

# The Significance of Individual Contributions to the History of Kildonan UnitingCare.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the history of the Victorian community service organisation which until June 2017 was known as Kildonan UnitingCare, and its historical predecessors, through the prisms of leadership and change. The *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864* established a child welfare system where both the government and private establishments could take charge of children. Successive governments did not merely tolerate these private providers but actively partnered with them, and over the course of two decades this entrenched a decentralised system. The thesis argues that this created an environment where individuals within private organisations could develop new methods of care and use their organisations as a platform to change the nature of the sector more broadly.

Kildonan, established in 1881, provides three examples of such significant contributions. Selina Murray MacDonald Sutherland founded the work as a lady missionary at the Scots' Church in Melbourne, and achieved a position of such prominence that she was able to persuade government to legitimate the work of private child rescuers through legislation, a recognition that was sought but rarely achieved by child rescue advocates in other parts of the world. In the 1950s two more leaders emerged, transforming not only Kildonan but also leading changes across the sector as a whole. Alison Player brought insights from her training as a social worker to lead the planning process that moved the organisation away from a focus on institutional care in the 1950s. She was followed by Alfred Spencer Colliver who, as Superintendent from 1957, developed the scattered family group home system, and worked alongside government to persuade other child care organisations to follow a similar path.

By comparing a range of sources to reconstruct what has been a poorly documented field this thesis shows how individuals, and the informal relationships they

were able to develop with others in the sector, were crucial to the ongoing development of child welfare policy across Victoria's decentralised array of support services.

## **Declaration and signed Statement of Authorship and Sources**

*This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.*

*No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.*

*No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.*

*All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees.*

*Signed.....*



## Acknowledgements

First, I wish to thank the people and organisations who made my research possible. I would not have been able to complete my thesis without the consistent and unwavering support and advice I have received from my Supervisors – Professor Emerita Shurlee Swain and Doctor Nell Musgrove. I am grateful for Professor Swain’s extraordinary ability to recollect so quickly the broad sweep of academic analysis this thesis has touched upon and her generosity in sharing her wealth of knowledge. Doctor Musgrove’s own work was invaluable, both formally in her written research on child welfare and in her essential commentary on my work as I progressed.

I also wish to thank Stella Avramopoulos who was Kildonan UnitingCare’s CEO during much of the period this thesis was being written. She granted me unfettered access to Kildonan’s extensive archival material for which I will be forever grateful. To Kildonan’s Epping office staff I say a big thank-you as they supported my research by listening enthusiastically to the various stories I uncovered about the organisation during my archival adventures across several years. It was an encounter with Kildonan’s history and my involvement in the ‘Who am I?’ project looking into Care Leaver records which initially sparked my interest in the thesis topic. (Care Leavers is the term now commonly used for those who were managed in out-of-home child placements.) This was also where I first met my supervisors and the rest, as they say, is history.

There were other sites I visited in my studies. Trove has been a fantastic source so I say a loud thank-you to the National Library of Australia for making such an incredible resource available to historians. I wish to thank Scots’ Church for allowing me to access their records on the early years of the organisation and for a copy of their history book written for their 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A thank-you to all those at the Public Record Office Victoria and the State Library of Victoria who were so helpful and answered my many questions. I am grateful to the Department of Health and Human Services for allowing me to access records from their archive.

There have been some wonderful individual contributions to this thesis which I wish to acknowledge. My Uncle, who also loves history, came to visit us and while staying at Phillip Island picked up a local history book only to notice ‘my lady’ (Miss Sutherland) in it. While the book provided a few short sentences about the life of Sutherland it proved to be important new evidence of her political links and I am very grateful to him for remembering her name. This thesis was also enriched by the contribution of Lloyd and

Faye Owen who kindly agreed to be interviewed and recounted their time as 1960s cottage parents. This added another dimension to my analysis of the family group home method. Most importantly I wish to acknowledge that this study has examined case files of children and families who were often in distress when they engaged with the nineteenth-century society and the various children's homes run by the organisation in later decades. I have been conscious of respecting their personal histories but hope that my research will provide a contextual framework which may assist their understanding of the broader child welfare system and how their experiences fitted within it.

Finally I wish to thank all my friends and family who have patiently supported me over several years. I am grateful for the encouragement I have received from them. I wish to thank my immediate family for surviving the thesis process up close. In particular my husband, who supported me in so many wonderful ways and to my adult children who have also cheered me on while I have been completing this thesis.



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# **Introduction**

This thesis explores the history of the organisation which was known most recently as Kildonan UnitingCare prior to its amalgamation into the larger organisation known as Uniting in June 2017. The organisation, informally known as 'Kildonan', was initially founded as part of the missionary work of the Scots' Church in Collins Street, Melbourne. Overseen by the Scots' Church District Aid Society, by 1884 the work with children had been formalised into the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society. In 1895 the organisation amalgamated with another child rescue organisation managed by the Presbyterian Church to become the Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society. In 1887 the Society rented a receiving home which it named 'Kildonan'. This was also to be the name of another home opened in North Melbourne, in 1890, and then a larger congregate care site on the then outskirts of Melbourne at Burwood, opened in 1937. When the organisation later moved to provide other social services it continued to use the name Kildonan, as Kildonan Family Group Homes, Kildonan Family Services, and then finally Kildonan UnitingCare. The organisation relinquished this distinguishing name after 130 years of association in July 2017 when it was subsumed into the larger Uniting Church social service group.

The organisation's longevity provides an opportunity to examine the features which made the Victorian child welfare system distinctive. By analysing the various stages of Kildonan's progression from an early child rescue organisation, through to its development of family group homes in the 1960s and its later focus on services to prevent children coming into 'care', the thesis identifies several key points at which individuals within the organisation were at the forefront of changes which transformed the broader

child welfare sector.<sup>1</sup> As a high profile and well-resourced provider, this Presbyterian organisation endured many pressures both internal and external while maintaining its various services and homes, and is still providing services today. By the 1970s financial pressures on the non-government sector had led to a much greater level of government regulation. This, in turn, diminished the influence that non-government organisations and their leaders were able to have in setting the agenda for child welfare.

This thesis presents Kildonan's history through an examination of the impact of three influential individuals. It also analyses the various styles of leadership represented over its history and explores the management of the organisation both at times when change was sweeping through the child welfare sector, and at other times, when stability and continuity became important. The evidence shows that because the child welfare system in Victoria was an environment in which both government and voluntary organisations managed children judged as 'neglected' or 'in need of care and protection', the voluntary sector remained influential well into the twentieth century. Using Kildonan as a case study, it argues that individuals from voluntary organisations were able to contribute to child welfare in ways that would not have been possible in jurisdictions where government had tighter legislative and regulatory control.

### **Background: A synopsis of the History of Kildonan UnitingCare**

Kildonan UnitingCare both shaped and has been shaped by the changes in Victoria's child welfare sector. The organisation evolved from the early philanthropic work of Scots' Church led by their Lady Missionary, Selina Murray McDonald Sutherland.<sup>2</sup> In 1881 Sutherland and her ladies' committee developed a program that aimed to assist children

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<sup>1</sup> Concepts such as children being in 'care' or adopted are placed in inverted commas, or replaced with more neutral terms within this thesis to acknowledge that sometimes children did not feel *cared for* despite the word 'care' being used in official documents and practice.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Hoban, "Selina Sutherland (1839-1909)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sutherland-selina-murray-4674>, accessed on 23 February 2012.

defined as 'neglected' by sending them to live with families, many of which were located in the country.<sup>3</sup> From around 1885 the work with children increased and by 1887 this part of the organisation was formally known as the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society.<sup>4</sup> Since the society did not pay families, young children were in effect informally adopted. This carried some risks for the welfare of these children whose new families often expected them to work to earn their keep, although the records do not provide evidence about the children's experiences in these situations. Older children were generally apprenticed as farm labourers, in the case of the boys, or as domestic servants for the girls. In 1887 a house was rented to operate as a receiving home to temporarily house and prepare children for placement.<sup>5</sup> This first receiving home was called 'Kildonan' after a local parish near Sutherland's Scottish home.<sup>6</sup> In 1890, after several years of fund-raising, the organisation moved its operations, purchasing a new receiving home in Flemington Road, North Melbourne.<sup>7</sup>

Under Sutherland's leadership the organisation thrived, but conflict with the church leadership meant that she later lost the support of the church and was unable to continue in this role. However, her work in child rescue was far from ended.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately it was only a matter of months before Sutherland was once again in dispute with the broader leadership of the Presbyterian Church. In 1895 the Scots' Church and Presbyterian societies that Sutherland had left behind amalgamated to form the Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society.<sup>9</sup> Through this

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<sup>3</sup> Marjorie Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring* (Melbourne: The Council of the Uniting Church Kildonan homes for Children, 1981). See Chapter One for an overview of this period.

<sup>4</sup> "The Neglected Children's Aid Society," *The Argus*, 13 December 1887, 8.

<sup>5</sup> "Home for Neglected Children - Opening by Dr Cameron Lees," *The Argus*, 22 August 1887, 7; "Children's Receiving Home," *The Herald*, 30 August 1887, 4.

<sup>6</sup> This newspaper article provides the earliest reference to the receiving home being named 'Kildonan'. See "The Neglected Children's Aid Society," 8.

<sup>7</sup> The home was officially opened in November 1890 after undergoing some alterations. See "14 November 1890," *The Argus*, 14 November 1890, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Della Hilton, *Selina's Legacy* (Melbourne: Oz Child Llenlees Press 1993). Chapter One covers this move.

<sup>9</sup> *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1896), 19. The Presbyterian and Scots' Church Aid Society Reports and Kildonan Annual Reports variously labelled are contained in the Kildonan UnitingCare archive (hereafter noted as KA,) located at 188 McDonalds Road Epping.

organisation the work with neglected children continued after Sutherland's departure, although at a much reduced rate. By 1913 children were still being placed in unpaid foster homes but these were becoming more difficult to find.<sup>10</sup> The decision was made to redevelop the receiving home in North Melbourne to accommodate more children. The home was always full, prompting those on the executive committee which ran the institution to consider a change of location to allow for expansion. Thus in 1937, in the context of another depression, and with the need for places for children in institutions increasing, the society moved its services to what was then a semi-rural location in Elgar Road Burwood.<sup>11</sup> It was at this time that the organisation changed its name to the Kildonan Home for Children.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War, services at Kildonan remained static with little change in the way the organisation was run.<sup>13</sup> By the mid-1950s, however, the home was facing serious financial difficulties as legacies from supporters began to dry up and costs spiralled.<sup>14</sup> With the assistance of Miss Alison Player, later Mrs Mathew, an experienced social worker who joined the Executive Committee in 1955, a plan was made to change the type of 'care' Kildonan offered from large dormitory style congregate method to smaller groups of mixed ages and genders in suburban-based homes in a system that was designed to imitate a nuclear family unit.<sup>15</sup> This was a response to international research, such as the influential Curtis Report in Britain, that questioned the quality of the congregate method—which housed children in large dormitories based upon their ages and gender—arguing that it had deleterious

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<sup>10</sup> "Neglected Children's Society," *The Argus*, 19 February 1914, 6.

<sup>11</sup> "New "Kildonan" Homes ", *The Age*, 13 December 1937, 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Home Committee Minutes*, (Melbourne: Presbyterian and Scots' Church Children's Aid Society, 1918 -1964). 19 September 1935.

<sup>13</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1931), 18-20; *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1939), 32-36; *Your Kildonan 61st Annual Report*, (1942 -1943), 1-11.

<sup>14</sup> KA, *Kildonan Home*, (1956-1957), 1. This point is made in the introduction by the chair of the Executive Committee.

<sup>15</sup> KA, *Kildonan Village of Homes 75th Annual Report 1881 - 1956*, (1955-56).

effects on children's psychological and emotional wellbeing.<sup>16</sup> It recommended smaller family group settings which were designed to imitate a family home.<sup>17</sup> Kildonan wished to recreate a nuclear family setting where all the children under its authority would be looked after by house parents who often brought their own children into the group home as well.<sup>18</sup>

Mr. Alfred Spencer Colliver was employed as the Superintendent of Kildonan in May 1957, and charged with implementing this ambitious plan. In 1958 Kildonan established its pilot mixed family group home on a site next door to the existing congregate home.<sup>19</sup> Kildonan's leadership judged the pilot to be very successful and decided to change all its residential care to this new system. It was given the opportunity to advance its cause in 1960 when the government offered to purchase the Burwood site. Kildonan then embarked on a large modernisation process using the family group home model while simultaneously developing a new but small foster care program.<sup>20</sup>

The family group homes established in the early 1960s were initially located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne but, after consultation with the state government during the late 1970s and early 1980s, services were moved to the inner suburbs of Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy, nearer to the public housing areas from which many of the children came.<sup>21</sup> In the mid-1990s the decision was taken to move towards support services for families and away from residential services.<sup>22</sup> The organisation's last residential care home was a unit for teenagers, managed by Kildonan, which closed in 2001. Kildonan still operates a number of community and family services in the north and east of Melbourne and in the Shepparton area as a result of the recent amalgamation.

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<sup>16</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945).

<sup>17</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report*, (1961), 3.

<sup>18</sup> KA, This point was made in Kildonan's development plan in 1959. See Reverend John Price, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan*, (1959), 3.

<sup>19</sup> KA, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> KA, *Quindalup*, (March, 1961), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 49-50. Chapter titled 'The Future'.

<sup>22</sup> KA, *Kildonan Child and Family Services, 1994-1995, 114th Annual Report*, 2.

## Methodology and Sources

Kildonan UnitingCare's own archival collection provided the major source of primary material for this thesis. The most significant feature of the archive is the complete collection of records of every child managed by the organisation, from its early nineteenth century case files from July 1881 through to its social work managed group home files and up until it ceased to provide out-of-home placements in 2001.<sup>23</sup> Given that many other institutions who managed children have incomplete records this feature of the archive at Kildonan made it exceptional. It also contained some memorabilia and historical artefacts from its time running children's homes. It also housed a collection of more recent photographic images of staff at various functions managed by Kildonan since the 1990s.

Despite the richness of the material, the collection has not been properly indexed and is far from complete. There are no Annual Reports held by Kildonan prior to the 1930s, with significant gaps up until the 1970s, after which most were available. The collection has been augmented during the course of the research with missing Annual Reports sourced from the National Library of Australia, which also held Scots' Church annual reports for the Neglected Children's Aid Society from 1890, 1896, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1904, 1907, 1911, 1912, 1918, 1931, and 1939, and copies of Kildonan's newsletter *Quindalup* from 1957 to 1961. The Annual Reports that have survived presented a summary of key dates and events and were read with an understanding that their intent as Annual Reports was to highlight the best aspects of an organisation's effort, the good stewardship shown in the financial records, and to document the organisation's funding, much of which came from the gifts and legacies of supporters. The reports often emphasised the financial constraints of the organisation's work in order to solicit further support from its readership. If read more thematically, however, they provided insight

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<sup>23</sup> This point is made because some children's homes in Victoria do not have all their files. Some files were deliberately destroyed, others seem to have been mismanaged and some were reportedly destroyed by fire.



into the motivations of the staff and committees who ran the institution and their understanding of their roles and responsibilities towards the children in their care.

The Kildonan archive holds a complete set of Admission Journals which provided case notes about the children who were under the supervision of the organisation in the Sutherland era. The admission records provided important demographic data for the early years of the organisation where the Annual Reports that were available gave few details about day-to-day child welfare practices. What was recorded was inconsistent but included such details as the child's age, their address, or where they were taken from. There were descriptions of the child's mother and father or other relatives who had charge of the child. The case notes also contained details of the number, type and location of homes the children were sent to, as well as any illnesses or diseases they suffered. All the cases between the years of 1881 and 1893 were studied as these were the years when Sutherland was in control of the society. There were 1,208 case files for this period all of which were analysed as part of this thesis.<sup>24</sup> These provided the greatest evidence for Sutherland's early work.<sup>25</sup>

The records of the children admitted to the organisation between 1881 and 1893 were analysed by reading into the silences in order to explore both Sutherland's strategies and day-to-day methods.<sup>26</sup> As Mark Peel has noted in the study of case files, this implies that a researcher has to double read the file, both for the information the writers intended it to impart, but also for the voices of others who are more powerless but who are

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<sup>24</sup> KA, In October 1893 Sutherland reported that 1206 children had been accepted by the society between July 1881 and October 1893. The following year the society accepted only a further 37. Selina Sutherland, *Statement of the Work in Connection with the Neglected Children from Jan'y 1st to October 31st 1893*, (1893).

<sup>25</sup> KA. The archive also contains After Care Journals from 1887 which list what some of the children were doing after they left the society, such as if they married or what employment they had. There were also some government documents, such as two reports by the Inspector of Charities for 1892 and 1893. A series of letters and some business letters such as building quotes were also located in the archive for this period. Unfortunately no letters from the children have survived.

