BCYF

barwon child, youth & family

Stronger Together

A history of the founding agencies of
Barwon Child, Youth & Family 1855-2018

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Researched and written by Jill Barnard, Living Histories

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While BCYF holds many of the archives related to its three founding agencies, many records related to Glastonbury Children's Home are in the custody of the Geelong Heritage Centre and I thank the centre staff for their assistance in gaining access to these records.

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Twenty-three oral history informants gave their time to share memories of the founding agencies of BCYF. These informants included current and former Board members and staff of the agencies and I am grateful for their time. Most particularly, I am grateful to the care-leavers and former clients of Glastonbury, Barwon Youth and Time for Youth who agreed to share their stories with me. Such interviews can often revive painful memories and experiences and I appreciate the courage shown by these informants. There were limitations on the number of interviews undertaken with care leavers and former clients and it should be noted that, while these informants have reflected on their own journeys, they cannot represent the lived experiences of all former clients and care-leavers. A collection of written memories of Glastonbury Children's Home — *The Way we Were* — compiled by Victor Coull in 1995 provided additional memories of life in the children's home in the twentieth century. The authors of these memories are identified only by their first names within the text.

To protect privacy, pseudonyms have been used for the former clients and care-leavers who shared their stories, along with some former staff and residents identified in archival material. These pseudonyms are indicated by the use of italics. Every effort has also been made to exclude from publication any photographs that readily identify former clients and care-leavers.

Jill Barnard, Living Histories.

Preface

When three Geelong community agencies — Glastonbury Community Services, Barwon Youth, and Time For Youth — merged to form Barwon Child, Youth & Family in 2015, it was with the aim of strengthening their services to the Geelong and Barwon regional community. The three agencies had much in common. Each had been established by community members to meet particular needs emerging across the community. Glastonbury Community Services could trace its origins back to the 1850s, when gold fever left many a Victorian child deserted or orphaned, and concerned Geelong citizens established an orphanage at Herne Hill. Barwon Youth and Time for Youth, on the other hand, were established in the early 1980s, when community members, once again, perceived a need for support, counselling, refuge and accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness or involvement with the youth justice system.

Although each of the three agencies sprang from the desires of concerned community members to better support children, families and young people, the methods of providing this support have altered dramatically over the last half a century. For almost 130 years, children placed in Glastonbury's care lived in solid institutional buildings, segregated along age and gender lines. Later, alternative forms of care more closely resembling normal family life emerged to improve the experiences of those unable to live at home. A growing understanding of the pain experienced by children and young people separated from their families has led policy-makers, governments and agencies like BCYF to increasingly search for ways to strengthen families and prevent family breakdown.

Over BCYF's combined history of more than 200 years, there have been innumerable committee members, board members and other volunteers who have given incredible service to each of the three agencies. The focus of this history, while acknowledging key contributors in the formation and development of our founding agencies is, however, on our clients themselves. From various sources, we have aimed to build a picture of the experiences of children, young people and their families whose lives have been touched by the three founding agencies of BCYF.

Jill Barnard from Living Histories has crafted an inspiring story of change and transformation and ongoing efforts to improve the lives of our clients and build a community that can realise the benefits of being 'Stronger Together'.

I thank all those who contributed to making this vision a reality and producing a publication that we can all be very proud of and that captures our colourful journey forevermore.

John Frame, Chair, BCYF

Chapter 1

Establishing an orphan asylum in Geelong

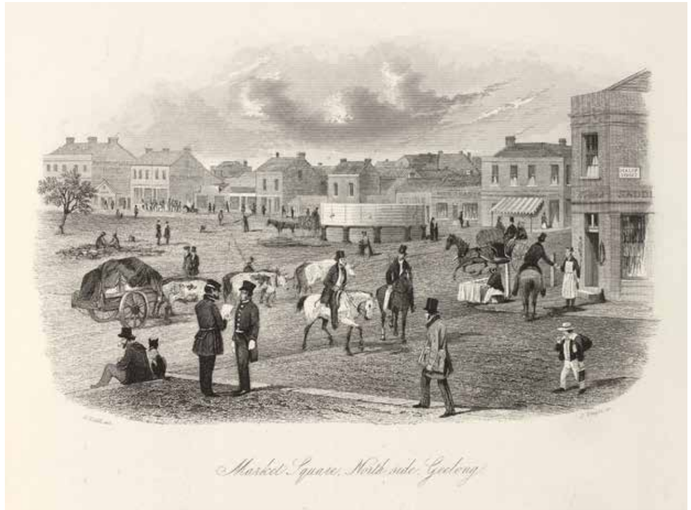
1850s – 1860s

One morning in November 1853, a 'respectable-looking' but elderly woman, with three little girls in tow, appeared before the Mayor of Geelong as he sat as Justice of the Peace in the Geelong Court. The three children, aged six, four and two, had been 'disgracefully deserted' by their parents. Their father was at the goldfields; their mother apparently living in 'undisguised adultery'. With nowhere in Geelong to send the sisters, the Mayor, Dr William Baylie, had no choice but to send them to the Melbourne Orphan School.[1]

The appearance of deserted children before the courts in Geelong became increasingly frequent in the early 1850s as gold fever gripped the infant Colony of Victoria. When gold was first discovered in Victoria in 1851, the town of Geelong was not quite 20 years old.

For thousands of years, Geelong and its environs had been Kulin land, belonging to the Wathaurong (Wadawurrung) people, whose country stretched from the coast between Werribee and Lorne and inland to the Ballarat region.[2] Their long custodianship of the land was disrupted in the 1830s, when land-seeking settlers from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) crossed Bass Strait to explore and claim country in the Port Phillip District of New South Wales. Though it was these illegal explorers who initiated non-Aboriginal settlement in the Port Phillip District, government authorities were quick to respond. By late 1836 Captain William Lonsdale was despatched to the Port Phillip District to serve as the police magistrate.

By the time Lonsdale arrived, hundreds of settlers, along with their flocks of sheep, had already settled in the Port Phillip District. Lonsdale found a number of these squatters around Geelong, located along the Moorabool and Barwon Rivers. While Melbourne, on the Yarra, became the seat of government, when Governor Richard Bourke visited the district in 1837, he found a number of settlers on Corio Bay and put forward his views on the best site for a township here. Geelong offered a landing place from which to explore the rich grazing land of the western district. There were 360 non-Aboriginal residents of the Geelong district in 1838, the majority of them men.[3]



Market Square Geelong 1857, ST Gill. lithographed by Tingle, State Library Victoria.

Geelong grew much more slowly than Melbourne in the 1830s and early 1840s. But in the late 1840s about 4000 immigrants arrived in Corio Bay, intended as labourers for landowners in the country.[4] These were assisted immigrants, whose passages to Australia were paid by the government or sponsoring future employers. They often came from the poorer classes, arriving with few material resources and no family networks to support them. Many soon found themselves in distressed circumstances. Accidental death or illness in a family could render immigrant families very vulnerable.

The Port Phillip District became the Colony of Victoria in early 1851. Soon after, the discovery of gold in central Victoria threw the colony into turmoil. Employees left their jobs to set off to search for gold; husbands left their families. Geelong, at first, was emptied. 'The people of Geelong are flocking to the diggings at the rate of one hundred a day', reported the *Geelong Advertiser* in 1851.[5] Desertion of women and children became commonplace and it became 'far from uncommon' to see destitute children wandering the streets of Geelong and Melbourne.[6]

Victoria's population began to swell as gold seekers poured into the colony, at first from other Australian colonies and then from overseas. Between 1851 and 1861 almost 600,000 overseas immigrants arrived in Victoria. Although the great majority of vessels carrying gold-seekers arrived at the Port of Melbourne, Geelong's greater proximity to the Ballarat goldfields meant that canny gold-seekers often travelled by steamer from Melbourne to Geelong, and then along an easier overland route to the Ballarat goldfields than was available from Melbourne. 'Hundreds of gold seekers, some with large families, swelled the town' wrote the members of the Geelong and Western Counties Co-operative Committee to members of Parliament in 1853. 'In many instances these gold seekers are suddenly taken away, leaving their offspring totally unprovided for.' The committee urged the government to provide an orphan asylum for the district.[7]

The government, however, faced with providing infrastructure of all kinds to meet the demands of the growing population, would not commit to providing welfare institutions for this population. It was up to private organisations and individuals, motivated by Christian ideals of charity, to provide relief for the destitute.

There had been some efforts by religious societies to care for the destitute, including orphaned children, in the Port Phillip District before the gold rushes. Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Catholics all formed societies to carry out charitable work, visiting and offering some assistance to the sick and destitute.

In Melbourne, the Anglican St James Visiting Society began sheltering some children in 1849, before opening a small home for orphans in conjunction with other church groups in 1851. In 1853 this home became known as the Melbourne Orphan Asylum.

Branches of the Catholic Friendly Brothers Society were also established in Melbourne and Geelong in the 1840s and provided support for those in need. In Geelong members of the Christ Church Anglican congregation established a benevolent society in 1847, visiting and offering assistance to 'worthy' destitute families and individuals. In 1850 the Christ Church Benevolent Society opened an infirmary (hospital) for the destitute sick, which included, among its inmates, some children.[8] This hospital was replaced by the Geelong Infirmary and Benevolent Asylum, the forerunner of Geelong Hospital, in 1852.[9]

> When the hospital of the Christ Church visiting society was closed there were three orphan children and a blind man handed over to the care of the government, and in the absence of any other asylum, they were temporarily lodged in the gaol. The eldest of these orphan children, only four years of age had been for several weeks previously, entirely supported by Mr Connor, the Town Council messenger, who was surprised the other day to see it wandering about in a much more wretched condition than formerly and, on making enquiries, he found that the poor little thing, with the two others, had been turned out of the gaol into the wide world, in company with the old, blind man, to live or die as might be. Mr Connor again took pity on the child, placed it in a place of safety and made interest with some of the committee of the Friendly Brothers Society for a weekly allowance towards its support. We have learnt that, after wandering miserably for the day, the old man took the remaining two children to the gaol, where they were allowed shelter for the night, but probably to be again turned out into the street...
>
> ***Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer,*** 7 Feb 1852, p.2

Geelong Orphan Asylum office-bearers elected in June 1854

Patrons

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor James Austin, Esq

President

The Mayor of Geelong

Vice-presidents

Captain Evans
and Charles Sladen

Trustees

Charles Ibbotson
John Guthrie
W H Baylie
William Roope
and J G Carr

Treasurer

F Champion Esq

Board of Directors

Thomas Forster
James Harrison
Edward Sandford
Thomas Bray
William Paterson
Thomas H Rawlings
H S Wills
W G McKellar

A Geelong orphan asylum

The problem of the increasing number of destitute or orphaned children on the streets of Geelong was apparent to Dr William Hingston Baylie, who, as Mayor of Geelong between 1853 and 1855, served as a Justice of the Peace in the local court. As a member of the Immigration Board at Geelong and as an honorary doctor at the Geelong Infirmary and Benevolent Asylum he was, no doubt, aware of instances of destitution in Geelong. Baylie saw many cases of destitute or orphaned children brought before the court. At times Baylie himself provided a home for the child or appealed to other citizens to do so.[12] At other times he had no choice but to send children to the orphan school in Melbourne. Baylie wrote to the Lieutenant–Governor seeking a solution to the problem of orphan children. At first he received little comfort in reply.[13]

It was local citizen, James Austin, in a generous parting gift to Geelong, who set the process of establishing a Geelong orphanage in practical motion. At a function given by Dr Baylie and the other Corporation of Geelong councillors to farewell Austin as he departed Geelong for England in March 1854, Austin announced that he had instructed his solicitor to hand over £500 towards the building of an orphan asylum at Geelong. He gave additional instructions to the solicitor to give £100 more than anyone else towards such an institution. Speaking at the farewell banquet, Austin explained his gift. An orphan asylum was, he said, 'an institution much needed and one that you cannot put up too soon' ... for 'we see many orphans here, children abandoned by their parents or whose parents, through crime, are in prison.'[14] The momentum had begun.

Not long after James Austin's departure from Geelong, Baylie convened a meeting for the purpose of establishing an orphanage in the town. After many requests he had received the news that the government would grant 10 acres of land in Newtown for an orphanage.[15]

With this news a public meeting was called early in May 1854 where it was decided that an orphanage would be erected on this land, that a committee be formed to frame rules for the orphanage and that subscriptions would be sought to support the orphanage.[16]

The elected committee lost no time in deciding that the Newtown site granted for the orphan asylum was unsuitable because it lacked space for recreation for the children. They applied for another grant of 20 acres 'east of Fyans Ford' overlooking the junction of the Moorabool and Barwon Rivers. By June 1854 they had been granted 10 acres in this 'high and salubrious situation' on what later became known as Herne Hill.[17] The government also granted a sum for building purposes, although the amount was dependent on how much could be raised locally; the more money that the local committee could raise, the greater the grant from the government.

Searching for supporters

Many 'gentlemen of influence' came forward to canvass all the districts of Geelong for pledges of subscriptions.[18] Unlike mere donations, subscriptions held the promise of continuing financial support, and offered subscribers the opportunity to vote for office bearers of the orphanage committee and thus have a degree of control over the management of the proposed institution. The orphanage committee also used the pages of the local newspaper, the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, to encourage financial support for the orphanage appeal. This was a delicate task in mid-nineteenth century Victoria. While there were certainly many people, inspired by Christian charity, who were moved by the plight of helpless abandoned children, there were others who did not regard it as their duty to support the children of negligent parents. Many nineteenth century Australians had brought from the United Kingdom the belief that 'wealth was derived from private ownership and every 'decent' man was expected to provide for himself and his family'.[19] They had little sympathy for those whose misery might have been caused by the laziness, intemperance or criminality of their parents.

To appeal to those who thought this way, the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, reporting the sudden death of a husband and father of four, reminding readers that death could come at any time. Without a father as 'protector' the family was now helpless. 'Who could protect them' now that the breadwinner was gone?[20]

Another strategy used to solicit support for the orphanage was to remind readers of the moral threat that destitute children posed to future society. 'Crime first flows from destitution. The deserted child makes the worst citizen', wrote an *Advertiser* columnist. 'The proposed asylum only proposes to keep the streets free from juvenile delinquents, boys and girls whom nothing but whipping will keep under and that punishment does but brutalise.'[21]

The Geelong press appealed across the religious divide. At that time in Victoria there were sectarian divisions between Catholic and Protestant Christians. Some of the bitterness of this divide had been carried to Victoria from Ireland where Catholics had endured centuries of oppression. But it had also been reignited in the Port Phillip District in the 1840s when many in the community had shown anti-Catholic prejudice against Irish immigrant girls. Although the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* carefully avoided the mention of specific religions, it reminded readers that the proposed orphan asylum would be for 'children of all creeds'.

There will be no attempt to win over the mind of a boy from the faith of his fathers. The orphanage will give shelter and not demand an adhesion to doctrine.[22]

The subscription drive appeared to be progressing well and by early June 1854, barely three months after the decision to build the orphanage, it was reported that £6,600 had been subscribed.[23] A meeting of the subscribers voted to go ahead at once and build the orphanage, approved rules for the orphanage and elected office bearers.[24] Possibly, however, not all those who had pledged financial support on paper, carried through with the funds. Though Dr Baylie had hoped that the orphanage would be finished by the end of 1854, when December arrived there was still no sign of an orphanage. The trustees, directors and office-bearers had to reconsider whether they could afford to erect the planned building and modified the original plans and specifications to build something simpler.[25]

Laying the foundation stone

In March 1855 the day dawned for the laying of the foundation stone of the orphanage. While the press regarded the occasion as surely the 'most successful public demonstration that has taken place for some time in Geelong',[26] it was a curious procession of organisations that wound its way from Market Square to the hill overlooking Fyansford, some distance from the centre of Geelong. Accompanied by a German band, the Mayor and members of the Corporation of Geelong led the Geelong Fire Brigade, the Geelong Rifle Corps and members of the Loyal Brothers Lodge of Oddfellows to the orphanage site, where work on the walls had already commenced. There Dr Baylie, expressed the hope that 'the public of Geelong would all join in promoting the benevolent object' of the institution.[27] After a dedication was read, it was placed in a bottle to be buried along with some coins, in a cavity in the foundation stone. Councillor George Wright expressed his surprise 'at the absence of clergy of all denominations. The object of their meeting together that day was one of benevolence and he always thought it was the duty of Christian ministers to practice benevolence'.[28] Perhaps it was the inclusion of 'licensed' refreshment tents in the ceremony that had led Protestant clergymen to stay away from the stone-laying ceremony for many would have frowned upon the consumption of alcohol. On behalf of the Catholic clergy of Geelong, Father Patrick Dunne, parish priest at Geelong, offered an explanation for his absence in the newspaper the following day, pointing out that the Catholic clergy had not been invited to the service. Moreover, though he had no doubt that the trustees and members of the committee of the orphan asylum were worthy, honest and respectable, 'there was no Catholic amongst them and no-one but a Catholic can conscientiously guarantee to us the education of Catholic children in their own religion.' Why not appoint a Catholic as one of the orphanage trustees? he asked.[29] Within months of the ceremony, the Geelong Friendly Brothers Society had begun providing shelter for children found abandoned on Geelong's streets, opening a temporary home for them in a rented temperance hotel in Malop Street. In 1856, the foundation stone for St Augustine's Catholic Orphanage was laid and the stage was set for both Protestant and Catholic orphanages to exist side by side in Geelong.

There were other signs of indifference or 'apathy' towards the proposed orphan asylum in the Geelong community. The annual general meeting, called to approve the rules of the asylum, was postponed three times in May 1855 due to inadequate attendance. At the second attempt to hold the meeting only five men were present.[30]

By July 1855, the first portion of the original design of the orphanage had been built. It was a building 'well-adapted to its purpose and a very tasteful piece of architecture'.[31] In September

James Austin

James Austin and his brother, Thomas, migrated with their parents and siblings from Somerset, England to Van Diemen's Land where their uncle, an ex-convict, had become a wealthy ferry operator and pastoralist. Although some of the Austin family returned to England and some remained in Van Diemen's Land, James and Thomas were among the early stream of hopeful pastoralists who crossed Bass Strait from Van Diemen's Land to the Port Phillip District in the late 1830s.

When the brothers arrived in the Port Phillip District in 1837, they took up land at Winchelsea, where Thomas Austin eventually built the mansion, Barwon Park, with his wife Elizabeth (nee Harding). James also acquired pastoral land and established Avalon Station, near Geelong. He also moved quickly to invest in properties in Geelong itself, including Geelong's 'leading butchery'. He built, as his own Geelong home, the Priory. He served on the first Geelong Council and was elected Mayor of Geelong in 1851.

Although James and his wife Rebecca (nee Savage) returned to England in 1854, he maintained many property interests in Geelong and one of his sons took over the Avalon estate. In addition to the gift to the orphanage, he left money for the Anglican and Wesleyan churches in Newtown and for a clock tower in Market Square. He remained a patron of the Geelong Orphan Asylum until the late 1870s and was the first Life Governor of the institution.

In England, Austin purchased and restored the Glastonbury Abbey and lived in Abbey House. In 1889 he returned for a visit to Geelong, being feted at a civic banquet.[10] He visited the orphanage, addressing the children, 'regaling them with lollies and fruit' and presenting each child with a 'bright Jubilee sixpence'. He died in England in 1896.[11]

Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum at Herne Hill.

a Master and Matron, Mr and Mrs Kent, were engaged to manage the orphanage.[32] But, despite the suggested urgent need for a refuge for orphaned or abandoned children, the first entries on the orphanage registers were not made until the 30th October 1855, when seven children – three Thompson children, Florence Reardon, Ann and Albert O'Connell and Martha Parker were entered.[33] They were the first of 44 children taken in by the orphanage in its first year of operation.[34]

Although Mr and Mrs Kent were responsible for the day-to-day management of the orphan asylum, a House Committee, appointed by the Board of Directors, kept a careful eye on things. They met weekly to 'examine accounts, superintend staff, purchase food, clothing etc, and attend to all matters relating to the health and conduct of the children'.[35]

Within a year of opening the orphanage, the board took advantage of government grants, together with funds raised locally, to erect the north wing of the building.[36] In 1863, with accommodation still inadequate, a hospital, sick room, bath room and water closet were added. A long verandah now extended along the rear of the building.[37] A new schoolroom was built in 1864. By 1871, the orphanage was described as 'as elegant and imposing as it is extensive and substantial', complete with lawns, gardens and a conservatory.[38]

Admission to the orphanage

Applications for admittance to the orphan asylum were approved or declined by the Board of Directors, which, by 1857, included three Protestant clergymen as well as businessmen and councillors, at monthly meetings. In the early years applications could come from the central goldfields, where working life could be fairly dangerous, as well as from Geelong and the western district of Victoria.[39]

Only children under the age of 10 were admitted to the orphan asylum, and admissions were restricted to children who had lost one or both parents through death or desertion, though the Board of Directors had some discretion in deciding which cases were deserving. Life Governors, who had subscribed £50 or more, had the right to recommend the admittance of particular children.[40]

The board clearly took its role in approving and admitting children very seriously. In 1859, for instance, out of a great many applications for admission, it admitted only 20 children. Although the board explained that lack of accommodation prevented them from accepting all, there were clearly other criteria at work. In 1859, the then Mayor of Geelong was unable to have three children in his care admitted. Their mother was in prison and their father had deserted them.[41] By this time the board had established a policy of refusing admittance to children of prisoners and those who had only been 'temporarily deserted'. Such cases were seen to be the responsibility of the government.[42] The following year, another three children, whose mother had died, were rejected because their father, though still able to work, was a 'dissipated character'.[43]

> 'At this meeting some most distressing cases were brought forward, specially that of four children whose parents have been dead for some time and the poor children have been completely neglected, except by the kind sympathies of some poor neighbours. It was resolved to admit the three youngest, the oldest being above the age....'
>
> ***Geelong Advertiser,*** 16 Apr 1860, p.2

Discharging children

The board also exercised discretion in discharging children from the orphanage. After a bad start when the first three inmates, the Thompson children, were 'enticed away by their mother', the board was careful to check the suitability of the 'friends' who came to claim children.

Of the first 102 children who were admitted to the asylum by 1860, 26 were 'given up' to their mothers and three to their fathers, suggesting that, as parents' fortunes changed, they were eager to be reunited with their children. Fifteen children were claimed by other relatives. Three absconded from the orphanage. Just under half of the first 102 children were apprenticed out.

It was common in the 19th century for orphanage children to be 'apprenticed out' to be trained or work for a master once they had reached a suitable age. On the whole, girls were apprenticed as domestic servants and boys, if not at trades, then as farm workers or general hands. The rules of the Geelong Orphan Asylum set the age of apprenticeship at 12 for boys and 14 for girls, unless they had already been found a position. While the first children to be apprenticed left the orphanage in 1859, the Board of Directors was anxious that the Victorian Government introduce regulations to enable institutions to formally make contracts between masters and the institution.[44] This did not happen until 1864 when Neglected and Criminal Children's legislation was passed. The board took the initiative in drawing up a form of indenture in 1862 'for the better protection of children apprenticed out' and took responsibility to apprentice children to masters who would provide 'wholesome supervision' of their 'moral character'.[45]

Life inside the orphanage

The development of the children's moral character was an important priority for the Board of Directors. In their third annual report to subscribers, board members pointed out that already 52 children had been removed from want and placed in a 'position where every opportunity is afforded them of becoming in afterlife useful members of society'.[46]

To this end, from the very first year, girls were taught all kinds of domestic work and how to make and mend their own clothes, while boys were instructed in gardening and farming, 'as far as the grounds will allow'.[47] By the end of the 1860s, however, vegetable gardens and four cows kept the boys busy in horticultural pursuits. Through this training and the careful education they were given, the directors aimed to prepare children to occupy 'useful stations in society' in occupations

appropriate to their stations in life.[48] There was no aim to equip the children for higher things.

Staffing the orphanage

The first Master of the Orphanage, Mr Kent, doubled as the children's teacher. Mr Kent and his wife did not stay long at the orphanage however and there was some turnover of staff in the early years. By 1860, three married couples had served as master and matron. When, in 1862, the Victorian Government established a Board of Education, the orphanage board was able to claim teachers' salaries from the board, thus economising on the cost of staffing the institution.

Matters of faith

In its first annual report to the subscribers of the orphanage, the board regretted that, despite its entreaties to clergymen of the various denominations in Geelong to make visits to the asylum, this had 'not occurred as much as anticipated'. Nevertheless the 'moral training' of the children was not forgotten. They attended Divine Worship every Sunday morning and often also in the afternoon. In addition the Master of the asylum gave them religious instruction. By the mid 1860s the older children attended church every Sunday, weather permitting.[49] Every religious 'sect' was catered for, it was claimed.[50]

In 1860, it came to the notice of some of the board members that some ladies, canvassing for donations towards St Augustine's Catholic Orphanage, had, inadvertently or not, led donors to believe they were giving to the Geelong Orphan Asylum, rather than to the Catholic institution.[51] Many supporters of the Geelong Orphan Asylum, it was suggested, had been 'fooled in this way' into subscribing to the wrong orphanage.[52]

At a special meeting of subscribers of the Orphan Asylum in 1862, a motion to change the orphanage's name to the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum to avoid this confusion in the future was debated. There was vehement opposition to the proposal from some corners of the room. The Reverend Andrew Love, Geelong's first Presbyterian Minister, urged those present not to 'lose sight' of the fact that the Geelong Orphan Asylum was not founded for an exclusive purpose. 'It was founded for Roman Catholics as well as Protestants and, indeed, the children of every creed.' Mr George Brown argued that: 'An institution should be regarded as totally irrespective of country or creed. Any alteration would be disastrous.' The 'bitter' discussion ended with a narrow vote. By 11 votes to nine, the meeting voted to change the orphanage name to the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum.[53]

Whether it was as a consequence of this change, purely coincidental, or due to the fact that the Orphan Asylum employed an additional collector to solicit subscriptions, there was a considerable increase in subscriptions the following year. The committee spread its net wider, appealing to the settlers in the Wimmera Region 'with pleasing results'.[54]

In 1864, the Victorian Government passed the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act*, establishing reformatory schools for juvenile offenders and industrial schools for 'neglected' children. Under the act, police could charge children with neglect and commit them to an industrial school. Parents could apply to admit their children to these 'schools' if they could not support them, but in doing so, they handed their children over to the care of the state.

A Geelong Industrial School opened in 1865, with children sent down to Geelong from Melbourne to be housed in deplorable conditions in the gaol. The year after the passing of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act*, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was opened. In that year, the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum admitted only 11 children, the lowest annual number for some time, suggesting that the alternatives offered by the Ballarat institution and the industrial schools offered other pathways for those needing help supporting their children.

In its first 10 years, the board and committees of the orphanage had established rules, patterns and procedures that set the pattern of life for children who entered the institution for the next 100 years. The Board of Directors' control of the intake and exit of children, the weekly visits of the House Committee, the training of children for useful places in life and a Protestant ethos that pervaded the institution were just some features of life in the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum that would endure.

