

Madonna House

1962 – 1971

Details

Madonna House was a “rest home for mothers and children in necessitous circumstances” located in Scarborough. It was run by the Catholic Daughters of Australia, under the management of the Sisters of St Joseph.

The Catholic Daughters of Australia (CDA) had run holiday homes for children at Sandgate from 1930 until 1950. In 1950, the CDA purchased 3 acres of land at Scarborough (Daley, p.25).

The CDA received funding from charitable funds to build what would become Madonna House. The Foundation Stone was laid in 1959 and the Madonna House officially opened on 14 December 1962 (Daley, 1997, p.25).

The CDA hoped to find an order of nuns to run Madonna House, however for the first couple of years this did not happen, and the Home experienced difficulty meeting its expenses. According to Daley, in 1963 there were several mothers and children at Madonna House, “with only a housekeeper in attendance”.

Finally in 1964, the Sisters of St Joseph took over the management of Madonna House. Children came to Madonna House from as far away as Charleville and Blackall. The two sisters in charge in 1965 were Mother Albeus and Sister Wolstan (Daley, 1997).

A publication from 1968 described Madonna House as:

A rest home for mothers and children in necessitous circumstances, especially for children in need of convalescence ...

PURPOSE: To provide a rest home for mothers and children in necessitous circumstances, especially for children in need of convalescence.

ACCOMMODATION: Is provided for 24 children and 4 or 5 mothers. Accommodation is available for infants with their mothers.

FEES: There is no scale of fees as individual cases are treated according to circumstances (Social Services Queensland, 1968).

Madonna House continued to experience financial difficulties. Daley writes that the situation was not helped by organisations sending women in need (such as deserted wives) who were not able to pay fees to Madonna House.

By 1971, the situation was untenable and Daley writes that “The Sisters were not happy with the state of affairs”. The CDA received a letter from the Superior General of the Sisters of St Joseph in Sydney advising that the Order could no longer staff Madonna House (Daley, p.26).

Madonna House closed in 1971 and the building and land was sold to Monsignor Bartholomew Frawley who planned to turn it into a home for retired priests (Daley).

Gallery



Madonna House

Description: This is a copy of an image of Madonna House, Scarborough, that was published in the book, *The Essence of a Vision* (Rita A Daley, 1997).

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