<sup>26</sup> Karen Dubinsky. "Afterward: Telling Stories about Dead People" in Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, *On the Case: Explorations in Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 361.

represented in the text nonetheless.<sup>27</sup> I sought to analyse the processes by which children came into care in order to draw conclusions about the principles by which Sutherland and her assistants conducted their work. While this approach does not directly address the voices of those not given agency within the case notes, this study seeks to infer how both the children and their families were treated by Sutherland and the society.

The early files contain not only practical details about the children, but also problematic and, at times, judgemental language used by the authors regarding both the children and their families. In more recent years with the advent of autobiographical accounts which provide a view of a child's lived experience in these organisations, researchers have become circumspect as much of the language which appears is loaded and has been contested.<sup>28</sup>

Such use of personal records required ethics approval and this process was completed.<sup>29</sup> Although the individuals mentioned in the case files examined for this study have passed away, I am sensitive to the fact that most will have descendants. Kildonan has received numerous requests for family records and I was mindful of this other purpose for which these records are currently used. Given this need to preserve confidentiality, I have wherever possible described their contents in broad terms, or used generalised statistics, so as not to identify or name the individuals involved.

The Kildonan archive also contained a series of administrative records. These records were useful in providing detail about the day-to-day practices of the organisation. They provided evidence of the priorities for the organisation at times when no other records were available. In the rare instances where incidents involving children's

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<sup>27</sup> Mark Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse: Social Work and the Story of Poverty in America, Australia, and Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 18. Peel discusses La Capra's approach to reading history in this section.

<sup>28</sup> Joanna Penglase, *Orphans of the Living: Growing up in Care in Twentieth-Century Australia* (Fremantle, WA: Curtin University Book, 2005). Particularly chapter one.

<sup>29</sup> Ethics approval number ID 2012 144V.

behaviour or thoughts were recorded in these minutes, they provided some details about the children's perspectives and experiences. The Home Committee Minutes documented the decisions of the ladies' committee responsible for admissions, staffing, and day-to-day business, and were invaluable in providing evidence of the types of decisions they were making. These records were available from 1918 until 1964 when the Home Committee was disbanded.

The archive also contained an assortment of promotional newsletters from 1957 and 1961 which provided details of the program developed by Kildonan's leaders as they sought to justify the move to the family group home method. These newsletters provided evidence of the growing importance of new emerging styles of leadership from the increasing centrality of the role of the male Superintendent and the growing importance of the expert role of the social worker. A full set of Executive Committee Minutes for the broader Presbyterian Social Service Department which governed Kildonan and several other organisations was available for the period from 1960 to 1972.<sup>30</sup> These minutes provided evidence of the decisions being made by the leadership team as the organisation transitioned from congregate care to family group homes. The Executive Minutes also provided details of the financial position of the organisation in the reports of the Finance and Property Committee.

Given the obvious gaps in the sources available within the Kildonan archive there were other important but disparate sources which were accessed to provide further supporting evidence. Sutherland left few personal records.<sup>31</sup> She regularly used local newspapers as an outlet for her views, most particularly the *Argus* with whose editorial

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<sup>30</sup> Further copies of these records and minutes of other meetings and training sessions are held in the Uniting Church archive located 54 Serrell St, Malvern East, VIC 3145 (Hereafter noted as UC). The records date from 1970 to 1985.

<sup>31</sup> Miss Sutherland's Bible has been viewed by the author at the Berry Street Archive which houses the Sutherland Homes for Children Archive (1895-1991). This was Sutherland's final organisation founded a year before her death in 1909. *Miss Sutherland's Bible*, Berry Street Archives (Melbourne: Berry Street Archives). Unfortunately she left no personal writings or a diary.

staff she developed a good working relationship.<sup>32</sup> Alison Mathew was interviewed for the National Library of Australia in 1970 and this provided much of the evidence for the section about her early life and motivations.<sup>33</sup> Information about the early years of her career was also found in newspaper reports from the time. Her reports to the Executive Committee following her appointment as Kildonan's Senior Social Worker in March 1961 also provided valuable primary source material. Colliver's contribution was accessed through the notes of the various committees that ran Kildonan while he was in charge, and papers he presented at conferences later in his career. He also wrote about his theories of child welfare,<sup>34</sup> although the report of his Winston Churchill Fellowship, published as *To make a study of social welfare administration, theory and practice and the principles of social survey and self-study research — Canada, UK* has been lost.<sup>35</sup>

While it would have been expected that the organisation which managed the society in its early years would have maintained some archival records, unfortunately the archive of Scots' Church was only marginally fruitful. It contained three Scots' Church Annual reports for the early period, 1884, 1890 and 1893. As the early child welfare work of the society was considered to be part of a broader mission of the church it was only documented in a small section in these reports. During the 1880s, furthermore, after the contentious departure of the Reverend Charles Strong, Minister of Scots' Church from 1875 to 1883, there were several years when the church did not produce an Annual Report.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "Miss Sutherland: A Philanthropic Study," *The Argus*, 5 October 1893, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Alison Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, Australian Association of Social Workers oral history project. (1972).

<sup>34</sup> For example see A.Spencer Colliver, "Further Comment on Organisational Issues," in *Community Service, Citizens and Welfare Organisations*, (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1966), 51-58. This article was produced after Colliver gave a paper on this topic to the ACOS conference in 1966.

<sup>35</sup> Alfred Spencer Colliver, *To Make a Study of Social Welfare Administration, Theory and Practice and the Principles of Social Survey and Self-Study Research — Canada, U.K.*

<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellows/detail/497/Alfred+COLLIVER>, accessed 15 August 2011. Details contained on the website confirmed that the paper was lost.

<sup>36</sup> For details regarding the dispute of the Reverend Strong see C.R. Badger, "Strong, Charles (1844-1942)", <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/strong-charles-4658>, accessed 13 December 2011; C. R. Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church* (Melbourne: Abacada Press, 1971).

Given the relative sparsity of personal and church-based archival material, examination of a wide variety of sources garnered from across the sector was necessary to provide context for the decisions being taken within the organisation at various points in its history. Hansard, for example, provided details of the debates related to child welfare legislation in the period between 1850 and 1970. These debates were important because the legislation had the potential to impact non-government organisations like Kildonan and in some cases the early society and Sutherland were mentioned. At the very least, these new legislation often set the agenda for the broader child welfare sector and provided evidence of contemporary political discourse around the topic.

Other valuable contextual resources included the reports of the state child welfare department which existed under a number of different names over time.<sup>37</sup> These annual reports not only documented the government's various methods and levels of contributions to child welfare, but provided some details about the work of the non-government sector, including Kildonan. In addition to information about private organisations, such as statistical data, these annual reports also provided evidence through their decades-long silences around the functioning and regulation of the non-government sector.

Another source which was used to provide small but important details about key individuals studied as part of this research was the weekly *Government Gazette* accessed from 1851 to 1970. The *Government Gazette* listed the names and roles of both government employees and voluntary committee members. Later gazettes documented the membership of the Children's Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC) and the Family Welfare Advisory Council (FWAC) with which Colliver was involved, making it possible to

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<sup>37</sup> The Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Annual Reports from 1874 to 1887, the Neglected Children's Department Annual Reports from the 1887 until 1924, the Children's Welfare Department Annual Reports from 1925 to 1959 and the Social Welfare Department from 1960 to 1970. Most of these reports were available at <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/vufind/>. Some were sourced from the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

map the alliances through which he and his colleagues sought to bring about change. It also recorded the name changes to the department which regulated child welfare, and at times also listed legislative regulations, their responsibilities and some procedures. The gazettes provided evidence of non-government agents and organisations authorised to take control of children under the *Neglected Children's Act 1887* and its amendment the *Neglected Children's Act 1890*.

Earlier government records available at the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) proved far less fruitful. The nature of Sutherland's relationship, if any, with the Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools should have left a record in the correspondence files. However, both of these departments were within the Chief Secretary's large portfolio, the correspondence files of which are both voluminous and minimally indexed. The Chief Secretary's Inward Registered Correspondence files were examined for this study.<sup>38</sup> This correspondence is catalogued by year and the years 1881 to 1887 were searched in the hope of tracking correspondence between Sutherland and the department. A sample of boxes from 1881 to 1884 was examined until it was clear that no records that would assist this study were present in those boxes. Most of the boxes examined contained copies of reports with a few items of personal correspondence from parents of wards, but none contained any direct evidence of Sutherland's interactions with the department. After about twenty boxes were sampled the search for information from this source was abandoned.

The Department of Health and Human Services now operates child welfare services in Victoria. Its archives contain some records relating to Kildonan.<sup>39</sup> Most relate

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<sup>38</sup> The Chief Secretary's correspondence for the years 1864 to 1954 is held at PROV: PROV, VA 475 Chief Secretary's Department, VPRS 1226 Supplementary Inward Registered Correspondence; PROV, VA 475 Chief Secretary's Department, VPRS 3992 Inward Registered Correspondence III; PROV VA 475 Chief Secretary's Department, VPRS 6345 General Correspondence Files These records were all located at the Public Record Office Victoria, 99 Shiel Street North Melbourne.

<sup>39</sup> The Department of Health and Human Services for the state of Victoria holds files related to Kildonan from the periods when it was named both the Children's Welfare Department (1924-1960) and the Social Welfare Branch (1960-1970) both of whom had responsibility for child welfare. The Department of Health and Human Services Archive (Hereafter

to the post-1970 period and hence fall outside the scope of this research, but the first file in the series included correspondence, mostly of an administrative nature, and reports of the department's annual visits to Kildonan from 1940 to 1970. Read thematically, these reports disclose a distinct pattern with the Inspectors using similar phrases every year to describe the home. The children were described as 'well clothed', sometimes with a comment regarding home-made jumpers. The site was said to be 'happily situated on the side of the hill', and 'the rooms were furnished well'.<sup>40</sup> It was not until the late 1960s that more nuanced, personal observations were added to these reports, while individual children's names, welfare or views were only recorded in one report for the entire period. The lack of details contained in the records expose the lack of regulation the department enforced over private providers like Kildonan throughout this period.

Newspapers provided an important additional primary source for contextual information, particularly during the early years. In its founding period the organisation actively sought the support of the local newspapers to promote its work and to persuade the public to provide much needed financial support. The leaders of the organisation, most particularly Sutherland, consciously developed relationships with reporters. The resulting articles provided details of various events and advertised their successes, or the need for financial support, in order to promote their work. Sutherland also used the papers to raise her own profile.<sup>41</sup> The newspapers of the day, such as the *Age* and *Herald* also followed aspects of Sutherland's career. The *Argus* articles supportive of her work were even republished in some interstate papers providing her with a national profile. The details of the later leaders' careers were also examined through use of the local and interstate newspapers. Fortunately there were newspaper articles featuring details of

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noted as DHHSA) is currently located at 50 Lonsdale Street Melbourne. Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01, (1940-1972).

<sup>40</sup> DHHSA, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01.

<sup>41</sup> Sharron Lane, "The Argus and Miss Sutherland," *Victorian Historical Journal* 84, no. 1 (2013): 93-103.

annual meetings in which the Scots' Church and Presbyterian Children's Aid Society, and later Kildonan Home for Children, Annual Reports were presented. Most importantly, the public faces of the three individuals who have been the focus of this study were tracked through their use of the print media to further their careers, or at the very least to advertise them. Using the National Library of Australia's online search tool, Trove, over 100 articles from local papers from 1881 to 1960 have provided context and background detail for much of this history.

For the period after the Second World War the *Herald*, which is available on microfilm at the State Library of Victoria and since early 2018 online on Trove was also accessed for this research. The *Herald* was a conservative-leaning broadsheet newspaper first published as the *Port Phillip Herald* in 1840. It was a popular afternoon daily newspaper that was accessed in order to balance the views presented by other newspapers. One of its reporters led a crucial campaign in 1946, based on the findings of the Curtis Report which had just been released in England. The report's critique provided evidence of some of the social pressure the Victorian government was experiencing in relation to its child welfare system. While other newspapers made some effort to report on these findings the *Herald* led the debate. Its contribution, although small, was crucial to this study.

Over recent decades historical child welfare policy and practice has gained significant public attention. It came to prominence in 1997 with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Board's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. The report, entitled *Bringing Them Home*, outlined the decades of policies which decimated Indigenous families through the forced removal of children, with a particular focus on the period from 1910 to the 1970s. Unlike most Australian states, Victoria did not have separate institutions specifically for



Indigenous children during that period. Rather, Aboriginal children separated from their families were typically placed through the mainstream child welfare system. There is photographic and Home Committee evidence that Indigenous children were present at Kildonan in the late 1950s—and there may have been other children in the home during an earlier period.<sup>42</sup> The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches often having parallel policies in relation to children under their management. However, although Indigenous children were sent from Methodist missions to the Orana Peace Memorial Homes under Keith Mathieson,<sup>43</sup> there is no evidence, for example, in the state-based *Presbyterian Life* articles of the period, that children were sent systematically to Kildonan by the Presbyterian missions.<sup>44</sup>

Government inquiries into the past treatment of child migrants and other children in institutionalised care in Australia followed *Bringing Them Home*,<sup>45</sup> and the survivor testimonies presented to these inquiries, accompanied by a boom in autobiographical and biographical works by or about former residents of child welfare institutions, have revolutionised the way this history is told.<sup>46</sup> In developing the arguments contained in this thesis I am conscious of the sensitivities that exist about the quality of the out-of-home ‘care’ provided to numerous children during Kildonan’s history. The vignettes used in this thesis, apart from a section of memoir written by one past resident, were all submissions to the Senate Inquiry into Institutional Care which published its report in

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<sup>42</sup> KA, Kildonan has a set of colour slides from the late 1950s to the early 1960s which picture Indigenous children. Three siblings were recorded as being admitted to the home in the *Home Committee Minutes*, on 17 November 1955. The children were reportedly taken to meet their family in Mooroopna by Colliver. This was reported in the *Home Committee Minutes*, on the 20 November 1958.

<sup>43</sup> Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain, *All God's Children: A Centenary History of the Methodist Homes for Children and the Orana Peace Memorial Homes* (Kambah: Acorn Press, 1989), 140; The *Presbyterian Life* magazine was examined to find any reference for a removal policy. While the magazine featured articles about various missions no details of child removal policies were located. Presbyterian Church of Victoria, *Presbyterian Life, Official Organ of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria*. (1956).

<sup>44</sup> *Presbyterian Life*. These magazines were examined for articles and for news items for the same time period that Orana received children - from 1956 to 1960.

<sup>45</sup> Senate Affairs Reference Committee, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*, (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> Nell Musgrove, "The Role and Importance of History," in *Apologies and the Legacy of Institutional Child Abuse: International Perspectives*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 147-58.

2004.<sup>47</sup> The Senate Inquiry into Children Who Experienced Institutionalised Care received submissions from three former Kildonan residents, presenting recollections of life in Kildonan's congregate care home in Elgar Road Burwood.<sup>48</sup> Despite the sparsity of records relating to children's experiences of care at Kildonan, by examining other works of this nature it was possible to challenge the dominant themes of congratulation and promotion often evident in the organisation's public reports and records.

More recently Kildonan and other providers have been required to provide details of their historical policies and the management of any reports of sexual abuse to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which was established by Julia Gillard in November 2012. While many organisations that provided out-of-home care have been the subject of serious allegations, Kildonan received only a handful of complaints via the commission. In part this was due to the structural and gendered arrangements of the home. For many years it was managed by predominantly female staff who are statistically much less likely to abuse children than men.<sup>49</sup> From the middle of the 1920s it was policy for boys aged eleven to be sent to Kilmany Park Home in Sale which lessened the need for male staff. Thus from this time on the only males at the site were male employees who assisted with general maintenance including gardening and who, importantly, did not live at the Burwood site from 1937 until it was gradually phased out under Colliver as he developed family group method of care from 1958.

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<sup>47</sup> The public submissions are available at [http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Community\\_Affairs/Completed\\_inquiries/2004-07/inst-care/submissions/sublist](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Completed_inquiries/2004-07/inst-care/submissions/sublist). In regards to Kildonan see 'Submission 413 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care', This girl compared her treatment at Kildonan favourably when compared with other homes and a foster placement; 'Submission 408 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care', This girl reported positive and negative aspects of her experience at Kildonan; 'Submission 492 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care', This girl reported that she received very bad treatment at Kildonan. All submissions were accessed on 9 June 2016.

<sup>48</sup> All of these on-line submissions contained the names of those who submitted them although I have chosen not to include these details in this thesis, but others would be able to access the submissions using the details provided here, as they have been placed on public record according to their individual instructions to the Senate Committee.