Boys at work in a corner of the garden circa 1915.

Chapter 2

Building industrious citizens

1870s – 1930s

On 22 July 1870 Sarah, Ellen and Alice Collins, aged nine, seven and six, were admitted to the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum. Their father had committed suicide two years before, leaving their mother with 'ten or eleven' children, some of them adults. Although Mrs Collins was working some land in the gold-mining and farming district of Rokewood, she was apparently 'very much in debt'. Yet it was not Mrs Collins who made the application to have some of her children admitted to the orphanage. The application came from pastoralists, William and Nairne Elder, of the Kuruc u Rac station near Rokewood.

It was the norm in the 19th century for applications for admission to the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum to come from 'respectable' people who could vouch for the deservingness of the case. Indeed, donors who subscribed £100 or more were guaranteed the right to place a child in the orphanage at any time. Like all applications for admittance to the institution, the Elders' application on behalf of Mrs Collins was considered by the Committee of Management and was not automatically approved. Some committee members argued that only two of the girls should be accepted.[55] Eventually all three children entered the orphanage and were allotted the numbers 281, 282 and 283. Mrs Collins was able to reclaim Alice in 1877 when she was 13 years old. But the two older Collins girls were apprenticed as domestic servants, Sarah as an apprentice in the orphanage itself.

Sarah, Ellen and Alice entered the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum at a time when the number of its residents was higher than it would ever be (apart from a spike after the end of World War II). Throughout the 1860s and most of the 1870s, the number of children in the asylum hovered from year to year at around 100, reaching 111 in 1872.

The Geelong institution was not the only one experiencing growth in these decades as increasing numbers of children came into institutional care. In 1867, 1418 Victorian children, effectively wards of the state, were living in the government's industrial schools.[56] In 1869 the Melbourne Protestant Orphanage sheltered 325 children, St Augustine's and Our Lady's Catholic Orphanages in Geelong cared for 161 children between them and St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage in South Melbourne cared for 297 children.

This increase was partly a result of the stabilisation of the population after the gold rush era. Migrants had married and started families and children represented a higher proportion of the Victorian population than in previous decades. Yet many families still lacked extended family networks to help out in times of trouble and working life, particularly in gold mines, was often dangerous.

In the mid-1870s the number of children in the Geelong Protestant Orphanage began to decline. This was not so much because there were fewer applications, but because more mothers were able to reclaim their children as their circumstances began to improve. The Committee of Management noted in 1874 that many mothers had remarried and thus were in a position to have their children back. They thoroughly approved of this course of events as it allowed a mother to 're-form her family circle having been assisted at her greatest need'.[57] Yet the committee remained wary of allowing parents to take their children back when they reached an age at which they could be employed, often refusing such requests. When Mrs Irwin wrote in 1871 to ask for her son so that he could work with her at the Duck Ponds railway toll gates, her application was refused.[58]

The increase in the number of parents seeking release of their children from the orphanage coincided with a decision by the Victorian Government to abolish the disastrous industrial school system for children who were under the government's care. A Royal Commission in 1872 had found that the government-operated industrial schools for neglected children had been 'carried on under conditions highly unfavourable both to the physical and moral well-being of the children'.[59] Children who were in the care of the government would now be 'boarded out' or fostered in private homes with foster parents. The government paid a small allowance to the foster parents, who were supervised by visiting committees of respectable ladies. Children who had committed criminal offences, however, continued to be placed in reformatory schools.

The orphanage school at Herne Hill in the early 20th century.

From the 1880s, government regulations also allowed for some widowed or deserted, but respectable, mothers to have their children boarded out to them.[60] Technically, these children were still wards of the state, but the allowance paid by the department to their mothers allowed them to remain in the family home. It is possible that many destitute women were able to avoid placing their children into care through this measure.

Orphanage life in the 19th century

Daily life for Sarah, Ellen and Alice Collins, as for children in many orphanages and benevolent institutions in the 19th century, was regimented and regulated by rules and designed, not only to keep the children busy, but to transform them into 'industrious citizens'. A timetable set out the activities for every hour of the day, which was punctuated by the sounding of a bell.

Much of the work required to maintain the orphanage was carried out by the children. This not only ensured a saving in wages for domestic and outdoor staff, but also offered useful 'training' for the children. Under the direction of a gardener, boys tended the gardens. Plants and shrubs for an ornamental garden had been provided for the orphanage by Daniel Bunce, the first curator of the Geelong Botanical Gardens.[61] But the boys also grew all the vegetables needed to supply the institution. From the 1870s some of the older boys were also trained in shoemaking and repairing, supplying, at times, all the shoes required in the institution.[62] The girls were employed indoors, cleaning the orphanage, but also, under the direction of a seamstress, making all the clothing required by the orphans, saving money, but helping to turn the girls into 'useful housewives'.[63]

The orphanage school

Two classrooms within the building at Herne Hill served as a school for those children not engaged in working around the orphanage and, initially, the superintendent of the orphanage doubled as the school teacher. After 1862, the school was classed as a common school, the forerunner of state schools, and the teachers' salaries were subsidised by the state. This meant that, for a few years in the 1860s, children from the surrounding neighbourhoods also attended the orphanage school.[64] In 1872, the Victorian Government introduced legislation that established the state school education system, providing free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 (grade eight).

Though the government had previously subsidised schools run by religious bodies, from 1872 education in state-run schools was to be secular. The legislation established a central department of education and a career path for teachers in the state school system. While numerous new state school buildings were constructed after the passing of the legislation, other schools carried on in the buildings formerly used as common schools or denominational schools. There was some opposition to the free secular and compulsory education legislation. The Catholic Church, in particular, opposed the secular nature of the state school education and continued to provide religious schools for its children.

Although the Geelong orphanage school had been subsidised by the state as a common school before 1872, it did not immediately become a state school once the 'free, compulsory and secular' legislation was passed. The orphanage authorities chose to revert to employing and paying the teacher out of their own funds. Perhaps they were motivated by the desire to continue offering a religious education in the school or feared losing control of the children's daily movements if their education was delivered by an employee of the state or they were sent out to attend a local state school with other children. Though the orphanage school did not come under the control of the Education Department, it followed the syllabus set down by the department and inspectors assessed the school annually. But it was not until 1910, when finances were tight and the orphanage buildings were in need of many improvements, that the Victorian Education Department assumed responsibility for the school, immediately improving the physical conditions for the children. The school became State School number 3656.[65]

The orphanage school room in the 1920s.

Placing the orphanage school under the control of the Education Department brought a certain loss of control for the orphanage management and was sometimes at odds with the desire to keep the children, as much as possible, within the close confines of the orphanage fences. In the early 1920s, for instance, the Education Department arranged for older boys in the orphanage school to receive woodwork lessons at a technical school in South Geelong. The orphanage secretary, George Deans, protested that the distance to South Geelong was too far for the boys to walk. The orphanage committee offered the alternative of woodwork classes delivered to the boys in the evenings by a retired carpenter.[66]

Life after institutional care

In the 19th century and for much of the 20th century, children who had not been reclaimed by their families by the time they reached an age to leave the orphanage were 'apprenticed out'. In the early years, boys were sometimes apprenticed out at the age of 12. But from 1906, boys were discharged from the orphanage at 14 and girls at 15, unless they had previously been apprenticed or reclaimed by their parents or family.[67]

Apprenticing of orphan or destitute children was the common method of managing their life after institutional care in 19th century Victoria. In fact, the Victorian Government's *Neglected and Criminal Children Act* of 1864 set out the procedures for licensing children out to employers as apprentices. It was not until the mid 20th century that the Victorian Government made it illegal to place state wards under the age of 15 in employment and ruled out live-in positions for apprenticed state wards under the age of 17.[68]

In common with children in the care of the state and in other institutions, the orphanage apprenticed most boys with farmers and placed girls as domestic servants because such positions offered accommodation, as well as work. Employers taking on apprentices from the Geelong Orphanage were obliged to provide them with food and clothing, as well as payment. But they were not under an obligation to train the children for any qualification. A percentage of the wages owed to the apprentices was paid to the orphanage to be held in trust until the young person reached the age of 21.

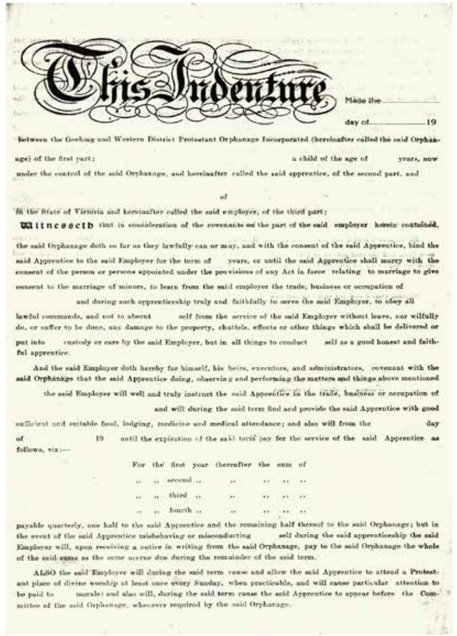
The Committee of Management kept a careful eye on applicants for apprentices. They were required to provide two references, often from local clergymen, proving that they were 'fit and proper' people to have the charge of an apprentice and there were instances when the committee refused applicants. Some applicants, while judged to be 'fit and proper', were nevertheless rejected on the grounds that they were located too far from Geelong.

These measures went some way towards preventing exploitation or abuse of the children who were apprenticed out, but there is little evidence that the committee checked up on the welfare of apprentices under its charge in the 19th century, except in cases where apprentices left their employer prematurely or were returned as unsatisfactory. In such cases, inquiries were made.

Religious training

Affiliated with no particular church or denomination, the orphanage relied on clergy from a number of Protestant churches in Geelong to cater for the children's religious education and needs in the 19th century. As the orphanage at Herne Hill was some distance from Geelong, visits from clergymen were, originally, sporadic. But by the 1870s, clergymen from the various denominations took turns to visit the orphanage on Sunday afternoons to hold services for the children.

By the early 20th century, children were walking from the orphanage to St John's Church of England in Church Street West Geelong and the Herne Hill Methodist Church on alternate Sundays for morning services, then gathering for services at the orphanage in the afternoon on one Sunday afternoon per month.[69] In addition, from 1914, volunteers from local churches visited the orphanage on Sunday afternoons to conduct Sunday School classes.



This Indenture Made the day of 19

Between the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage Incorporated (hereinafter called the said Orphanage) of the first part; a child of the age of years, now under the control of the said Orphanage, and hereinafter called the said apprentice, of the second part, and of in the State of Victoria and hereinafter called the said employer, of the third part;

Witnesseth that in consideration of the covenants on the part of the said employer herein contained, the said Orphanage doth so far as they lawfully can or may, and with the consent of the said Apprentice, bind the said Apprentice to the said Employer for the term of years, or until the said Apprentice shall marry with the consent of the person or persons appointed under the provisions of any Act in force relating to marriage to give consent to the marriage of minors, to learn from the said employer the trade, business or occupation of and during such apprenticeship truly and faithfully to serve the said Employer, to obey all lawful commands, and not to absent self from the service of the said Employer without leave, nor wilfully do, or suffer to be done, any damage to the property, chattels, effects or other things which shall be delivered or put into custody or care by the said Employer, but in all things to conduct self as a good honest and faithful apprentice.

And the said Employer doth hereby for himself, his heirs, executors, and administrators, covenant with the said Orphanage that the said Apprentice doing, observing and performing the matters and things above mentioned the said Employer will well and truly instruct the said Apprentice in the trade, business or occupation of and will during the said term find and provide the said Apprentice with good sufficient and suitable food, lodging, medicine and medical attendance; and also will from the day of 19 until the expiration of the said term pay for the service of the said Apprentice as follows, viz:—

For the first year thereafter the sum of
" " second " " " " "
" " third " " " " "
" " fourth " " " " "

payable quarterly, one half to the said Apprentice and the remaining half thereof to the said Orphanage; but in the event of the said Apprentice misbehaving or misconducting self during the said apprenticeship the said Employer will, upon receiving a notice in writing from the said Orphanage, pay to the said Orphanage the whole of the said sums as the same accrue due during the remainder of the said term.

ALSO the said Employer will during the said term cause and allow the said Apprentice to attend a Protestant place of divine worship at least once every Sunday, when practicable, and will cause particular attention to be paid to morals; and also will, during the said term cause the said Apprentice to appear before the Committee of the said Orphanage, whenever required by the said Orphanage.

The form of agreement signed by a representative of the orphanage and prospective employers of apprentices from the late 19th century into the 20th century.

Outings, entertainment and recreation

Treats and entertainments for the children were few and far-between in the 19th century. In 1865 the cabmen (coach drivers) of Geelong combined to take the children for a treat in a park in Geelong, where they played sports and enjoyed a picnic. For many years, however, there seems to have been little relief from the monotony of daily life within the orphanage. The Committee of Management provided annual prizes for the school and arranged for an annual picnic by the seaside at such locations as Portarlington, Queenscliff, Clifton Springs or Torquay. In the 20th century members of the local RACV club began to provide the transportation for these annual picnics by the sea.

During the depression years of the 1890s, treats provided by well-wishers to the orphanage were rare. For the whole of 1899, for instance, only two 'entertainments' were provided at the orphanage. Both were magic lantern displays, one of them organised by the matron's daughter to coincide with annual school prize-giving ceremony at Christmas. Renewed interest in the orphanage in the early 20th century, however, led to a growing number of entertainments and invitations for the children.

Applications for admission

At their monthly general meetings, the members of the orphan asylum's Committee of Management carefully assessed every application for entry into the orphanage, reluctant to admit the children of any parent, mother or father, who might have relatives who could assist them. Officially the orphanage's rules allowed for the admittance of children 'deprived of one or both of their parents through death, insanity or permanent desertion'. In reality, however, in the early years it was only the loss of a father that counted as the loss of 'one parent'. Fathers who had lost their wives were expected to be able to carry on supporting their children.

Applications were more likely to be successful if they came via a local clergyman or upstanding citizen who could vouch for the deservingness of the case. There was no room for emergency admittance to the orphanage. Applicants had to have their applications, on the correct form, to the committee at least 21 days before the meeting at which the application would be considered. Even then, sometimes approval or dismissal was deferred to a subsequent meeting as the committee made further inquiries into the conditions of the case.

In 1879, when the number of children in the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum had dropped to 70, the Committee of Management began to consider relaxing some of the stringent rules for admission. They recommended that a man deprived of his wife through death or insanity, but not through desertion, might be allowed to admit his children to the orphanage, but only on the condition that physical illness or disability 'prevented him from providing for them'.[70]

Committee members resisted overtures from the Government Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools to take on wards of the department. As the government industrial schools closed and the majority of the wards were placed into foster care, a receiving depot, where children came into the state system, remained at Royal Park in Melbourne and, for a few years between 1874 and 1877, the Geelong industrial school became a receiving depot for female children and infants.[71]

The Catholic orphanage system continued to offer places for Catholic female government wards at the Abbotsford Convent and at Our Lady's Orphanage (later St Catherine's) at Geelong. In 1878, when the receiving depot at Geelong closed, the Department of Neglected Children asked the committee of management of the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum to consider taking some of these children or setting part of the orphanage aside as an industrial school. After 'repeated discussion and adjournments' the committee rejected the proposal.[72] It would not be until the 1930s that the orphanage would begin to accept wards of the state.

> The children were invited to concerts, sports etc by the Loyal Orange Lodge, Herne Hill Methodist Sunday School, Geelong Agricultural Society, Protestant Alliance Friendly Society, the Comunn Na Feinne Society, Barwon Regatta Committee, Corio Bay Regatta Committee, Eight Hours Committee and Geelong Football Club.
>
> **Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage Annual Report 1910-1911**

> By the kindness of the President of the Geelong Football Club an invitation has been extended to the boys to attend the football matches played here and this consideration has been much appreciated by the boys.
>
> **Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum Annual Report 1900**

> An application for the admission of two children was read. The father of children has absconded leaving his wife with three children but it appears very probable that he is still alive and the rules not admitting of such children being received into the asylum, the Reverend Mr McKewsie moved and Mr Reed seconded that this case be not entertained. Reverend W Price moved and Mr Wright seconded that the children be admitted. On both being put, the first motion was carried.
>
> **Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum General Committee minutes 13 January 1871**

> Mr Gerrard applied for the admission of his two children so that he might go to the country for work. Application refused.
>
> **Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum General Committee minutes 9 September 1870**

Similarly, the orphan asylum committee resisted pressure to adopt a boarding out system for the children placed in its care. In the 1880s the Victorian Government tried to encourage orphanages to adopt this system and the Melbourne Orphan Asylum (later known as Oz Child) was boarding out three quarters of the children in its care by 1888, either with their own mothers or with foster carers.[73] Boarding out was a cheaper option for the government as it did not have to subsidise spending on the maintenance of orphanage buildings. It was also regarded as healthier for children to be living in normal family homes, preferably in the country, rather than in unnatural institutions.

The committee of the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum resisted attempts to have them board out children, fearing that it was a 'radical' step to take and they were sceptical of the motives of mothers who were paid to have their children boarded out to them, claiming that, in 'the majority of cases, it simply relieves the mother of a burden at the expense of the public'.[74] Committee members were not alone in avoiding the boarding out system. The Catholic orphanages of Victoria also resisted the move towards boarding out, fearing that the religious upbringing of Catholic children could not be guaranteed in private, unsupervised homes.[75]

Some correspondence from Mr Pickins, Camperdown was read, Mr Pickins asking admission of an illegitimate child of 10 months. On the motion of Mr Wheatland it was resolved that this was not a case that can be entertained by the Committee.

Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum General Committee minutes, 10 April 1879

Sarah Alder, of Sharp Street Chilwell, had seven children, ranging in age from 12 to six months, when her husband died in Queensland in 1880. She supported herself and her children with needlework, but also had to rely on the charity of the Geelong Ladies Benevolent Society. In 1882, the Reverend W C Hose, who was Vicar at All Saints Church and a member of the orphanage committee, sought the admission of some of the children into the orphanage so that their mother might be able to 'leave home during the day and earn more wages to support the others'.[76] Charles, George, Herbert and John, aged 10, eight, seven and five, were admitted in 1882. James was admitted the following year when he turned five, as was Jane, in 1885. All of the children, apart from James, were eventually returned to their mother. James, on turning 14, was apprenticed to a farmer at Modewarre. Jane was the only one who was able to leave the orphanage before the age of 14, returning to her mother in 1889, when she was nine years old, perhaps as her mother's circumstances had begun to improve.

Caroline, Julia, Gertrude, Daisy and Lilian Clarke were admitted to the orphanage in February 1892, on the condition that their father paid 5 shillings a week for their maintenance. All five children were returned to their father in 1896.

Depression in the 1890s

The orphanage committee's notions of who was deserving of assistance was tested during the 1890s. After two decades of relative economic prosperity in the 1870s and 1880s, Victoria plunged into a disastrous depression in the early 1890s. Unemployment in Victoria rose to 28.3 per cent in 1893.[77] Pressure increased on charitable institutions and societies, such as ladies benevolent societies, to assist the needy.[78] The Geelong Ladies Benevolent Association, for example, which provided food, fuel and clothing to those in distress, assisted 369 families (2564 individuals) in 1894 alone.[79]

As many hard-working and industrious families, and, indeed, some relatively prosperous people, lapsed into poverty, it became clear that not everyone in distress had brought their troubles on themselves and the orphanage committee found it more difficult to readily dismiss applications for admittance to the orphanage. During the 1890s there were more frequent cases of fathers applying to have all of their children placed into the care of the institution. Increasingly, these cases were approved, but usually with the provision that the parent contribute something towards the children's maintenance. The bye-laws of the orphanage were revised in 1906 to reflect this broader acceptance of the reasons why parents might need to place their children in care. Now, as well as admitting children 'deprived of one or both of their parents through death, insanity, permanent desertion' the Committee of Management could also accept children in 'any such circumstances as shall, in the opinion of the committee cause the welfare of the child or children to be imperilled'.[80]

In the parallel state subsidised system of care, the grounds for admitting children to the care of the state had been widened in the 1880s and 1890s, with a broadening of the definition of parental neglect to include children being provided with insufficient food, clothing or shelter, found wandering the streets or engaging in street trading or, in the case of girls, in 'moral danger'. Government legislation licensed some institutions and organisations to apprehend and care for children in these categories. The Geelong Orphanage was not one of them.

By the 1920s, however, the orphanage was accepting children who might not have been classified as from 'respectable' backgrounds. The secretary of the orphanage committee advised in 1925 that two children in the orphanage came from families where, through drink, desertion, immorality or illness, the parents were not able to care for their children. While he conceded that there was a possibility that these children might be returned to their parents in the future 'it had meant the salvation of the children to have them placed in the orphanage'.[81]

In 1892 John and Bertie Libbis, aged four and two, were admitted to the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum on the proviso that their mother contribute £1 per month towards their support.[82] John and Bertie remained in the orphanage into the new century when first John and then Bertie was apprenticed as each of them reached the age of 14. Both boys went to farmers, one at Ocean Grove and the other at Alvie, near Colac. Bertie Libbis would go on to enlist in the first AIF during World War I. Signing up in 1916, when he was 25, Bertie served in France where he was wounded in a gas attack in 1918, the last year of the war, before returning to Australia at war's end.[83]

The orphanage's 'babies' pictured in 1928.

Younger children in the orphanage

The admittance of several family groups that included very young children, in the 1890s meant that, for the first time, the orphanage 'boarded out' a small number of children under the age of two with their mothers or with foster carers. Very young children were difficult to care for in large institutions before the development of reliable alternatives to breast milk. In 1911, however, the committee decided that younger children would be cared for at the orphanage by the matron and staff.[84] By 1927 there were 15 inmates in the orphanage's babies' wing.[85]

Gaining support for the orphanage

While the 1890s depression did not increase the number of children in the orphanage to a great extent, it did place a strain on the orphanage's financial resources as donors and subscribers to the orphanage became limited in their ability to contribute. The numbers of subscribers listed in the annual reports of the orphanage did not decline significantly, but the amounts they were contributing to the orphanage did.

Even before the onset of the depression, the Committee of Management had long complained that the institution did not receive adequate support from the citizens of Geelong and surrounding districts. The committee particularly relied on private subscriptions and donations because, from the 1870s, government grants to charitable institutions were tied to the amount raised locally through subscriptions or donations. The government matched these funds by a ratio of two to one. The greater the amount that could be raised by the local charity, the greater the government grant.

While the Committee of Management acknowledged that the 'general financial stress' of the 1890s contributed to a falling off in donations, in 1894 its members still complained that only a very small proportion of the 40,000 or so residents of Geelong and surrounding districts, 'contributed to charitable institutions'.[86] In 1894, for the first time, the committee spent more money on maintaining the orphanage than it received in grants and donations and it was forced to draw on the capital in the institution's endowment fund. Formerly the committee had only drawn on the interest from this fund, which had been established through various bequests and legacies from deceased estates. By the end of the 1890s, the committee was fearful that the work of the institution might not be able to carry on.

The committee tried a number of approaches to boost its finances, appointing a collector to canvass for subscriptions on

a commission basis. A change in the bye-laws in 1906 allowed for anyone contributing over £20 to the orphanage to be named a life governor. One scheme that was introduced in the 1890s continued for many decades. Each year in May the children in Protestant Sunday Schools in Geelong and districts were asked to contribute to an annual collection.

In 1909, recognising that there might be 'an advantage' to be gained by changing the title of the institution, a special meeting of subscribers voted to rename the orphan asylum the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage. This seemed to coincide with a renewed interest in public support for the institution.

Perhaps more significantly, a change in the bye-laws of the institution allowed for the election of women, as well as men, to the Committee of Management. While the first women on the committee — Mrs A H Cunningham and Mrs Langhorne — were not elected until 1914, the encouragement offered to women to be involved in the affairs of the orphanage seemed to pay dividends. In 1912 the three Lady Mayoresses of Geelong, Newtown and Chilwell and Geelong West convened a meeting of 'ladies' who formed committees to systematically canvass the three municipalities for subscriptions and donations. Many friends 'responded liberally' to this direct appeal, 'relieving the committee of much anxiety'.[87]

Concerts, fetes and entertainments to raise funds for the orphanage began to proliferate and, during World War I, when the ex-Mayoress of Geelong initiated a citizen's drive to raise funds for the orphanage, the committee's debts were paid off.[88]

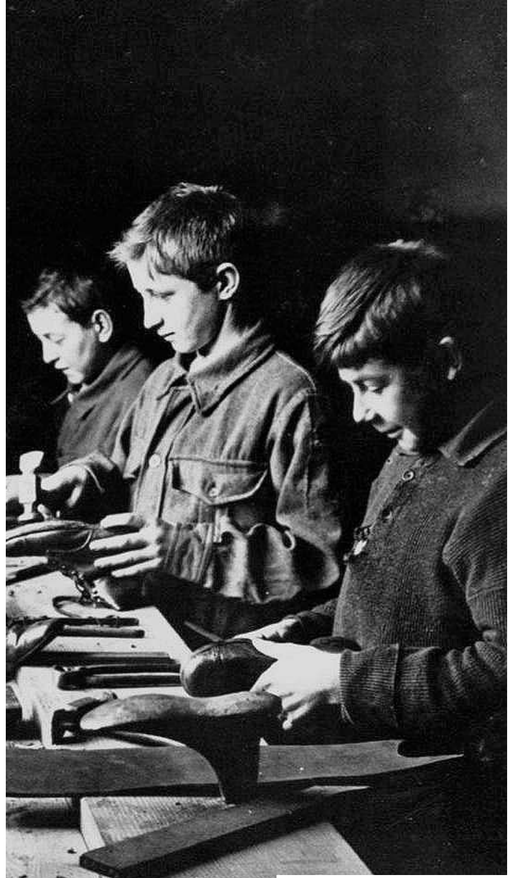
In 1929 a Ladies Auxiliary was formed to support the orphanage by making clothing and knitting socks for the children.[89] The Ladies Auxiliary would continue to be a source of both material support and caring interest in the lives of the orphanage children until the 1970s and a number of women who first became involved with the orphanage through the Ladies Auxiliary, would go on to become members of the Committee of Management.

The committee have undertaken during the year the care of children whose fathers are on active service with the AIF. Recently one of the fathers was invalided home unfit for further service and on seeing his three little boys he gratefully expressed his thanks for their well-cared for appearance.

Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage Annual Report 1916-1917

The Mayoress, Mrs H Hitchcock, Major T B Dibbs, members of the orphanage committee, Matron Bell and the officials of the institution and a bevy of bright, healthy, happy children assembled in the grounds yesterday to plant trees in honour of the heroes who were reared and educated at the top of Herne Hill. After the singing of the National Anthem, the President, Mr H H Washington said the line of trees they were planting that day would remind them of those who were fighting and dying for them on the fields of France. It would be something to show these men when they returned, the trees, bearing their names, planted in their honour...

