run Home for children diagnosed with profound intellectual disabilities. It opened in 1966 in Eden Hill (Lockridge) with children transferred from Claremont Hospital. Pyrton provided long-term accommodation and short-term respite 'care'. From 1973, young people could be employed in an onsite Training Centre. No children were admitted to Pyrton after the 1980s. Pyrton residents were moved into community-based hostels or to Mount Henry Hospital by 1997 and Pyrton was closed by 1998.

Pyrton opened on 12 December 1966. It was established and run by Mental Health Services. Pyrton was built on land once owned by the Drake-Brockman family, and took its name from the village in England where Elizabeth Drake-Brockman had once lived.

The first building at Pyrton was the Primary Unit, later called 'Myoora'. It had four dormitories. The Secondary Unit ('Pindarra') had a two metre high fence and no gardens. A Tertiary Unit ('Carramar') was built in 1975 to provide a more 'homely environment'. Each unit had 64 beds.

Pyrton was staffed by multidisciplinary professional teams, principally registered nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social trainers. The first intake of children was classified as 'active'. They were followed in January 1967 by a group of 'immobile' children, who went into a special dormitory. These children were all under 12 years old and had lived all of their lives in Claremont Hospital. Stella's (1996) history of Pyrton records that many children, due to the lack of individual attention, training and support at Claremont, had little idea how to behave or to how to acquire social skills. Self-harming, lack of self-worth and anti-social behaviours were common. In 1969, behaviour modification techniques were introduced at Pyrton to complement social training. At first, seclusion in padded cells was tried but found to have little positive impact on self-mutilation, so a 'cattle prod' which was said to 'deliver a very painful but safe shock, was used on several residents whose behaviour was considered a danger to themselves' (p.113).

In 1975, searching for ways to develop the potential of each child, individual treatment plans were implemented. Even so, evaluations showed that the institutional environment of Pyrton was not delivering the hoped-for progression to higher skills. By the 1980s, there were no children in residence at Pyrton – though some people who had been children on admission were still there. But a decision had been made not to admit any more children to Pyrton.

Pyrton was part of the hostel system and was based on a 'progression model' whereby people would move towards greater independence. Pyrton residents were moved into community-based hostels or to Mount Henry Hospital by 1997 and Pyrton was closed by 1998.

Gallery



Pyrtton Training Centre for Intellectually Handicapped 1973

Description: This is a digital copy of an image that was part of the Mental Health Museum WA Inc's collection of images. The image shows the Pyrtton complex of buildings.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Mental Health Services, State Government of Western Australia \(1954 - 1984\)](#)
Pyrtton was run by the Mental Deficiency Division from 1966 to 1977.
Date: 1966 - 1977
- [Division for the Intellectually Handicapped \(1978 - 1986\)](#)
Date: 1978 - 1986
- [Authority for Intellectually Handicapped Persons \(1986 - 1993\)](#)
Date: 1986 - 1993
- [Disability Services Commission \(1993 - current\)](#)
Date: 1993 - 1997?

Related Organisations

- [Claremont Mental Hospital \(1903 - 1972\)](#)
Children were transferred to Pyrtton from the Claremont Hospital.
Date: 1966 - 1970s
- [Devonleigh \(1979 - 1987\)](#)
Children were transferred from Pyrtton to Devonleigh Hostel in line with a policy of progressing to more appropriate accommodation services.
Date: 1982 -

Resources

- [Legislative Assembly - Questions on Notice \[Disability Services Commission - Residents in Hostels, Age Range\]](#), Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 2 April 1996. *Relevance:* 'Legislative Assembly – Questions on Notice [Disability Services Commission – Residents in Hostels, Age Range]' reported that residents aged 25-62 years lived at the Pyrtton Hostels

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