<sup>49</sup> Ashling Bourke et al., "Female Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse: Characteristics of the Offender and Victim," *Psychology, Crime & Law* 20 no. 8 (2014): 769-80.

Children were more at risk when sent to holiday hosts during school holidays, a practice which was in place from the 1940s on. Families were only minimally screened by a local Minister and children were placed without strong oversight. Two Kildonan Care Leavers made an allegation of abuse against a holiday hosts in private sessions with the Royal Commission.<sup>50</sup> There was evidence presented to the Royal Commission that this occurred in other organisations as well.<sup>51</sup> The development of family group homes from the late 1950s provided another risk with male staff members having access to children in these new home environments. The Royal Commission provided evidence that the cottage system was vulnerable to allegations of abuse.<sup>52</sup> Kildonan was not immune from this concern with two requests for records relating to issues with cottage fathers. Overall the data from the Royal Commission revealed that 2.9% of all reports of abuse were from the Presbyterian or Reformed Church. Some further reports of abuse may have been listed as under the Uniting Church from 1977 when it took over responsibility for Kildonan's services.<sup>53</sup> The Uniting Church accounted for another 2.4% of the reports.

Despite these risks only four Care Leavers sought private hearings to make allegations of sexual abuse claims with the Royal Commission. One of these cases was a complex family situation and there was evidence of the management of this case in records provided in the Home Committee Minutes. An allegation of abuse was made to the Superintendent of the home, Colliver, in the late 1950s.<sup>54</sup> He reported this to the Home Committee and took some steps to fully investigate, including speaking with the child and the parent, and he reported his conclusion to the committee a few weeks later. All these details were recorded in the minutes. While the family was unhappy with the findings of

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<sup>50</sup> KA. These were recorded as part of Kildonan's record release system.

<sup>51</sup> 'Submission 38 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care', ; 'Submission 527 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care', accessed on the 27 June 2018.

<sup>52</sup> "Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse, Report of Case Study Number 17," Available at <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list>, accessed on 28 June 2018.

<sup>53</sup> *Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse*, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) 12.

<sup>54</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, (1958-1959).

the review the home was transparent in its dealings in this case and there was no evidence of attempts to cover up the issue. In fact the parent involved raised further concerns and these were also noted openly in the minutes. Despite this example of transparency, not all families or their children would have been comfortable to report abuse.<sup>55</sup> There remains a strong possibility that there were other children in the care of Kildonan who experienced some form of abuse and were not willing to come forward to the Commission. This thesis acknowledges that most of the experiences of children managed by Kildonan, both negative and positive, still remain unrecorded.

### **Literature Review**

This thesis drew on a wide range of scholarship in order to provide both a theoretical framework and the necessary historical context. There has been much debate over the past decades about what can be described as both overt and covert motivations of those who worked in welfare. Both progressivist and social control theories have something to offer in the study of individual contributions.

Progressivist histories assume as positive, and perhaps inevitable, transition away from welfare provision by private individuals and organisations, towards a centralised government welfare state. Margaret Tennant noted that frequently Welfare history 'focused on tracing the "rise of the welfare state", from the nineteenth into the twentieth century, with an emphasis on a growing collective humanitarianism and citizen entitlement to statutory benefits'.<sup>56</sup> This development, scholars such as Maurice Bruce and Derek Fraser assumed, 'would bring an end to the history of non-government action'.<sup>57</sup> Writing in 1981, David Rochefort argued that welfare history was dominated by

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<sup>55</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Giving Voice to Narratives of Institutional Sex Abuse," *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 41, no. 2 (2015).

<sup>56</sup> Margaret Tennant, "Government and Voluntary Sector Welfare: Historians Perspectives," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no. 17 (2001): 149.

<sup>57</sup> Maurice Bruce, *The Coming of the Welfare State* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1961); Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State* (London: Macmillan, 1973); Fukuyama made this argument in relation to the development of

'a liberal conviction that the historical development of social welfare policy has been generally progressive in both intentions and results'.<sup>58</sup>

Progressive accounts of welfare history have three major weaknesses in the child welfare context. First, they assume that a regulated government welfare system was fully adopted in all jurisdictions and that services were completely centralised.<sup>59</sup> Yet there are still places like Australia where a strong non-government sector continues to operate. Second, they assume that the welfare state operated efficiently and was by definition superior to the earlier models of care provided piecemeal by voluntary organisations.<sup>60</sup> Third, and crucial for this study, they assume that private providers would lobby government to take over their services in order to improve them.<sup>61</sup> The systems in place in Australia today testify to the continued contribution of voluntary organisations in the provision of innovative social and more specifically child welfare programs. Far from ending the government's reliance on the private sector, the welfare state adopted in the Australian, and locally, the Victorian context, embedded this dependence.<sup>62</sup>

The progressivist faith in the benevolent motivations of welfare workers and government-supplied services was later disrupted by social control theorists who viewed these individuals and services as instruments of the state. Early Marxist-influenced representations of social control theory argued that the state had an interest in controlling the poor in order to produce a suitable and reliable workforce to support and maintain

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liberal democracy as the ultimate political system. This book is a later version published for the twentieth anniversary of his first work. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> David A. Rochefort, "Progressive and Social Control Perspectives on Social Welfare," *The Social Service Review* 55, no. 4 (1981): 569.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Freeden, "The Concept of Poverty and Progressive Liberalism," in *Liberal Languages Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 60-77.

<sup>60</sup> Sidney Pollard, *The Idea of Progress: History and Society* (London: C.A. Watts, 1968), 297-304.

<sup>61</sup> Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920," *American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990): 1079. Koven and Michel contend that women often founded philanthropic responses to social needs only to have them financed and managed by the state.

<sup>62</sup> John Murphy, "The Other Welfare State: Non-Government Agencies and the Mixed Economy of Welfare in Australia," *History Australia* 3, no. 2 (2006): 44.10-44.15.

the capitalist economic system.<sup>63</sup> Applying such theories to Australian welfare history Richard Kennedy proposed that the rich, as a powerful interest group, controlled welfare policy in order to maintain their economic dominance over the middle and lower classes.<sup>64</sup> Unlike earlier versions of this theory Kennedy argued that both the middle and lower classes adopted the narrative provided by those in power. They had, he argued, a certain amount of agency, but they were encouraged to adopt the values and norms being proposed to them by those with influence and power.<sup>65</sup> Social control theories such as this do address the issue of the power that welfare providers have over those they assist, but they provide little insight into the complexity of individual motivations. Not all those working in the sector can be easily understood as operating through the lens of exploitation and government motivations were more complex than rigid social control theories can capture.

Michel Foucault's work regarding the implicit and subtle use of social norms and values to direct the everyday lives of civil society has complicated this debate.<sup>66</sup> Foucault proposed that social control is applied not merely through the force of large social institutions such as government, but also in the day-to-day interactions between people, and that the general trend over time has been for Western societies to rely increasingly on the self-regulation of their citizens. In relation to child welfare this implies that the overt discipline of nineteenth-century welfare models made the power between providers and recipients explicit, while twentieth-century discourses about 'care and protection' of children simply conceal the continued reinforcement of social norms and

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<sup>63</sup> Rochefort, "Progressive and Social Control Perspectives on Social Welfare," 580. For early examples of this theory see Martin Wolins, "The Societal Function of Social Welfare," *Megamot* 4, no. 4 (1968): 316-27; Morris Janowitz, "Sociological Theory and Social Control," *American Journal of Sociology* 81, no. 1 (1975): 82-108.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Kennedy, *Australian Welfare: Historical Sociology* (South Melbourne: Macmillan Co. of Australia, 1989); Robert Van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare*, Studies in Society (North Sydney, NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1992).

<sup>65</sup> "The Poverty of Social Control: Explaining Power in the Historical Sociology of the Welfare State," *Sociological Review* 39, no. 1 (1991): 1-25.

<sup>66</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 777-95.

power dynamics. Foucault understands people as inextricably embedded in their social positions and thus those in power are unable to act genuinely altruistically, just as the disempowered can do little to resist.

More recent works have taken up Foucault's view that power operates in subtle ways. These works have paid close attention to the role of the 'expert' as important agents of change who have influence and assist in providing a range of social outcomes sought by those in power. As Nikolas Rose has argued, the empowerment of the 'expert' in all aspects of society has influenced and normalised civil ideals which have, in turn, supported the status quo.<sup>67</sup> Like Foucault before him, Rose argued that this was a largely subconscious transaction where individuals who actively sought the assistance of these 'experts' bought into dominant social norms without questioning their validity.

Jacques Donzelot argued that these 'experts' were also visible in nineteenth-century philanthropy where 'philanthropic societies dispensed material aid', but did so in order to employ it as a vehicle of what they saw as their 'legitimate moral influence'.<sup>68</sup> Shurlee Swain, in contrast, noted that the relationships between welfare providers and their recipients were much more nuanced.<sup>69</sup> She argued that the poor had choices which gave them some power over their lives, and that welfare providers often formed empathetic relationships with the people they assisted, which caused them to question and stretch the usually rigid rules of their work. This use of social control theory suggests a more subtle use of power by those who wielded it rather than that of absolute authority suggested by some of the earlier proponents of this theory.

The individuals studied in this thesis can best be understood as collaborators with, rather than agents of, the state. In order to understand their motivations, the study draws

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<sup>67</sup> Nikolas S. Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1990), 130.

<sup>68</sup> Jacques Donzelot and Robert Hurley, *The Policing of Families*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 65.

<sup>69</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Negotiating Poverty: Women and Charity in Nineteenth-Century Melbourne," *Women's History Review* 16, no. 1 (2007): 99-112.

both on progressivist concepts of 'doing good' and the more recent social control analyses of the amount of authority those who provided welfare had over those who received it. Foucault's analysis is also useful in showing how pervasive social norms and values are in the decisions people make in their everyday lives, and the ways in which people unknowingly exert social discipline in the process of trying to 'do good'. Both those who receive welfare and those who provide it have been viewed in this study as having their own agency despite the pressures placed on them by these overt and covert forms of social power. Even welfare providers, this study notes, had social expectations placed upon their operations which they were in no position to resist.

In more recent years welfare historians have developed new theories to understand the relationship between the government and welfare providers. The most useful such theory for the purposes of this thesis is the concept of path dependence, used as an historical theory by Paul David in 1994 when he was examining the history of institutions in order to explain the slow progress of change within these social structures.<sup>70</sup> David posited that the systems contained within institutions were complex and driven by procedures and processes which inhibited and restricted the progress of change.

The concept of path dependency was further refined by the work of sociologist James Mahoney who argued that the term should be understood as 'historical sequences in which contingent events set in motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties'.<sup>71</sup> Mahoney argued that by beginning with various outcomes one can trace the historical events and pre-conditions which were necessary for the outcomes to take place. He also elaborated two types of analysis for which scholars had

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<sup>70</sup> Paul A David, "Why Are Institutions the 'Carriers of History'? Path Dependence and the Evolution of Conventions, Organizations and Institutions," *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 5, no. 2 (1994): 205-20.

<sup>71</sup> James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory & Society* 29, no. 4 (2000): 507.



used path dependence. The first type he called 'self-reinforcing sequences'.<sup>72</sup> He argued that these have most often been used by economics scholars, for example, to identifying successful business models. The second type of analysis he termed 'reactive sequences' in which a given outcome is dependent on a series of events to come to fruition. Clearly this second type of analysis lends itself to more loosely structured institutional environments where their systems are less complex and more flexible.

Building on this analysis of institutional change, Jacob Hacker used path dependence to describe the functioning of the dualistic welfare system in the United States. Hacker argued that private institutions were more likely to be able to make substantial changes than larger government systems that suffered from the institutional limitations and restrictions which hindered attempts to modify welfare practices and programs. He noted that 'path-dependent processes imply a strong element of institutional inertia. Once past a certain threshold of development what exists is likely to persist'.<sup>73</sup> Hacker argued that government services were more likely to suffer from these effects than private welfare organisations because they 'allow much greater discretion on the part of private actors ... are likely to foster a much more dynamic sphere of benefits, allowing substantial changes within the confines of existing policy'.<sup>74</sup>

John Murphy has used this theoretical concept productively to explain the distinctive features of the welfare system that developed in Australia between the First and Second World War. It can be similarly applied to the development of child welfare in Victoria from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. The early decision of the Victorian colonial government to reject any type of centralised poor law provision had consequences for the subsequent development of child welfare policy. Regardless of their

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<sup>72</sup> Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," 508-09.

<sup>73</sup> Jacob Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 54.

<sup>74</sup> Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State*, 57.

political allegiances, from its earliest foundations all Victoria's governments championed the important role and position of voluntary philanthropy. Their resistance to centralised provision led them to encourage a relationship which over time became a partnership between the government and the non-government sector.<sup>75</sup>

This partnership can best be understood through Tennant's concept of a 'mixed economy of welfare', an Antipodean variation on a construct more explicitly elaborated in the British historiography.<sup>76</sup> Despite the long history of centralised provision in the United Kingdom, there was still space for an active philanthropic sector. Pat Thane and others argue that over the longer term welfare can be understood as a series of changes in the nature of the relationships between states and philanthropic enterprises.<sup>77</sup> Writing about the inter-war period of welfare history in Britain, historian Geoffrey Finlayson employed the phrase 'the moving frontier' to describe the relationship between the welfare providers and the state. Instead of a fixed and rigid relationship the moving frontier is best understood as 'an "ideological front" ... constantly being reassessed and negotiated.'<sup>78</sup> In shifting from the moving frontier to a mixed economy, Tennant extends the focus, arguing that government and non-government sectors were connected by more than just financial obligations.<sup>79</sup> She asserts instead that there were family, social, business and other connections which linked politicians and those that led various philanthropic enterprises in New Zealand from the nineteenth century. Given the complexity of these exchanges she believes 'there is space for an approach that uses

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<sup>75</sup> Murphy, "The Other Welfare State,"; See his book where this concept is also discussed. *A Decent Provision: Australia Welfare Policy, 1870 to 1949*, Modern Economic and Social History (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> Tennant, "Government and Voluntary Sector Welfare," 155.

<sup>77</sup> Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (London: Longman, 1996), 96. Tennant also mentions that New Zealand historian David Thomson came to the same conclusion when completing a long term study of pensions. See David Thomson, "Taking the Long View on Pensions," *The New Zealand Journal of History* 32, no. 2 (1998): 93-120.

<sup>78</sup> Tennant, "Government and Voluntary Sector Welfare," 149. For another important analysis of the relationship between private providers and the state in England see the earlier work of Finlayson. Geoffrey Finlayson, "A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the State in British Welfare 1911 - 1949," *Twentieth Century British History* 1 (1990): 183-206; Rochefort, "Progressive and Social Control Perspectives on Social Welfare," 568-92.

<sup>79</sup> Tennant, "Government and Voluntary Sector Welfare,"; *The Fabric of Welfare: Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005* (Wellington, N.Z.: Bridget Williams Books, 2007), 155.

collective biographies of male and female welfare workers over time to chart such interactions and movement across welfare boundaries'.<sup>80</sup> This thesis has been able to develop just such an analysis in its study of the relationships which developed between Kildonan, its leaders and the state.

Another area of scholarship which has examined the emergence of the importance of individual welfare workers is the feminist analysis of the role of the nineteenth-century female philanthropists. In her introduction to a work which examined this phenomenon on an international level, American historian Kathleen McCarthy uses the concept of a 'decentralised state' to describe a situation where, in the absence of a 'centralised, bureaucratised regime' voluntary philanthropy found space to operate independently.<sup>81</sup> As a feminist historian her particular interest is in the opportunities which this space provided for disenfranchised women to develop leadership skills and exercise power within the public sphere. McCarthy edited a series of articles which together highlighted many of the common experiences women had in decentralised states enabling them to develop social roles for themselves in the nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup>

Other feminist historians have developed the concept of the social mother to explain how women were able to use their roles as philanthropists to expand their influence beyond the domestic sphere. Martha Vicinus argued more specifically that single women in the middle of the nineteenth century found themselves in a world divided between the public and private, where a woman's place was in the home. Some single women, many of whom wished to contribute to the broader society, began various types of philanthropic work for poor women and children. The roles they sought to create for themselves were based upon the strongly gendered roles of the nineteenth century. As

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<sup>80</sup> Tennant, "Government and Voluntary Sector Welfare : Historians Perspectives," 155.

<sup>81</sup> McCarthy published her introduction in an earlier journal article. See Kathleen McCarthy, "Women and Philanthropy," *Voluntas* 7, no. 4 (1996), 333. Her description of a decentralised state is provided here.

<sup>82</sup> Kathleen McCarthy, *Women, Philanthropy, and Civil Society*, Philanthropic Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

Vicinus argues 'single women [gained] a means of entering into new work; they could make a 'maternal contribution' to all social institutions'.<sup>83</sup> They found a suitable career pathway which they used to both influence and critique the social structures around them. This thesis has used this understanding in relationship to nineteenth century philanthropy.