Geelong Advertiser
14 September 1918, p.4



Orphanage boys repairing boots circa 1922.

Support from the Charities Board

The great loss of young Australian lives during World War I (1914-1918) underscored the importance of preserving and promoting the health and welfare of the nation's children. In 1922 the Victorian Government established, by legislation, a Charities Board to regulate and oversee charitable institutions. Although the Charities Board was partly intended to ensure that charities were run efficiently and gave good value for government money, it was also expected to ensure that the quality of care given in charitable institutions was adequate. The Charities Board aimed to give every child 'the best possible start' in life.[90] In contrast to the 19th century, when government authorities aimed to de-institutionalise as many children as possible by boarding them out, the first secretary of the Charities Board, J C Love, believed that well-run and efficient institutions, particularly those operated by religious bodies, were best-equipped for providing for the welfare and health of orphans and neglected children. The Charities Board would be instrumental in supporting the Geelong orphanage to achieve new premises in the 1930s.

A new orphanage

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the orphanage committee, both financially and in terms of accommodating the children, lay in the state of the orphanage buildings. As early as 1891, the Government Inspector of Charities had drawn attention to the inadequate state of the old 1850s-built orphanage at Herne Hill, suggesting that it be replaced with a new building constructed on modern lines. All the committee could afford to do, however, was to make minor modifications, such as enlarging staircases and carrying out repairs, where necessary. By the 1920s, the Committee of Management was reluctant to carry out further repairs on the obsolete buildings and was convinced that it was absolutely necessary to replace them with a new orphanage.[91]

The Australian Portland Cement works, later known as Geelong Cement Works, which had been established near the orphanage in 1890 and much expanded in the years afterwards, posed a significant health hazard to the orphanage residents and staff. By 1925 the cement and coal dust that blew from the cement works coated the orphanage's paddocks and vegetable garden. The orphanage cows were grazing on cement dust, which permeated the orphanage building, making it difficult to clean. The children were breathing a cement-laden atmosphere continuously.[92] Writing to the *Geelong Advertiser* in 1925, an 'old inmate' of the orphanage recalled that the cement dust 'was bad enough' in his time but was probably worse by 1925 'owing to the progress the company has made'.[93] It was time to move.

The Committee of Management began the search for a new site for the orphanage in the early 1920s, first fixing on a site near the Geelong Botanic Gardens at East Geelong. The site was partly owned by the Geelong Harbour Trust and was partly Crown Land. The committee proposed swapping their Herne Hill land for this site. However, after it was discovered that part of this land had been reserved for school purposes, and with the promise from Mr McCann, proprietor of the cement works that he would take steps to abate the nuisance from cement and coal dust, the committee resolved, in 1927, to construct new orphanage buildings on the Herne Hill site. One inducement in favour of staying was that the cement works supplied the orphanage with free electricity. But when conditions at Herne Hill deteriorated again, the committee, with the approval of Charles Love, Secretary of the Charities Board, purchased 30 acres of land at Belmont, in a high commanding position.[94]

Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage 1911.

Mr Love encouraged the committee to buy enough land to establish a farm where the boys could be trained in farm work.[95] He also had an influence on the design of the orphanage. Although plans for the new orphanage were drawn up by Angus Laird, former committee of management member and partner in the architectural firm, Buchan Laird and Buchan, Mr Love encouraged the construction of separate 'pavilions' within the building, so that sexes could be segregated. He was pleased with the lightness and airiness the plans suggested. The 'simple Georgian' style of the building was a 'happy blending of the official and the domestic'.[96] Acting on his view that separate institutions should cater for separate age groups, he discouraged the committee from including an infants' dormitory, arguing that the Bethany Babies Home in West Geelong could cater for infants before they moved on to the orphanage. Bethany had its origins in the 1860s as a refuge for destitute and fallen women and those who were pregnant with illegitimate children. In the late 1920s the refuge had been transformed into the Bethany Home for babies. This coincided with the legalisation of adoption in Victoria in 1928.

Despite the fact that the Great Depression was descending on Australia, there was massive support for the public appeal in aid of the new orphanage that was launched by the Mayor of

Geelong at a public meeting in the town hall on 24 February 1930. The mayors of all the surrounding municipalities joined a committee to oversee the appeal and Mr Edward Arthur Austin, great-nephew of James and Thomas Austin, continued the Austin family tradition of support for the orphanage, with a rousing launch speech reminding the audience of the sacrifices that young Australians had made during World War I. Despite the stressful economic times, he said, sacrifices made life more worthwhile.[97]

The appeal was a huge success. By 1931, £23,000 had been subscribed. Not all of this was in hand. Subscribers were given four years to pay off what they promised. The Victorian Government, anxious to provide sustenance work for the unemployed, granted £10,000 on the proviso that unemployed labour was used in the construction of the new orphanage building.

The Premier, Mr Hogan, laid the foundation stone for the new orphanage in July 1931. Two years later, on 7 July 1933, Edward Arthur Austin officially opened the orphanage, using a silver key presented to him by the architect J A Laird. A crowd of subscribers and supporters attended the ceremony and took advantage of the opportunity to inspect the buildings. The orphanage children were already in residence, having moved from the old orphanage on Anzac Day 1933.

The continuing Austin family connection

While James Austin, whose generous donation was the catalyst for the establishment of the orphanage, left Geelong in 1854, the connection between the orphanage and the Austin family continued. James remained a patron of the orphanage until his death in 1896. Soon after this, his sister-in-law, Elizabeth, widow of Thomas of Barwon Park Winchelsea, was made a Life Governor of the orphanage after she made a substantial donation. Elizabeth was well-known for her philanthropy, supporting the establishment of the Austin Hospital for Incurables in Melbourne, along with the Austin Homes for Destitute Women in South Geelong.

Interest in the affairs of the orphanage by members of the Austin family continued. In 1919, soon after it became possible for women to serve on the orphanage's committee of management, Mrs H A (Elizabeth) Austin, daughter-in-law of Thomas and Elizabeth joined the committee. At the same time Mrs A C (Harriet) Gray, daughter of James and Thomas's nephew Sydney, also joined the committee. While Mrs H A Austin soon stood down from the committee to enable her daughter, Mrs Newton Lees to take her place, Harriet Gray remained on the committee of management until 1936, serving as a vice-president of the committee for some of those years. It was Harriet's brother, Edward Arthur Austin, who launched the appeal for the new orphanage in 1930 and officially opened it in 1933.

In the 1950s, the relationship with the Austin clan continued. As the committee of management searched for a new name for the orphanage, a member of the Geelong Historical Society suggested Glastonbury, honouring the connection with James Austin, who had purchased and restored Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset on his return to England in the 1850s. A year after the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphan Asylum became Glastonbury Children's Home, Richard Austin, great-grandson of James Austin, who still resided at Avalon, joined the committee. He offered his expertise as a pastoralist to the committee until 1961, when he stepped down.

The children in front of the Herne Hill orphanage circa 1911.

Chapter 3

Orphanage life and times

1930s – 1960s

Seven *Goodall* children were admitted to the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage in February 1946. Their parents were both suffering ill-health, had no permanent home and were unable to care for them properly. Mr and Mrs *Goodall* had been offered a rent-free home at Breamlea, where they lived while saving to buy a family home. It took them five years to achieve this, finally moving into a house in the newly-developing suburb of Norlane in 1950. They were able to take all of their children out of the orphanage in time for Christmas 1950.

The *Goodalls* entered the orphanage at a period when the number of residents was at its highest since the 1870s. The number of children in the new orphanage building had hovered in the 70s during the Depression of the 1930s and began to rise during World War II, peaking at just over 100 in the years immediately following the war. In addition to the privately-placed children, such as the *Goodalls*, a growing proportion of the children who were accommodated in the orphanage in the post-war years were wards of the state as the government began to rely on non-government institutions to care for these children.

For 50 years from the 1870s the Victorian Government had relied heavily on paid foster carers to 'board out' wards of the state. Following a scandal in 1929, in which an infant in the care of a foster mother died, the Children's Welfare Department (CWD) began to move away from placing infant wards of the state in foster homes, preferring to place them in babies' homes. The secretary of the CWD pointed out in 1932 that children under the age of three now appeared 'to thrive better under the skilled care and modern methods of management' in babies' homes than in foster carers' homes.[98] Once state wards outgrew babies' homes, they had to be found places in homes for older children. A trickle of these children began to be admitted to the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage in the 1930s.

As the Depression wore on the CWD found that it had to rely on voluntary and denominationally-run institutions to take older wards of the state as well. Many foster parents could no longer afford to maintain foster children on the limited allowance (7 shillings a week) the government paid and, by 1936, the department was having difficulty obtaining sufficient foster parents to care for the growing numbers of children coming into state care.[99] This continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and by the 1950s the department was almost completely dependent on orphanages and children's homes to care for its wards.

The new orphanage was designed to separate the sexes into dormitories according to age.

The Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage admitted its first two state wards in 1935. The number of wards within the orphanage population would fluctuate over the coming decades, as private admissions rose and fell. While some of these children came from the Geelong district, the fact that most were transferred to the orphanage from the CWD's central receiving depot in Royal Park, Melbourne, meant that children came into care at the orphanage from places throughout Victoria and were a long way from home.

The numbers of children in state care in Victoria rose during the 1950s, partly because new legislation — *the Children's Welfare Act 1954* — broadened the grounds on which children were seen to be 'in need of care and protection'. Being 'inadequately fed, clothed, nursed or lodged', being 'ill-treated or exposed' and having no fixed abode or visible means of support were now all considered as grounds for bringing children under the care of the state.[100] Under the 1954 Act, any children's homes or hostels caring for wards of the state had to be 'approved' by the Minister of Welfare.

Children admitted in the month ending July 12 1938

George Smith, *Myron Clark*, *John Sullivan*, *Kevin King*, *Walter Stephens*, *Alfred Strong*, *Victor Small*, all ex-Royal Park. *Timothy Martin*, ex-mother Geelong.

Matron's Report 12 July 1938.

The Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage was officially approved in 1955.[101] The following year, in keeping with the more modern terminology of the Act, the orphanage's name was changed to Glastonbury Children's Home, honouring the Somerset home to which the orphanage's first benefactor, James Austin, had retired in the 1850s.

The Children's Welfare Act 1954 was passed at a time when views on the appropriate care for children who could not be with their families were changing. Influenced by research into the importance of early bonding for children's healthy mental and emotional development, both the Victorian Government and the Children's Welfare Association began to question the role of institution-like care for children, proposing breaking institutions down into smaller, 'family-like' units, such as family group homes. This was more easily said than done. For many children who lived in the Belmont home between the 1930s and 1970s, the pace of change was slow. This chapter uses oral testimony to examine life inside the institution during this era.

A more modern approach

The new orphanage at Belmont was built on modern lines. It was designed to separate the sexes, with girls in one wing, boys in the other and separate quarters for the live-in staff. Within the different wings, the children were allocated to dormitories according to their ages. By modern standards the dormitories may have seemed large, holding up to 12 children, however in comparison with similar institutions, especially those built in the 19th century, they were relatively intimate.

Beside each bed, each child had a locker in which they could keep their treasures. With the trend towards allowing older children to stay on at secondary school in the 1960s, the older children's dormitories were subdivided into 'cubicles', complete with study desks so that they had comparative privacy in which to complete their homework. Girls and boys had their own 'sitting rooms' within their segregated wings. Outdoor spaces were also segregated along gender lines, with separate 'quadrangles' for boys and girls to use in their leisure time.

> *"They had four dorms in the boys' section of the place. There was K dorm – that was for the juniors – and there was probably 10 beds in that room, ward – it had blue lino. And then you went to H dorm, where you were till you were about 12. Then you went to I dorm and by 14 you might have been in J dorm and that's where you were sort of in senior. Now then for a little while they had what they called L dorm which was not a very big dorm from memory, maybe six beds, and you went there probably as you got a bit bigger again."*
>
> *Max*, 1950-1963

Contact with family

One impact of the segregation of children along gender and age divisions was that siblings who came to the orphanage as family groups, often had minimal contact with each other. Even the dining room tables were arranged according to age groups. *Doris* who entered the orphanage in 1953 with two of her sisters, recalled that they were never close and her sister, *Helene*, recalled that 'family bonding was not encouraged'.[102]

The broader system of child welfare that developed in Victoria in the 20th century did not encourage sibling connections either. Although the orphanage committee had planned to build accommodation for toddlers in the new Belmont orphanage in the 1930s, this did not occur and, after accommodating infants for the first two decades of the 20th century, the orphanage reverted to accommodating children of school age.

Babies and pre-school aged siblings of children who came into care in the Geelong region were placed in Bethany, or, after 1947, at Kardinia Children's Home, run by the Salvation Army in Belmont, before eventually moving on to the orphanage if they were not adopted or reunited with their parents. This had the effect of separating siblings. Large family groups, especially those who came into care as wards of the state, might be sent to separate institutions and move through the system without contact or even knowledge of each other.

> *"We were a family of six. Now, I didn't know this until recently but my brother and one sister, Bronwyn, and I were admitted to the Children's Home. I was the youngest of the three. Bronwyn was there for three months and got tuberculosis and she was then transferred to a sanatorium in Greenvale and she was there about four months to my knowledge and then went home to our father. Gordon and I stayed at the home. The other three youngest sisters, I believe two went to Bethany Babies' Home and one was, I think, adopted to a maternal aunt, at birth."*
>
> *Max*, 1950-1963

Strict adherence to visiting times for family and friends of the children did not encourage family connections. The institution allowed visits on Thursdays and every first and third Sunday afternoon.[103] By the 1930s this had been reduced to two days per month on a Sunday afternoon. There was little allowance made for families who could not make it to the orphanage within these restricted hours. One mother, seeking permission to visit her child on a Friday, was informed in 1931, that she could only visit on normal visiting days.[104]

By the 1950s, visiting day was every second Sunday, from 1-3.30pm. The children dressed in their best clothes and waited for their names to be called when their visitors arrived. For those who had regular visitors these occasions were a highlight. For others, whose families visited less regularly or not at all, visiting days were an endurance test. The Belmont orphanage, situated amidst farm land, was almost impossible to reach by public transport in the 1950s. Even staff complained that they had to use taxis to go to and from Geelong on their days off.[105] This, and the fact that increasing numbers of children placed in the orphanage in the post-war years were not originally from Geelong, would have made it difficult for many parents to visit.

There was little privacy for children and their families during visits. Max recalled that family groups would sit in the shelter sheds or courtyards. Later, in the 1960s, relatives and friends could take the children out for an outing during these times.[106]

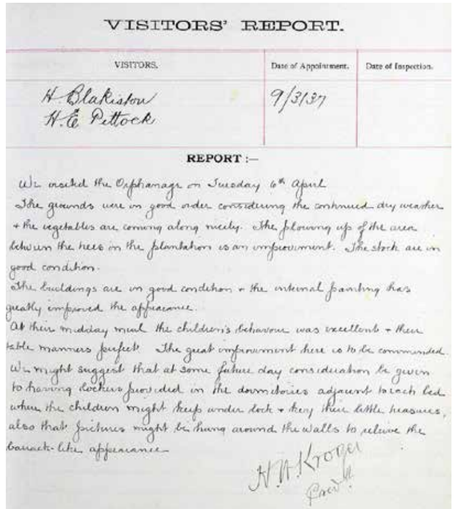
> *"Glastonbury was hard to get used to at first I think because I had always been with my sister and we had always shared a room and now we were separated to different sections of the home due to our age difference. I remember standing at the bottom of a huge staircase that led to my bedroom and just crying and crying. I felt so lost and alone and overwhelmed by the size of the place."*
>
> Vicki 1965-1971
> 'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury'

The secretary reported that Mrs Warner had visited the orphanage on the previous Sunday to see her girls but they were away at the Aberdeen Street Church. Matron wished to know if she would be allowed to see the girls if she came on the next visiting day. The secretary was instructed to write to Mrs Warner informing her that she would not be allowed to visit the orphanage or see the girls.

House Committee minutes 10 March 1931

> *"Once a month on a Sunday was visitors' day and I remember my Dad would religiously turn up with a huge bag of lollies and I clearly remember sitting in the passage waiting to see if he would turn up or not. He didn't miss many of those days but I clearly remember feeling very hurt when he didn't make it."*
>
> Pamela 1952-1961
> 'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury'

> *"Set visiting days were once a month and these were often disappointing. We all waited in one room for our names to be called when a visitor arrived for us. Some children never had visitors so these days were a real trial for them as they still had to wait with everyone else. This was very hard for them as it emphasised their lack of family or anyone interested in their well-being."*
>
> Margaret 1948-1950s
> 'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury.



VISITORS' REPORT.

VISITORS.	Date of Appointment.	Date of Inspection.
H Blakiston H.E. Pittock	9/3/37	

REPORT :—

We visited the Orphanage on Tuesday 6th April.
The grounds were in good order considering the continued dry weather + the vegetables are coming along nicely. The planting up of the area between the trees on the plantation is an improvement. The stock are in good condition.
The buildings are in good condition + the internal painting has greatly improved the appearance.
At their midday meal the children's behaviour was excellent + their table manners perfect. The great improvement here is to be commended. We might suggest that at some future day consideration be given to having cockies provided in the dormitories adjacent to each bed when the children might keep under lock + key their little treasures, also that pictures might be hung around the walls to relieve the barrack-like appearance.

H.M. Stone
Secretary

Two members of the orphanage committee of management were assigned to visit the orphanage each month and report on conditions there. This is the report complied by H Blakiston and H E Pittock in March 1937.

> *"After a while your life settled into a monotonous pattern, up early, do your chores, have breakfast, get changed, go off to school. After school you had to change from your school clothes to your home clothes and polish your shoes. We seemed to do a lot of clothes changes and our shoes would have done the armed services proud."*
>
> Pamela 1952-1961
> 'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury'

> *"When you got home from school, you'd get home about four or four thirty, and you used to have to go and do your homework until about five - tea was at quarter past five. The bell would ring, so you'd all line up, boys on one side, girls on the other. You'd go in, you'd eat tea. If it was the middle of summer, you'd probably get to play outside for a little while after that but generally about six o'clock or seven o'clock you had to have your showers and sit down and either read a book, because there was no TV in those days, or clown around in the dormitory. Lights out was about eight thirty, and you were always up at six."*
>
> Geoff, 1960s-1970s

Regulating time

As in the 19th century, the children's time was regulated. Indeed, the bell that signalled changing activities remained a feature of daily life for the children long after the orphanage moved to Belmont, though it was replaced with an electric siren in 1946.[107] The rostering of children for various tasks around the orphanage continued as well. Vic, a resident in the 1930s recalled that his first job, when he was not yet 10 years old, was to scrub the tiles which surrounded the quadrangle...

> *"down on your hands and knees, with no kneeling pad, but with a bucket of cold water, a cloth, soap and a scrubbing brush and then you went to work. The supervising sub-matron would be there to make sure the work was done thoroughly, no smudge marks, otherwise you did it again."* [108]

Members of the Committee of Management and the Ladies Auxiliary often intervened to lighten the load of the children working in the orphanage. Each month two members of the committee were rostered to 'visit' the orphanage to inspect conditions there and report on any improvements needed and it was often their visitors' reports that suggested improvements in conditions for the children. Mrs Evans, in 1943, for instance, pointed out that polishing the orphanage's extensive linoleum and malthoid floors involved 'much labour for the girls'.[109]

When, in 1955, the superintendent, Mr Jones, suggested rostering the older boys to carry out farm work and light the orphanage hot water boiler each day, the committee reluctantly agreed, but only on condition that the children should not split wood and that the roster should be arranged so that the job of milking cows was shared equally.[110] In 1961, committee member, Mrs Marfell, questioned all the duties that the children were expected to do in the home. Children were, for example, washing dishes after lunch before returning to class in the orphanage school. The committee ordered that this practice be stopped.[111] Yet, despite the changing expectations of what were appropriate levels of work expected from children in the 1960s, there was still a roster of tasks. Geoff recalled that:

> *"everyone worked on a roster thing. You know, you'd take your turn washing dishes and drying dishes, you took your turn taking the laundry to the massive big laundry, and bringing the laundry back."* [112]

Staffing the orphanage

Although the Committee of Management had ultimate authority over the lives that children led within the orphanage and, indeed, deputed two of its members to visit the institution on a monthly basis, the care experienced by the children was largely dependent on the quality of the staff of the institution. For many years, economy and the strict discipline of the children dominated the selection of staff and, even in the mid-20th century, the ratio of staff to residents was low.

Although in its early years the orphanage had been headed by married couples, in the 1870s there was a series of short-lived male superintendents and the Committee of Management struggled to attract and keep suitable candidates in the position. One superintendent, Mr Weir, appointed in 1878, for instance, was in 'delicate health' and lasted less than a year before dying.[113] Another, Mr Wilson, who had seemed promising, was summarily dismissed by the committee when he was found by the House Committee to have committed 'grave' acts with one of the older orphanage girls.[114]

In 1883 the Committee of Management abolished the position of superintendent, leaving the female matron, Mrs Coxon, in charge. She was followed by Mrs Wilkinson, who managed the orphanage for 26 years until 1910, followed by Miss Bell, who served from 1910 until 1924 and then Miss Everard until 1935. Following Miss Everard's resignation, the next matron, Miss Hamilton, struggled with discipline of the children, many of whom were 'rude, disobedient and insolent'.[115]

Concerns about the level of discipline in the orphanage in the 1930s led the Committee of Management to revert to appointing a married couple, Mr and Mrs Dawson, as superintendent and matron in 1936. Mr Dawson became active in child care networks, joining the Matrons' and Superintendents' Association, a group that shared ideas on child care. Dawson had firm views that children in institutions should be trained 'to a state of manly self-reliance and independence'.[116] Mrs Dawson started a choir in the orphanage. Prior to the Dawsons' arrival at the orphanage, the committee had had sole responsibility for deciding admissions and departures from the orphanage. As superintendent, however, Mr Dawson took an active role in recommending to the committee what he considered to be the best options for children leaving the home and this policy continued with subsequent superintendents.

After the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Dawson joined the armed forces, leaving Matron Dawson to manage the orphanage until he was discharged from the army in 1943. His health appears to have been affected by his war service and soon after his return to Geelong he was warned by the Committee of Management that he risked being dismissed because he had been observed under the influence of alcohol on a number of occasions.[117] In 1949, members of the committee found Dawson in an intoxicated state at the orphanage one evening.[118] He was asked to resign his position. Regretfully, the committee sought his wife's resignation as well so that they could employ another married couple.

Edgar and Dorothy Jones, who was a trained nurse, followed the Dawsons as superintendent and matron for 16 years. The Joneses had experience working at the Methodist Children's Home and brought their young daughter with them to the live-in position at Glastonbury. The Joneses were regarded with great warmth by many former residents and noted for their 'affection for and kindness to children'.[119] Mrs Jones is remembered as successfully convincing the orphanage committee to dispense with the 'uniform' that children had worn when outside the orphanage since time immemorial, and, for the first time, children were taken to purchase new clothes in shops to wear for their 'best' clothes.

Mr and Mrs Jones resigned their positions in 1966, not long after a firm of external business consultants, W D Scott and Co, presented a report on future directions for the home.. The position of superintendent passed to Chas Hunter, who had been serving as farm manager since 1964. The precedent of having married couples as superintendent and matron was broken and first Miss Phyllis Smith, then Miss Lucas and finally Mrs Partridge served as matrons alongside Chas Hunter. Hunter remained as superintendent until 1974 when he was replaced by Kevin Walters.

Until the 1980s, most of the staff of the home lived on-site at the orphanage. They included a cook and gardener – until the position became one of farm manager, a laundress, a seamstress and minimal staff to care for the children in the mornings and evenings. A post at the orphanage offered accommodation as well as employment and was attractive to single women or widows who could not afford to rent their own homes. Some of the staff put in many years of service. Miss Buntine served as seamstress for a number of decades until she was asked to retire because of her advanced age in 1937.

In the post World War II decades, it became increasingly difficult to attract and retain staff prepared to live in and work for fairly low rates of pay. When Chas Hunter became superintendent in 1966, for instance, he was paid just a few dollars over the average weekly wage for the time. There was, at times in this period, a high staff turnover.

As with any staff in children's homes, the staff varied in quality and, until the 1960s, none had formal qualifications in child care. Yet many of the staff were remembered with great affection by former residents. Often, these were not the child care staff, but ancillary staff. Max, a former resident of the home who became farm assistant and then farm manager in 1966, is one staff member who Geoff remembered fondly. 'I turned to the farm for something to do', he recalled 'and Max was a great guy'.[120]

> *"I think most of the staff, their hearts were in the right place. There was a lady there, Miss Oliver, she was a hard worker and her heart was always there for the kids. Miss Lucas was an old bitch but she did the right thing nine times out of ten. Mr Hunter was just the jewel in the crown. I don't think that place would have survived without him."*[121]

The orphanage school

When planning the new orphanage at Belmont, the Committee of Management included provision for an on-site school, as had existed at Herne Hill. Representatives of the State Education Department pointed out that, rather than building a school within the new orphanage, the children could easily be accommodated at the nearby Belmont State School. But, to the orphanage committee it was 'essential from the orphanage point of view to keep the children in close touch with their home'.[122]

The committee's own plans for the new school were not approved by the Education Department and ultimately the school, built in the grounds of the orphanage but separate from it, was built to a Public Works Department design, forming an architectural contrast to the main orphanage building. The school continued to be operated by the Victorian Education Department, which sometimes caused headaches for the orphanage committee.

In an era when there were lingering deep divisions between Protestant and Catholic Victorians, the staffing of the school sometimes caused contention. In 1934, the Education Department appointed a Catholic woman as a junior assistant teacher at the school, arousing 'strong protests' from some of the orphanage's supporters. The committee pleaded with the Education Department to replace the woman with a 'more suitable' candidate, but, as she had been appointed in accordance with the teaching regulations, the department declined to move her.[123]

> *"The school had only two classrooms. The teachers came from out in the public. Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 in one room and grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the other. Each room had a large fireplace. Our lessons were good - excellent really - and grades 6, 7 and 8 had special lessons from high school. We also had a section that I didn't like: Young Farmers Club School. The teachers were good, very fair. Their aim was that each child would get their Merit Certificate, the highest we could go there."*

Thelma 1935 'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury'

In the 1950s children from neighbouring farms attended the orphanage school, though they were far outnumbered by the orphanage residents.[124] 'We called them the outsiders. We were the insiders', recalled Doris. While the 'insiders' went back to the orphanage for their hot dinners, the 'outsiders' remained in the school playground.[125] As was customary in other state schools, a parents' committee was formed to offer support to the school and help raise funds for equipment.