Eileen Yeo has contended similarly that married women as well as their single sisters positioned themselves in the public sphere as 'social mother[s]' which enabled them 'to move parts of the private and the feminine world into the masculine and public domain'.<sup>84</sup> She showed that women from middle and upper class families created a sanctioned public role for themselves in assisting poor women and children.<sup>85</sup> She argued strongly that even single women imbued their roles with Victorian notions of womanhood. 'When they tried to dignify their position as spinsters they did not abandon the vital elements of motherhood and home but rather enlarged and altered these to fit the single woman.'<sup>86</sup> Accordingly these women 'set up a new image of a virgin mother engaged in self-sacrificing work with the poor and needy in the public world'.<sup>87</sup> In doing so they created opportunities for middle and upper class women to provide services to poor women and children. This thesis alludes to several instances that show that despite some relative freedom created by this subtle resistance to the concept of the 'angel at the hearth', there were times when a nineteenth-century woman still found it difficult to navigate the public world where most institutions were completely male dominated.<sup>88</sup>

The spread of the enthusiasm for women's public philanthropy precipitated a growing exchange across national borders of ideas and methods in the welfare field. Much

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<sup>83</sup> Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women* (Tiptree: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>84</sup> Eileen Janes Yeo, "Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science, 1850-1950," *Women's History Review* 1, no. 1 (1992), 63-87.

<sup>85</sup> Eileen Janes Yeo. "Constructing and Contesting Motherhood, 1750 - 1950," *Hecate* 31, no. 2 (2005): 4-21.

<sup>86</sup> Yeo, "Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science, 1850-1950," 75.

<sup>87</sup> Yeo, "Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science, 1850-1950," 75.

<sup>88</sup> Grace Russo Bullaro, "Salvatore Morelli, John Stuart Mill and the Victorian 'Angel of the Hearth' Feminine Role Paradigm," *Forum Italicum* 39, no. 1 (2005): 157-66.

of this correspondence and interest in philanthropic methods, it should be noted, was created by women for women.<sup>89</sup> In the late nineteenth, and well into the twentieth, century, ideas were formulated and transferred across and between continents. Elizabeth Harvey and Tanya Evans have both argued that social welfare ideas were an international commodity in the nineteenth century.<sup>90</sup> This transnational phenomenon has also been examined by Swain, who noted that ideas flowed both from and to the Australian colonies.<sup>91</sup>

One important example of this transmission was in the area of child rescue, a movement which shaped child welfare services both within and between Western nations. The child rescue movement, and the child migration programs which it partially inspired, have been the subject of a growing amount of historical research in recent years. Various scholars have researched individual organisations which began to spring up towards the end of the nineteenth century. These organisations featured leaders with a high public profile. Individuals such as Thomas Barnardo in London and Selina Sutherland in Melbourne began to 'rescue' children from city slums.<sup>92</sup> While their work varied, depending upon local conditions, the discourses they used to justify their actions contained themes which resonated at an international level. These common discourses have been analysed by welfare scholars who have noted that notions of childhood and the welfare responses that followed were shared across borders.<sup>93</sup> These international

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<sup>89</sup> For example see Mary Carpenter, *Juvenile Delinquents, Their Condition and Treatment* (London: W. & F. G. Cash, 1853); Francis Power Cobbe, *Life of Francis Power Cobbe* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1894). The Davenport Hill's were also active in this area. See Florence Davenport Hill, *Children of the State; the Training of Juvenile Paupers* (London: Macmillan and co., 1868). Creating pamphlets advertising their work was also a feature of the Australian philanthropic scene. See Catherine Helen Spence, *State Children in Australia: A History of Boarding out and Its Developments* (Adelaide: Vardon and Sons Limited, 1907).

<sup>90</sup> Elizabeth A. Harvey, "'Layered Networks': Imperial Philanthropy in Birmingham and Sydney, 1860-1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 1 (2013): 120-42; Tanya Evans, "Working Towards the 'Welfare of the World': British Imperial Networks of Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century," *History Australia* 13, no. 1 (2016): 109-23.

<sup>91</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Florence and Rosamond Davenport Hill and the Development of Boarding out in England and Australia: A Study in Cultural Transmission," *Women's History Review* 23, no. 5 (2014): 1-16.

<sup>92</sup> Gillian Wagner, *Barnardo* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979); and locally in Australia Shurlee Swain, "The Victorian Charity Network in the 1890's" (PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1976).

<sup>93</sup> Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia 1850 - 1915*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

narratives about 'the child' supported both the child rescue and child migration movements which spread across the burgeoning British Empire.<sup>94</sup>

The narratives of child rescue have been used by scholars to analyse various organisations in England, where they initially emerged, and in numerous colonial settings such as in Australia and Canada.<sup>95</sup> Several works focused on child rescue organisations have been of benefit to this study.<sup>96</sup> Lydia Murdoch's work on the case files of Dr Thomas Barnardo exposed the gap between child rescue mythology and the reality of how most children came into care and their parent's agency in these decisions.<sup>97</sup> Swain also positioned Sutherland as someone who used child rescue tropes from early in her career to justify her work and to claim legitimacy for it.<sup>98</sup> Works such as these have provided evidence of the prevalence of child rescue narratives which strongly influenced both Sutherland and her contemporaries in the early colony.

While this study utilised child rescue research to analyse the foundational work of the Scots' Church in the late nineteenth century this was just one stream of welfare history analysis. There was a very broad range of existing scholarship describing local philanthropic enterprises, and the development of government responses to child welfare

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<sup>94</sup> See R. B. Lefroy, "Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917," *Children Australia* 37, no. 1 (2012): 47-49; Phillip Bean and Joy Melville, *Lost Children of the Empire*; Daniel Vallance, "Child Immigrants to the 'Edge of Empire': Fairbridge Child Migrants and British Columbia's Quest for the Construction of the 'White Man's Province'" (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2013); Janet Fink, "Children of Empire," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 6 (2007): 847-65; and for Australia after World War Two. Stephen Constantine, "The British Government, Child Welfare, and Child Migration to Australia after 1945," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 30, no. 1 (2002): 99-132.

<sup>95</sup> Patricia Rooke and Rodolph Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada (1800-1950)* (New York: University Press of America, 1984). For an American example see Clay Gish, "Rescuing the 'Waifs and Strays' of the City: The Western Emigration Program of the Children's Aid Society," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 1 (1999): 121-41.

<sup>96</sup> Much has been written about child rescue over several decades. For example see Shurlee Swain, "Sweet Childhood Lost: Idealised Images of Childhood in the British Child Rescue Literature," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 2, no. 2 (2009): 198-214; Wagner, *Barnardo*. For a more recent analysis of some of Barnardo's methods see Susan Ash, "'Panoramas' and 'Living Pictures': Dr Barnardo's Annual Meetings," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 8, no. 4 (2010): 431-50.

<sup>97</sup> Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London*, The Rutgers Series in Childhood Studies (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

<sup>98</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Selina Sutherland: Child Rescuer," in *Double Time: Women in Victoria - 150 Years* (Richmond, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1985).

in other states in Australia.<sup>99</sup> These studies provide important evidence about the lack of consistent development of child welfare in various jurisdictions. Others have examined the experiences of individuals who experienced only one method of welfare, such as orphanages, over several decades.<sup>100</sup> While many provided a narrow research focus about specific periods and/or types of services, dominant themes which transcend each region were extrapolated and used as both reference points and as contrasts to the findings in this thesis.

However, there have been very few works written to provide a broad overview and comparison of child welfare history across Australia. Most authors have used one state as the basis of their studies on welfare provision and broadened their analysis to include interstate examples. Stephen Garton's book examines the types of assistance the poor in Australia received from the earliest foundations of the colony of New South Wales.<sup>101</sup> Brian Dickey's work is in a similar vein but neither examine child welfare policies which became quite separate from other types of support.<sup>102</sup> John Ramsland's work on the early colonial welfare provisions in New South Wales mainly covers the earliest period of analysis in this thesis.<sup>103</sup> Robert Van Krieken's work examines the New South Wales child welfare system and was also a useful background resource which

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<sup>99</sup> For example see Susan Keen, *Burnside: 75 Years of Caring* (North Parramatta, N.S.W: Burnside Homes for Children, 1986); Vera Whittington, *Sister Kate: A Life Dedicated to Children in Need of Care* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia, 1999).

<sup>100</sup> For example see Penelope Hetherington, *Paupers, Poor Relief & Poor Houses in Western Australia* (Perth: Crawley; University of Western Australia, 2009); Joan C. Brown, "The Development of Social Services in Tasmania" (PhD Thesis, University of Tasmania, 1969); Naomi Parry, "Such a Longing': Black and White Children in Welfare in New South Wales and Tasmania 1880 - 1940" (PhD, University of New South Wales, 2007); Maree Murray, "'The Child Is Not a Servant': Children, Work and the Boarding out Scheme in New South Wales, 1880-1920" *Labour History* 77 (1999): 190-209; Beryl M. Bubacz, "The Female and Male Orphan Schools in New South Wales, 1801-1850" (PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, 2008).

<sup>101</sup> Stephen Garton, *Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare 1788-1988* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990).

<sup>102</sup> Brian Dickey released two versions of his book, one in 1980 and a revised edition for the bi-centenary. See the later work Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

<sup>103</sup> John Ramsland, *Children of the Back Lanes: Destitute and Neglected Children in Colonial New South Wales* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1986); John Ramsland "Henry Parkes and the Development of Industrial and Reformatory Schools in Colonial New South Wales," *Australian Social Work* 35, no. 4 (1982): 3-10; John Ramsland "The Ragged School Systems in the Australian Colonies," *Victorian Historical Journal* 60, no. 2 (1989): 49.

provided some context from other states.<sup>104</sup> Works such as Elizabeth Mellor's, for example, are rare as they give a broad overview of the various historical stages of child welfare practice in every state in Australia.<sup>105</sup> Nell Musgrove's recent book is an exception and has provided important background for this study as it examined many of the unique child welfare developments which occurred in each colony and state in Australia.<sup>106</sup>

As with the Australian context, there have been few comprehensive analyses of Victorian child welfare. In *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria*, Donella Jaggs attempted to provide a state-wide analysis of child welfare history. Her focus is on the legislative change and policy development rather than the contribution of individuals.<sup>107</sup> Musgrove's PhD thesis provides a rich analysis of child welfare in Victoria from the founding of the colony until the development of the *Children's Welfare Act 1954*. One of its most important contributions to the study of child welfare is the analysis of the experiences of families and children caught up in the child welfare system. It shows how the experiences of children in care changed little across some one hundred years.<sup>108</sup>

The major body of literature about child welfare history in Victoria is made up of the numerous commissioned histories of child welfare organisations. Such texts are potentially problematic as they are written to celebrate the achievements of individual organisations and often overemphasise the apparent 'successes' and minimise or fail to acknowledge the difficulties experienced by these establishments. Despite these

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<sup>104</sup> Robert Van Krieken, "Towards 'Good and Useful Men and Women': The State and Childhood in Sydney, 1840–1890," *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 93 (1989): 405–25; Van Krieken, *Children and the State*.

<sup>105</sup> Elizabeth J. Mellor, *Stepping Stones: The Development of Early Childhood Services in Australia* (Marrickville NSW: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990).

<sup>106</sup> Nell Musgrove, *The Scars Remain: A Long History of Forgotten Australians and Children's Institutions* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2013).

<sup>107</sup> Donella Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria* (Melbourne: Phillip Institute of Technology, 1986).

<sup>108</sup> Nell Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" (PhD Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 2009).



concerns, such publications have provided both context and background for the study of the child welfare sector, its leaders and its operations at various points in history.<sup>109</sup>

Kildonan Family Services, as it was called at the time, produced its own small history commissioned for its centenary and published in 1981.<sup>110</sup> The author, who was an amateur historian, used an earlier 1930 unofficial history document contained in the archive as the source for her first chapter on the founding of the work. This was written by people who knew Sutherland or who had connections with those who stayed at the Scots' Church Society and had worked with her. The book failed to credit Sutherland with the leadership of the early work. This was a legacy of the controversy that surrounded Sutherland's departure from both the Scots' Church and Presbyterian Children's Aid Societies. She polarised people — producing both fervent supporters and passionate detractors. The way in which she is represented in this first Kildonan history would suggest that some of this bitterness remained. Despite being able to interview both Colliver and Mathew, this book also reinforced the view that Colliver led the changes that took place at Kildonan when it moved to family group homes while obscuring the important role of Mathew in preparing the organisation to wrestle with its service provision model. A new book was commissioned in 2016 but it too was developed to celebrate only key features of the history of Kildonan and focused on the more recent history and featured interviews with external collaborators.<sup>111</sup>

Some of these celebratory institutional histories however, contained relevant analysis which contextualised the history of an organisation within the state's broader

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<sup>109</sup> Keen, *Burnside*; Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*; Keith Cole, *Commissioned to Care; the Golden Jubilee History of the Mission of St. James and St. John 1919-1969* (North Melbourne: Ruskin Press, 1969); Tanya Evans and Patricia Curthoys, "Family History, Identity, and Public History: Writing a History of the Benevolent Society in Its 200th Year," *Journal of Australian Studies* 37, no. 3 (2013): 285-301.

<sup>110</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*. Kildonan's centenary history was authored by the wife of Kildonan's finance manager: John Robinson. She was a volunteer and amateur historian and produced a document which was unlike the histories written for other similar organisations as they were commissioned and written by historians who were independent of the organisation.

<sup>111</sup> KA, *Kildonan* (Melbourne: Kildonan UnitingCare, 2016).

child welfare settings. Swain and Renate Howe produced a comprehensive history of the work of the Methodist organisation, Methodist Children's Home, later Orana Peace Memorial Homes, which conducted an orphanage and later a cottage style home.<sup>112</sup> Jill Barnard and Karen Twigg's history of Victoria's Catholic orphanages similarly sought to understand individual institutions within the context of the sector as a whole.<sup>113</sup> By contrast, Della Hilton's book recounting Sutherland's work in the Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society suffered from the hagiography which has so often characterised commissioned histories.<sup>114</sup>

The development of themes about the 'neglected' and 'criminal' child feature as a theme within this study. As Jaggs argued, it was in legislation that the definitions of the 'neglected' and 'criminal' child were found.<sup>115</sup> These themes were pertinent to this study, particularly in relation to its nineteenth-century foundations. Also of use was the analysis completed by Dorothy Scott and Shurlee Swain of the history of the Children's Protection Society, *Confronting Cruelty*, which situated the role of this organisation within the broader spectrum of changing images and meta-narratives surrounding the neglected child well into the twentieth century.<sup>116</sup>

Numerous histories have been written about the rise of social work as a profession but none has charted how the profession gained access to influence child welfare services as this thesis seeks to do. In examining various histories of social work this study sought to identify the influences which drove the development of the profession locally in Victoria. The recent analysis of the historical progression of social casework by Mark Peel provided an international perspective which aligned local social workers with their

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<sup>112</sup> Howe and Swain, *All God's Children*.

<sup>113</sup> Jill Barnard and Karen Twigg, *Holding on to Hope: A History of the Founding Agencies of MacKillop Family Services 1854-1997* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2004).

<sup>114</sup> Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*.

<sup>115</sup> Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal*.

<sup>116</sup> Dorothy Scott and Shurlee Swain, *Confronting Cruelty: Historical Perspectives on Child Abuse* (Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2002).

overseas counterparts.<sup>117</sup> Damian Gleeson's thesis was especially valuable in providing detailed research about the early individuals, mostly women, who trained overseas and promoted this emerging profession in the Victorian and Australian context. Elaine Martin's work, however, provided evidence of the gendered nature of the development of social work and was extremely useful in examining the role of female social workers as they attempted, with some initial frustration, to have an impact on the child welfare field in Victoria.<sup>118</sup>

Very little has been written about the Victorian child welfare system from the period after the *Children's Welfare Act* 1954. Where references are available, for example from Musgrove's conclusion, they provide a summary of major events rather than any in-depth analysis.<sup>119</sup> Jaggs also offers further examination of the international and national influences that led to the professionalisation of child welfare provision.<sup>120</sup> Most works on child welfare history which cover this period finish by summarising the modernisation and standardisation of services that took place during the 1960s and 1970s and the legislative changes in the early 1980s. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that a large body of welfare history was written during the 1980s and early 1990s. This thesis hopes to make an important contribution to this under-researched but important era of child welfare development in the state of Victoria.

The history of child welfare in Victoria cannot be understood without reference to the history of religion. Most major Christian denominations represented in Victoria set up

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<sup>117</sup> Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse*.

<sup>118</sup> Elaine Martin, "Social Work, the Family and Women's Equality in Post-War Australia," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 3 (2003): 445-68; R. J. Lawrence, *Professional Social Work in Australia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1965). Lawrence's early history of social work in Australia has been critiqued for presenting a male dominated version; The work of Philip Mendes was also helpful to this analysis. See Philip Mendes, "Social Workers and Social Action: A Case Study of the Australian Association of Social Workers' Victorian Branch," *Australian Social Work* 56, no. 1 (2003): 16-27; Philip Mendes "The History of Social Work in Australia: A Critical Literature Review," *Australian Social Work* 58, no. 2 (2005): 121-31.

<sup>119</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 158-64.

<sup>120</sup> See both Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal*, and Donella Jaggs *Asylum to Action: Family Action 1851-1991, a History of Services and Policy Development for Families in Times of Vulnerability* (Oakleigh East, Vic.: Family Action, 1991).

children's welfare organisations during the mid to late 1800s and many of the individuals who worked within them were motivated by faith.<sup>121</sup> Swain makes this point in her article 'Do you want Religion with that?' where she argues that it is impossible to study this field without acknowledging the influence of people's beliefs.<sup>122</sup> Anne O'Brien has made a similar point in her work on New South Wales.<sup>123</sup> The work of Scots' Church and the broader Presbyterian Church in child welfare is considered by members of these denominations to be part of their faith history. Other voluntary organisations that provided child welfare also featured their faith as a strong motivating factor.<sup>124</sup> Despite a clear connection this area has attracted little consideration from historians of religion.

In recent years it has been acknowledged that one group of important voices in the historical narrative have also been absent from much of the current historical record; the voices of the children themselves. There were very few public examples of narratives of children's time in care at Kildonan. The few that did write were the exceptions. Despite the early letters to Sutherland, the submissions to the Senate inquiry, or the one memoir, there are many more who have remained silent. While there is a great need to accept and value the contribution of Care Leavers' views, there needs to be an understanding that there still remains a much larger silent group who have so far not been heard.

Unfortunately there are no records which can provide any reliable examples of children's views of the boarding-out and early congregate care provided by Kildonan.

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<sup>121</sup> For various examples of church based organisations see Howe and Swain, *All God's Children: A Centenary History of the Methodist Homes for Children and the Orana Peace Memorial Homes; The Challenge of the City: The Centenary History of Wesley Central Mission, 1893-1993* (South Melbourne, Vic.: Hyland House, 1993). For the history of the Catholic institutions in Victoria see Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*; and the Anglican response see Joanne Monk and Gina O'Donahue, *Billy Lids and Home Kids: The Story of the Mission of St James and St John 1919 - 1994* (Melbourne: The Mission of St James and St John, 1994).

<sup>122</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Do You Want Religion with That? Welfare History in a Secular Age," *History Australia* 2, no. 3 (2005): 79.1-8.

<sup>123</sup> Anne O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005).

<sup>124</sup> Often denominational histories include details of philanthropic or social welfare work. For example see Bruce Norman Kaye et al., *Anglicanism in Australia: A History* (Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2002); T. R. Frame, *Anglicans in Australia* (Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2007); Howe and Swain, *The Challenge of the City*; Aeneas MacDonald, *One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Victoria* (Melbourne: Robertson and Mullens Ltd, 1937); Roland Ward, *The Scots' Church Melbourne: A Story of 175 Years 1838 - 2013* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2013).

While several early Annual Reports do contain letters attributed to some of the children in care, their reliability and validity needs to be called into question. None of the original letters were kept in the archive. Even if some had been it may have been problematic to assume that any letters were representative of the experiences of children sent out to families in the nineteenth century. It is clear that the letters which were used by Sutherland to promote her work were often supportive of her choice to remove them from their families, or benign, polite letters to someone the child knew. What cannot be deduced was if Sutherland also received letters of complaint, distress or defiance from the children. It is also not clear how representative these few letters were of all the letters she must have received from the hundreds of children who were eventually under her authority. These are the problematic silences which cannot be overcome. Despite this comparative absence in the children's voices in the official records it was important to include those that do exist.

Survivor narratives constitute another genre of child welfare history.<sup>125</sup> Thanks to the work of advocacy organisations such as CLAN (Care Leavers of Australasia Network), the voices of the children who lived in out-of-home 'care' organisations are now being heard and acknowledged.<sup>126</sup> They have partially filled some of the silences contained in the official histories and records of organisations like Kildonan. Indeed the work of these advocacy groups has been so successful that they have dominated the political and media narratives over the past couple of decades. Their role in highlighting the treatment of children in many out-of-home care situations has been invaluable in gaining both political acknowledgement of the very real suffering of many children in 'care' and to provide

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<sup>125</sup> Matthew Colton, Maurice Vanstone, and Christine Walby, "Victimization, Care and Justice: Reflections on the Experiences of Victims/Survivors Involved in Large-Scale Historical Investigations of Child Sexual Abuse in Residential Institutions," *British Journal of Social Work* 32, no. 5 (2002): 541-51.

<sup>126</sup> The apology to the Forgotten Australians was made by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on the 17th of November 2009. For details of the Senate Committee's Reports into Forgotten Australians see Senate Affairs Reference Committee, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*, (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2004).

funded support services to address the on-going issues such treatment has had upon a large group of Care Leavers.

In tandem with this strong advocacy, autobiographical and biographical works of those who experienced out-of-home 'care' have also expanded historical considerations of child welfare provision. This thesis is respectful of these testimonies but also notes that when those who have previously been silenced seek to place their version of events on the public record there is necessarily a political element to this process. Care Leavers have spent years seeking both to be heard and for the redress of their childhood experience. It is also important to take into consideration that their testimonies are sometimes designed to elicit an outcome at the site of an inquiry and within the framework of seeking redress or apology. Historians need to be aware that the meanings derived from these memories are contextual and can shift emphasis over time.

There are other voices, represented by some who have been interviewed in recent years, who remember their experiences in a more positive light. As Brigitte Soland found when she interviewed Care Leavers in America, 'Many former 'inmates' seem to love the places in which they grew up, and, [interestingly], they frequently articulate a strong defence of orphanages as institutions.'<sup>127</sup> Suellen Murray, who interviewed forty Care Leavers in her work, *After the Orphanage*, also encountered some who reported positive aspects of their time in care.<sup>128</sup> Such accounts are not necessarily representative overall but represent a different cohort of Care Leavers. In light of these considerations of the Care Leaver voices I have been thoughtful in developing the arguments contained in this thesis. I am conscious of the sensitivities that exist about the quality of the out-of-home 'care' provided to numerous children during Kildonan's history.

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<sup>127</sup> Brigitte Soland, "'Never a Better Home': Growing up in American Orphanages, 1920-1970," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 8.1 (2015): 34-54.

<sup>128</sup> Suellen Murray, *After the Orphanage: Life Beyond the Children's Home* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009).

In conclusion, this thesis acknowledges the complexity of both individual and organisational motivations and activity. It uses the primary source evidence available to develop a nuanced discussion about the realities of managing a child welfare organisation in Victoria from 1881 to 1970. As a result it touches on many of the theories outlined above. It provides three case studies which can be used to examine changes in the relationship between one voluntary child welfare organisation and the Victorian state government. However, despite its focus on the work of three individuals it also takes a critical approach to the history of the organisation within which they worked, measuring both its successes and failings.

### **Thesis Structure**

The first chapter of this thesis argues that the Victorian colony relied on private philanthropy to a large extent which led to the development of a decentralised child welfare system. By the early nineteenth century in Europe, children had become a focus for philanthropists who sought to create new methods to deal with urban poverty created by the consequences of the industrial revolution. These new methods, far from being localised responses, were studied by individuals in other jurisdictions and adapted to these new situations. Private philanthropy remained a popular response to the needs of destitute children. In the newly established colony, which would later become the state of Victoria, politicians supported and encouraged these early efforts creating an environment in which private organisations could flourish. Despite the government eventually having to intervene and provide some services, voluntary organisations remained a strong feature of Victorian child welfare.

The second chapter postulates that within such an environment Sutherland, who led the development of the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society from 1881, was able to thrive. While Sutherland could in some ways be viewed as a typical female

philanthropist she was different from the middle and upper class women who dominated public philanthropy. Unlike these women, who were supported by husbands or fathers, Sutherland was an employee who came from a poor background. She had other characteristics such as a headstrong character and a good education which were essential to her early successes. Sutherland came to Melbourne with a strong sense of self-belief. She was supported by a small group of allies in Scots' Church who also believed in her abilities. Throughout her early years in Melbourne Sutherland was able to develop a non-denominational boarding-out system that rivalled the government program and in so doing became an influential voice for child welfare.

The third chapter contends that Sutherland's work over the subsequent seven years would be profoundly influenced by her rising status and her interactions with powerful men. While the *Neglected Children's Act 1887*, which she helped shape, gave private persons and organisations authority over the children in their care it also led to her methods being questioned. This brought her into conflict with an important group of men, the leadership of Scots' Church and some Ministers of the wider Presbyterian Church. Unwilling to change her methods or to have them questioned she entered into open conflict with many in the Presbyterian leadership and ultimately left to pursue her work free of such interference.

The fourth chapter argues that after Sutherland's departure, the society became essentially a Presbyterian organisation which sought to assist Presbyterian families. Without its energetic and strong-willed leader, Kildonan entered a stagnant phase, although the chapter also provides evidence that external and internal conditions did not encourage change. In the absence of legislative innovation, non-government organisations began to share ideas informally and mobilised to learn about what was happening overseas through the formation of the Children's Welfare Association. The



chapter shows how Kildonan was able to use this new information in reshaping its services in the wake of a decline in foster placements, and an increasing dependence on congregate care.

The fifth chapter examines the forces that led to the development of new services and the professionalisation of social welfare in the post war years. In particular, it shows that the development of medical social work in America in the early twentieth century, and important child welfare reforms in Britain after the Second World War, were noted by those interested in improving child welfare in Victoria. It focuses on the select group of women who sought to extend their social service training in America from the 1930s, and the struggle they had to exert influence on practice in Australia on their return. However, their expertise became vital when local child welfare leaders sought to remodel services in the sector in the wake of the findings of the Curtis Report in Britain in 1945 which emphasised the value of family-based care.

The sixth chapter argues that two new types of leadership emerged in Kildonan as it became involved in the process of change from the middle of the 1950s. The chapter restores social work pioneer Alison Player, later Alison Mathew, to her place in Kildonan's history, showing that she used her qualifications and broader experiences to bring about reform, despite not being offered a major leadership role within the organisation. It also traces the incoming Superintendent Colliver's transformation from teacher to child welfare expert and his involvement in the wider collegial networks which underwrote Victoria's child welfare reforms. Player brought her experience to bear at Kildonan, and Colliver his enthusiasm and ability to influence those around him.

The focus of chapter seven is on those influential networks. It argues that child welfare reform was driven by leaders in the private sector who organised themselves to advocate for reform and then used their own organisations as prototypes for change.

Supported by the Secretary of the department, Edward James Pittard, this strong advocacy group was successful in having its views enshrined in the *Children's Welfare Act* 1954. Under Colliver, Kildonan was at the vanguard of the reform process but the chapter also demonstrates that the changes it implemented sometimes had serious and unexpected consequences. The costs were high, children did not necessarily settle as expected into these new artificial family groups, and Colliver and Mathew had little to do with the children's day-to-day care.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis focuses on three individual welfare practitioners from Kildonan UnitingCare: Sutherland, who was active in child rescue work from 1881 to 1893, Player, who helped to plan major changes to Kildonan in the mid-1950s and then worked as a senior social worker throughout the 1960s, and Colliver, who managed Kildonan Children's Home from 1957 to 1969. It places their work within the context of local, national and international trends, broadening the analysis beyond the organisation in which they were located. Most historical studies have examined these workers as part of a greater system but not in their own right. This thesis seeks to examine the role of three workers located eighty years apart in the same organisation.

## Chapter One: The development of the child welfare system in Victoria

### Introduction

Like many other colonies within the British Empire, Victoria adopted what has been termed a 'mixed economy of welfare' meaning the government relied heavily upon private philanthropy to meet the needs of the poor.<sup>129</sup> Within thirty years of Europeans arriving in the area, Victoria had developed both government and non-government provisions that helped support destitute families and children, reproducing methods used by both the government and voluntary providers in England or in other colonies.<sup>130</sup> Such nineteenth-century welfare developments have been described by McCarthy and others as a period of 'decentralisation' when government outsourced at least some of its social welfare responsibilities.<sup>131</sup> Importantly, this created the ideal environment for non-government organisations and voluntary interest groups.<sup>132</sup> In such a fluid environment leaders in non-government organisations were able to carve out notable voluntary careers, acting as the public face of their organisations and, in some cases, providing governments with expertise and advice. Importantly, these predominantly Protestant groups gave women the opportunity to develop their careers through the arrival of new services.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> The earliest use of the term 'mixed economy of welfare' was in the title of a 1983 article. See Sheila B. Kamerman, "The New Mixed Economy of Welfare: Public and Private," *Social Work* 28, no. 1 (1983): 5-10.

<sup>130</sup> For example, the Industrial and Reformatory School method was adopted in various jurisdictions across the Western World. See W. Peebles-Wilkins, "Janie Porter Barrett and the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls: Community Response to the Needs of African American Children," *Child Welfare* 74, no. 1 (1995): 143-61; Virginia Crossman, "Cribbed, Contained, and Confined? The Care of Children under the Irish Poor Law, 1850-1920," *Eire-Ireland* 44, no. 1&2 (2009): 37-61; These schools were also introduced in other colonies in Australia. See Ramsland, "Henry Parkes and the Development of Industrial and Reformatory Schools in Colonial New South Wales," 3-10.

<sup>131</sup> McCarthy, *Women, Philanthropy, and Civil Society*, 3.

<sup>132</sup> A good example of this type of international transmission of philanthropic ideas can be seen in the development of societies for the prevention of cruelty to children. "Waugh, Benjamin (1839 - 1908)", <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/36787>, accessed on 28 January 2014. Benjamin Waugh successfully lobbied for child protection legislation in Britain. For further details see Monica Flegel, "'Facts and Their Meaning': Child Protection, Intervention, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Late Nineteenth-Century England," *Victorian Review* 33, no. 1 (2007): 87-101; These societies were set up in other regions. For example see G. Clapton, "'Yesterday's Men': The Inspectors of the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 1888-1968," *British Journal of Social Work* 39, no. 6 (2009): 1043-62; For the American situation see Susan Pearson, "'The Rights of the Defenseless': Animals, Children, and Sentimental Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century America" (PhD Thesis, University of North Carolina, 2004).

<sup>133</sup> Yeo, "Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science, 1850-1950," 63-87.

Unlike other jurisdictions, both in Australia and overseas, Victoria remained a highly decentralised system well into the twentieth century. This chapter examines the foundations of child welfare in Victoria. It summarises the earliest examples of voluntary endeavours and government responses set up to deal with impoverished and destitute children, and explores the legislative and regulatory structure within which they operated. By examining the political attitudes that underwrote the collaborative relationship developed between government and non-government providers in the colony, it argues that these early developments produced an environment in which leaders from the non-government sector were able to influence not only their own organisations, but also colonial (and later, state) developments.

### **The foundations of child welfare**

The nineteenth century produced numerous debates and social responses raised by new emphasis on childhood across the British Empire. These focused more exclusively on the needs of children rather than adults or families. Legally, children had been viewed as essentially the property of their fathers. However, Harry Hendrick has posited that with the social upheaval created by the Industrial Revolution came what he termed 'the emergence of the child'.<sup>134</sup> Reformers began to rail against what they saw as the exploitation of child labour. Hugh Cunningham also noted that the Industrial Revolution had seen mass migration into the cities. There, the prevalence of child labour was visible to social reformers who soon argued for 'a child's right to a childhood'.<sup>135</sup> Childhood was recast as a right rather than a middle and upper class privilege and members of emerging

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<sup>134</sup> See especially 'Part I' which he labels 'The emergence of the child'. Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994), 15-35.

<sup>135</sup> Hugh Cunningham and Michael Morpurgo, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006), 14-15.

philanthropic networks often led the various interventions made into the lives of working class children.<sup>136</sup> By the nineteenth century 'the child' was well and truly 'discovered'.<sup>137</sup>

The formation of distinct responses to poor children in Britain, which was also manifested in slightly different ways in the United States, influenced the officials charged with solving similar problems in Australia. The child was the focus of many early welfare responses in the newly developing colonies.<sup>138</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century they had all recognised the need to make legislative provisions for children in need, but the nature of these provisions varied, as did the role that was to be played by reformers from outside of government.<sup>139</sup>

There had been some earlier attempts by government to support the poor. The most wide ranging attempt was the Poor Law in Britain instituted in the reign of Elizabeth I in 1601. It enshrined in law methods by which the government sought to assist those they classed as 'the deserving poor' and it specified this by explicitly defining those who were worthy of relief and those who were not.<sup>140</sup> The law was created in response to a series of bad harvests which left the poor without work or food. It was also a reaction to growing need brought about after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1530 which 'left a vacuum' in the provision of relief.<sup>141</sup> The poor were provided with outdoor relief which meant they were supported with basic food relief in their parish by the members of a local council who knew all the local poor.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Eileen Janes Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996), 124-25.