> *"In the days at school, when the Young Farmers was going, we had this area we called "the plots" where we'd grow veggies and things like that. It was part of the Young Farmers, but it was through the school. I had one of those plots. Later that area was taken over by the swimming pool."*

Max, 1950-1963

> *"One particular headmaster was very kind and, knowing the lives that we lead, was reluctant to punish us anymore. His method of "punishment" was to bend us over a desk and paddle our bottom with a wide, flat board which didn't hurt a bit."*

Margaret, 1948-1955 'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury'

As the value of institutional life for children came under increasing scrutiny in the 1950s and 1960s, there were some members of the orphanage committee who questioned the appropriateness of all the children attending school on the grounds of the home. Some suggested that their social and educational development would be enhanced if they attended schools outside the institution and mixed with other children. Late in 1968, the school was damaged by fire, offering an opportunity to examine its future. A number of committee members saw this as an opportunity to close the school and send the primary-aged children out to mix with children in local primary schools. Within a month of the fire, the school's fate was determined. In February 1969 children from the children's home were enrolled in three primary schools — Roslyn, Belmont and Oberon — and were transported to them daily in the home's newly acquired bus.[126]

Futures for the children

In the 20th century the orphanage continued with its policy of apprenticing boys to farmers and girls as domestic servants, but these were both areas of employment that began to dry up during the Depression of the 1930s. Besides, some problems with the system of apprenticing young people in private homes and distant farms were beginning to emerge. Those who were isolated on farms, distant from any means of communication with the orphanage or relatives, could be extremely vulnerable to abuse. An anonymous letter to the Premier of Victoria in 1937 described a woman in western Victoria who was ill-treating apprentices she had obtained from both the 'Geelong Methodist Home' and St Augustine's Orphanage. The letter-writer alleged that the employer

> *"treated these poor boys just like a brute - kick them, knock them with anything she laid her hands on. Sir, children should not be sent to the likes of her home... poor children that can't defend themselves. Sir, I hear she is inquiring after more. God help them. Kindly see into it at once and save some poor child."*[127]

Doris, who was placed in the home of a local Geelong woman at the age of 14 in the 1950s, suffered abuse from her employer's husband and returned to the children's home.[128]

From the early years some older children had occasionally been apprenticed to the orphanage – either as domestic servants or gardeners. This practice increased after the orphanage moved to Belmont in the 1930s. These were the years of the Great Depression and finding places for apprentices outside the orphanage became difficult. An added incentive for apprenticing children within the orphanage was that it saved staff costs. When Mr J T Dawson took over as orphanage superintendent in 1936, he dispensed with the services of some of the staff, including the laundress, at the same time saying that some of the female apprentices would not be able to be released from the orphanage for some time.[129] These female apprentices rotated around the laundry, kitchen and the seamstress's room and often helped mind the younger children. *Doris*, who was an apprentice at the orphanage in the 1950s, remembers carrying out tasks in each of these areas, particularly working in the laundry where she was 'ironing dresses and all of that for the children'.[130]

> We have dispensed with the services of Mrs Ayres (charwoman) and reorganised the laundry work and the time spent by Mrs Munro in the laundry work has been cut down by at least two-fifths.... We believe we can carry on satisfactorily provided the number of female apprentices is not cut down. This means we will not be able to release any of our present apprentices until April next when Betty M will join the apprentices.
>
> **Superintendent's Report, 9 February 1937**

Apprenticed boys helped to run the orphanage farm, which was increasingly expanded by the purchase of neighbouring land to an eventual 200 acres (80 hectares). A dairy herd, chickens, vegetable gardens and fruit trees supplied most of the food for the orphanage residents. Male apprentices, from the age of 14, were rostered for such tasks as 'starting the steam boiler, ringing the bell at 6am, milking and feeding cows, gardening, lawn-mowing, ploughing, fruit-tree pruning, cleaning out the gully traps, maintaining the boiler such as tube clearing, shovelling coal, chopping and sawing wood and general farm work.'[131] During World War II, when the demands of essential wartime work in other fields made staff even harder to find, the orphanage relied even more on apprentices. The Committee of Management resolved, in 1942, to keep all the children in the orphanage until they reached the age of 18.[132]

> *"Technically I was never an apprentice as in getting up every morning and having to go and milk or chop the wood but I did do it sort of weekends. I remember you'd get up and the apprentices would get up. They'd go and light the kitchen fires ready for the cooks, then they'd go on and chop wood or some would go on and milk the cows."*

Max, 1950-1963

While apprenticeships within the orphanage offered a means of keeping young people safely in the orphanage until they were of an age to find employment and somewhere to live, they also offered a source of employees for the orphanage and the need for a ready supply of reliable staff sometimes coloured the decisions made about a young person's future. Reporting on one apprentice in 1945, superintendent, Mr Dawson, wrote:

> *"This boy, who is a state ward, will be 17 years of age in July. His behaviour and general attitude towards his work has never been the best, but a few months before Christmas he showed so much improvement that I promoted him to the rank of senior apprentice. He did fairly well for a time, but has slipped back considerably since the holidays. He has his good points. He is very good natured, and so far as I know, he is honest, but he is lazy, unreliable, untidy and generally not a good influence on his associates. I have had to disrate him to ordinary apprentice again within the last couple of weeks. As I cannot see him making any further progress here I recommend that the C.W.D. be asked to remove him at an early date."*[133]

By the mid-1950s, however there were fewer young people willing to stay on as apprentices to the orphanage and fewer young men interested in farm work.[134] Older children, who were still attending school, were rostered to carry out some of the work formerly carried out by the apprentices. Fewer children were placed as apprentices outside the orphanage, as well, though there was still concern to ensure that young people, who were not state wards and therefore the responsibility of the state, had employment and a place to live before they were allowed to leave. Sometimes the superintendent's judgements of the capacities of individual care leavers overshadowed individual preferences and desires. Some young people, having found employment, but nowhere to live, stayed on at the home, paying board.

In 1967, the orphanage considered establishing a hostel for older boys, a suggestion that had been made to the committee back in the 1920s. Other children's homes had established such hostels to provide accommodation for former residents once they had left the home. The committee eventually decided that the number of older boys leaving the home did not justify establishing a hostel and it would be preferable to subsidise private board for these young people.[135]

The lack of available accommodation for young people leaving care in the Geelong region would, in the next decade or two have an influence on the formation of two services – Barwon Association for Youth Support and Accommodation and Barwon Youth Accommodation Service — to support young people within the community.

> *"Before I left Glastonbury I wanted to be a gardener and I could have had a job with the City of Glen Huntly where used to go for holidays. I was down the gardens one day in Glen Huntly and just got talking to a bloke and he said, "Oh, we're looking for an apprentice". Anyhow, he gave me some particulars so I brought them back with me and I said to Mr Jones, "I could get a job here as an apprentice gardener".*
>
> *"Oh, no, Max," he said,"you're a bit sickly and I would rather you work indoors".*"
>
> Max, 1950-1963

Further educational opportunities

From year to year, the Committee of Management relied on the recommendations of the head teacher at the orphanage school as to which children should be afforded an opportunity to continue on to a secondary school after completing primary school (to grade eight) at the orphanage. Geelong High School had been established in 1912 and there had been occasions before World War II when the orphanage committee allowed exceptional children to go on to the high school. Some were supported in the orphanage while they pursued higher education at the Gordon Technical College if they showed a particular aptitude.

In the years after World War II levels of participation in secondary education rose in the general Victorian population. In 1948, for instance, just 50 per cent of Victorian children who entered high school stayed on to the 3rd year. By 1956, this had risen to 75 per cent.[136] Nevertheless, it was not automatic for the orphanage children to proceed to secondary education. Mrs Fanny Brownbill, a member of the committee from 1935 and the first woman elected to a state parliamentary seat for the Labor Party in Victoria, when she won the seat of Geelong in 1938, was one committee member who was interested in the children having further education. Perhaps it was under her influence that, in the mid-1950s, it was decided that selected students, who had done well in their final years at the primary school, could go on to Junior Technical College or Matthew Flinders High School for girls.

The Victorian Government raised the age at which children could leave school from 14 to 15 in 1963, meaning that most of the children in the orphanage went out to a secondary school for at least a few years from this time. Some remember that they stood out from the other students in subtle ways.

Max recalled that school lunches, provided by the orphanage staff, were always 'the same drab thing and we never bought our lunch' but felt that he was accepted by the other boys at Geelong Technical School in the 1960s. One teacher, he recalled, went out of his way to assist the boys from Glastonbury, giving them money to buy the newspaper so that they could complete their assignments.[137]

Geoff, who attended Geelong Technical School in the early 1970s, did not remember being treated differently from other students at the school but recalled that:

> *"other students called the boys from Glastonbury the "pen kids", as in jail sort of kids, because we didn't have parents or anything like that and everyone certainly got to know who the pen kids were because, I suppose, we did stand out. Our clothes were old and they were all hand-me-downs. I do remember when I was in form 3, which is Year 9, Mr Hunter took me into town and actually bought me a pair of school pants and it was the first new pair of pants I'd ever had in my life and I was about 13 or 14 years old."* [138]

Religious influence

In the early 20th century as the youth and social groups connected with various churches in Geelong began to proliferate, there were increased visits from such groups to entertain and brighten the lives of the children in the orphanage. One group that began visiting the orphanage in 1920 was the Geelong and District Band of Hope Union. The Band of Hope, a temperance movement for working class children, had originated in Britain in the 19th century. It aimed to encourage abstinence from alcohol, not only by encouraging children to 'take the pledge' never to drink alcohol, but also through organising recreational activities, such as games, choirs and sports. There were several Bands of Hope branches in Geelong in the early 20th century. Representatives of the Band of Hope continued to visit the orphanage on a monthly basis until the 1950s, encouraging children to take the pledge not to drink alcohol. Years later, *Max* remembered his pledge: "I promise God help me to abstain from all intoxicating liquids and beverages and to help others to do the same."[139]

Religious training and attendance at Sunday services remained a constant at the new Belmont orphanage. Indeed application forms for admission to the orphanage continued to require an indication of the religion of the child until the 1970s. The move to Belmont made access to local churches a little easier. Facilities for teaching children their Bible stories were also enhanced soon after the move to the new site when the orphanage received a significant bequest of £1500 from Mrs Catherine Low on condition that it be used to build a Sunday School hall. The Sydney Gordon Low Memorial Hall was opened in 1936 and Sunday School teachers from local churches continued to visit to offer the children classes on Sunday afternoon.

Along with Sunday School at the home in the afternoon, the children also attended Sunday morning church services at an array of local Protestant churches according to the religion nominated on their admission records. *Helen* remembered that, 'dressed in their best dresses, shoes, hats and coats the children would march, two by two off from the orphanage at 9.30 am on a Sunday, the girls leading the way as they dropped off the Presbyterians first, then the Church of England children and the Methodists last at their respective churches.[140]

Max, a resident of the orphanage in the 1950s and early 1960s remembered that the day-long rituals associated with the compulsory attendance at church and Sunday School were 'a pain':

> *"you'd get up in the morning, into your home clothes, you'd have breakfast, get into your church clothes, come home from church, get into your home clothes, have lunch, come out from lunch, get into your Sunday school clothes. Oh, it drove you mad. Anyhow, that's how it worked and that was the system."* [141]

In the 1930s some of the Methodist congregations in Geelong began to invite children to stay on after morning church services once a year to have Sunday dinner in the homes of congregation members.[142] This idea was later adopted by other denominations and the bi-annual visit to local churches and lunch with members of the congregation became a fixture of orphanage life. *Vic*, who was a resident in the orphanage between 1928 and 1933, recalled that in the grim days of the Great Depression, the children looked forward to these 'outings' as a relief from the monotony of orphanage life.

> *"As soon as the morning service was over, we would file through to the Sunday School hall and our names would be read from a sheet and the families would collect us, take us to their home, and after lunch return us for the afternoon service before returning home to the orphanage. We looked forward to those outings... this was at the time of the depression and conditions in Geelong and other areas were very grim'."* [143]

In contrast, *Noel*, who was at Glastonbury in the 1950s, recalled that 'getting dressed up in our suits and being called the 'orpho kids' made attendance at church and Sunday school 'a bit of a bore'.[144]

In the mid-1960s, when the Committee of Management began to consider methods of modernising life in the orphanage, compulsory attendance by the children at both church services and Sunday School was quietly dispensed with and it was left up to the orphanage staff to decide how children could best spend their Sundays.

> *"I learned how to put milk in tea when I was out with a family after church. I was about 11 years old and at the end of the Sunday roast lunch the lady said, "Max, would you like a cup of tea?" "Oh, yes, please". ... You know, I got my tea and it was black – and I looked at their son and said, "Hey, what's wrong with my tea? Why isn't it like yours?" He said, "Oh, you've got to put milk in it" At Glastonbury we just had the tea served at the table already sweetened and with milk. I took it for granted that tea was made like that in a cup. That's when I found out that you put milk in tea."*
>
> Max, 1950-1963
>
> *"I had a time out one Christmas to spend with a lovely couple in Murrumbeena. I was placed on the train for the first time. It was a lovely memory to have kept because they were lovely people."*
>
> Kathleen, 1941-1944

Summer school holidays

From the early 20th century relatives and friends of the children were encouraged to take them out of the orphanage for the summer school holidays. In 1911 the orphanage committee appealed to the broader community to take children into their homes for the summer break. The appeal was successful and thus a tradition began of emptying the orphanage, apart from those who were too young to go out, for the summer school holidays. This enabled staff to take breaks and also for maintenance to be carried out on the orphanage buildings. Occasionally, a holiday placement with sympathetic hosts resulted in a child being adopted.

At times, the orphanage management regarded the holiday hosts as more reliable than the parents of some of the children. In 1930 Matron Everard reported that some children, who had spent time with their families returned to the orphanage 'absolutely spoilt' and requested that they not be allowed home again. It took 'months to undo the harm their parents had done'.[145]

The experience of spending time with holiday hosts offered mixed blessings. Some former residents had lasting memories of pleasant experiences and enduring bonds formed with their 'second families'. Others recalled being abused or exploited as cheap labour. *Geoff*, who was sent with another boy to a farm in western Victoria for a holiday in the early 1970s, spent all day chopping thistles under the hot sun and was given meagre rations to eat by his 'holiday host'. In desperation, the boys stole money to buy food. They were reported to the orphanage superintendent, Chas Hunter, who telephoned the boys. Geoff recalled that:

> "*Mr Hunter rang and spoke with me and said, "Why did you take the money?" And I said, "Well, we were hungry and we had nothing to eat because there was nothing in the house" and he turned round and he said, "Well, I'm coming". And he drove out there that night and we never got into trouble at all and he certainly let her know it because he wasn't aware that she was just using us for labour to work in the fields, because we didn't do anything other than work.*" [146]

Experiences such as *Geoff's* were an alarm bell to orphanage authorities that not all holiday hosts were well-meaning. By the late 1960s, it was becoming difficult to place some of the children with holiday hosts. In 1968, for instance, Chas Hunter reported that they were unable to find places for 20 of the 60 children and some had to remain in the home over the school holidays.[147] The new orphanage bus was pressed into service to take the children on excursions. At the same time, a trend was emerging of children spending weekends away from the orphanage with hosts or parents. This, according to Chas Hunter, superintendent, seemed 'beneficial to the children'.[148]

Orphanage Sports Day 1938.

Outings, entertainment and recreation

Reporting on the conditions at the new orphanage in 1934, the Government Inspector of Charities, Charles McVilly, pointed out that 'some of the older children showed signs of rather more repression than in some other institutions' and suggested this was due to the matron's policy 'of constant employment'. He suggested that definite hours should be set aside for sporting activities and all children encouraged to take part.[149] Soon after, under a new superintendent, J T Dawson, cricket, football and netball teams were formed and, as school teams, the children competed in inter-school competitions.[150]

From 1922 the United Freemasons of Geelong provided an annual Christmas Tree for the children at the orphanage. In preparation for the party each year, freemasons visited the orphanage to ask each child what they would like for Christmas. These gifts were then delivered by Santa at a Christmas party and concert held in the week before Christmas. The Christmas trees were a rare highlight in the day-to-day routine of the orphanage. The Geelong Freemasons continued to provide the annual Christmas treat at the orphanage until the 1980s, when the institutionalised care gave way to family group homes.

> "*Christmas was an important time, as in any child's life. In October we were all asked to write to Santa Claus and choose one gift. It was a glorious time, we practised our choir and singing lessons and Matron Dawson had a wonderful concert for us to perform for all our relatives who were invited to the Sunday School Hall. A huge pine tree was to the left of the stage, covered in lights and presents. After the concert Santa Claus gave each child a gift. Then the school prizes were handed out and the names of people who were to be entered on the Honour Rolls, one for the boys and one for the girls, which hung in the dining room. I was very proud to have my name there.*"

Thelma, 1930s

After the Second World War, another group of philanthropists, the Bing Boys, also helped to lighten the gloom in the orphanage. The Bing Boys were a small group of Melbourne businessmen who raised money for children's charities.[151] In 1949, they began to supply silver cups annually to be awarded to the 'best' boys and girls in the orphanage and began to make contributions to the material comfort of the children. Bing Boys would attend the annual orphanage sports day, instituted after the war. The Bing Boys also sent birthday cards to each child and supplied the orphanage with toys so that each child could choose a gift on their birthday. When television was introduced to Australia in 1956, the Bing Boys offered to supply a television set for the children. This offer was initially declined, but their offer to build a swimming pool for the children in 1963 was gratefully accepted.[152]

> "*The Bing Boys would supply trophies, Best Junior, Best Senior, not so much in sport, in general life. And every year they would send you a birthday card…and the Christmas tree was always a good night. That was sponsored by the Masonic Lodge and old Santa would come and you'd all get up and get a present from Santa – that was another big event.*"

Max, 1950-1963

The orphanage's Ladies Auxiliary was another group which sought to improve the material comfort of the children. Mavis Kosseck, a long-serving auxiliary and Committee of Management member, recalled how, when she first visited the orphanage in 1950, she was struck by the 'coldness' of the entrance hall, with its 'dull brown linoleum floor covering. The children, she noticed, 'seemed well-fed and adequately clothed, but certainly lacking fashion'.[153] Besides making clothes for the children, supplying afternoon teas and school prizes, the auxiliary provided the funds for other 'extras' - like heaters in the orphanage dining room and a carpet for the orphanage entrance hall, to make it more welcoming. As sports loomed larger in the day-to-day lives of the children, the auxiliary offered money towards a tennis and basketball court.[154]

With funds raised through the orphanage's centenary appeal, together with support from the Charities Board, the Committee of Management erected a recreation hall in 1955. Like the swimming pool and sports courts, the Baxter Memorial Hall, as it was named, was a marker of a growing awareness of the needs of children for organised recreation in the post World War II period and the rising expectations of quality in child care. No longer could the orphanage rely simply on annual picnics and concerts for relief from day-to-day drudgery. A survey of child welfare homes in the state published in 1958 concluded that Victorian children's homes were increasingly providing recreational facilities for their residents. Unfortunately, the survey found, these facilities were not often well-utilised because the staff in institutions did not have the skills to do so.[155]

Members and players of the Geelong Football Club continued to offer support for the orphanage children in the 20th century. *Helen*, who was resident in the orphanage in the 1930s, recalled travelling by horse and dray to watch Geelong games at Corio Oval. In the 1960s, Geelong team members visited the orphanage, 'giving a very enjoyable evening's entertainment complete with band, folksingers and magician'. *Geoff*, who was at Glastonbury in the 1960s and 1970s, recalled that Club legends, such as Polly Farmer and Billy Goggin, would 'come out and kick a ball with us, which was pretty cool'.

Rebellion

Despite increased facilities for organised recreation, children still found ways to make their own fun, and former residents of the 1950s to 1960s recall small acts of rebellion against the strictures of orphanage life, such as being 'out of bounds' on the orphanage farm or walking across the fields to a nearby service station to buy lollies. The staff at the orphanage took their meals in a separate dining room from the children and the evening meal time offered an opportunity for contact between girls and boys, who would climb over the fence separating their two courtyards.

> "*After lunch we went down to the service station down on the highway and spent the money and got bags and bags of lollies.*"

***Geoff*, 1960s-1970s**

From time to time, particularly during the period when Mr and Mrs Dawson were in charge, children registered their feelings about the orphanage by running away. Occasionally children acted out in ways with far more serious consequences. In 1939, for instance, fires were lit in one staff member's bedroom, destroying her clothing.[156] In 1970 a recent arrival in the home bashed a younger boy so severely that he was hospitalised with head injuries.

A frequent solution to serious misbehaviour was to send the offending child away from the orphanage. In the years after the Second World War, as more wards of the state were accepted at the home, the superintendent, Mr Dawson, simply returned those who created problems or were a perceived to be a 'bad influence' on other children to the Children's Welfare Department's reception centre at Royal Park.

Behaviour and discipline

For decades the orphanage staff sought to manage behaviour by keeping the children busy with chores. In the post-war years the introduction of awards for the 'best girl' and 'best boy' in each age group was an incentive to good behaviour and, during the 1970s, children who were compliant could earn the right to attend outings from the home. Some former residents recalled extra chores, such as scrubbing floors, as punishment for misdemeanours.

Other former residents recall being caned or strapped. The use of corporal punishment for children was not unusual in broader society throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In fact it was not until 1983 that the Victorian Government outlawed the use of corporal punishment in Victorian state schools. Nevertheless, some former residents recall that, in certain eras, the cane or strap was inflicted unreasonably for misdemeanours that were only slight. *Margaret*, a resident from 1948 to 1955, recalled that, in her day, children were not permitted to talk in the dining room.

> *"If caught talking the next step was to line up outside the superintendent's office after the meal for a caning with a six foot cane. The superintendent's wife was very good at this and with our hands held out to the side she would bring the cane up under our hands before crashing down on them."* [157]

Others remembered that, in later years, there was a more measured approach to the use of the strap and often, during the Jones's period as superintendent and matron, those who misbehaved were given extra chores.

Some former residents recalled that Chas Hunter, who was superintendent from 1966 until 1974, would not automatically strap children sent to him for some misdemeanour, but first seek to know the reasons behind their behaviour.

> *"I remember when I first went there the staff that were there were very sort of strict, you know, but they weren't strict to the extent where they'd belt you or anything like that. The only person who ever belted us or gave us the strap or the cane – the cane originally and bloody hell that hurt – was Mr Hunter but we were always sent to him and if we were sent to him and if he determined that we needed the strap, well, we got the strap."* [158]

Geoff who attended technical school with boys from another orphanage considered himself 'lucky to have been placed in Glastonbury'.

> *"There was a kid there who was beaten and abused at the other orphanage all the time. He would show me the scars. I often think how lucky we were to have been in a place where there was no molesting or abuse or things like that."* [159]

Community expectations of the standards of care for children had changed in the decades leading up to the 1970s. By the time that *Geoff* left Glastonbury in 1973, life within the confines of a large institution was no longer acceptable as a solution for children who could not live with their families. While members of the Committee of Management had attempted, at times, to take steps to alter the pattern of life for children at Glastonbury in the 1960s, it had remained very much an institutionalised lifestyle. In the 1970s this lifestyle was to become a thing of the past.

> *"While the staff was at their evening meal was the time we tried to get up to mischief. The window of their dining room faced the girls' courtyard so we had to be very careful. The boys would wait behind the fence for us to climb over to meet them. Before the staff finished their meal they would help us back over the fence. At other times we would crawl along the upstairs corridor to meet them."*

Margaret, 1948-1955

> *"My most unpleasant memory is when I was 14 and was blamed for something I had not done and each time I denied it I was called a liar and belted with the strap. Needless to say at the first opportunity I cleared out and returned to Royal Park, getting a lift with a truckie part of the way. Wasn't there a what-oh when the belt marks were noted?"*

Dorothy, 1949

Orphanage at Belmont 1933

Chapter 4

From children's home to Glastonbury Child and Family Service 1970s – 1990s

The four *Wilson* children – *Amy*, *Kelly*, *Luke* and *Amanda* – were transferred to the care of Glastonbury Children's Home from Ballarat in 1979. Their ages ranged from seven to 14. Unlike many of the children who had come into Glastonbury's care in previous generations, the *Wilson* children were not accommodated in dormitories at the Belmont orphanage building, but went straight into a family group home – a 'normal' house in East Geelong, which they shared with newly-appointed family group home parents – Mr and Mrs *Lavery* and their two children. The *Wilson* siblings would stay together in the family group home until they each reached the age of 17, when each one moved to 'independent' living in private board. The *Wilsons*' experience of Glastonbury's care occurred at a time of transition for the children's home as it moved away from an institutional setting.

In 1971 the Geelong Community Chest commissioned a study of community services in the Geelong region. The study revealed that Geelong was over-supplied with babies' and children's homes, with Glastonbury, St Augustine's, St Catherine's, Kardinia and Bethany accommodating 453 children.[160] Of those 453 children in substitute care at the time of the survey only 77 (17 per cent) were from Geelong.

At the same time, the author of the study, Hayden Raysmith noted that there were, in the Geelong region, inadequate services to prevent family breakdown and support family functioning.[161] He pointed out that, while family group homes (where live-in carers cared for children in domestic house style models), or foster care had been considered superior to large institutional children's homes for the past 20 years, the majority of children in care in Geelong still lived in large institutional settings. Raysmith urged Geelong agencies to develop services to prevent children coming into care, a foster care scheme in Geelong, and the provision of family group homes for those children who would unavoidably have to be placed into substitute care.

Another deficiency noted by Raysmith was the lack of services to support children and young people once they had left substitute care, particularly those in the 15-19-year-old age group. Specifically, he pointed out the need for a remand centre for young offenders in Geelong. The only option for accommodating young people charged with offences and awaiting court appearances was to send them to the youth training centres at Turana and Winlaton in Melbourne.[162]

There was no immediate resolution of the problems identified in Raysmith's 1971 report. However, over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, Geelong responded to these gaps. Community activism and public generosity as well as a willingness to part with traditions, helped to bring these changes about. They also took place within the context of changing economic and social conditions and new philosophies about best practice in child protection and youth justice.

The Geelong and District Community Chest was formed in 1954 to raise and distribute funds in a harmonious and equitable manner between charitable causes in Geelong. Glastonbury Children's Home was one of the beneficiaries of the Community Chest. In the late 1970s United Way Australia was established and the Geelong Community Chest became, in 1983, United Way Geelong Incorporated. United Way continued to support the work of Glastonbury and other local organisations. In 2010, however, when the global United Way organisation changed its method of operations, United Way Geelong disaffiliated and Give Where You Live was incorporated in 2011.

givewhereyoulive.com.au/about

Changes in community services philosophy

Raysmith's assessment of the community services in Geelong came just as changes were beginning to creep in to the administration of social welfare in Victoria. Increasingly in the 1970s, the practice of placing children in the state's care in institutionalised, congregate care was discouraged by the Victorian Department of Social Welfare. Alternatives to this style of substitute care, such as foster care or cottage style family group homes, became the department's preferred option for children who could not remain with their own families. Victorian Government policy was aimed at the prevention of family separation, by supporting and enhancing family life.