<sup>137</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 35.

<sup>138</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 9-20.

<sup>139</sup> For example see the early chapters in Margaret Barbalet, *Far from a Low Gutter Girl: The Forgotten World of State Wards: South Australia, 1887-1940* (Melbourne ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Brown, "The Development of Social Services in Tasmania."; Parry covers both Tasmania and New South Wales child welfare in her thesis.

<sup>140</sup> See A. L. Beier, *The Vagrant Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Social Science Research Council, London, 1976); Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England C. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004); Helen Bosanquet, "The Historical Basis of English Poor-Law Policy," *The Economic Journal* 20, no. 78 (1910): 182-94.

<sup>141</sup> David Feldman, "Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (2003): 80.

<sup>142</sup> Feldman "Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State," 80.

The Industrial Revolution in Britain had brought a growth in visible child poverty that was poorly catered for by these traditional responses to need.<sup>143</sup> With evidence of overcrowded housing and increasing concentrations of the poor in the larger cities, debates which for centuries had swirled around the concepts of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor gained new currency.<sup>144</sup> The constructs of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' were not rigid definitions but mutable and contested. Philanthropic societies which formed in Britain utilised these definitions in order to separate those they saw as worthy of receiving support from those who were not, rescuing the 'deserving' from the harshness of the new Poor Law which introduced a punitive system designed to deter all but the most destitute from seeking support.<sup>145</sup>

During the Industrial Revolution the localised system of poor relief was brought under pressure by the movement of large numbers of people into towns and cities. The poor, including women and children, were viewed by some as a threat as they were housed in large numbers in towns and cities a concentration that was regarded as endangering social cohesion. A review in 1832 resulted in the drafting of a new Poor Law that came into effect in 1834.<sup>146</sup> Rather than being provided with what was termed 'outdoor relief', poor people were now to be herded together into large impersonal institutions.<sup>147</sup> These new workhouses were designed to deter people from seeking assistance.<sup>148</sup> They took a punitive approach, expecting their adult inmates to complete

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<sup>143</sup> Various writers have written about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the social structures in Britain. For example see Richard Price, "Economy, Social Relations, and Social Policy in Britain, 1750-1914," *The Journal of Modern History* 61, no. 2 (1989): 285-96; Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman, *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England Diversity and Agency, 1750-1914* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013); Brian Inglis, *Poverty and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971); Emma Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn a People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (Cumberland: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>144</sup> Susan Doran and Norman L. Jones, *The Elizabethan World*, (Milton Park: Routledge, 2011), 151, 305-07.

<sup>145</sup> Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Robert Humphreys, *Sin, Organized Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995); Carl Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>146</sup> Nadja Durbach, "Roast Beef, the New Poor Law, and the British Nation, 1834-63," *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 04 (2013): 963-89.

<sup>147</sup> Commission of the Poor Law, *The Poor Law Report of 1834* (Great Britain: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1834).

<sup>148</sup> Durbach, "Roast Beef, the New Poor Law, and the British Nation, 1834-63," 963-89.

hard labour in return for basic rations. Old men, the unemployed and unsupported women and children were all to be confined within these establishments.<sup>149</sup>

The harshness of these changes was condemned by philanthropists, who viewed the requirement that paupers should enter the workhouse where the able-bodied would be required to undertake hard labour as being unfair to the 'deserving poor'. According to Steve Tindle, it was the desire of the voluntary charities to rescue the 'deserving poor' from the rigours of the workhouse that laid the basis for a 'mixed economy of welfare' in England.<sup>150</sup>

Children in particular became the focus of reformers' concerns. Within workhouses children were segregated according to age and gender, and later placed in large barrack-style schools. Critics argued that these schools required uniform behaviour which was 'soul destroying' for children.<sup>151</sup> As a report prepared by the Poor Law commissioners in 1840 argued 'no one who regards to see the future happiness of the children would ever wish to see them educated within its precepts'.<sup>152</sup> Some reformers also argued that the system failed to provide adequate domestic training for girls and trades for boys. Calls for change came particularly from female reformers who emerged as leaders in this expanding philanthropic field.<sup>153</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, ideas about how to care for the poor were being shared by reformers across national and jurisdictional boundaries. Two of the earliest forms of child-specific institutions that gained popularity at that time were philanthropic

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<sup>149</sup> Margaret Anne Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929: The History of an English Social Institution* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>150</sup> In particular see chapter two in Steven King and Alannah Tomkins *Poor in England, 1700-1900 : An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, GBR: Manchester University Press, 2003), 40-42; Humphreys, *Sin, Organized Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England*.

<sup>151</sup> Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 59.

<sup>152</sup> *Report of the Poor Law Commissioners to the Most Noble the Marquis of Normanby*, (London: W. Clowes and sons, 1840) 120.

<sup>153</sup> Danika Rockett, "Single Women in the Borders: Religion and Philanthropy as Paths to Social Action in Victorian Britain" (PhD Thesis, University of Maryland, 2012), 86-143. Chapter 3 covers the work and life of Louisa Twining; Mary Carpenter, "Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders," *The Quarterly Review* 98, no. 195 (1851); Joseph Estlin Carpenter and Mary Carpenter, *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter* (London: Macmillan Co., 1879).

orphanages and reformatories. As Yeo has noted, reformers were interested in applying new social science concepts to these institutions which up until that point had been managed by religious groups.<sup>154</sup> The Rauhe Haus founded by German philanthropist Johann Wichern in 1833 accommodated destitute children from Hamburg in a village environment, providing a model that would be widely copied internationally.<sup>155</sup> The reformatory at Mettray in France devised by Fredrick August Demetz in 1840,<sup>156</sup> used Wichern's model to accommodate young offenders and achieved international fame, becoming 'a key site of pilgrimage for a generation of social reformers'.<sup>157</sup> Visitors included Matthew Davenport-Hill an influential English reformer who inspired his daughters Florence and Rosamond to take up similar causes.<sup>158</sup>

An important precursor to the development of non-government institutions for children in Britain and the broader British Empire was the Ragged School movement.<sup>159</sup> Essentially a social improvement measure for poor children, ragged schools were devised to teach the basic skills of reading, writing and Bible studies to poor children, and were predominantly managed and supported by male ministers and philanthropic men and women.<sup>160</sup> Mary Carpenter, who was the daughter of a minister, was a leader of this new movement writing several booklets which became very influential.<sup>161</sup> As participation in

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<sup>154</sup> Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*, 3-5.

<sup>155</sup> Brian J. Els, "'Creating Free and Good People': Idealization of the Countryside in the Berlin Orphanage Administration, 1890-1914," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 3 (2010): 411-26.

<sup>156</sup> Jeroen J. H. Dekker, *The Will to Change the Child: Re-Education Homes for Children at Risk in Nineteenth Century Western Europe* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2001); For details of the program at Mettray itself see John Ramsland, "Mettray: A Corrective Institution for Delinquent Youth in France, 1840-1937," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 22, no. 1 (1990): 30-46; more recently a new french title Eric Pierre, *La Colonie De Mettray: Exemple, Mais Unique* (Rennes: Rennes University, 2015).

<sup>157</sup> Swain, "Florence and Rosamond Davenport Hill and the Development of Boarding out in England and Australia," 747.

<sup>158</sup> Rosamund Davenport-Hill and Florence Davenport Hill, *The Recorder of Birmingham: A Memoir of Matthew Davenport Hill, with Selections from His Correspondence* (Reproduced by Kessinger Publishing in 2010, 1878), 286-305. Davenport Hill speaks about his visit to Mettray in the chapter on the reformatory system.

<sup>159</sup> For example see Thomas Guthrie, *A Plea for Ragged Schools or, Prevention Better Than Cure* (Edinburgh: John Elder, 1847); Also "Sixteenth Annual Report of the Field Lane Ragged School and Night Refuges for the Homeless", (American Theological Library Association, 1858); Ragged schools were also founded in various colonies in Australia. See Ramsland, "The Ragged School Systems in the Australian Colonies," 47-57.

<sup>160</sup> Guthrie, *A Plea for Ragged Schools or, Prevention Better Than Cure*.

<sup>161</sup> Carpenter and Carpenter, *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter*; Swain, "Florence and Rosamond Davenport Hill and the Development of Boarding out in England and Australia," 747.



ragged schools was a voluntary arrangement Carpenter became concerned about other children unwilling to attend her schools. These children she believed to be at more serious risk of falling into criminal behaviour.<sup>162</sup> As a result of this concern Carpenter turned her attention to how to remedy the situation.

In a paper written in 1851 Carpenter outlined her attempts to provide a practical solution to reach this group of youths.<sup>163</sup> Her aim was to alert the general public to what she viewed as the escalation of juvenile delinquency and crime. She had personal experience of such concerns through her ragged school work but felt that 'these things that have long been known to a few' needed more attention.<sup>164</sup> She argued that 'education, the early nurture, and the sound religious, moral and industrial training of the child is the only curative that can strike at the root of the evil, by infusing a fresh and healthy principle'.<sup>165</sup>

In 1853 Carpenter, seeking to convince fellow reformers to adopt her new system of small reformatory schools, published a further paper on the subject of juvenile offenders. The paper gave descriptions and details of the issues surrounding children she saw as being at risk of falling into a life of crime. She argued that 'whatever views may be entertained respecting adult criminals, all agree that *reformation* is the object to be aimed at with young offenders'.<sup>166</sup> In the report she used the examples of the works at Mettray and the Rauhe Haus and their programs to deal with poor children.<sup>167</sup> Her paper argued that children in the workhouses should be separated from adults and receive a basic

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<sup>162</sup> Carpenter and Carpenter, *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter*, 98.

<sup>163</sup> Carpenter, "Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders," v.

<sup>164</sup> Carpenter, "Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders," v.

<sup>165</sup> Carpenter, "Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders," vi.

<sup>166</sup> Carpenter, *Juvenile Delinquents, Their Condition and Treatment*, iii.

<sup>167</sup> Carpenter, *Juvenile Delinquents, Their Condition and Treatment*, 207-57.

education, which she saw as vital to their future successes.<sup>168</sup> What she was pursuing was a compulsory system of reformatory schools which provided a rehabilitative program for those in need of discipline, and industrial schools for those in need of care to prevent them falling into the reformatory class. Carpenter's campaign was rewarded in 1857 when the Industrial Schools Act was passed. Children placed in large institutions in order to provide them with basic schooling but more importantly to discipline and train them for menial work or apprenticeships. This was the first method for managing children used by the British government separately from other Poor Law responses.<sup>169</sup>

By advocating for change in government policy, and by developing their own responses to children of the poor, British reformers had singled out child welfare as an area to which they could legitimately contribute. Through their writings they were also internationally influential. As Tanya Evans has argued, '[c]harity workers were not bound by national borders as they implemented reforms and they made claims to political and social power through their transnational philanthropic work'.<sup>170</sup> They set a precedent for citizens in other jurisdictions to also gain influence in the development of child specific policies. This was especially true for the numerous colonies of Britain who looked to 'the motherland' for inspiration as to how to manage the poor in their newly developed societies. The next section examines how the various colonies in Australia noted these developments and adapted these methods to local conditions.

### **Child welfare developments in Australia**

The earliest philanthropic works and government responses in Australia were not uniform. They were influenced by many factors, including the foundation date, size and nature of the colony. These colonies had the advantage of having no pre-existing systems

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<sup>168</sup> Carpenter, *Juvenile Delinquents, Their Condition and Treatment*, 1-49. She covers her argument in the Introduction and her description of various classes of children are further elaborated in Chapter One.

<sup>169</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989*, 174-75.

<sup>170</sup> Evans, "Working Towards the 'Welfare of the World'," 109-23.

that needed to be maintained or amended, as in Britain, but the colonists had brought with them implicit understandings of British law and importantly their own assumptions and preferences. This led to a diversity of responses to child welfare across the continent. Victoria developed its own version of responses to the needs of destitute children, which, while still utilising methods developed elsewhere, led to a distinctive local system.

Two major Australian colonial societies were already well established by the 1830s when the first ongoing European occupation of Port Phillip began. Both New South Wales and Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land) had been established as convict outposts of Britain. The influence of reformers in these earliest convict colonies was limited. Stephen Garton makes the point that '[f]rom the beginnings of white occupation the government played a dominant role in feeding and clothing colonists...[and that] in the early years of colonisation the circle of colonists wealthy enough to subscribe to voluntary charities was small, leaving many societies dependent on government subsidy to continue their operations'.<sup>171</sup> Until the mid-1800s the poor in these two colonies were still primarily convicts or their descendants and thus the general public were not initially as willing to support welfare work.<sup>172</sup> Later Western Australia was also influenced by similar considerations.<sup>173</sup>

Tasmania was Australia's smallest penal colony. As Anne O'Brien has noted the 'end of convict transportation in 1852 ... raised hopes that charity might act as a form of social rehabilitation'.<sup>174</sup> However, despite the government providing funding to some benevolent efforts, the few voluntary reformers wealthy enough to contribute had limited opportunities to create organisations which were influential enough to challenge either

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<sup>171</sup> Garton, *Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare 1788-1988*, 45.

<sup>172</sup> Parry, "'Such a Longing'", 24.

<sup>173</sup> Hetherington, *Paupers, Poor Relief & Poor Houses in Western Australia*, 1-20.

<sup>174</sup> Anne O'Brien, *Philanthropy and Settler Colonialism* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 63. The third chapter discusses the rise of philanthropy.

government services or policy.<sup>175</sup> They were also far less likely to receive the necessary level of public funding for their endeavours. After the British government ceased to financially support its penal colony it left a weak economy. This 'restricted the development of voluntary networks to a few elite families'.<sup>176</sup> As a result Tasmanian philanthropy remained underdeveloped and the colonial government was forced to address most issues relating to the poor. The size of other colonies in Australia enabled a greater level of cooperation between the government and philanthropically minded citizens. Tennant's description of New Zealand as 'a small society, [in which] there was considerable intimacy, a cosiness between politicians and the leaders of favoured social service organisations', also applies to Tasmania and most early jurisdictions in the Australian colonies.<sup>177</sup>

Victoria was very different from its immediate neighbours. Located within the boundaries of the colony of New South Wales, it began as a free settlement which initially did not have the approval of the authorities in Sydney. It was a small settlement without any of the structures to manage poverty that resulted from a convict past. Established in 1837 as the Port Phillip District, it was quick to develop an independent identity although it did not become a separate colony until 1851. Despite its isolation its capital city, Melbourne, was part of an international network, where the busy port provided local newspapers with news from across the Empire.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Victoria experienced the impacts of an extraordinary gold rush and the associated increase in population. It did not take long for reformers to argue that the government needed to address some of the new issues which this unforeseen and transformative event had created. Like other colonies in Australia, Victoria continued to

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<sup>175</sup> Brown, "The Development of Social Services in Tasmania." 87.

<sup>176</sup> Parry, "Such a Longing," 6; Dickey, *No Charity There*, 48.

<sup>177</sup> Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare*, 215; Parry, "Such a Longing," 26. Parry noted that the philanthropic field in Tasmania was dominated by a 'few well known Protestant families'.

resist any suggestions that it should implement a poor law.<sup>178</sup> Parliamentary debates clearly indicate that those in power wished to create a new colony without necessarily recreating a policy which many had experienced either as a charge against landowners, or a harsh punishment of the poor.<sup>179</sup> The new colony also lacked the local government structures through which the Poor Law could be administered, as responsibility was more centralised. Yet, as Christina Twomey has also shown, the earliest European colonists still felt they had a right to call upon government for assistance,<sup>180</sup> and the patterns of provision that did emerge incorporated several key Poor Law principles, including the role of magistrates in providing relief, and the principles of deterrence and less eligibility.<sup>181</sup>

In 1851 it was recorded that there were 77,345 individuals in the colony—a figure that excluded the surviving Indigenous population which was estimated to number about 2,500 at the time.<sup>182</sup> By 1857, with the gold rush now an international sensation, the population had swelled to 410,766 and by the 1861 census it was recorded at 540,322.<sup>183</sup> While there were extraordinary economic benefits derived from the gold rush, there was also serious disruption to the colony's developing social structure. Most particularly at risk were women and children who were often abandoned.<sup>184</sup>

The early Port Phillip District provided an opportunity for an emerging group of elite and upwardly mobile men and women able to give their time for voluntary efforts,

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<sup>178</sup> Many historians have noted that early immigrants in Australia were resistant to any attempt to legislate a Poor Law. For example see Swain, "Negotiating Poverty," 100; Julie Kimber, "Poor Laws: A Historiography of Vagrancy in Australia," *History Compass* 11, no. 8 (2013): 539; Murphy, "The Other Welfare State," 44.4.

<sup>179</sup> For a good example of the early public debate about a new Poor Law see "Systematic Colonization," *The Argus*, 10 Oct 1848, 4.

<sup>180</sup> Christina Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute: Motherhood, Wife Desertion, and Colonial Welfare* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2002), 44-55.

<sup>181</sup> Twomey makes this argument strongly through this entire book but in particular see. *Deserted and Destitute*, 103-09.

<sup>182</sup> William Henry Archer, *The Statistical Register of Victoria from the Foundation of the Colony, with an Astronomical Calendar for 1855* (Melbourne: J. Ferres, Govt. Printer, 1854) 5, 36. These pages provide approximate numbers for the Indigenous population.

<sup>183</sup> *Census of Victoria, 1861: Population Tables*, (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1862) vii.

<sup>184</sup> Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 128-31.

to take the initiative. As Musgrove has stated, the 'absence of government support ... left a clear space for voluntary activity.'<sup>185</sup> In the earliest 1840s, Friendly Visitors or Strangers Societies were founded by various religious denominations seeking to assist those in need.<sup>186</sup> The support that was delivered by these societies in the early years of the settlement was generally what was referred to as 'outdoor relief' which, as well as providing financial support for people in their own homes, also 'consisted of hot meals, provision of blankets for persons sleeping outdoors, etc.'<sup>187</sup>

These earliest forms of relief were ad hoc, having developed informally in the small settlement. As the colony grew and flourished the issues faced by those providing assistance became more complex.<sup>188</sup> Melbournians originally looked to the government in Sydney for support for their philanthropic endeavours. But, as Musgrove has noted, the New South Wales government was reluctant, initially rejecting assistance for the founding of a hospital despite supporting such projects at home.<sup>189</sup> Similarly, there were no funds provided for the establishment of a government-run orphanage.

In the 1840s the new philanthropic societies stepped in to fill the gap. The Melbourne Friendly Brother's Society, for example, was an early Catholic response to need, 'preventing some children from being imprisoned with their parents by boarding them with suitable families'.<sup>190</sup> Other denominations also provided support to families and vulnerable children, early evidence of the deep-seated sectarian divisions which would continue to influence the burgeoning welfare field.<sup>191</sup>

It was an offshoot of the Anglican Dorcas society that was the first organisation which dealt exclusively with children. It began taking in children on a temporary basis in

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<sup>185</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 10.

<sup>186</sup> "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 – 1954," 26. Musgrove has provided an excellent analysis of the earliest welfare endeavours in the Port Phillip District.

<sup>187</sup> Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 6-7.

<sup>188</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 10.

<sup>189</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 10.

<sup>190</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 10.

<sup>191</sup> Swain, "Do You Want Religion with That?" 79.1-79.8.

1849. By the 1850s, in response to the rising numbers of children coming under its care, the society established a temporary home, the first official out-of-home care institution in the colony.<sup>192</sup> In 1851 the society changed its name to the St James Orphan Asylum and Visiting Society in an acknowledgement of its new and growing role.<sup>193</sup> The society had the support of the colonial government which allowed it to use a building close to the centre of the city.<sup>194</sup> When the site proved unsuitable for children, with some dying from dysentery in the early 1850s, the society lobbied the colonial government for more support. A meeting of concerned citizens in the colony's second city, Geelong, argued they too needed an orphanage. The colonial government eventually responded to these demands, granting land in both cities for the establishment of orphan asylums in 1855. In the following year it made similar grants to Catholic authorities to establish their own orphanages in South Melbourne and Geelong.<sup>195</sup>

Children were only accepted into the existing orphanages under very strict conditions. As Musgrove has argued: 'The colony's orphanages were designed to cater for the children of the "deserving poor" or, in the absence of evidence about the children's parents, children who had not been tainted by exposure to "lives of vice and crime".'<sup>196</sup> Children who were double orphans (with both parents deceased) were obviously considered deserving, so too were the children of widows, but with the added provisions that their mothers kept some of their children with them and lived temperately and responsibly. Fathers were not generally able to use the orphanage services for their children but were expected to make private arrangements for their care. Musgrove makes the point, however, that while those who managed the orphanages were judicious about

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<sup>192</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 10-11.

<sup>193</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 11.

<sup>194</sup> "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" 30.

<sup>195</sup> See Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 11-15; Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, Chapter One, 3-15.

<sup>196</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 29-30.

the types of children they were willing to take into their care, they did not always adhere to their own criteria.<sup>197</sup>

The initial orphanages all reflected the institutional building style of Scotland, Ireland and England from where many of these reformers had come.<sup>198</sup> They provided basic care to the children. The diets were monotonous, and children were housed in large dormitories with sparse and practical furnishings.<sup>199</sup> The conditions reflected the view that children should be grateful for any care they received.<sup>200</sup> The Protestant orphanages were governed by men, who managed the finances, but administered day-to-day by ladies' committees.<sup>201</sup> The Catholic ones, although sometimes founded by lay people, were soon transferred to the control of Religious orders. The homes for boys established by the Friendly Brothers and the St Vincent de Paul Society were taken over by the Christian Brothers after they arrived from Ireland in 1868. The Catholic girls' orphanages were managed by the Sisters of Mercy.<sup>202</sup>

The colony's orphanages could not provide for the ever increasing numbers of children who were now in need as a result of the extraordinary increase in population and many of these children also failed to meet the criteria for assistance. The government reluctantly began to address concerns related to the growing number of abandoned children and destitute families and a perceived increase in crime.<sup>203</sup> Its initial response was to establish, in 1861, a Royal Commission into 'Local Government and Charitable Organisations' headed by Evelyn Sturt, the Police Magistrate.<sup>204</sup> The Royal Commission

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<sup>197</sup> Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 17-30. Barnard and Twigg note that the Catholic orphanages were also flexible about which children they took into their care.

<sup>198</sup> For example see Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 30. A photograph provides an example of these early orphanage designs.

<sup>199</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 33-34.

<sup>200</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" 88.

<sup>201</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 13.

<sup>202</sup> Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 17, 57.

<sup>203</sup> Twomey provides further details of this concern. Christina Twomey, "Courting Men: Mothers, Magistrates and Welfare in the Australian Colonies," *Women's History Review* 8, no. 2 (1999): 231-46.

<sup>204</sup> *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Municipalities and the Charitable Institutions in Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1863), 70-71. This report listed six orphanages, two Protestant ones and four Catholic ones.



examined the work of the six voluntarily-run orphanages then in existence and recommended that the colonial government should have control over all children in their care. The proposal replicated the system already in place in New South Wales (NSW) with the Government paying three quarters of the costs and having two representatives on each institution's board.<sup>205</sup> In Victoria, this proposal faced resistance from Catholic institutions who were greatly concerned about proselytisation by Protestants.<sup>206</sup> Tabled just as there was a change in the ministry in 1861, the report's recommendations were not implemented.

The difficulty in deciding how to assist the growing number of deserted and destitute families did not go away. How much the government should be involved in dealing with this issue was hotly contested in parliamentary debates. Despite the instability of the government the debates which took place in the early 1860s set the direction for the government's response to child welfare well into the twentieth century. On September 3rd 1861 the Premier, Richard Heales, introduced a bill 'For the Protection of Neglected Children and the Prevention of Crime by Children'.<sup>207</sup> Taking the advice of Sturt, it abolished the subsidies for private institutions' buildings and introduced the English model of industrial and reformatory schools to be run by the government instead.<sup>208</sup> On October 22<sup>nd</sup> the bill was sent to committee for consideration before being returned to the parliament.<sup>209</sup> However, when the Heales government fell in November 1861 the legislation was shelved.

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<sup>205</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 – 1954," 10.

<sup>206</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 40.

<sup>207</sup> *Victorian Parliamentary Debates (VPD)*, (Melbourne: Parliament of Victoria, 1856-1999) 10. Available at <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au>. See debate from September 3 1861.

<sup>208</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 40.

<sup>209</sup> *VPD*, (1861), 194. This debate took place on October 22 1861.

In 1863 a new government returned to the issue of destitute children. Consistently, many parliamentarians resisted attempts at creating government institutions.<sup>210</sup> The new Catholic Premier, John O'Shanassy, argued that it:

was not the desire of the Ministry to make (both reformatory and industrial) schools Government institutions because if it were done they would fail to accomplish the real objective in view in their formation. Accordingly, it was their desire to afford room for the exercise of the practical benevolence of those who would be likely to take an interest in such institutions.<sup>211</sup>

As a means of assisting private philanthropy this government was willing to offer free land in the country to voluntary societies willing to manage these institutions, believing that this would significantly reduce the costs of founding such schools and would enable private endeavours. As an added incentive, the bill proposed that one third of the required funds should be raised by these potential voluntary providers through subscriptions, while the government would meet the rest of the building costs.

The government was seeking to relinquish its responsibility for the children already informally housed in other facilities. Aside from children housed in the institution conducted by the Immigrants' Aid Society in Melbourne, there were numerous children in other benevolent asylums across the state. The government was also concerned that children had been placed in gaols with their parents as they had nowhere else to go.<sup>212</sup> Children were already a burden on the state in these institutions, O'Shanassy argued, but politicians and the public alike felt that children should not be in such places.<sup>213</sup> It was the promise of the same money better spent that he pursued in his opening address in order to convince any politicians who may have opposed the bill. Most importantly for the

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<sup>210</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 434. This was debated on February 17 1863.

<sup>211</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 435.

<sup>212</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 435.

<sup>213</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 435.

government, O'Shanassy's proposal it would not be ultimately responsible for the management of these children.

Many of Victoria's politicians were well informed about international child welfare developments and used examples from overseas to argue the inherent value of private philanthropy. Heales, who had introduced the earlier bill, was not convinced that private providers could raise the necessary funds for such an arrangement. He stated that:

No comparison could be instituted between the philanthropy of this colony and the philanthropy of Great Britain; because in Great Britain there was a large number of persons who had amassed immense fortunes and devoted their time to acts of benevolence, while in this colony there were comparatively few very wealthy people – the majority of the people who possessed means being still in the process of accumulating fortunes.<sup>214</sup>

Other members of Parliament agreed with the view that the government needed to act but they were always in the minority and often sought a compromise solution. John Houston, the member for Brighton, gave his partial support noting that in particular 'reformatories should be entirely Government institutions' because if 'the initiation of them was left to private benevolence, then many districts where it might be desirable to establish reformatories would be without them altogether'.<sup>215</sup> It was his view that all council districts, rather than private individuals, should be compelled to contribute to the development of these institutions. He was arguing for the development of a Poor Law-like structure as he had known in Britain. Richard Heales also believed that the care of criminal children should fall to the state while the care of destitute children 'was one which commended itself to the sympathy of the people.'<sup>216</sup> William Nixon, the member for

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<sup>214</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 663. The debate continued on March 27 1863.

<sup>215</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 662.

<sup>216</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 662.

Colac and a protectionist who did not generally approve of state aid, stated that in this case he supported the move believing '[t]he bill to be one of the most important pieces of legislation the government had introduced'.<sup>217</sup>

But those who, like O'Shanassy, preferred philanthropy assisted by government funding, argued that reformatories overseas managed by voluntary committees were more effective. George Collins Levey, the member for Normanby, and a member of the opposition, mentioned Mettray in France, the Rauhe Haus in Germany and subscribers in Lancashire, Ireland and Scotland who funded voluntarily run industrial schools and reformatories.<sup>218</sup> Eventually Heales offered a compromise suggesting that the bill could allow for private establishments but also for the government to run its own establishments if necessary. He stated that the 'Government of a new country were of necessity driven to do many things that the Government of an old country would never think of doing.'<sup>219</sup> He argued that Pentridge, the local government-run prison, had been successful and so could reformatories run under similar auspice.

The debate was further slowed by concerns about how to implement this policy. Sectarian concerns were raised by those on both sides of the debate in regards to housing children within large government run institutions. O'Shanassy argued that there was a need to have separate institutions for children of different faiths, otherwise there 'would be the greatest possible danger of proselytism ... especially in a country like this'.<sup>220</sup> He was concerned that the larger and more dominant population of Protestants would seek to proselytise children from a Catholic background. There were strong sensitivities about this issue with some members of parliament raising concerns that other denominations could be disadvantaged by the inclusion of this distinction. Edward Cohen, a Jewish

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<sup>217</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 663-64.

<sup>218</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 662-63.

<sup>219</sup> *VPD*, (1863), 664.

<sup>220</sup> *VPD*, (1864), 664.

member of parliament, was worried that some children may be refused entry to a reformatory if there was not one managed by their religion. In concluding the debate O'Shanassy asked for more time to consider the issues raised.<sup>221</sup>

After several months of political instability, the resignation of O'Shanassy, and sustained debate, the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864* finally passed into law as a new government under James McCulloch took power.<sup>222</sup> While the eventual act was closely modelled on British legislation passed in 1857 which provided for the establishment of industrial and reformatory schools for Poor Law children, the colony lacked the broader social structure in which to develop this new system.<sup>223</sup> While Britain maintained its other Poor Law provisions the Victorian schools were the only option for dealing with children in need. To manage them the colony had to set up a new administration which it located within the portfolio of the Chief Secretary.

Child welfare was just one of many concerns for which the Chief Secretary was responsible. His portfolio was diverse and expansive including prisons, mines, libraries, Aboriginal people, education, health, police, agricultural matters, liquor licensing, the census, statistics and registration functions.<sup>224</sup> He was also responsible for managing the relationships between all the other departments and government business in the Parliament. In practice the Chief Secretary relied on the Inspector of the Office of Reformatory and Industrial Schools to administer all aspects of child welfare covered by the new Act, and rarely got involved in day-to-day management issues. The Inspector himself largely relied on the managers of the various institutions to provide him with written reports and updates regarding the running of their establishments.

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<sup>221</sup> VPD, (1864), 664.

<sup>222</sup> *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act*. Victoria, 1864.

<sup>223</sup> Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal*, 25.

<sup>224</sup> Description of the Chief Secretary's Department", <http://www.access.prov.vic.gov.au>, accessed on 22 July 2014.

Under the 1864 Act, children who committed crimes and children judged by the courts to be neglected were placed in large dormitory style institutions. These schools were initially located in existing institutions such as a wing of the Princes Bridge Immigrants Home. The first new government institution opened at Sunbury in 1865, followed by Geelong; by the late 1860s abandoned hulks were used for training, with more schools opened across the colony during following years.<sup>225</sup> By 1869 the Catholic Church had new reformatories for girls in Oakleigh, Abbotsford and Geelong.<sup>226</sup> All of these institutions were regulated by the newly formed Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools.

The new system attracted criticism almost from the beginning.<sup>227</sup> According to Musgrove 'the government's schools were overcrowded from the moment they opened their doors'.<sup>228</sup> This placed pressure on the accommodation and strained government finances. The press led the criticism, declaring the buildings at the Princes Bridge site as 'wretched shanties', and highlighting the spread of ophthalmia, an eye disease which could cause blindness, and other maladies amongst the children.<sup>229</sup> In the face of such criticism the government looked for a cost effective and practical solution. An approach that was gaining popularity with reformers, and by the middle of the nineteenth century had a foothold in some jurisdictions, was boarding out. The Victorian government took note of this emerging option. By 1872 there were eleven large industrial or reformatory schools, including three that were run by Catholic Orders, and a Naval training ship, but

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<sup>225</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954," 58, 86.

<sup>226</sup> George Guillaume and Edward Connor, *The Development and Working of the Reformatory and Preventive Systems* (Melbourne: Robert S. Brain, 1891) 23-24.

<sup>227</sup> "Town News," *The Australasian*, 4 November 1865, 6.

<sup>228</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 14.