A number of alternate care-providers in Victoria had already begun the move away from institutional-style care by the 1970s.. Some, such as the Methodist Children's Homes and Kildonan in Melbourne, had moved to a cottage-style or family group home model in the 1950s. Others, such as St Catherine's Girls Home in Geelong, had begun the process of dividing dormitories into smaller 'family-style' units in the 1960s and, in the early 1970s, sold the old orphanage, establishing a number of family group homes, and, in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department and other partners in Geelong, the Geelong Foster Care Program.[163]

A major change that occurred within the Department of Social Welfare (renamed Department of Community Welfare Services in 1979) was the break up of the centralised bureaucratic machinery of the department into regional areas, with offices of the department located within 18 distinct regions across Victoria. The regionalisation policy was designed to encourage the development of services to meet local needs. Geelong became the central point of the Barwon region and the regional office opened in 1974.

From children's home to child and family service

Like the managers of many other children's institutions, the Glastonbury Committee of Management struggled to find ways to convert the institutional setting to more family-like living. From the 1960s representatives of the Social Welfare Department had encouraged the committee to work towards establishing family group homes scattered throughout the community and to expand the age range of children accepted into the home so that siblings groups could be kept together. Moreover, several members of the home's committee, notably Mavis Kosseck, had suggested various ways of creating more family-like units within the orphanage building in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The committee did begin to plan to convert some of its dormitories into self-contained 'units' for various age groups and did, in fact, manage to convert one dormitory into a flat for older girls, where they could have a measure of autonomy. But it took them some time to move completely away from the institutional setting of the Belmont orphanage building.

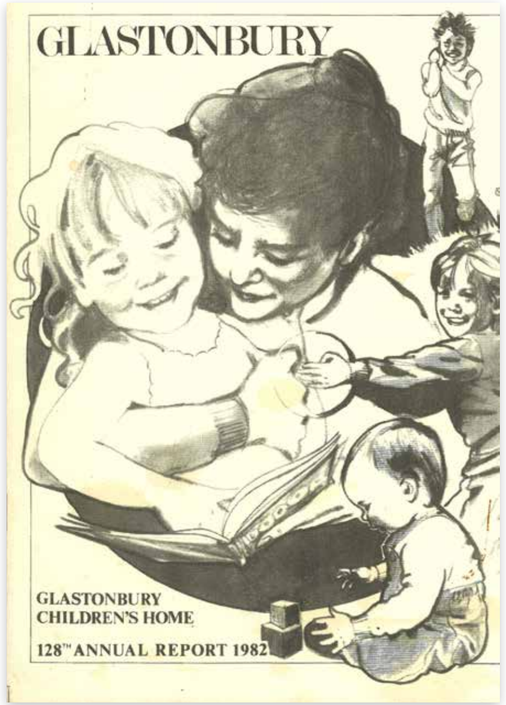
Finally, in 1974, the committee approved the purchase of Glastonbury's first family group home at 22 The Avenue Belmont and cottage parents – a married couple who would live in the house with a family group — were appointed. The first group of siblings to occupy the house were not transferred from Glastonbury itself, but came from Kardinia Children's Home.

There were still 50 children living at Glastonbury Children's Home at this time. But changes were in the air. Soon after the purchase of the first family group home, there was a change in management of the children's home. Chas Hunter resigned and Kevin Walters, who had qualifications in child care, was appointed as superintendent. The position of farm manager at the home disappeared. The dairy herd and milking equipment were sold off.

Changes in the expectations on the part of the government and in standards appropriate to the out-of-home care for wards of state were being discussed at the Victorian Government level at about the time that Walters became superintendent of Glastonbury. These had been recommended by a Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria in 1976 and translated into a government white paper and legislation two years later.

Girls' sitting room at Glastonbury, circa 1960s.

Senior boy's cubicle at Glastonbury circa 1960s.



Glastonbury Annual Report cover, 1982.

Reasserting that institutional-style care was no longer appropriate for children, the committee recommended that no more than 40 children should be accommodated together in any one institution or group home. The committee also recommended replacing the system of 'approved' providers of care for wards of state – in force since 1954 - by a system of licenses or contracts between the Department of Social Welfare and the non-government agencies. The Committee of Enquiry recommended the greater development of services, such as family counselling, to prevent the break-up of families. Another key recommendation was that the cases of children in out-of-home care should be reviewed at least on an annual basis to prevent children languishing needlessly in substitute care.[164]

Almost instantaneously Kevin Walters responded to some of the committee's recommendations. For the first time, the concept of a case plan was introduced at Glastonbury when Walters implemented weekly meetings to review each child's case and make plans for them, passing on this information to the CWD so that they could work with parents towards reunification.[165] In 1977, Glastonbury employed its first social worker, Margarette O'Brien.[166]

During the past month it has been necessary to terminate the services of two staff members. *Miss Weekes* had for some time been maltreating children in her care but we were unable to 'catch her in the act'. Fortunately, another staff member observed her being extremely unkind to a child. The children in her group were subsequently questioned and it appeared that they had been too frightened for a long time to say anything about *Miss Weekes's* attitude with them in case they were penalised. *Miss Weekes* was given instant dismissal.

Chief Executive Officer's Report 17 September 1979

The Department of Community Services made it clear, in discussion with Glastonbury personnel, that it saw the agency's future role in the Barwon region as the provider of residential care in family group homes.[167] By this time Glastonbury had acquired two more family group homes at Colac, where it had taken over the former St Cuthbert's Anglican Boys Home in 1977. St Cuthbert's, which was centred on an old homestead, *Cooraminta*, at Elliminyt, had served as a boys' home operated by the Ballarat Diocese of the Anglican Church since 1948. In the 1960s, four separate cottages had been added to the property to serve as family group homes. When Glastonbury took possession of St Cuthbert's, *Cooraminta* and one of the cottages was demolished. Two cottages became family group homes. These cottages served as the basis of Glastonbury's future role in Colac.

When Barry Hawley took over from Kevin Walters as superintendent in 1979, plans for more family group homes were accelerated. The Glastonbury Committee of Management built some, purchased others and took over a family group home that had been operated by the Department of Community Services. Apart from those in Colac, the family group homes were scattered throughout Geelong suburbs. These homes provided a living experience a little closer to that of a 'normal' family life and enabled sibling groups to stay together. They were not, however, always a perfect solution to the need for substitute care.

Although the family group home parents lived in the house with the children, the position was a job and, at least in the early years, there was a slight artificiality about it, with the 'parents' having time off from the children on weekends and holidays when relieving staff came in.

Mr and Mrs Foster, the group home parents at Smith St, have tendered their resignation. In their letter of resignation they intimated that they had not received as much support as they considered appropriate from the administration. My personal opinion and observation is that the work had been too much for them and it is probably in the best interest of the children that they have made this decision.

Chief Executive Officer's Report 20 August 1979

Alf Swan, a retired school principal who served on the Glastonbury committee from 1989 until 1999, recalled that the selection process of family group home parents at that time was largely based 'on spec, on how they appeared at interview...'

> *"They did have to have police checks. ... We knew if they'd been in trouble or they'd had a criminal background and had any jail time. Some of them were retired people. Their own children were off their hands and they could speak from experience Some of them were obviously looking for jobs, looking for work and I think probably we knew if they were unsatisfactory."* [168]

By 1984, Glastonbury was caring for 49 children in 12 scattered family group homes and no children were living at the orphanage building in Belmont, though it still served as the administrative office of the agency. Once again, there was a change of name and Glastonbury Children's Home became Glastonbury Child & Family Services. With a chief executive officer instead of a superintendent, and a more professionally-trained staff, the committee (called a board after 1992) assumed a less direct role in determining the delivery of the agency's services.

Committee members had always had a role in visiting the orphanage building on a monthly basis to inspect its condition. Now they visited the family group homes but, as Alf Swan remembered, their focus was often on property maintenance and any problems that the cottage parents might have in managing the children, rather than on the children themselves. Although a social worker was also employed to case manage the children and young people in the family group homes, the system was open to abuse. In 1984, for instance, there was an incident in the teenage girls' unit that was serious enough for the Department of Community Welfare Services to demand the instant dismissal of the carers.[169]

As the last of the children left the Glastonbury building some traditions ended. The Geelong United Freemasons, who had provided an annual Christmas treat for the children since 1922, chose to convert the balance of their Christmas Tree Account into a fund to provide an annual scholarship to assist a Glastonbury child or former resident to complete their secondary schooling by the provision of books, uniforms, etc.[170]

> *"The agency also had an office and family group home in Colac. Each month two board members would inspect the house, meet the carers and visit the office. The children were at school when we used to go. We'd look at the property and see if they had any problems... We had to give a written report to the board every time. Everybody's written report was discussed and if there were problems the appropriate action was taken."*

Alf Swan

> *"Living in a cottage home was completely different to Glastonbury. We got to do things we had never done before. We got to go to the beach lots, learnt sailing and 4WD, and did lots of things that seemed to be extras. It was good to make friends that thought you were normal, that saw you live in a normal house."*

***Frank* 1978-1989**
'The Way it Was Oral History Memories of Glastonbury.'

Victor Coull, CEO of Glastonbury 1994-2004

Developing complementary programs

A succession of chief executive officers guided Glastonbury as it negotiated its new role in the provision of child welfare in Geelong. Barry Hawley was followed by Jean McLoughlin who acted in the role before Robert Hosie assumed it in 1983. Myron Pentz steered the agency from 1984 to 1991, while Shane Tolliday led the agency from 1991 to 1993. Victor Coull, who had had a career in the Department of Human Services, took on the role in 1994.

Along with the residential care provided in the family group homes, Glastonbury staff added after care/preventative care to their services in the second half of the 1980s. Some of this care was directed towards supporting families or young people who had left residential care. But much of it was intensive support for families to enable children to remain in the family home. There were also two part-time staff, who were not social workers, based in Colac where they worked as case workers in the local community, with a focus on strengthening families and reintegrating children into schools and community groups.

These areas of activity provided the basis for Glastonbury's programs until the end of the 1990s. In 1998 the agency was still operating eight family group homes, the Colac case work program and the before and after care preventative casework with families. To the family group homes, however had been added a community care program, in which care-givers were recruited to care for children and young people who were difficult to place in foster care and given case work support.

The family support programs, initially known as aftercare and preventive care, continued to support families to stay intact. In 1998, the agency won a tender to develop a pilot Strengthening Families program in the Geelong and Queenscliff areas.

Financing new programs

Although Glastonbury was funded by the Department of Community Services to provide residential accommodation for children in the family group homes, the agency largely used its own pool of resources to develop the after care and Colac casework services in the 1980s. Glastonbury's resources were also used to help support the work of other welfare agencies.

In 1985, recognising that historically much support for Glastonbury's work had come from Victoria's western district, the Glastonbury Committee of Management began offering financial support to Glenelg Foster Care (later South Western Community Care), a relatively new foster care service based in Warrnambool. In 1989, the Glastonbury committee agreed to lend Glenelg Foster Care funds to purchase a new building to house its offices.[171]

Similarly, in 1990, when Barwon Association for Youth Support and Accommodation (BAYSA) required some financial assistance to meet its deficit, the Glastonbury committee agreed to help, on the basis that the agency played a key role in the delivery of welfare services in Geelong.[172]

To secure the agency's financial future, the Glastonbury committee expended much time and energy in the 1980s and 1990s subdividing and selling its extensive land holdings for development and investing the dividends. One way in which it raised funds was to rent out those parts of the orphanage building that were not used for administration. But predominantly, funds were raised by the slow and methodical subdivision and release of the Belmont property over two decades. The process began in the 1970s when portions of the Glastonbury farm land were sold to the City of South Barwon for a new civic centre and to Sirovilla Aged Care for an aged care facility.[173] In the 1980s, the board pressed on with the process of subdividing and selling the land for housing development. Alf Swan recalled that board members with expertise in law, taxation and farming, as well as education, 'spent a lot of our time buying property and selling property'.[174]

After Care Cases March 1990

Sibling group of two, aged 6 and 2

The children were referred from the Department of Community Services Barwon office after being placed on a supervision order for a period of 12 months. They have since moved from foster care back to live with their mother who has set up a new home. A family support worker is working with the family 15 hours per week to assist with behaviour management, budgeting and meal planning.

Mother and one child, aged 10

Intensive support of 15 hours per week was provided to the family, who were referred by Mercy Family Care, to enable the child to be integrated back into her family after being in foster care for a short time. Behaviour management techniques were shown to the mother to enable her to manage her intellectually disabled daughter more successfully. This intensive support was provided for a period of four weeks. In that time the mother developed enough skills in managing her daughter for Glastonbury to be able to cease involvement.

Committee of Management Minutes 26 March 1990

Much of the land that the committee sold off had been purchased by Glastonbury for use as farmland over the decades after the orphanage had moved to Belmont. However, the 30 acres originally offered to the orphanage in the 1930s was Crown Land and an Act of Parliament was required to transfer ownership to the Glastonbury Committee so that it could be sold. The subdivision and sale of Glastonbury's land continued until the late 1990s. As Chair of the Board, Kim Henderson pointed out, this subdivision was a 'boon' to the agency, enabling it to have a degree of financial independence and autonomy which otherwise might not have been possible.[175]

> *"We spent a lot of time being told what was up for auction, how much it was, and all this money we were getting, what were we going to do with it and so a lot of it went into stocks and shares and some of us were a bit apprehensive about that but we had people on the board who we trusted and seemed to know the right thing to do. The money from that enabled more staff to be put on and more homes to be built and more services to be provided."*
>
> **Alf Swan**

By the time that Victor Coull was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Glastonbury, the location of the agency's administrative centre at the old orphanage building was seen as inappropriate. It was not in a particularly accessible spot for clients to visit and its institutional character was seen as potentially 'intimidating'.[176] It was time for a move. The board had, for some time, entertained offers to purchase the buildings, but had rejected them on the grounds that the sums offered were not enough. Finally Christian College Geelong, which had established a campus at nearby St Augustine's Orphanage in the early 1980s, offered to lease the buildings as a junior school with the intention of eventually purchasing them.[177]

Late in 1995, the agency moved to new, purpose-built premises at 222 Malop Street Geelong, a central Geelong location that it was hoped would provide easier access for clients. Victor Coull reflected that the new administrative centre, with its 'light and airy ambience.... contributed to a new sense of agency identity for staff'. The design of the building, inviting the outside environment into the interior, symbolised Glastonbury's renewed attempts to strengthen families and reinforce their connections with their communities.[178] A new chapter was beginning for Glastonbury.

Glastonbury Community Services moved to new premises at 222 Malop Street in 1995. The building was rebranded in 2015 with the merged agency name and logo.

Chapter 5

Barwon Association for Youth Support and Accommodation (BAYSA) is born

1970s – 2000s

Brian was 14 when he was expelled from school. A frequent witness of his step-father's violence towards his mother, he was restless and unpredictable in the classroom. When he finally reacted to his step-father's violence to defend his mother, he was physically attacked and kicked out of home. At the age of 14 he was on the streets. *Brian* made his way from his home on the Bellarine Peninsula to the streets of Geelong, where he was directed to Lismore House, a hostel for young people operated by Barwon Association for Youth Support and Accommodation. *Brian* was nervous when he knocked on the door of the hostel, but the staff 'made him feel comfortable'. He was taken in and given a bed.

Brian stayed at the hostel 'on and off' for five years before he had enough resources to get a job and move into private accommodation with a mate. In the staff at Lismore House, *Brian* found people he could talk to. Many years later, he looked back on his time at Lismore House as a 'crutch to get my life in order and get on my feet'.

> *"Basically I wouldn't be who I am today if it I hadn't gone through Lismore House. I could have ended up like a lot of my other friends have, who left Lismore House while I stayed on. They got into drugs and so on. ... I would have gone down that path as well. I'd either be in jail today or dead."* [179]

Lismore House was established in 1982, but the origins of the association which established it, Barwon Association for Youth Support and Accommodation (BAYSA), go back to the 1970s.

Just as Glastonbury Children's Home was transforming itself into Glastonbury Child & Family Services, BAYSA was one of two agencies established in Geelong to tackle the needs of youth and young adults. The other was Barwon Youth Accommodation Service (BYAS).

Like the original Geelong Orphan Asylum, these agencies sprang from the concerns of Geelong community members about the plight of young people in the community. In contrast to the founders of the orphanage, however, those behind the establishment of BAYSA and BYAS concentrated their focus, not on children, but on adolescents and young adults.

After three decades of economic growth and prosperity, Australia's

Lismore House, Kilgour Street Geelong, BAYSA's hostel from 1982 to 1995.

economy began to flag in the early 1970s, leading to a period of higher than usual unemployment in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Youth unemployment, in particular, rose in Australia during this period.[180] This was not all due to the economic downturn. Changes in the workforce, such as increasing use of technology, meant that many of the jobs previously attainable by school leavers disappeared, while the rise of part-time work also put younger workers in jeopardy.[181] Together with changes to the family at this time, this led to the emergence of an epidemic of homelessness amongst Australian youth.[182]

Geelong was changing too in the last decades of the 20th century. From a population of only 47,000 in 1951, Geelong and its surrounding suburbs and satellites had swelled to 186,000 in 1981.[183] Much of this growth had occurred during the 1960s, as suburbs such as Corio, Belmont, Highton and Leopold mushroomed.[184] In the 1970s, however, a number of the long-term industries of Geelong, particularly the woollen mills, disappeared.[185] Many of the traditional pathways for gaining employment straight from school were disappearing.

Community-led and grassroots activism was on the rise in Australia in the 1970s, encouraged partly by the Commonwealth Government's Australian Assistance Plan, which supported planning and decision-making at the local and regional level. In Victoria, regional consultative councils were established and funded by the Department of Community Welfare Services to encourage local participation in identifying and planning for family and community needs in local areas.[186] In 1979 the Barwon Regional Consultative Council identified the needs of adolescents as a priority, establishing a sub-committee, the Barwon Adolescent Task Force. This task force, later known as BATForce, identified a number of gaps in services for young people in the Barwon region.[187]

The beginnings of BAYSA

For Dr Michael 'Taffy' Jones, Deputy Director of Medicine at Geelong Hospital in the 1970s and Chairman of the Barwon Regional Consultative Council, the implications of rising youth unemployment in Geelong in the 1970s were fairly obvious. As Chair of the Board of the Geelong Community Adolescent and Family Centre, he was only too aware that 'the unemployment rate among young people in Geelong was enormous - three times anywhere else in the state. Social opportunities for young people were appalling'.[188] His observation was that many of these unemployed young people 'got into trouble with the law fairly often'. The problem was that the options for dealing with young offenders or those at risk of offending were limited. Young people from Geelong were sent to youth training centres or reception centres in Melbourne, such as Turana or Winlaton. In Jones's view, neither of these were good places for young people. 'If they didn't have problems when they went there, they certainly did when they came out.'[189]

Jones wanted an alternative pathway for young Geelong residents at risk of getting lost in the youth training centres in Melbourne. As it happened, his concerns echoed a growing awareness within the Victorian Department of Social Welfare (known as Department of Community Welfare Services from 1979 to 1985) that more effort should be placed on preventing young offenders or potential young offenders from being incarcerated in the state's youth training centres.

The Social Welfare Department had traditionally had responsibility for young offenders as well as for children in need of care and protection (formerly officially known as 'neglected children') and operated a number of youth training centres as well as remand and reception centres for both boys and young men at Turana, in Parkville and for girls and young women at Winlaton in Nunawading.

In the 1970s, the Social Welfare Department moved to improve services to prevent young people entering the justice system, noting that there were few existing services and, as youth homelessness became 'more evident', there was a large and growing number of homeless, dislocated, unemployed youth whose needs were not being catered for'.[190] The department established four of its own youth welfare services for adolescents in Melbourne as alternatives to placement in youth training centres. Staff within the Youth Welfare Division of the department recognised the need to develop a wider 'network of services to meet the needs of young people at risk of coming into the justice system or already in serious trouble with the law.'[191] The department aimed to develop community-based, non institutionalised alternatives to youth training centres, allowing young people to maintain

Help on way for the needy young

Youth hostel move gets a boost

Helping hand for troubled youths

PUBLIC MEETING
BARWON ASSOCIATION FOR YOUTH SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATION
GEELONG CITY HALL 4.30 pm
WEDNESDAY, 10th JUNE, 1981.

Support rolls in for youth hostel

BAYSA first media coverage

connections with family and community.[192]

In 1979 the Department of Community Welfare Services announced a pilot scheme offering grants to help community agencies to provide emergency accommodation and related services to such young people. The timing was right. Taffy Jones, on behalf of the Geelong Adolescent and Family Health Centre, applied for and received a grant through the program to provide an emergency accommodation centre in Geelong.

For Mike Kelly, then Deputy Supervisor of Youth Services with the Department of Community Welfare Services, it was a red letter day when recurrent funding for the hostel, followed by funding for the full Youth Support Unit for Geelong, was approved. He recalled that 'youth services were so starved of resources in those days. All the new resources that seemed to come from Treasury went to Child and Family Services. The young offenders were very much the poor, poor cousins in terms of resources.' Kelly was thrilled that Jones's aim was to establish a facility in Geelong that would 'actually provide for those young people who were being sentenced and placed in the facilities in Melbourne.'[193] Kelly recalled that the Geelong community's commitment to supporting troubled youth was

Dr Michael 'Taffy' Jones, first Chairman of the BAYSA Board of Management, Shane Murphy, long-serving Executive Director of BAYSA, and Mike Kelly, CEO of BYAS, pictured in the 21st century, decades after BAYSA was established.

'unique' at a time when the public generally considered that the supervision of young offenders was the sole responsibility of government.

The department offered a grant of $40,000 for a hostel provided that the local community could match it on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In June 1981, within days of hearing that the grant had been received, the Mayor of Geelong, Cr Des Podbury, called a public meeting and Barwon Association for Youth Support and Accommodation (BAYSA) was formed as a legal entity. Its members came from the local community.[194] Financial support came from service clubs, philanthropic trusts and United Way. The Department of Community Welfare Services also provided funding for the employment of a manager and staff.

By October BAYSA had purchased a two-storey bluestone house in Kilgour Street Geelong to serve as a hostel and youth support unit. The house would become known as Lismore House. Jones remembered a certain amount of outrage from local residents in Kilgour Street, who feared that their properties would be devalued by the presence of 'wayward kids' in the neighbourhood.[195] In contrast to the 'defenceless orphans' of the 19th century, the young people that BAYSA aimed to assist were not seen as the 'deserving poor'.[196] Yet, despite the concerns of some of the neighbours, the location of the hostel seemed ideal. It was not in the centre of Geelong, but close enough for its residents to access services in the city. The old house was solid but required much work to make it conform to safety regulations. Local service clubs, such as Rotary and Apex, provided support through working bees to bring the hostel up to the appropriate standards.

> *'What was not covered by the government grant, and which knocked us for six, was that the Council inspected Lismore House and demanded that we install all this fire protection equipment, at an enormous cost, and do a number of renovations to the place. Fortunately, I'd have to say, the Geelong service clubs — Rotary and Lions and other service clubs — were absolutely wonderful. They donated their time and their members, and raised money. We never could have done it otherwise.'*
>
> **Dr Michael 'Taffy' Jones**

With a Board of Management elected from among the early members of the association, BAYSA set about employing a manager for the hostel, appointing Shane Murphy early in 1982. A qualified youth worker, Murphy had worked in the Department of Community Welfare Service's Brunswick Youth Support Unit. Taffy Jones, who interviewed Murphy for the position, believed that the role of manager would be critical to the success of the hostel and, as he interviewed Murphy he 'knew straight away he was right. He was wonderful. He could relate to the kids and he could deal with old buggers like me.'[197] Murphy would remain at the helm of BAYSA (later called Barwon Youth) until 2013.

With four residential staff employed, the hostel was ready to welcome its first residents in June 1982. Up to 12 residents were accommodated at Lismore House in shared bedrooms. Two beds were reserved as emergency accommodation, providing for stays of up to seven nights. But the remainder allowed for longer term stays.

Early in the piece, staff devised a set of guidelines, known as a 'Living Program' aiming to help prepare residents for independent living. Residents were encouraged to develop self-discipline and to assess the consequences of their actions.[198] *Brian* remembered that, while the hostel staff were always available to chat, there were strict rules and consequences.

The Living Program continued for 20 years at the hostel. 'The hostel was never just a holding bay', reflected Mal Douglas, coordinator of BAYSA's accommodation services in 2000. 'The age appropriate developmental process ensured residents had vastly improved skills upon leaving care.'[199]

> *'I can remember going to visit Lismore House one day and Shane said that they had just had a visit from some VIP at the Council and I said 'I hope it went alright.' 'Yes,' he said, 'It did, but only just'. I said 'What do you mean?' He said 'Come and have a look at this' and he showed me the back of the door from one room into another and he said, 'No sooner had I shut the door after he and I had gone through it, than one of the kids threw a knife and embedded it in the back of the door!' ... They were exciting times, I tell you.'*
>
> **Dr Michael 'Taffy' Jones**

To help improve relationships with neighbours, as well as to provide residents with work experience, hostel staff initiated a Needy Neighbours program, offering garden maintenance and landscaping services. Hostel residents were invited, but not coerced, to participate in the program and were paid for their work. For *Brian*, working on the Needy Neighbours program offered not only a chance to earn extra cash, but a way to pass the time during the day. The program was the first hint that BAYSA would eventually include a strong vocational training strand in its programs. In the early 1990s Graeme Stockton, the Needy Neighbours coordinator at Lismore House, expanded the program so that residents were carrying out important environmental restoration work on the Bellarine Peninsula.[200]

In the early years, while some of Lismore House's clients were referred by the courts or were on parole, a relatively high proportion were wards of the state, referred to BAYSA by the Department of Community Welfare Services.[201] Shane Murphy recalled that, in the Geelong region at the time, many older wards of the state had no place to stay. 'They wouldn't go with foster carers and they needed youth workers around them, not part-time foster carers... and they didn't want to be parented, they had parents.'[202]

While the hostel accepted young people from the age of 14 to 18-plus, 15 and 16-year-olds made up the largest age cohort at this time.[203] But by the early 1990s, the trend had been reversed, with a dramatic increase in the number of older (18-plus) residents at Lismore House.[204]

The impact that BAYSA's programmes had in keeping young people out of the youth justice facilities in Melbourne appeared to be almost instantaneous. Within a year or two of the opening of Lismore House, observed Mike Kelly, the number of young Geelong people sent from Geelong to Melbourne on placement or sentence dropped from around 40 annually to two or three.[205] By the early 1990s, the impact of changes in legislation and measures to strengthen families was felt as the number of clients who were wards of state diminished and the number of voluntary clients increased.[206]

From its small beginnings at Lismore House, BAYSA's programs expanded rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s. Soon after the establishment of the hostel at Lismore House, BAYSA's role as a Youth Support Unit was initiated with the employment of the first social worker to support and supervise non-resident young people living in the community, who were on supervision orders from the courts.[207] The community support program was to rapidly expand and involved case workers in intensively supporting young people to deal with a range of issues, including 'their offending, family issues, accommodation, health, employment and training, leisure and personal development'.[208]

Along with Lismore House, BAYSA also took responsibility for managing transitional housing in lead tenant housing in Geelong. Eventually, late in the 1990s, BAYSA became responsible for managing transitional housing in the Barwon and South West regions.

Expanding into Spring Street West Geelong

At first Lismore House served as both hostel and office for the BAYSA staff. Fairly quickly, however, Shane Murphy realised that having an office in the front room and the residents living upstairs was 'problematic'. Despite the BAYSA Board of Management's best intentions, it was inappropriate to have an office located in a residential hostel. Murphy argued that the hostel residents knew the building was 'not their space'.

> *'It made it even more difficult for them to cope when they had other people wandering in and out of the building and it was treated, not as a residential property, but as an office environment as well.'* [209]

The board had planned to build additional office space behind the main residence at Lismore House. In 1986, however, BAYSA was offered the opportunity to lease the premises of the Boys Employment Movement at 44 Spring Street, West Geelong. The upper storey of this building was converted to office space, while the ground floor workshops provided a space to expand the training and education arm of BAYSA. In a unique move, several staff of the regional Community Services Victoria Juvenile Justice team were co-located at BAYSA's new office.

The Boys Employment Movement building in Spring Street Geelong was converted into BAYSA's office and education and training space from 1986.

"Many of the young people had come from families that were extremely dysfunctional. There may have been family violence occurring and back then family violence didn't receive the attention it does now – so a lot of families really struggled. There was often substance abuse in families as well and in some of our families there was a long history of criminal behaviour which was just handed down through generations. The skills that we were trying to impart to young people hadn't been part of their upbringing so it actually took a lot of coaching to do that."

Danielle Rygiel,
former BAYSA staff member

"In terms of the impact and in terms of providing community-based alternatives for young people at risk, BAYSA really had a huge, huge impact. They were very significant to the whole deinstitutionalisation movement throughout the state and that's very much a credit to Shane Murphy and the team that he had at BAYSA, certainly in those days and ever since then."

Mike Kelly

The Boys Employment Movement

The Geelong Boys Employment Movement had its beginnings in 1932 and was originally named the Unemployed Boys Centre. Formed during the Depression years, it was the brainchild of the principal of Geelong Grammar School, J R Darling.[210] It mirrored the efforts of the Boys Employment Movement established in Melbourne in 1931 which aimed to provide technical training and jobs for young male school leavers who had difficulty finding employment during the years when so many Australian workers were out of work.

The Unemployed Boys Centre changed its name to the Boys Employment Movement (BEM) in 1933.[211] The centre was based at an old confectionery factory at 44 Spring St which had been established in the 19th century and was operated, from 1883 by McPhillimy Brothers Confectionery.[212]

One of the two brothers, James McPhillimy, along with his sister Louise, would go on to become a leading philanthropist in Geelong, donating money for a new wing at the Geelong Art Gallery and a spire for St George's Presbyterian Church in La Trobe Terrace, for instance. He was also, for many years, associated with Geelong Sailors' Rest Home and the Geelong Try Boys Brigade, acting as president of that association from 1922 until his death in 1940. It is possible that he made the disused confectionery factory available to the BEM for he was a donor to the association and, on his death in 1940, left £1000 to the Boys Employment Movement, along with substantial donations to many other worthy Geelong causes, including the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage.

During the 1930s boys attended the centre in Spring Street during daylight hours, learning crafts and trades. But the centre also operated as an employment bureau for the boys, recommending them for positions with local employers as they arose. In May 1935, for instance, seven boys made a start at work with the Ford Motor Company.[213]

While the Boys Employment Movement in Melbourne closed its operations during World War II, when there was no shortage of employment, the Geelong Boys Employment Movement endured, even expanding its buildings to Gordon Avenue. Volunteers continued to teach boys trade skills and help to find them employment until the 1980s, when the BEM celebrated its 50 year anniversary. By then, a number of Commonwealth-funded training and youth support schemes were in existence and the Geelong Group Apprenticeship Scheme, with funding from both state and federal governments, managed training in a number of trades for young people in the Barwon region.[214] In 1989, then Chairman of the Board of BAYSA, Peter Betts, began to negotiate the amalgamation of the Geelong Boys Employment Movement and BAYSA.[215] This was finally achieved in 1996.[216]

Shane Murphy recalled that the Spring Street premises offered the practical space for BAYSA staff to work towards breaking down the nexus between lack of education or employability skills and offending behaviour by offering training to young people.

"We realised after a year or so that we could use the facility to help the young people develop some skills, become proficient in something and maybe head off and do an apprenticeship. The training program also helped to establish a work pattern for the young people in the hostel. They had to get up, get showered and dressed and be at the place at 9am, just like a job." [217]

Shane Murphy

BAYSA was able to take advantage of Commonwealth Government funding provided in the 1980s to assist Australians to gain employment. One such government-sponsored scheme, introduced in 1985, was the Community Training Program which funded community-based organisations to offer training to the unemployed. In its new Spring St premises, BAYSA took over the Geelong Community Training Program, formerly auspiced by the Geelong Community Health Centre. From 1987 the agency initiated its training arm, offering training in such areas as welding, carpentry and metal work.[218] When the Skillshare scheme superseded community-supported training and employment schemes in 1989, BAYSA began to deliver Skillshare.

BAYSA's provision of education and training courses would continue until 2013 and expanded into areas beyond those offered by Skillshare. Other educational or motivational schemes were added to the training. Instrumental music became a component of BAYSA's offerings. This was extended into a music industry training course in 1999. Cooking and catering courses were also provided.

"We employed musicians to teach kids how to play drums and how to play guitar and even read music. You wouldn't get a job with that but building the profile of a young person and their self-esteem was very much more important for us and them, than thinking about getting a job."

Shane Murphy

As part of the Motivation and Retention of Students (MARS) program, students undertook a variety of outdoor activities, designed to build self confidence and esteem and promote decision making and leadership skills.

Training was just one of a number of threads that BAYSA implemented to support young disadvantaged people at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system. The agency, with funding through Community Services Victoria, recruited and supported volunteers to care for young people in their own homes.[219] Another scheme, named after the popular 1980s TV show Minder, matched volunteers with young people with whom they could spend one-on-one time.[220]

Recognising the impact that early school leaving had on future prospects for young people, BAYSA implemented, in 1996, a school mentoring program, which was eventually known as Motivation and Retention of Students (MARS). Youth workers employed by BAYSA intervened with early post-primary students at risk of truanting or anti-social behaviour.[221] This program would expand in the next decade as BAYSA teamed with Barwon Youth Accommodation Service and MacKillop Family Services to deliver a Reconnect program in the Barwon region, helping to improve connections between young people and their families and prevent homelessness.

Farewell to the hostel

By 1995, the facilities at Lismore House, with its shared bunkrooms, had become outmoded. The BAYSA board sold the property, replacing it with Wahroonga, a purpose-built residence in Newcomb, which catered for a smaller group of five residents. Each had their own bedrooms, ensuring 'less turmoil and more stabilised accommodation periods'.[222] Within five years, however the hostel-style accommodation was deemed to be inappropriate in a departmental review of options for high risk adolescents. BAYSA's clients were now often coming from a younger age group and departmental policy favoured moving these young people into more home-based care.[223]

Twenty years after BAYSA had opened its first hostel, Lismore House, in 1981, it closed Wahroonga as a hostel. In conjunction with the Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS), BAYSA turned the Wahroonga property into the first residential youth drug and alcohol detox centre in Geelong. Eventually YSAS would assume sole responsibility for operating the detox program on this site.

Although the hostel was closed, BAYSA continued its support for young people who came into contact with the youth justice system, continuing its supervisory role in the 21st century and maintaining its training arm. Increasingly, BAYSA was responsible for managing transitional housing for young people in the Geelong region as the 20th century gave way to the 21st. In its first 20 years, BAYSA's staff had experimented with a range of initiatives to engage and support young disadvantaged people. While government funding supported many of these initiatives, others succeeded through the generosity of supporters such as United Way. In the 21st century BAYSA would build on and expand from the understandings gained during its first 20 years.

"The 'Hostel', as it was known for many years, was BAYSA in the early days. Its closure was brought about by a change in the emphasis that the State Government wished to pursue in the supervision of this client group. For over 20 years the BAYSA hostel provided a home, protection, guidance, support and hope to many troubled young people in Geelong."

Peter Betts,
BAYSA Chairperson, BAYSA Annual Report 2000-2001

Chapter 6

Barwon Youth Accommodation Service (BYAS) fills a void

1980s – 2000

Anna, the youngest of three girls, was eight when her mother died. Her father remarried a few years later, but *Anna* clashed with her stepmother and left home when she was 14. Although she was made a ward of the state, and spent some time in a family group home, she gravitated to the streets of Geelong, where she met other homeless young people. Together with friends, she spent nights in squats, on the beach or in derelict buildings. She spent many of her days in the Little Malop Street Mall in Geelong, with other homeless young people. She recalled that in the 1990s *'there'd be hundreds of people in the mall on a Friday or Saturday night'*.

Occasionally *Anna* stayed at the City Limits youth shelter established by the Barwon Youth Accommodation Service (BYAS). A year after *Anna* left home, her older sister, *Karen*, joined her in Geelong, having been kicked out of her older sister's home. She, too, slept in squats, at the beach and, for a time, with a much older man before she found a bed at City Limits youth refuge. She recalled the routines adopted by homeless young people in Geelong at the time:

> *'Some people were in the same routine where they were living on the streets permanently and going to certain places. You know, there'd be the group that were living at City Limits at the time and then there'd be a group staying at the squat and you kind of just got to know everyone and where they were living.'* [224]

From City Limits refuge, *Karen* was assisted to move into a transitional house in Norlane. 'I shared with another girl and I believe we paid $15 a week rent and then we just paid all the bills, our own bills and stuff.'

Allison came home from school one day to find her bags packed and child protection staff waiting to take her into care. Her mother 'couldn't deal with her anymore'. She was 14. *Allison* passed through a number of family group homes but, as a teenager, couldn't settle and she ended up drifting onto the streets of Geelong. 'I lived in so many places,' she recalled. *Allison* strove to keep attending her high school but, after yet another move to a distant suburb, she found it impossible to arrive at school on time and left school during Year 10.

Like *Anna* and *Karen*, *Allison* spent some time on the streets of Geelong in the 1990s. She recalled 'plenty of squats' where young people would stay.

> *'There's a property in Sydney Parade, now worth a million dollar place apparently, that was fairly derelict and abandoned. We used to sleep there. We pulled all the carpet up to keep us warm.'*

Soon after leaving school, *Allison* became pregnant with her first child. Barwon Youth Accommodation Service found her accommodation in a unit sharing with another young mother.

Anna, *Karen* and *Allison* shared the experience of homelessness in Geelong in the 1990s. The agency which supported them with emergency and longer term accommodation — Barwon Youth Accommodation Service (BYAS) — was less than 10 years old at the time. BYAS emerged in the 1980s as a response to the needs of the ever-growing number of young homeless people in the Barwon region. Like BAYSA, which had been formally established in 1981, it was the product of local concerns to tackle what was perceived as a growing problem. Unlike BAYSA, however which was funded to focus on young offenders or those at risk of becoming young offenders, BYAS would, in its early years, focus solely on providing emergency accommodation and housing for young people in the Geelong, Bellarine and Colac areas.

Youth homelessness was identified as a growing phenomenon across Australia from the late 1970s and, during the 1980s, there was evidence that the average age of young people who were homeless was decreasing.[225] Two Geelong-based organisations identified the need to improve young people's access to accommodation in the early 1980s. The Barwon Region Housing Council, auspiced by the Ministry of Housing, was one of these. It established the Barwon Youth Accommodation Steering Committee in 1983 and, with funding from the Commonwealth Government, employed one youth accommodation officer who shared an office in Geelong's Housing and Consumer Resource Centre Geelong.

The Barwon Regional Consultative Council's Adolescent Taskforce (BATforce) also identified the need for both emergency and longer term accommodation for young people as a priority. In its comprehensive youth policy report, released in 1985, it recommended that a central agency should be created in the Barwon Region to assist youth with accommodation and housing matters. While some church groups and other agencies offered a range of accommodation options within the Barwon region, there was a lack of coordination in providing access to these options. At the same time, some of the options for accommodation, such as supervised residential care, were not seen as attractive to young people seeking independence. A central youth accommodation agency, the taskforce report pointed out, would be able to direct young people to the most appropriate form of accommodation, offer a range of options for young people and would be able to gather information about young people's needs in order to advocate on their behalf.[226]

In 1985, a joint Commonwealth and State Government scheme - the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) - was introduced. SAAP made funds available to agencies and community groups to provide emergency and crisis accommodation, counselling and referral services. At the same time, Victoria's Ministry of Housing also introduced schemes to alleviate homelessness, including making public rental housing available to agencies supporting the homeless. The opportunity to establish a youth accommodation and emergency housing service seemed ripe and Mike Kelly, Youth Services Supervisor for the Barwon Region in the Department of Community Welfare Services, was asked to research and review options for tackling the problem within the region.

> *'Mike Kelly was a real mover and shaker...he influenced a major change for the government in the way that youth support agencies should be developed.'*
>
> Shane Murphy

Mike Kelly recalled that, although there were already existing agencies interested in providing youth accommodation and emergency housing services, none was quite the 'right fit'. The Barwon Region Housing Council, which had already established the youth accommodation sub-committee, was 'very much about housing, as a response to youth homelessness'. He reasoned that the solutions to youth homelessness went further than simply providing accommodation. 'We were very conscious that young people were 'grappling with the issues that lead to homelessness, such as family conflict and family dysfunction-type issues.' [227] BAYSA was another potential candidate to take on a service for homeless youth. It had already established its Lismore House hostel. However, as its first priority was young offenders and protective clients, there was a concern that 'young people who were just leaving home could be very easily pulled into a delinquent sort of a culture' if they were placed at Lismore House.[228] Kelly recommended that a new agency be formed and in 1987 the Barwon Youth Accommodation Committee was incorporated and began operating as Barwon Youth Accommodation Service.

Though BYAS's initial management committee included ex officio representatives of the Ministry of Housing and the Department of Community Services, it was very much a community-based committee. Local government, the housing council and a number of other not-for-profit agencies were represented. Ann Davies, who soon became chair of the committee, and was later manager of the agency from 1996 to 2001, joined the committee initially as a representative of the Colac Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS), for instance. She reflected that, from the beginning, BYAS's primary goal was to ensure the rights of every young person to 'safe, secure, affordable accommodation'.[229] A point of difference between BYAS and similar agencies, such as BAYSA, according to Davies, was that young people participated in its services on a voluntary basis. Unlike BAYSA, which was funded to supervise youth offenders, BYAS received its funding through the Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. It did not have to take on a 'mandatory role' with its clients.[230]

By 1988 BYAS had set its basic programs in place. The agency offered an information and referral service, an accommodation service sourcing and maintaining a register of private board places for young people, and managed nine houses — six in Geelong and three in Colac — under the Victorian Ministry of Housing and Construction's Youth Housing Programmes and Youth Initiative Scheme. Within a few years, the number of houses that BYAS managed had expanded to 15.

BYAS partnered with not-for-profit organisation, Kids Under Cover, to provide relocatable bungalows and units, such as this one, for homeless young people. By 2006 BYAS was managing 10 Kids Under Cover properties in Geelong and Colac.

A Geelong youth refuge, *City Limits*, offered emergency accommodation for up to six young people, four females and two males under the age of 18. In 1996, additional funding allowed BYAS to include a Housing Access and Support Program, aimed at helping young people gain access to the private rental market. At the same time, however, BAYSA won a government tender to manage transitional housing for youth in the Barwon and South–West Victorian regions.

While BYAS retained management of a small number of properties, BAYSA became the major manager of youth housing in the region.[231] BYAS staff continued to refer young people to this housing and to offer them support as they transitioned to independent living. It was a measure of how the agencies could work cooperatively together and not duplicate services.

> *"In the early days of BYAS it was not a refuge. It was really about looking at housing models for young people and how to engage young people into accommodation and in fact in its very early iteration most of its houses were church-run. The Office of Housing had given church groups houses and they then managed those with BYAS as a support agency. BYAS didn't have any housing as such but supported a number of committees of management that ran houses and then young people that were in those houses and did quite a lot of that in collaboration in the early days with Lismore House, which was the original home of Barwon Youth. And then it became obvious that there was a need for refuge, so they first applied for a refuge as the priority."*

Jane Wager,
former BYAS Committee Chair

Of the 42 young people accommodated at City Limits in 1988, 10 found further accommodation with BYAS, 11 returned to their parents or relatives, 13 found other housing either in private rental, caravans or boarding houses; and in only one case are we unsure of the young person's housing outcome.

BYAS Annual Report 1988

In the early years it soon became apparent that simply providing accommodation — both emergency and longer-term — was not the complete panacea for homeless young people, particularly the ever-increasing numbers of younger adolescents who were presenting to BYAS. Much of the work of the support workers revolved around helping clients to access government benefits or employment.

For those young people who were placed in Ministry of Housing properties, there were often difficulties in meeting rental obligations and BYAS workers sometimes found themselves between a rock and a hard place as they juggled the roles of supportive worker and rent collector. Frequently young people placed in housing did not want to stay long term. Prejudice against younger tenants on the part of real estate agents or private landlords also presented problems for young people. It also became clear that many young people lacked the independent living skills to manage living harmoniously in shared accommodation with other young people. BYAS tried to overcome this problem in the early 1990s by incorporating two additional crisis houses, with lead tenants in charge, to help develop independent living skills in young people.

> *"I was placed in a rental house with another girl. We were a bit too immature to have our own house, to have to pay the bills, have responsibilities that we probably didn't need, weren't responsible enough for. It would maybe have been better to have stayed somewhere like City Limits, where you have a bit of direction, till we were a bit older, because we were so immature. My housemate didn't like one of my friends, so she wouldn't let one of my friends come over and I didn't like that and I can't remember how it came about but we didn't live together for too long."*

Karen

The BYAS office, initially located at the Housing and Consumer Resource Centre, moved in 1988 to the Health Resources Centre in Lt Ryrie Street, but was soon on the move again to premises in Villamanta Street.[232] Finally, in 1996 the office relocated to the newly-established youth hub at the old Geelong Post Office in Ryrie Street Geelong, co-locating with other youth services. The old post office location made the BYAS office readily accessible to the young people who spent their days in the Little Malop Street mall. It became easy for young people, such as *Karen*, *Anna* and *Allison*, to drop in. *Karen* remembers 'rocking up' to the BYAS office in the Post Office everyday to get warm and have something to eat. Looking back, she reflected that as 'street kids' she and her friends may have annoyed the BYAS office staff. 'At times we weren't fun, I'm sure', she reflected, but 'they never told us to go away'.[233]

Anna recalled that, while she was aware of the services provided at BYAS, her motivation for visiting the office was strictly to find a warm spot out of the weather and to help herself to food. 'I wasn't interested in doing anything except hanging around in town and having fun.' But, she reflected, 'support was available'.[234] Looking back, however she recognised that BYAS was a constant in her chaotic life. 'It was like BYAS was solid,' she recalled. 'It was always there.'[235]

Karen recalled that BYAS staff would wander into the mall to check on people, but they never 'tried to talk us out of anything. What would have been the point?'[236] Yet BYAS support worker, Kerry Ford, provided Karen with an escape route from a potentially dangerous relationship with a man eight years older than her, who was a heavy drug user.

> *"I was living with him because he had a house and that meant I wasn't sleeping on the street. Kerry never said "You need to leave" or anything like that, she just said, "If you want to go, you can go straight to City Limits". She could get me straight in same day. I separated from him, from that house, straight into City Limits."*[237]

> *"I got kicked out of City Limits and Karen snuck me in one night and I crawled past the office and the staff didn't know till the morning. They kind of cottoned on when she was getting two doughnuts and making two Milos and that sort of thing, but luckily it was just the one night and then she got into a transitional house the next day, so then I just went there with her."*

Allison

Ria Bua, BYAS Client Services Intake Worker - Youth Entry Point

> *"You'd get to the BYAS door and say "We're here to see Ria" and they'd open the door and up you went to the desk, you know, whereas now it's very much about client confidentiality and "This is a secure area" and "This is where you see the clients". You didn't necessarily have to be engaged in a service or program to visit or have that connection. It was very different to how it is now: if you don't have a reason to be there, no one's got time to see you so "On your way"."*

Allison

City Limits

The refuge provided at City Limits was staffed from the earliest days by a range of part-time but experienced youth workers. By 1991 the first City Limits building had outgrown its usefulness and BYAS was given access to a second property supplied by the Ministry of Housing. Like the first refuge, its location was officially kept confidential, though word of mouth meant that young people could easily locate it. Until 1995 funding constraints meant that the refuge could not open during the day. Funding authorities expected that young people would be at school or in employment during the day. Residents were turned out at 9am and allowed back at 5pm. That meant, said Ann Davies, that those with nowhere else to go spent their days in the mall being cold and hungry.

> *"We'd go down to the mall – it's pretty close, within walking distance; we didn't need any money – we'd scab money off people, we'd buy alcohol and just hang around there and make a nuisance of ourselves, really, and shoplift."*

Karen

Christine Couzens, who worked at City Limits for 25 years from its inception, recalled that, despite the limited opening hours, the residential workers' role went beyond providing safe accommodation to providing support in a number of ways:

> *"Within the residential setting, we talked to them about a whole range of things, supporting them, making sure that there was food, there was support for any issues that they might identify. Drugs and alcohol were always a bit of an issue and we had fairly strict guidelines around that sort of thing, about young people coming in intoxicated. If they were clearly intoxicated and unruly, then they wouldn't get in the front door. We were protecting the other residents as well as the staff."*[238]

Couzens recalled that young homeless people arrived at the refuge with a range of issues to deal with:

> *"...family breakdown, family violence, young people just who could no longer live in the family house. There were issues where there'd been a divorce or separation and there was a new partner on the scene that impacted on their ability to live in the home. There were some mental health issues and drug and alcohol issues."*[239]

There were very few clients, according to Ann Davies, who left the family home just because the 'rules were too hard'. Yet BYAS staff and committee members also had to work against this preconception amongst many in the community, as well as prevailing image of homeless youth as simply 'mall rats'.[240]

The agency approach was to 'gain the trust of the young people', leaving value judgements aside. Even in the face of quite risky behaviour, Christine Couzens recalled, staff at the City Limits refuge tried to avoid lecturing young people. 'We would talk about the dangers of roaming the streets or jumping into a stolen car' rather than saying 'no, you shouldn't do that', she recalled.[241]

> *"It was a really comfortable environment in City Limits. A lot of the other kids would ride out their curfew right to the end, so there would be times where I'd get home a little bit early and they'd let me in and you could just sit there and they'd do the normal parent things like, "How was your day?" or "Did anything good or bad happen?" and I suppose that was really comforting at the time but not judgemental."*

Mia

> *"I think, for me, the thing that I always admired about BYAS and wanted to keep when I became employed by the agency, first as Coordinator at City Limits and then as the Manager, was the absolute commitment to the young people and it was always about that commitment to giving the best service and best support possible to the young people with the resources that we had."*

Ann Davies

New directions into mediation

As much as BYAS staff provided non-judgemental support to young people, it became apparent as early as 1991 that a mediation service between young people and their families was desirable to help reopen or maintain the lines of communication.[242] Mike Kelly reflected that:

> *'BYAS staff realised quite early on that a 14 or 15 year old placed in the community in a house, really hasn't got a lot going for them. They realised that kids, at the age 18 or 19, still needed family support and you couldn't just place them in a house and visit them one or two days a week and expect that everything would be okay.'* [243]

City Limits Staff: Marcus Seecamp, Peter Dillon, Gabriella van der Fluit-Dillon, Lydia van der Wel and Christine Couzens pictured in 2004. Christine Couzens, Gabriella van der Fluit-Dillon and Peter Dillon, who passed away in 2011, were long-serving staff at City Limits. Time for Youth Chair, Peter Smith,expressed gratitude for their long service of over 20 years at the TFY 2011 Annual General Meeting. In his tribute, Smith acknowledged that their inspiring message of 'respect and hope for young people' was a key to the long-running success of the refuge.

In 1994, with SAAP funding, the Barwon Parent and Youth Mediation service was added to the BYAS portfolio. Staffed by sessional mediators who were trained by the inaugural coordinator, Fred Stern, the mediation service not only aimed to re-connect young people who might be estranged from their families, but also to be accessible to families where conflict might put young people at risk of leaving home. The mediation service was also offered to young people living in shared accommodation. In the late 1990s the service moved towards outreach in secondary schools, training young people in peer mediation so that they could help resolve conflicts amongst their peers.[244]

The expertise built up in BYAS's family mediation arm led the agency to its first partnership with other Geelong welfare agencies in 2000. Together with BAYSA and MacKillop Family Services, BYAS was successful in winning a tender to deliver the Reconnect program in the Barwon region. Reconnect, a Commonwealth initiative, aimed at preventing youth homelessness and improving young people's connections with family, work, education and the community. It focused on intensive early intervention with families. The program was piloted in 23 locations around Australia in 2000.

Delivering the Reconnect program allowed each of the three agencies to contribute according to their strengths. BYAS would provide mediation and conflict resolution strategies for families and in schools. BAYSA staff contributed their mentoring skills, while MacKillop Family Services offered intensive case management.

Participation in the Reconnect program signalled an increasing readiness on the part of BYAS to partner with other agencies in Geelong to deliver programs that met the needs of young people in the Barwon region. There were other changes in store. In 2001, the management committee appointed Mike Kelly, a veteran of youth services in the Department of Human Services, as manager of the agency. At the same time, BYAS undertook a strategic review of its operations, determining to work more collaboratively with similar agencies, where possible, to provide a holistic service to clients and to further develop its services to prevent homelessness.

The Review of BYAS in 2002 was a seminal achievement. It was driven by Chairperson Bill Snowdon and members Jane Wager and Jim Rutherford and led by Laurie Boyd, Centre for Leadership and Management. This major review ushered BYAS into the modern world of governance and professional management.

Comprehensive consultation with staff, stakeholders and consumers and exhaustive work by the leadership team produced the agency's first strategic plan 'Refocus on Our Future', which underpinned BYAS's future direction.

> *'The boys and the girls were locked away from each other at night. There was a door that you couldn't get through into the other section of the house. I don't ever recall anyone ever being violent or being scared of anyone in there, because we were all kids. The staff were cool. They had to have a bit of fun but also know when to say enough's enough.'*
>
> *Karen*

With a background as a psychologist, Carol Wlodarczyk joined BYAS in 2003 as client services manager and worked to streamline the services offered to clients across all the arms of the agency.

'Staff were working in silos within the agency and I worked to break those down to provide a unified approach to clients', she remembered. Carol remained with TFY until 2012. In 2013, after a break from employment, Carol took up position as General Manager of Human Resources at Barwon Youth. She was eager to foster a stronger relationship between Barwon Youth and TFY. Serving, for a short time, as acting CEO of Barwon Youth, Carol actively sought to promote the proposed merger of that agency with TFY and Glastonbury Community Services.

Elected as a councillor for the Surf Coast Shire, Carol resigned in 2015 to concentrate on her municipal duties.

One new direction occurred in 2003 when BYAS took over a property named Restoration House which had been built as a community project to house vulnerable young people. It had grown around the activity of a dedicated couple who had previously been caring for young people in their own home. After years of service the couple decided to retire to attend to the needs of their own family. Consideration was given to possible uses of the property and after consultation with the Department of Human Services (DHS) it was decided to recruit a team to work with a small number of young people with complex needs. A start was made with some young people who were being managed by the department in contingency situations such as motels and caravan parks. BYAS took over the contingency staff who had been employed by DHS and added more to the team to achieve 24-hour cover.

The property was renamed 'The Acreage'. It provided a base and accommodation for one or two young people whose behaviour and situation were at the challenging end of the risk scale. Support was also given to another who was accommodated elsewhere while effort went into establishing relationships, brokering appropriate forms of professional help and exploring wraparound service options. In the process BYAS engaged with both Take 2 (established under the high risk adolescent service quality initiative) and the multiple and complex needs initiative (MACNI) which were services and processes established to manage higher risk children and youth and adults. Within these efforts agency-wide training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention occurred. Ultimately management change in DHS resulted in decision that the level of contingency funding provided could not be sustained and funds were withdrawn. The program ceased in 2005. Some support was continued while responsibility was transferred elsewhere. 'The effort was a challenge to say the least and quite a few lessons were learned.'[245] BYAS used The Acreage for a number of other daytime programs, such as a horticultural program with school students. Eventually the building was initially rented then sold to Foundation 61 and utilised for a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.[246]

The Acreage was one example of the innovative ways in which BYAS, like BAYSA, attempted to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people. However, it also represented the dependence of many of the agencies' programs on funding from government sources. This dependence would become more critical in the early decades of the 21st century.

Grovedale College students participating in Young Men @Work program at The Acreage in 2006. The program involved students in practical activities one day per week.

Chapter 7

Into the 21st Century 2000 – 2015

Mia had just turned 16 when she made the decision to leave a very controlling home. After some weeks staying with friends' families, she was put in touch with Ria Bua, the intake officer at Barwon Youth Accommodation Service (BYAS), and found a place to stay at City Limits refuge. Unlike many of the young people who came to City Limits, *Mia* was not fleeing a violent or abusive situation, nor had she previously experienced out-of-home care. Sharing accommodation with young people from such backgrounds initially made *Mia* question her decision to leave a relatively comfortable home.[247] However, her 'gut feeling' told her the decision was right for her.

Mia was determined to continue her education. She was able to remain at City Limits for six months and credits the 'normalised and supportive environment' the refuge staff provided for enabling her to continue attending school.

> *"They didn't have exceptions for any of the kids; everybody got the time of day. I mean there were some lost causes but the staff would never stop. Trying to get them to go to bed and stuff sometimes was hard but you could see in the workers' faces that that was what they were there to do and they just never stopped."*

It was also via BYAS that *Mia* was able to access funding to enable her to pay the fees at her independent girls' school. After six months at City Limits, *Mia* moved to a lead tenanted house managed by BAYSA. She remained in the house, becoming a lead tenant herself, as she transitioned from school to university, moving on, eventually, to private rental accommodation.

Looking back, *Mia* believes that, without the support provided by BYAS staff when she left home, she might not have survived or been able to complete her schooling.

> *"Without that accommodation, I would not have been able to function; I would have had to have quit school. It enabled me to finish that and be quite successful now – I run my own business as well. That would not have happened... without Ria's assistance and the support from the people in City Limits, just to get your head in the right space and confirm that you have made the right decision and keep sticking to your guns and whatever your gut was telling you and get it done."* [248]

Mia's experience occurred in the first decade of the 21st century when all three of the agencies that would eventually come together to form Barwon Child, Youth & Family were refining their practices, experimenting with a range of programs to best support children, young people and their families.

From the 1990s, government legislation and ideas of best practice increasingly placed the best interests of the child at the forefront of welfare policies and the idea of preserving family life and preventing the need for children and young people to be removed from their families gained ascendancy. This was further emphasised by the *Children, Young Persons and Families Act (2005)*, which, among other things, required the Children's Court, when sentencing young offenders, to consider the interests and needs of the offender. Despite these movements, and efforts to keep children and young people with their families, the number of Australian children and young people living in out-of-home care increased by 44 per cent in the first decade of the 21st century.[249]

Successive government policies sought to strengthen and preserve families, but there was an increasing understanding that there were a whole range of issues behind the need for out-of-home care or support.[250]

Glastonbury could boast a 150-year history while BAYSA, which became Barwon Youth in 2006, and BYAS, which became Time for Youth in the same year, were relative newcomers. Yet in the new millennium, there were commonalities in their understanding of what was good practice. In each of the agencies there was a growing awareness of the value of early intervention to prevent trauma and harm to young people. There was also an understanding of the link between educational outcomes and well-being and there was an ever-increasing readiness to work in networks to strengthen their response to children, young people and families. Each of the three agencies sought and implemented innovative ways to support young people and children.

As board member Lloyd Owen recalled, there was a willingness to search for what worked and use the best available knowledge but also to try things out when the way ahead was uncertain.[251] Innovative programs, however, which looked at strengthening family connections or diverting children and young people from the protective or youth justice systems, were often constrained by government policy which tied much of the funding for projects in each of the three agencies to 'outputs and targets'.

> *"We talked about the work we did years ago in terms of that really intensive hand-holding stuff. But we did that without an understanding of trauma. There was nothing about that back then. We just knew if we went in and we really worked hard and taught them bit-by-bit that this worked. Then there was the shift and government was saying, "We can't afford to sustain this. We need to do it differently" and often what you were doing, you were addressing immediate stuff and as soon as you walked away they would just fall back down and then there'd be real problems for families or young people in managing their situations."*
>
> **Danielle Rygiel**

Glastonbury at a crossroads

In the early years of the 21st century, Glastonbury was at a crossroads. For two decades the agency's primary focus had been residential care for sibling groups in family group homes, with some casework supporting these children and their families, a mediation service and casework in Colac. Now the agency grappled with the changes needed to better meet the needs of children and families and to maintain relevance in a changing world.[252] Glastonbury was one of a number of agencies offering out-of-home care primarily in the Geelong region. MacKillop Family Services, for instance, offered residential care and a foster care program.

The Department of Human Services relied on these agencies for the placement of children in need of care and protection. While some at Glastonbury felt that the agency continued to fill a niche by providing group homes for large sibling groups who would be hard to place together in foster care, family group home care, once seen as an innovative alternative to institutional care, was losing favour as a preferred model of care for children who could not be with their own families. At the turn of the 21st century, the Department of Human Services convinced Glastonbury to convert some of its family group homes to family-based care, staffed by volunteer foster carers, rather than paid group home parents.[253] The agency began recruiting and training foster carers to offer long-term care within their own homes.

Under the guidance of CEO Victor Coull, who served from 1994 to 2004, Glastonbury began to slowly work towards developing services to prevent the breakdown of families and to enrich family life, with a particular emphasis on early childhood. In 2000, with the approval of the Glastonbury board, two staff members were trained and accredited to deliver the HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) program in Geelong. HIPPY had been developed in Israel in the 1960s and aimed to train parents of pre-school children to effectively be their child's first teacher, supporting them in their parenting roles and improving their children's school readiness and early years learning. The HIPPY program had first been introduced to Australia in 1998 by the Brotherhood of St Laurence.[254]

Glastonbury initiated a HIPPY program in Corio in 2000, extending it to Norlane, Newcomb and Whittington in 2004.[255] The HIPPY program was augmented by the PEACH (later PLAY) program, which was developed by two Glastonbury staff to encourage parents of children aged one to three to initiate and sustain play activities. Each of these programs was underpinned by an understanding of the impact that early learning could have on a child's later learning and development in life. But they also aimed to strengthen relationships between parent and child and encourage social interaction for isolated parents. These early years support programs were a feature of Glastonbury's offerings that would slowly gather momentum over the next decade.

> The contribution of early childhood programs is the focus of parents as teachers of their children. It is this focus which contributes to a change in parent activity and relationship with their child and sets children up for life.
>
> **Glastonbury Annual Report 2003**

In the early years of the new century the Glastonbury Board of Directors began to reassess the future directions of the agency. Unlike many community-based agencies, Glastonbury was, thanks to the subdivision and sale of its land and the prudent investment of the proceeds, in a position to self-fund programs such as the HIPPY and PLAY. While it relied on Department of Human Services funding to support its residential programs, the agency contributed a significant proportion of financial support from its own resources.[256]

Ever mindful of shepherding its resources, the board began to question whether it was better to spend on current programs or diversify into other areas of service provision.[257] The board also pondered its own role in the direction of the agency. First as a committee of management and later as a board, the members had been intimately involved in decision-making, particularly in the area of managing the agency's investment portfolio directly. The agency had grown in the preceding 10 years and new expectations of the role of boards of directors in the governance of community-based services led to a decision that it would concentrate on the major philosophies and directions of Glastonbury, rather than 'micro issues of day-to-day management'.[258]

The board also moved to actively raise Glastonbury's profile within the community, though this 'flew in the face of the philosophy which Glastonbury had implicitly developed over the years of having a low profile in the community'.[259] Now it seemed appropriate to publicise the agency's work, both to garner public support, and also to enhance staff morale and pride.[260]

The 150th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Geelong Orphan Asylum offered an opportunity to do so. When Judy Wookey was appointed CEO of Glastonbury after Victor Coull's retirement in 2004, it was with the clear expectation that she would lead the agency towards 'strengthened relationships with the Department of Human Services and raising the profile of Glastonbury in the community.'[261] She soon discovered that many people in the community recognised the Glastonbury name because it had been around a very long time. However they equated it with the former orphanage, and were not necessarily aware of the profile of the modern agency.[262]

> *"My role as CEO at Glastonbury involved a lot of community engagement. I would also go out and talk to various Lions Clubs and all of those, about the work that we did, bringing families alive, and talking about the difference that we made."*
>
> Judy Wookey,
> Glastonbury CEO 2005-2009

In the years after 2004, Glastonbury's programs in the family and child welfare area diversified. As well as building on the existing care, counselling and early years program, Glastonbury brought its expertise to a community development project based in Whittington. With funding from the Federal Government, Glastonbury was also able to initiate a support program for the children of parents with issues related to illicit drugs. Known as the Supporting Kids and their Environment (SKATE) program, it was delivered in partnership with Bethany Community Support and Barwon Health Drug Treatment Program. Another program related to mental health was Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPWAMI), delivered in conjunction with Barwon Health.

The foster care and residential care component of Glastonbury's out-of-home care program was significantly redeveloped by weaving in holistic and therapeutic modes of practice. Therapeutic residential care aimed to go further than simply providing an out-of-home residential option for children and young people needing protection, facilitating recovery from the effects of trauma, abuse and family separation. Therapeutic residential care relied on training carers and others associated with children to be aware of the effects of trauma and use every interaction with a child to promote healing.[263] In 2008 Glastonbury won funding to pilot the first therapeutic residential care program in the Barwon region.[264] In addition, programs catering to culturally and linguistically diverse communities and indigenous communities were introduced.

With a new CEO Gabrielle Nagle at the helm from 2009, Glastonbury refined its processes and strategies as a modern community services agency. New partnerships were developed with other service providers; visions and mission statements were developed and the agency consensus was that it should focus on its core strengths of early intervention, family and community services and out-of-home care. 'We tried to create an environment where we could cross-refer within Glastonbury but not spread ourselves so thin that the client and our staff were at risk,' she recalled.[265]

Glastonbury's foster care program was expanded to include 80 foster carers and by 2012 there were also 30 approved volunteers working with the agency. The PLAY program was redeveloped, based on research to feature as the cornerstone of the Early Years Program. A new family-strengthening program, Schools and Family Connections, aimed at the families of students transitioning from primary school to secondary school, was also introduced.[266]

> *"We introduced an evidence-based program meaning that it was proven to be effective. We made sure we employed people who actually were skilled in early childhood, but also had a breadth of experience across education, community services and health and that we were able to provide scientifically-endorsed programs we aimed to introduce into 'pockets of need' in the catchment that we had, and one of those was Colac. We looked towards embedding ourselves in the long term, in that zero to five space, more effectively so that the efforts around supporting families of high need early on, could be sustained and transitioned to a three to four-year-old-kinder program and then into an education environment."*
>
> Gabrielle Nagle,
> Glastonbury CEO 2009- 2012

In 2011, after extensive staff and board consultation, Glastonbury relaunched itself with a new name, Glastonbury Community Services, and new positioning statement, Support, Nurture, Grow, to reflect the importance of investment in early childhood development.[267]

From 2004-2012 the Glastonbury Board of Directors faced a number of changes and challenges. With a slight turnover of members at the beginning of this period, the board looked anew at contemporary governance guidelines. Terry Powell, who joined in 2004 and became Chair in 2007, recalled that, while the board was composed of very capable directors, there was an opportunity over time to obtain a broader representation of skills and diversity. During the early years of the 2000s, the composition changed to include a broader range of skills and experience.[268]

A major change that occurred in the operations of the board was to remove its hands-on management of Glastonbury's investment portfolio and place it with external investment managers.

Having realigned operations along modern governance lines, Glastonbury's Board of Directors initiated a new constitution in 2008. But there were problems for the board to confront. One of these involved the agency's financial deficit, fuelled by expenditure that was unallocated within the agency's budget. Members of the board felt obliged to 'assume a much greater role in the organisation's operations, reviewing management practices and moved quickly to realign costs and budget structures'.[269] After decades of subsidising the agency's programs, the board realised that reliance on its own capital base to fund many services had become unsustainable.[270] Glastonbury weathered the deficit storm and finances improved during Gabrielle Nagle's tenure.

Another problem, however lay in the attraction and retention of quality staff to oversee and provide programs. Glastonbury was experiencing a significant turnover of personnel.[271] Board members looked for ways to improve Glastonbury's services so that it could 'make a bigger difference where it is really needed at the grassroots'.[272] Board members looked to help the agency 'do a bit more for the community' and thoughts turned to merging with other Geelong-based agencies.[273] With the appointment of Alexander (Sandy) Morrison, first as acting CEO and then as CEO in 2013, the agency began to move towards exploring a merger with other agencies in Geelong.

History and heritage

One issue that confronted Glastonbury board members in the late 20th and early 21st centuries was the legacy of its care for past generations of orphanage residents. There was a growing awareness and understanding in Australia at this time of the impact that out-of-home care had had on hundreds of thousands of Australians during the 20th century.

Government inquiries into the Stolen Generations, former child migrants and forgotten Australians focussed national attention on the generations of Australians who had grown up away from their families. Former care leavers who offered testimony at these inquiries gave accounts of the many ways in which their time in care and separation from family had often had long-term effects on their well-being. In his time as CEO of Glastonbury, Vic Coull had arranged reunions for former Glastonbury care leavers. Collecting a series of oral history memories for a reunion in 1995, Coull acknowledged the sense of loss that many former residents expressed in reflecting on their time in the institution.[274]

The government inquiries exposed evidence of neglect and abuse in many children's institutions. One of the Forgotten Australians inquiry's recommendations, made in 2004, was that all former providers of out-of-home care make their records available to care leavers seeking information about their life in care. In line with this recommendation, Glastonbury in 2009 reviewed and catalogued its client files, digitising some of the records to enable easier access when former clients made contact.[275] At Glastonbury's Annual General Meeting on 14 November 2008, an apology to past care leavers was read out by the Chairman of the Glastonbury Board, Terry Powell. This apology was revised in 2018 and is included in the final pages of this history.

Glastonbury began to receive complaints and legal demands for compensation for abuse and neglect in the 1990s. Judy Wookey remembered that a small number of requests for compensation, passed on to the agency via legal channels, began appearing during her time as CEO. Gabrielle Nagle, CEO from 2009 to 2012, recalled a similar trickle of allegations of abuse and neglect suffered by former residents of the orphanage.

While some Glastonbury board members at this time worried that conceding to these claims for compensation might have damaged the agency's reputation and others argued that the contemporary agency had no responsibility for events that had taken place in the past, eventually the board, in 2013, adopted the point of view that past care leaver's claims ought to be settled, as much as possible, rather than taking them through a court process. Chair of Glastonbury John Frame (from 2012 and later chair of Barwon Child, Youth & Family) reasoned that this approach was helpful to the care leavers themselves – many of whom 'were disadvantaged people who we should be trying to assist'.

He also acknowledged it was also beneficial to Glastonbury to admit it didn't always get it right and redress any of those things that went wrong.[276]

BAYSA to Barwon Youth

BAYSA, which became Barwon Youth in 2006, moved into the 21st century with a continued emphasis on youth work principles, still aimed predominantly in the youth justice sphere, but with increasing responsibility for transitional accommodation in the Barwon region, as well as education and training. These additional areas complemented the youth justice component of Barwon Youth's work and were able to value add to it. A notable addition to the suite of programs in the early 21st century was drug and alcohol services.

> *"The purpose of what we did was to deal directly with young people in their environment. I never withdrew from that, and I expected that of our youth workers...if you're in your office, you're in there to do a report, you're not seeing kids in offices. I mean see them in their environment. See them at home. See them down at the bloody coffee shop, I don't care - and that was different."*
>
> Shane Murphy,
> Barwon Youth CEO 1982-2013

Workers in BAYSA's community support program continued to case manage juvenile offenders in the community. Early in the new century, in conjunction with Jesuit Social Services, BAYSA accessed DETYA (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs) funding to introduce a program assisting young offenders after their release from juvenile justice centres. Aiming to support young offenders to access education, training, accommodation, the program was named Out There.

BAYSA personnel worked with Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre to deliver pre-release and post-release support for young offenders from the Barwon region.[277] An understanding of the value of outdoor and wilderness activities led the staff in Community Support to begin offering camps and other activities for clients, including those in the Out There program. As evidence of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in the youth justice system came to light, links between the Community Support Team and the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative were strengthened.

The Children, Youth and Families Act (2005) established the facility for the Children's Court to allow group conferences before sentencing. Group conferences were available only to offenders between the ages of 10 and 18 and were not applicable for those who were charged with serious crimes, such as homicide, manslaughter or sex crimes. The young offender did not have to agree to a group conference, but doing so and agreeing with others present on a plan of reparation might mitigate the sentence he or she received. Conference convenors mediated the conference and prepared a report for the court. Group conferences aimed for rehabilitation of the offender as well as restorative justice. After the passage of the legislation, Barwon Youth, in conjunction with Brophy Family and Youth Services in Warrnambool, became a mediator for group conferences.

Housing

BAYSA continued to manage housing for youth in the region in the 2000s. By 2003 it was managing 70 properties across the region and partnered with other organisations, such as Kids Under Cover, to provide shelter for young people.

Mia who lived in a Lead Tenant House operated by BAYSA, recalled that some of her housemates could have challenging behaviours that proved troublesome for the lead tenant in the house:

> *"Everything was fine for the lead tenant until we got one kid who was really messed up. This kid ended up drinking an awful lot and then he started coming home on pretty hard drugs and it was pretty easy to tell. He'd come home aggressive and it was frightening, not something that I had been privy to up until that point. But he came home one night just irate. He had not been to school for months and it was the condition of living there was that you had to be in school. And the lead tenant had to pull him up;, "Mate, come on. Like you're not going to school. What are you doing?" and he lost his shit and punched the lead tenant in the face. I locked myself in my bedroom at this point but he's just through a wall and then he started hammering through the wall and I'm like, "Oh, my God. Oh, my God, what is going on?" And so we had to call the cops on our own tenant, which was so sad because that kid was lovely when he wasn't on anything; he was amazing."* [278]

Drug and alcohol services

BAYSA had combined with Barwon Health Drug Treatment Service and the Youth Substance Abuse Service (in Melbourne) to form the Barwon South West Youth Alliance to tackle drug and alcohol addictions in young people in 2000, turning its Wahroonga Hostel over to YSAS as a residential withdrawal unit for young people. In 2002 the Clockwork Young People's Health Service (later headspace Geelong) also joined the alliance. In 2003 BAYSA received funding from the Department of Human Services for a day centre for alcohol and drug withdrawal and BAYSA began providing a variety of support options to young people aged 12-21 with identified substance use issues.

In 2001 most of the BAYSA staff had moved to a new office location in Halstead Place – just down the street from the 44 Spring Street premises. This allowed the day program - known as Zones - to take place at Spring Street, alongside education and training programs. The Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation offered funds to develop the Zones program. The funding provided a coordinator along with three drug and alcohol outreach officers, one based at Geelong and the others at Warrnambool. It was an innovative approach to drug and alcohol programs for young people.[279]

> *"We used to get most of the young people who would normally hang out in the mall come along. Every day was different and exciting as you never knew who would show up or how many on any given day.*
>
> *They were always welcome and they knew it and they would let their mates know where to come to get a good meal and a roof over their head for the day especially on bad weather days. They were free to come and go and felt a belonging and connection to the space.*
>
> *It was great to be able to provide a safe, supportive and learning environment to those who were in need. There were many fond memories that included camps, outings and an interstate trip to Sydney with four young people. When they boarded the plane, the excitement on their faces is something I will never forget; one of wonderment that you see in a young child experiencing something new and unknown for the first time.*
>
> *Living skills, art therapy, massage, woodwork, relapse prevention were but a few of the programs on offer. Zones became somewhat of an institution with those young people and played an important role in keeping them engaged in activities and off the streets and offered hope. Zones closed mid 2012 but is still fondly remembered and referenced by those who passed through the doors – young people and workers alike."*

Terry Robinson – Zones Co-ordinator from 2005 until its closure in mid-2012.

'During 2012 two of your staff members were instrumental in assisting and supporting my son with his addiction issues – their unrelenting optimism, honesty, support, perseverance and ability to think outside the box was like a breath of fresh air.'

Parent of Barwon Youth client, Barwon Youth Annual Report 2012

Barwon Youth continued and expanded its work with schools in the 2000s providing support for students in the transition years in schools on the Bellarine Peninsula and Geelong. The aim was to work with students who might be at risk of leaving school early. A Wilderness in Life Development Program provided camps and outdoor activities for students, school holiday programs, group work programs, music and bicycle maintenance.

BAYSA had always relied on volunteers as mentors. The mentoring nature of these programs was expanded when BAYSA initiated the Big Brother, Big Sister program in Geelong, launched at Kardinia Park and with Cats Captain, Cameron Ling, as patron. The Big Brother, Big Sister program was an American program originating in 1904 before it was adopted in Australia in 1979. It matched young people, between the ages of seven and 17, with role models for intensive mentoring.

Street Surfer Bus

In 2009, with financial support from the Victorian Police and a donated bus from Benders Bus Lines, Barwon Youth began a new youth outreach program which became known as the Street Surfer Bus. Fitted out with 'big television sets that you could run training programs through and computers and a barbecue', the bus could be driven to 'hot spots' where young people gathered. Youth workers and volunteer police offered information on a range of subjects, such as health, education and drug abuse.[280] In later years this outreach service extended to rural school locations including Winchelsea and Deans Marsh, targeting young people at risk of leaving school early.[281]

BAYSA Zones participants creating artwork for the 2004 Drug Action Week in Geelong.

Changes at BAYSA

Long traditions at Barwon Youth were changing in the later years of the 2000s. In 2010, following changes to legislation, responsibility for case managing youth justice community clients was transferred from Barwon Youth back to the Department of Human Services. For 25 years Barwon Youth had carried out this role. Soon after, the Department of Human Services Youth Justice staff, who had been co-located with Barwon Youth staff for many years, moved back to State Government offices in Geelong. A further change occurred in 2013 when, amid stiff competition from private providers, Barwon Youth voluntarily relinquished its status as a Registered Training Organisation and the long-running educational and training arm of the organisation shut down.

Traditionally, BAYSA had been adept at coming up with programs to attract funding from government agencies or creating projects that fitted a particular niche in government policies.[282] The agency had been built on strong youth work principles, with staff becoming close to their clients. But, as governments increasingly favoured dealing with larger agencies, rather than a number of smaller ones, this grassroots approach sometimes put Barwon Youth at a disadvantage.[283]

As Bill Mathers, Chair of the Barwon Youth Board from 2006 reflected, the very qualities of the agency that made it a successful organisation, such as strong relationships with clients - could also act as an Achilles heel when government priorities changed. 'When programs that had been funded stopped, it had an impact on the whole agency,' he recalled. 'For instance, a program that was 25 per cent of our business was also 25 per cent of our staff. When a federally-funded program was stopped, there was no capacity to redistribute staff across programs so we lost them.'[284]

Traditionally, many members of BAYSA's Committee of Management (Board after 2006) served long years with the association. Peter Betts, who joined in 1983 and became president in 1988, remained until his death in 2004. Michael Merriman, who succeeded Betts as president, had served on the committee from 1988, retiring in 2009. Four of the retiring board members in 2011 had notched up 67 years of service between them.

A further major change occurred in 2013 when Shane Murphy retired after 30 years at the helm of Barwon Youth and John Townsend was appointed CEO. Looking back on his 30 years in the gritty and sometimes raw world of working with disadvantaged youth, Murphy mused that success stories in the field of homeless and disadvantaged youth are not always readily obvious.

> *"It's hard to measure the results over a long period there. It's hard to define success because the successes could be very small, but very important and quite influential in a kid's life. If you were an analyst you might say, 'Well, they didn't get a job, they didn't stay in a tenancy very long. They've got no money, they don't work, they're abusive', but then you can say 'well there's a whole lot of things they do do. They don't take as many drugs as they did. They don't beat their girlfriends or their mothers, and so on and so forth...' And they're not dead, they're not dead."* [285]

Time for Youth

Barwon Youth Accommodation Service (BYAS) also underwent a name change becoming Time for Youth (TFY) in 2006. The agency faced the new century with a renewed commitment to a 'whole of agency' approach to meeting the needs of clients. Young people had care plans developed for them and if they needed family support, that's what they got; if they needed mediation, they got it; if they needed refuge, they got accommodation.[286]

Time for Youth has a 'committed, tight-knit, confident and resilient staff group who demonstrate a genuine client focus and are able to support young people while facilitating the young person's ownership of their own circumstances'.

QICSA review of TFY 2009, quoted in TFY Annual Report 2009-2010.

Building on its collaboration with Barwon Youth and MacKillop Family Services in the Reconnect Program which offered early intervention support to families, the TFY committee resolved to increase its participation in partnerships and alliances with other agencies in the region. As CEO of TFY, Mike Kelly, recalled, the committee and staff recognised that, while homelessness was the presenting problem for clients, there were inevitably a whole range of other problems that, as a smaller agency, it could not address. It made sense to refer young people, or to partner with agencies such as Barwon Youth, Bethany, Glastonbury and MacKillop Family Services.[287]

TFY maintained its crisis accommodation and continued to try innovative approaches to problems associated with youth homelessness. In 2007, it introduced a Café Meals program. Based on research carried out by Jill Whelan, as a student of nutrition at RMIT University, the Café Meals program sought to meet the food security needs of young people by enlisting cafes in the Geelong and Colac areas to provide healthy, subsidised meals to young people for $3 each. The balance of the cost of the meal — up to $15 — was paid to the cafe out of the Café Meals budget. The project was initially funded through philanthropic trusts. While the major aim of the project was to encourage healthy eating among young people in insecure accommodation, a further benefit of the program was that it encouraged social skills in the young people. Jill Whelan and colleague Melanie Craig later documented the success of the program in the Barwon Region, publishing a kit to be made available to organisations in other regions who might like to establish a similar program.

In the 2000s TFY staff strengthened their focus on early intervention to prevent the breakup of the family and consequent homelessness for young people.[288] By 2006, referral to the City Limits refuge was seen as the last option for young people. As TFY staff identified increasing levels of conflict within families, the agency's core focus on formal mediation services was complemented with a range of other services aimed at preventing the breakdown of family relationships.

A range of programs within TFY's Youth and Family Options offered support to young people and their families to prevent them from leaving home and to divert them from the youth justice system.[289] Conflict resolution, anger management and mediation were among the strategies employed at grass roots level to assist both young people and family members to resolve difficulties and strengthen family relationships. In 2011 the agency received funding for a Youth Support Service to operate in conjunction with the police.

The Geelong Project

TFY's increasing commitment to early intervention to prevent homelessness among young people in the Barwon region led the agency to take on a leading role in an innovative project. The Geelong Project was underpinned by strong research, coupled with TFY staff's increased understanding of the link between education and risks of homelessness.

TFY was represented in 2009-2010 on a Creating Connections Steering Committee, with representatives from several other community agencies and organisations which aimed to research and document what early intervention strategies might work to prevent youth homelessness.[290] While TFY agency staff had a growing belief in the effectiveness of early intervention, as Mike Kelly mused, government personnel were often 'dubious' about allocating resources to preventative work. He recalled that TFY staff and their collaborators 'were out to prove that early intervention would make a difference' to homelessness rates among young people.[291]

The agency found the opportunity to prove its point when it won a tender with the Department of Human Services to pilot a research-based project in Geelong. The Geelong Project paired TFY and Barwon Youth with Swinburne University researcher, Professor David MacKenzie and the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network represented by Anne Maree Ryan. It was an innovative project on several levels; it was not crisis-driven, but aimed at identifying secondary students who might be at risk of homelessness or disengagement from education. MacKenzie developed a survey to be completed by all students in the participating schools to screen such students. The project involved active collaboration between participating schools and the community agencies – a deviation from the traditional relationship with community service providers.

In 2005 two young volunteers, Danni Morris and Tori Graham, approached BYAS offering to mentor young people in an experiential learning and adventure program and XTG-Town (Extreme Team Geelong Town) was born. Later that year eight young people, together with these volunteers and some BYAS staff members, travelled to New Zealand.

Geelong, with its strong network of local services, was an ideal place in which to trial the approach. TFY and Barwon Youth were in prime positions for success. TFY had experience with counselling families and young people to reduce homelessness. Barwon Youth had runs on the board with school mentoring and alcohol and drug programs.[292] Both agencies had the networks to refer families and young people to other services. They also had the flexibility to respond in a range of ways to support those students identified as being at risk of homelessness or early exit from education.

While teachers could often identify some students in difficulty, MacKenzie's student survey offered more accurate information. Once at-risk students were identified, three possible levels of service delivery were applied, ranging from monitoring to more formal case work.[293] Mike Kelly recalled that TFY had built-in flexibility:

> *"It wasn't only the three agencies that we brought on board with the Geelong Project - a dozen or so other agencies were part of the whole exercise: Wathaurong Indigenous agencies, Diversitat, the ethnic service agencies in Geelong...any agency that was relevant to supporting young people came on board."*
>
> Mike Kelly

> *"If the young people needed mentoring, extra mentoring at school and so forth, that could be provided. If there was trouble at home and conflict between Mum or Dad, or whatever the situation might be, then we had the resources there to engage the young person with a mediation program. If the young person just needed bit more adult support then working with our partners, like Barwon Youth, we could get them engaged with a 'big brother' or a 'big sister'. Whatever was required we had the resources to meet the need. Actually bringing the family member, the school, the teachers, the class co-ordinators, the special school counselling services together with our workers and the young person, getting them all together, and committed to a plan was the magic of it.*[294]
>
> *What makes The Geelong Project different is its systematic approach to identifying young people and families where there is risk, and responding at that point. This is much more effective than waiting until the risk escalates into a full crisis, such as the young person leaving home, before we respond."*
>
> Peter Jacobson,
> Youth Services Manager,
> Barwon Child, Youth & Family

The pilot of the Geelong Project was a huge success. All of the students (93) supported in the first year of the project remained at school and all were in safe and secure accommodation, 86 per cent of them in the family home.[295]

Government funding for the evaluation of the project dried up in 2013. However, support from the Geelong Community Foundation, Give Where You Live and The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation allowed it to continue in a limited capacity in 2015 and it was reinvigorated by Barwon Child, Youth & Family and additional partners in 2016.

Between 2013 and 2016, the number of young people in Geelong entering the Specialist Homelessness Service (operated by Time for Youth until 2015) declined by 40 per cent.[296] By any measure, this was a success.

After the merger of Time for Youth, Barwon Youth and Glastonbury Community Services to form Barwon Child, Youth & Family in 2015, the Geelong Project gained major State Government investment in the 2018/19 Budget of $2.8 million over two years, enabling four more Geelong schools to join in (making seven in total). The project became strongly aligned with Barwon Child, Youth & Family's strategic direction to intervene early and prevent complexity arising in young people's lives.

> *"The model which had evolved as a 'Community of Schools and Services' has received interstate and international recognition."*
>
> Mike Kelly

Bernadette scored as high risk for homelessness when she completed the TPG survey. She was arguing with her mother about chores at home and was grieving her father, who had recently died. This had led to disruptive behaviour at school, including fighting with her peers. More serious was the beginning of self-harming and there were some mental health concerns. Support was provided to her mother and after a period of family mediation relationships at home improved. Headspace was involved to provide counselling on grief and loss as well as the self-harming. Four brief counselling sessions were enough to address the disruptive behaviour at school.

The Geelong Project Interim Report 2016-2017.

Geelong Business Excellence Awards

All three of Barwon Child, Youth & Family's founding agencies' contributions to the Barwon region and to excellent outcomes for the community have been recognised in the Geelong Business Excellence Awards over many years.

Time for Youth (then BYAS) won the Community Agency award in 2006, with the judges extremely impressed with community partnering approaches:

> *'this allowed a full range of services to be provided to young people in the region with a focus on mediation and intervention to assist young people to remain in a family environment.'*

Glastonbury Community Services won the Government Enterprise award in 2011 and the Health and Wellbeing Award in 2012 and 2013. After winning for three consecutive years, Glastonbury was placed in the Awards' Hall of Fame category.

Glastonbury Community Services CEO, Sandy Morrison, centre, accepting the Award for Glastonbury Community Services in 2013.

The judges were incredibly impressed by the attitude of staff and board members:

> *'Glastonbury Community Services is an excellent business that has undergone a recent change in CEO while continuing to deliver exceptional service to the community which demonstrates a clear commitment from employees.'*

Accepting the award on behalf of Glastonbury, the Chief Executive Officer, Sandy Morrison, paid tribute to the 120 staff, the Board of Directors, and volunteers, complimenting '*their dedication and commitment to the delivery of a broad range of services to the vulnerable and less advantaged young people and families of our region and in keeping with the Glastonbury values of Care, Innovation and Collaboration.*'

In 2014 Barwon Youth won the Community Contribution Award which recognises organisations that positively impact on the community and generate outcomes that have long benefits. The judges' commented:

> *'It was a pleasure to visit Barwon Youth and experience first-hand the passion and expertise demonstrated by the staff and the recipients of the services provided. A highlight was the genuine belief among all those that we met that they were about changing lives and changing them for the better.'*

Towards a merger

In a roundabout way, the Geelong Project had a role to play in the merger of Glastonbury Community Services, Barwon Youth and Time for Youth to become Barwon Child, Youth & Family in 2015. For a number of key TFY staff and board members, it was critical that this ground-breaking program would continue and not become lost in any future, merged organisation.[297]

There had been some talk of mergers in the years leading up to 2015, but nothing very formal. In 2012, Barwon Youth and TFY had signed a memorandum of understanding agreeing not to compete with each other for contracts. But this was still far from a merger. Bill Mathers, chair of Barwon Youth, recalled that his board took the TFY board out to dinner to discuss such a proposal and received a negative response. For Mathers and Barwon Youth, a merger might guarantee some sustainability, not simply to keep the agency going, but to ensure that it could continue to make a difference for young people in the Barwon Region. He recalled that

> *'Geelong had a lot of agencies and we were competing for a limited financial pool of money and often we were undercutting each other and trying to compete for funding…I felt it would be no good if Barwon Youth was still in existence in 20 years, with a building with our name on it and no services to provide.'* [298]

Glastonbury board members also perceived the advantages of merging with like-minded agencies in Geelong. John Frame, Glastonbury chair from late 2012, reflected that that board was interested in trying to improve its service delivery to the community.

> *'The Glastonbury board's view was that by merging with other agencies we could improve our services by providing a 'one-stop shop' for clients. There were so many very small organisations and the government's view that was being put forward at that time was that they would be much happier with some more substantial not-for-profits providing levels of service rather than dealing with a plethora of tiny organisations.'* [299]

The Glastonbury board had had some discussions with other Geelong-based agencies. They were not under any financial pressure to merge and were determined to find the right fit. After Sandy Morrison was appointed as CEO of Glastonbury in late 2012, merger discussions with Barwon Youth commenced.

While Barwon Youth and Glastonbury agreed to merge in 2014, it took a bit longer for TFY to come on board. Jim Rutherford, TFY's chair, recalled that there had always been pockets of competition between TFY and Barwon Youth board members and among some staff. But the chief obstacle in the way of TFY joining with others was a concern that the agency's legacy of focussing on youth would be swallowed up.[300] Mike Kelly, CEO of TFY, recalled that for him, the primary issue was TFY's mandate and mission in terms of working for homeless young people.

> *'We needed to ensure that whatever partnership merger that we got into, that the interests of young people - our constituency if you like, who we were established to provide for - was sustained and would grow.'* [301]

Fears that the youth focus would be submerged by the children and family-focus were assuaged somewhat by the proposal that two youth-focused agencies join with the family services agencies. Kelly was reassured by Sandy Morrison's vision of an agency that offered a continuity of services 'from child to adolescent through to family and so forth. It was quite inspiring really'.[302]

With the decision by the boards of the three agencies to merge their organisations, progress towards the unveiling of the new agency advanced rapidly. Within a mere six months of TFY agreeing to be part of the new entity, Barwon Child, Youth & Family was launched. As John Frame pointed out: 'The amount of work involved in creating the merged entity should not be underestimated – everyone worked very hard. What assisted the process, however, was the way in which the board directors of the three agencies were all prepared to put egos and other issues aside and make sure that it came together and it worked pretty well.'[303]

> *'I think Barwon Youth certainly and Time for Youth did think a lot more outside the box but, at the end of the day, the merger has been able to utilise all those different sort of talents, which is good. I don't think that the innovation has been stifled and I think the Geelong Project moving on in the way that it has is a good example of that.'*
>
> **Jim Rutherford**

Board directors from the three former agencies came together to form a new agency board, with John Frame as inaugural chair of Barwon Child, Youth & Family. For Jim Rutherford, who had been a long-serving member of Time for Youth, there was an 'obligation' to move onto the new board to see that the agency's legacy was carried forward.[304] For Bill Mathers, who also moved on to the new board, the merger 'opened the door to a whole range of services we could provide'. But more than this, a strengthened agency could have influence, not simply in the areas of welfare policy, but in 'advocating for the needs of Geelong, which might be different from the needs of other areas' in Victoria.[305]

One hundred and sixty years after the Geelong Protestant Orphan Asylum opened its doors to the orphaned and deserted children of Geelong, Barwon Child Youth & Family harnessed the strengths of three agencies to refresh and renew support services for the region's disadvantaged. The new agency's freshly-minted name summed up the holistic approach that the merged agencies hoped to achieve. As John Frame, inaugural chair of Barwon Child, Youth & Family mused, the new agency was poised to continue to 'respond to community needs'.[306]

Joining forces, Glastonbury Chairman John Frame, Barwon Youth Chairman Bill Mathers and Time for Youth Chairman Jim Rutherford.

Chapter 8

A new era in care 2015 – 2018

In 2017, a young family came to Barwon Child, Youth & Family (BCYF) through the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) seeking support for their young child.

Charlie was diagnosed with a rare condition, Williams Syndrome, which affects only one in 20,000 children and can produce many symptoms and result in developmental delay. Charlie was one of the first clients presenting to BCYF's specialist early childhood team and was supported to access specialist therapies such as physiotherapy and speech therapy for more than 18 months. Charlie's Mum Brooke reflects:

> *"Support from Barwon Child, Youth & Family has helped us make informed decisions for Charlie's future. As first time parents, the road ahead is a daunting one, filled with doubt and uncertainty. But Charlie has a team of diverse professionals in his corner who are full of ideas and insights and are working together towards common goals to make his path easier."*

Working together for the benefit of families and children would continue to be a driving force of BCYF in this new era of collaborative care.

Photo Right: Charlie and his mum Brooke.

Stronger together

On 1 July 2015, Glastonbury Community Services, Barwon Youth and Time for Youth formally became Barwon Child, Youth & Family (BCYF). This new organisation would become a sector leader, aspiring to better outcomes and experiences for clients, through integrated services and partnerships focused on evidence-based preventions and interventions. At the heart of the BCYF vision was a community where people are safe, connected and empowered to live well.[307]

The BCYF board was made up of six former Glastonbury board members, along with four each from Barwon Youth and Time for Youth. This new board oversaw the formal appointment of a new CEO in Sandy Morrison who had also been appointed by the three previous boards as the pre-merger Group CEO in February 2015 until his appointment as BCYF CEO on 1 July 2015. In turn, the CEO oversaw and implemented a new management structure with responsibility for a workforce of 250 highly specialised staff (which had grown to 325 by 2018). The appointment of a Merger Project Manager provided a smooth transition and minimised impact on resources of the founding agencies. Consultation across staff, partners and stakeholders enabled a shared vision to emerge.

A one-year (2015-2016) Strategic Plan was initially developed, consolidating the key themes and areas of future work identified by the three founding agencies. In 2016, further scoping and analysis of a rapidly changing sector was undertaken to support longer term planning and ensure BCYF was well placed to meet the current challenges and to leverage future opportunities. This included a series of workshops with key government and non-government organisations to inform and guide future direction.

BCYF moved from a mission-based organisation to one that was purpose-based: 'To provide, deliver and develop services, where the need exists, that advance the rights and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.' [308] The organisation's Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was the culmination of extensive consultation and collaboration with stakeholder groups, providing the blueprint for its future direction.

The successful merger of three community agencies into BCYF demonstrated enormous courage and selflessness on the part of those involved, who were determined to forge a meaningful and collaborative model and to ensure a more connected and responsive service delivery system. It also provided the benchmark for other organisations to follow; reducing duplication, providing greater efficiencies and consolidating substantial resources for more focused community benefits.[309]

In 2016 BCYF was appointed the lead agency for headspace Geelong.

headspace Geelong

On 1 July 2016, as a result of Commonwealth policy changes relating to primary health networks, BCYF tendered for and was successful in being appointed as the lead agency for headspace Geelong. headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Initiative for young people aged 12-25 and provides services across four core streams including mental health, counselling, sexual health, primary health, vocational counselling and support for young people with problematic alcohol and other drug behaviours. headspace Geelong is one of 101 centres operating across Australia and is the busiest of those, with 11,428 'occasions of service' provided in 2017.

Later, the service expanded to also provide support to people following suicide attempts, as well as a social outreach program for disengaged youth. The development of the headspace service in the region is guided by a consortium of service providers including Barwon Health, Bellarine Community Health, Kardinia Health, G-Force, Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health and the local Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS).

The addition of headspace Geelong to BCYF represented 'a significant and appropriate extension of our services into primary health care for young people, including clinical, allied health and counselling services', according to CEO Sandy Morrison.

BCYF has identified three strategic priorities in the framing of its 2017-20 Strategic Plan:

- Service Excellence – Each and every client encounter draws upon the best theoretical and practice knowledge
- Social Impact – We understand the effect of our activities on our community and quantify this as part of our accountability to clients, funders and partners
- Sustainability – We develop systems that enable effective management of our operations while maintaining a focus on long term thinking and planning

In 2018 BCYF delivers more than 40 programs across the key areas of: Early Years Programs; Family and Community Services; Out of Home Care; Youth Services; Specialist Intervention Services; and headspace Geelong.

Since merging BCYF has attracted an additional $9.372 million in revenue which represents a growth of 52 per cent in three years - and this in the face of relinquishing Resi-Care funding of $2.2 million in April 2017.

It takes a village...

In the years since three agencies merged to become BCYF, the organisation has built on its reputation and begun to develop a strong new identity. Partnerships with like-minded organisations have been a big part of this strategy, helping BCYF achieve significant growth and community awareness.

Geelong Cats

In 2017, BCYF embarked on a five-year partnership with Geelong Football Club to help achieve its commitment to care for the community and provide a sense of connection and belonging. This partnership jointly delivers two programs focused on building better health for young people: Cyber Cats and Just Think.

Cyber Cats is an online safety and anti-bullying education program for children and young people, designed to teach them about the dangers, legal issues and consequences of cyber safety and cyber bullying.

Just Think is an education program for secondary school students designed to discourage underage drinking, underpinned by evidence that alcohol use before the age of 18 years can impair growing brains, increasing the risk of violence and injury and increasing the likelihood of alcohol dependence into adulthood. The program was first delivered in 2008 by Barwon Youth (pre-merger) and Geelong Cats. It has since been refined and redeveloped in alignment with National Health and Medical Research guidelines.

In June 2018 Geelong Cats player, Jamaine Jones, was announced as BCYF's new Foster Care Ambassador, heading up a campaign to promote foster care in the region. This was in response to an urgent shortage of foster carers and increasing numbers of children needing care.

Other initiatives as part of the partnership include having a BCYF community development worker co-located at the Geelong stadium and the Street Surfer Bus at every Geelong Cats home game.

In 2017 BCYF launched the refurbished StreetSurfer Bus.

BCYF CEO Sandy Morrison (right) and Geelong Cats CEO Brian Cook (left) celebrate the launch of the Cats and BCYF five-year partnership with Geelong players and students from Geelong Lutheran College.

Jamaine Jones, ambassador for Foster Care.

Deakin University

BCYF has worked collaboratively with Deakin University, facilitating student placements and education, as well as supporting joint research and evaluation projects. In 2018, moves were made to formalise this partnership to secure and build on those foundations and establish a strategic partnership for the mutual benefit of both organisations, across six areas: research; evaluation; service delivery; workforce delivery; shared resources; and community engagement. Significant work on the partnership culminated in the appointment of a jointly funded Senior Lecturer/Manager Research and Innovation located at BCYF.

Stepping Up

The Stepping Up Consortium comprises three not-for-profit organisations — Odyssey House, TaskForce and Youth Projects — who work together to provide innovative counselling and rehabilitation services for Victorians experiencing alcohol and drug misuse and mental health issues.

Stepping Up has a vision to be: 'the leading provider of quality, innovative and high impact services for people with complex needs at the intersection of the addiction, mental health, family violence and justice sectors.' [310]

Welome to country ceremony opening. The Barwon Community AOD Hub in Gordon Ave, opened in 2018 following a $500,000 State Government grant.

Based on the strong alignment with the BCYF vision, it was a natural fit for Stepping Up to provide these services in Barwon region in partnership with BCYF.

This partnership gained a $500,000 boost through the Victorian Government-funded Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Services (AOD) Capital Grant program in 2015/16, enabling the creation of The Barwon Community AOD Hub at BCYF's Gordon Avenue site.

The hub, officially opened in March 2018, is one of the region's largest community based alcohol and drug service delivery platforms. It provides a purpose built, therapeutic environment for clients, hosting a wide range of programs and services delivered by a highly skilled multi-disciplinary workforce. The hub provides a shining example of how better service integration achieved through partnerships provides a flexible and adaptable experience for clients on their treatment journey.

National Disability Insurance Agency

In 2017 BCYF won a new contract to partner with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in the provision of Early Childhood Early Intervention Services (ECEI) across the Barwon region. These services are for children up to six years who have a disability, or those for whom there are concerns regarding development. The ECEI process identifies the type and level of early intervention support a child needs to achieve their best outcome. The family-centred approach, supporting greater inclusion in mainstream settings, helps build the capacity of children and their families.[311]

BCYF today and beyond

BCYF operates in accordance with the Victorian Government's reform agenda and is guided by the organisation's 2017-20 Strategic Plan. It is no coincidence that BCYF's vision and purpose mirror the Victorian Government's commitment to "reform that protects families and sets a child up for life, leaving them more likely to be healthy, to form positive relationships, to learn and grow and to be in employment in adulthood".[312]

BCYF's work today complements other reform initiatives including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan and Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change.

After relocating to Geelong from country Victoria a couple of years ago, Marcus lost many of his social connections. Suffering from anxiety and with difficulty processing information Marcus was only working a few hours a week.

Through headspace Geelong's Social Outreach Program, Marcus was provided with one-on-one support and became involved in some group activities where he was able to meet other young people. Over time he improved his self confidence and self esteem to the point where he was able to speak to his manager about having more responsibility at work. He wanted to learn more and thought he was capable of doing more for the company. After this discussion, his manager provided him with more responsibilities, and increased his work hours, giving Marcus a sense of achievement and skills in working through his anxiety.

With the support of his headspace worker, Marcus has now purchased a car and is working towards achieving his driver's license so he can have more independence. His work hours continue to increase and Marcus has a small group of friends that he can socialise with.

Residential care: past, present and future

Within the pages of this history there are many references to the tensions that have, over time, existed between life in institutional care and life in a family setting. From as early as the 1870s, until the 1930s, 'children who were in the care of the government were 'boarded out' in private homes with foster parents'. Foster care was a cheaper option for government and saved on maintenance of orphanage buildings. It was also regarded as a healthier option for children to live in normal family homes.[313]

These tensions continued for many years. In 1971 the Hayden Raysmith report confirmed that the majority of children in Geelong still lived in large institutions and recommended a move towards smaller family group homes. The use of family group homes continued throughout the 1980s until the mid-1990s when government direction was to focus on family supports to retain children in their homes and the increased use of foster care. The use of residential care continued for a small number of children and young people, who were unable to live in foster care, due to past trauma and complex behaviours.

The out-of-home care system in Victoria has been the focus of several major reviews and inquiries over the past two decades. Common themes and issues have been identified, with each recommending sweeping changes designed to improve the system. In 2012, the findings from the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry (PVVCI) went further, recommending that a comprehensive five-year plan for the out-of-home care system be established. This was driven by the increasing growth of the number of children and young people requiring places and the aim of improving the stability, quality and outcomes for this group.[314]

In 2015, the report of Inquiry into the Adequacy of Residential Care Services for Victorian Children and Young People, *As a Good Parent Would*, demanded urgent redevelopment of residential care services and the development of specialised care options for children.[315] The report acknowledged the tireless dedication of those who worked in residential care but noted that the system within which they operated, often distracted and inhibited their ability to achieve positive outcomes for residents.

BCYF, through Glastonbury, has a long history in the provision of residential care, providing flexible models of care that responded to the changing needs of young people and in accordance with contemporary research and theories. Through therapeutic residential care, BCYF focused on providing nurturing, caring relationships and experiences, alternative schooling if the young people were disengaged from school and promoting their wellbeing to influence positive life trajectories. It has always remained committed to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people in its two residential houses and has contributed significant internal financial resources to address government funding shortfalls.

The young people living in residential care were exposed to other young people with high risk behaviours, impacting on their physical living conditions and prompting copycat behaviours and risk taking. From 2014, multiple attempts to grow and strengthen the BCYF residential service to fully support and resource individual client needs were limited due to clear government policy to reduce reliance on residential care and expand foster care provision.

On December 2016, following careful consideration of the issues, opportunities and challenges surrounding the provision and future of residential care, BCYF decided to cease providing residential care.

After 162 years, BCYF was confident that recommissioning this service to another and larger provider would result in far better outcomes for young people. At the heart of this decision was a strong belief that children and young people grow up healthier in a family environment.

BCYF in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and MacKillop Family Services, undertook a process of sensitive transition, to minimise disruption and impact on the children and young people affected by the decision and ensuring the residential places were not lost to the region. The transition from BCYF to MacKillop was completed on 28 April 2017.

BCYF's Out of Home Care Team currently supports a carer pool of 67 households, supporting 43 children in foster care.

In November 1853, the three little girls aged six, four and two years, whose story began this history, were forced through their family circumstances to be sent from Geelong, away from their family and community connections, because of the lack of available support. In 2018 if any child or their family experiences complex issues and needs to be removed from home, BCYF aims to provide a local foster care placement that can ensure our kids can stay connected to their local community.

BCYF Foster Carers provide care for children and young people in our community.

BCYF will continue to acknowledge the significant history and contribution of our three founding agencies.

Apology to Past Care Leavers

Original Apology 2008, Revised in 2018

On 1 July 2015, Barwon Child, Youth & Family was formed through the merger of Glastonbury Community Services, Barwon Youth and Time for Youth. These organisations provided various forms of alternative care for children and young people who could not or would not, live within their family. Whilst recognising the significant histories and contribution these former agencies have made to the region's social history, Barwon Child, Youth & Family appreciates that lessons from our past shape and influence our future.

We support the findings of the Australian Senate Report 2004 and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013). We rise to their challenges to admit past wrongs, to provide supportive, appropriate responses to those who were harmed and to ensure that such wrong doings are never hidden or repeated.

Barwon Child, Youth & Family is committed to providing the best care and support services possible and we recognise and honour the efforts of the majority of our staff, carers and volunteers of the former institutions who strived to do their best for children and young people living in alternative care. Many former clients report positive experiences, nonetheless, we acknowledge and deeply regret that the experience of some children and young people living in our care caused them hurt and anguish, which has continued to impact on their lives as adults.

We express our heartfelt regret and contrition about the experience of children and young people in the care of any of our founding organisations, who may have endured pain and trauma at being separated from their parents and siblings or who suffered abuse and neglect from people entrusted to care for them. Barwon Child, Youth & Family recognises that for those people who have grown up apart from their families, they may continue to be impacted through a loss of their sense of identity and belonging and endure ongoing painful residual effects. In respect of those people who suffered from abuse or neglect, we understand the impact these experiences have had on their ability to live meaningful, fulfilling lives and we apologise unreservedly.

Barwon Child, Youth & Family acknowledges the bravery and courage of former residents telling their story and bringing these issues to light. We are committed to assisting them to address the pain of their past experiences in the hope that they can reach a satisfactory level of healing and recovery.

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