<sup>229</sup> See "Industrial and Reformatory Schools," *The Argus*, 9 October 1875, 4; Cases were noted in the Geelong school as early as 1865. See "Current Topics," *The Geelong Advertiser*, 22 December 1865, 2; Cases were also reported about Prince's Bridge. See "The Prince's Bridge Industrial School," *The Argus*, 14 March 1867, 7.

the system was still at breaking point as ever increasing numbers of children were being placed under the government's authority.<sup>230</sup>

### **The Victorian Boarding Out System**

Boarding out was initially developed within the Poor Law system in Scotland in the early part of the 1700s.<sup>231</sup> While the reasons for the adoption of this method are complex, it began in Glasgow as a response to the terrible overcrowding in the city which was created by booming industrialisation.<sup>232</sup> Scottish welfare had historically been managed by local ministers and magistrates and supported by general subscription rather than government funding. Fostering children out into country homes was an expedient response and the system expanded relatively quickly.<sup>233</sup> The new method began to be championed by welfare advocates in other jurisdictions.<sup>234</sup> The most influential of these in the Australian context were Rosamond and Florence Davenport Hill, English reformers who had taken up the interest after the death of their father Matthew Davenport-Hill whose writings championed boarding out.<sup>235</sup> They studied Scottish, Irish and Australian systems, eventually producing a book aimed at influencing Poor Law authorities in England.<sup>236</sup>

Boarding out schemes as a substitute for institutional care were adopted across many jurisdictions in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>237</sup> One reason why this method was embraced by government departments was because it was cheaper than the

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<sup>230</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Inspector for the Year 1872* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1873) 3. The Secretary of the Department, George Duncan reported that the number of children held in the schools had in fact decreased by 64 only because the boarding out system had begun.

<sup>231</sup> Malcolm Hill, Kathleen Murray, and Judith Rankin, "The Early History of Scottish Child Welfare," *Children & Society* 5, no. 2 (1991): 182-95.

<sup>232</sup> Hill, Murray and Rankin, "The Early History of Scottish Child Welfare," 190.

<sup>233</sup> Hill, Murray and Rankin, "The Early History of Scottish Child Welfare," 190.

<sup>234</sup> Nell Musgrove, "Imagining Foster Families," *Journal of Australian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2014): 175.

<sup>235</sup> Florence and Rosamund Davenport Hill, *Children of the State; the Training of Juvenile Paupers* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1889); For an analysis of the sisters' influence see Swain, "Florence and Rosamond Davenport Hill and the Development of Boarding out in England and Australia," 1-16.

<sup>236</sup> Florence and Rosamund Davenport Hill, *What We Saw in Australia* (London: MacMillan and Co, 1875).

<sup>237</sup> For an Australian example see Murray, "The Child Is Not a Servant" 190-206. For international examples see Mel Cousins, "Poor Relief and Families in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Italy," *The History of the Family* 13, no. 4 (2008): 340-49; William Seraile, *Angels of Mercy: White Women and the History of New York's Colored Orphan Asylum*, (New York: Empire State Editions, 2011). Chapter Six and Seven.

large scale barrack style institutions. For example the Swiss used boarding out for both single mothers and poor families.<sup>238</sup> In Sweden, according to the work of Elisabeth Engberg, poor children were auctioned which was a method of keeping costs even lower while still ensuring children were provided with their basic physical needs for food, shelter and clothing.<sup>239</sup> In Canada, the main recipient of the child migration movement, children were boarded out or put into in work placements.<sup>240</sup> Mary Carpenter and her fellow child migration operatives understood their placement of children in overseas homes as a variation on this system.<sup>241</sup> The understanding was simple: 'good' families raised 'good' children. In Australia, colonial governments embraced boarding out for their own purposes.<sup>242</sup>

Boarding out had been used previously in the Australian context. As Joan Brown noted the Tasmanian government was the first colonial government to board children out. They did so on a small scale from 1844 in order to separate convict offspring from other destitute children placing non-convicts with families and paying them £10 per year.<sup>243</sup> Later on some voluntary individuals were able to manage these services. 'This was one of the few areas of state provision in Tasmania to be controlled by voluntary interests, and the boards of management ... were comprised of members of just a few elite Protestant families'.<sup>244</sup>

In South Australia, in 1867, Catherine Helen Spence and Caroline Emily Clarke, cousin of the Davenport Hill sisters, lobbied the then South Australian Minister in charge

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<sup>238</sup> Anne-Lise Head-Konig, "The forms of care for boarded out children in Switzerland: Ambiguous policies, resistance and conflicted objectives (1850-1950)," *Paedagogica Historica* 46, no. 6 (2010): 763-73.

<sup>239</sup> Elisabeth Engberg, "Boarded out by Auction: Poor Children and Their Families in Nineteenth-Century Northern Sweden," *Continuity and Change* 19, no. 03 (2004): 431-57.

<sup>240</sup> For example see the work of Carmen Nielson Varty, "'A Career in Christian Charity': Women's Benevolence and the Public Sphere in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada," *Women's History Review* 14, no. 2 (2005): 243-64; Charlotte Neff, "Government Approaches to Child Neglect and Mistreatment in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Histoire sociale/Social history* 41, no. 81 (2008): 165-214.

<sup>241</sup> Carpenter and Carpenter, *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter*.

<sup>242</sup> Musgrove makes this point. See Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 33.

<sup>243</sup> Brown, "The Development of Social Services in Tasmania," 192.

<sup>244</sup> Parry, "'Such a Longing'," 25-26.



of destitute children to fund them to introduce a boarding out trial.<sup>245</sup> The government was near to completing the large four storey Magill Industrial School so did not offer any support to the project.<sup>246</sup> Within a few years the institution at Magill was overcrowded. Another delegation visited the minister and their scheme was accepted. Children from Magill were boarded out under the management of Spence and Clarke with the government paying five shillings per child per week to the foster parents. While the activism and subsequent contributions of these women in the development of South Australia's boarding out system provided an example for Victoria to follow the children boarded-out were already in the government's care and the whole operation was managed under the auspices of the government, making it distinct from the independent work of Sutherland in subsequent years.<sup>247</sup>

In 1870 the Victorian government set up the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline which eventually produced three reports which included examining the work of the reformatory and industrial school system.<sup>248</sup> The Commissioners were led by William Stawell, a distinguished judge and Member of Parliament. In 1872, the system to manage children was covered in its third report entitled: *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (no. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*. The report argued that the current buildings were unfit for their purpose, particularly Sunbury which the government had only recently built and opened. The commission also concluded that the whole system was 'hurtful to the health, the morals, and the intellectual and industrial

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<sup>245</sup> S. Eade, "Catherine Helen Spence (1825 - 1910)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/spence-catherine-helen-4627>;; "Caroline Emily Clark (1825 - 1911)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/clark-caroline-emily-3212>, both accessed on 28 January 2014.

<sup>246</sup> A photograph of this school can be found in Barbalet, *Far from a Low Gutter Girl*, 189.

<sup>247</sup> Spence, *State Children in Australia: A History of Boarding out and Its Developments*, 10.

<sup>248</sup> Pentridge *Penal Establishment: Progress Report of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1870); *Penal and Prison Discipline: Report (No. 2) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1871); *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1872). This final report examined the government's childrens' institutions.

training of the children'.<sup>249</sup> These concerns echoed those raised by overseas reformers such as Frances Cobbe and her associate Florence Davenport Hill.<sup>250</sup>

The commissioners appeared to have read or heard about some of the arguments which were used by reformers such as Cobbe and Hill to justify the introduction of boarding out. They were critical of how the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act had been implemented. Acknowledging the lack of preparation made for opening large industrial and reformatory schools, William Templeton, a police magistrate and one of the commissioners who had been a visitor in the early years of the industrial and reformatory school system, considered it a failure. He argued that 'it was diverted from its original purpose' which was 'dealing with vagrant, vicious and convicted children', and instead it had 'been used for providing for the support of the children of the poor' in place of a poor law.<sup>251</sup> These were the very children, those in need, rather than the unruly, who boarding out advocates believed would benefit from their system.

Reformers condemned the conditions in the large dormitory style institutions and argued that children should not be housed in such environments. The first witness before the commission, the former Superintendent of Industrial Schools, James Thomas Harcourt, was pointedly asked about the detrimental health effects for children accommodated in these large barrack-style institutions, including ophthalmia and other infectious diseases.<sup>252</sup> George Oliphant Duncan, the current Inspector of Industrial Schools, as the next witness, was also quizzed about these health related issues.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, vii.

<sup>250</sup> Michael Horsburgh, "Her Father's Daughter: Florence Davenport-Hill, 1829-1919," *International Social Work* 26, no. 4 (1983): 4.

<sup>251</sup> Minutes of Evidence. *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, 14.

<sup>252</sup> Minutes of Evidence. *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, 4; Harcourt was considered as an early reformer. See A. Stoller and R. Emmerson, "James Thomas Harcourt (1813-1893): A 'Social Worker' in Early Colonial Victoria," *The Victorian Historical Journal* 46, no. 1 (1975): 337-47.

<sup>253</sup> Oliphant was interviewed over two days of the commission. *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, 6-13.

Boarding out advocates regularly cited the difficulties of keeping children in large institutions where they were not regarded as receiving life skills to assist them to adapt to a regular society and work on release.<sup>254</sup> The Commissioners heard evidence from the Chief Medical Officer of the colony, William McCrae, who visited the children in the current institutions. Members of the commission pointedly asked whether some of the destitute children could be sent to families where they could 'bring them up as if they were their own'.<sup>255</sup> McCrae cautioned that such children were 'of idle, disorderly habits, and no decent man would take them into his family'.<sup>256</sup> He was willing to concede, however, that with training in the school first they could be placed out in this manner.

The main issue raised by the commission to counter the enthusiasm for boarding out children was how to provide a suitable level of supervision. The government system had been placing older children in work places and the commissioners' questions during the inquiry seemed to suggest that a boarding out system could simply be viewed as an extension of this existing method. Harcourt was asked to explain how the current system of work placements was operating and if there were any concerns with it. In response he expressed concern that many people in the young colony were not settled enough to take children on long term. He believed that children should be supervised in placements, most particularly girls, as often poor families were located where 'a great deal of the prostitution and crime in our community arises' as 'the labouring classes are willing to take up their residence' there.<sup>257</sup> The commissioners, appearing to lobby for the introduction of a boarding out system, challenged him to compare the child in an

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<sup>254</sup> Horsburgh, "Her Father's Daughter," 4. Horsburgh argues that Florence Davenport Hill believed that 'practical training of living in a normal home was ... highly valued'.

<sup>255</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, xxv. McCrae was interviewed for report number 2 in February 1871 but details of the interview were included again with report number three.

<sup>256</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, xvi.

<sup>257</sup> Minutes of Evidence *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, 3.

institution with children outside. Despite the concerns he had raised earlier to the commissioners Harcourt conceded 'I want the family principle carried out'.<sup>258</sup>

The commission's emphasis clearly revealed that it favoured the introduction of a boarding out system. As part of their apparent enthusiasm for the introduction of boarding out the commissioners turned their attention to how they could provide support to find the necessary number of placements. Several high profile local ministers were examined and asked whether they believed the state should care for destitute children in large institutions or by boarding out.<sup>259</sup> The commissioners' aim appears to have been to canvass whether these ministers would encourage members of their congregations to foster children. All the ministers stated that they were in favour of this method but had similar reservations to those outlined earlier by Harcourt about the necessity of having suitable families recruited. It was clear the commission was going to need the support of the general public for the scheme to have any success.

Although the report was not officially released until August 1872,<sup>260</sup> and the enabling legislation was not passed until 1874, Victoria began boarding out children in state care in April 1872 under the supervision of the secretary of Reformatory and Industrial School's Department, George Oliphant Duncan.<sup>261</sup> By 1873 the department's Annual Report stated that '600 of the children [had been] successfully placed out with foster parents before the year had ended'.<sup>262</sup> The scheme was overseen by a series of voluntary local ladies committees which were required to have one representative from each of the local religious denominations. Children were to be placed in the care of the families from the denomination in which they were raised. With the help of these

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<sup>258</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, 3.

<sup>259</sup> Minutes of Evidence. *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report (No. 3) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline*, 22-25. The ministers involved were all Protestant and one Rabbi was also called as the final witness.

<sup>260</sup> "Industrial and Reformatory Schools," *The Argus*, 24 August 1872, 11.

<sup>261</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Inspector for the Year 1872*, 4.

<sup>262</sup> *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Inspector for the Year 1873* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1874) 4.

enthusiastic voluntary supporters the boarding out system was successfully implemented.

The scheme was judged to be so successful that the Melbourne Orphanage trialled its own system in August 1876.<sup>263</sup> The four existing Catholic orphanages resisted pressure from the government Inspector of Charities to place children out into the community arguing that they would not be able to find suitable families.<sup>264</sup> St Augustine's was the only Catholic orphanage to try the scheme but just for a handful of boys. Within a little over a decade, however, the government had essentially emptied its own institutions, closing down all its industrial schools and most of its reformatories. After the privately managed Sandhurst industrial school closed in 1885 only the government's own receiving home, which also accommodated children who were difficult to place, voluntarily run reformatories, the existing orphanages and Catholic industrial schools continued to operate.<sup>265</sup>

The Victorian boarding out system which was embraced so enthusiastically by local reformers was used by other supporters interstate and overseas to further the method. Reformers who had so far found it difficult to get backing for the scheme elsewhere used the success of the Victorian system to lobby harder for its introduction. Rosamund and Florence Davenport-Hill whose work had inspired Australian philanthropists to lobby for the introduction of boarding out made an extended visit to Australia to see the system in operation.<sup>266</sup> By the time they arrived the South Australian and Victorian boarding out schemes were fully operational. In October 1873 they travelled to Sydney where a Royal Commission into Public Charities headed by William

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<sup>263</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" 74.

<sup>264</sup> Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 29.

<sup>265</sup> For example see *Industrial and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Inspector for the Year 1879* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1880) 4-5.

<sup>266</sup> Swain makes this argument in Swain, "Florence and Rosamond Davenport Hill and the Development of Boarding out in England and Australia," 1-16.

Charles Windeyer was in session. The Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, immediately requested they appear before his commission.<sup>267</sup> While local reformers, such as Dr Arthur Renwick, had lobbied for the introduction of this system, the support received from these influential English social reformers ensured that New South Wales was the next colony to abandon large institutions in favour of boarding out.

By 1879 Renwick and a group of volunteer ladies were placed as a committee to run their pilot program 'with the approval of the Premier Sir Henry Parkes'.<sup>268</sup> In 1881 when the State Children's Relief Act was introduced to support this new system, Dr Renwick became Secretary of the new department, and his supporters, who became committee members, were placed under the authority of the Child Welfare Department. The NSW government employed 'boarding out officers who were empowered to remove state children from institutions and organize their placement out with a licensed family'.<sup>269</sup>

While all the colonies in Australia adopted the boarding out system as a cheap alternative to earlier attempts at developing reformatories and industrial schools, most of these systems were eventually managed by state governments within their newly developing state children's departments. Many key reformers in other jurisdictions who had lobbied successfully for boarding out to be adopted now became responsible for it, by being placed on government committees or directly employed by them. Only Victoria relied so significantly on volunteers to run its boarding out system. Voluntary ladies committees in local areas had the responsibility of choosing and overseeing the children in foster homes in each district. These committees had to produce monthly reports for the department. While the central bureaucracy of the government's boarding out system was

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<sup>267</sup> Horsburgh, "Her Father's Daughter," 4.

<sup>268</sup> Parry, "Such a Longing," 28.

<sup>269</sup> Ramsland, *Children of the Back Lanes*, 186.

run by public servants based in Melbourne, it was managed by, and relied on, the work of private individuals.

## **Conclusion**

The decentralised model developed in Victoria during its early colonial years determined the shape of child welfare provision well into the twentieth century. Historically, Victoria followed international child welfare trends that were considered suitable and cost effective. However, it remained committed to voluntary philanthropy allowing the several providers then operating private orphanages to continue their work unaffected by the government's creation of reformatory and industrial schools. By the late 1800s, boarding out provided the government with a cheaper option than housing children in large establishments and private providers also began to experiment with this new method.

The central role played by volunteers in managing industrial and reformatory schools and later assisting the government's boarding out system indicated the important role government believed the public could and should play in welfare provision. Victoria stood alone in providing opportunity for voluntary contributions even within its own system. This entrenched and maintained a role for voluntary services. The next chapter will show how one woman and a city church, importing insights from the international child rescue movement, were able to take advantage of Victoria's decentralised approach to shape the local child welfare system.





## Chapter Two: Selina Sutherland – Melbourne’s Female Child Rescuer



Figure 1: Miss Selina Murray McDonald Sutherland<sup>270</sup>

### Introduction

By the end of the 1870s a new wave of reformers in Britain was challenging the passive approach of waiting for children to be thrust on welfare authorities, arguing that children needed to be actively removed from their destitute families. Using the emotive term, child rescue, they depicted the slums as a foreign mission field and evoked biblical imagery to argue that children needed to be removed from such polluting environments. Drawing upon their religious networks, Dr Thomas John Barnardo, the Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson, and others, used preaching, pamphlets, images and magazines to promote their child rescue work.<sup>271</sup> Child rescue ideology was just beginning to gain traction when Miss Selina Sutherland commenced her role as Lady Missionary at Scots’ Church in Melbourne.

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<sup>270</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 9.

<sup>271</sup> See Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 24.

This chapter examines Sutherland's rise to prominence, and her ability to take advantage of a state system which actively encouraged all types of private philanthropy. The first section examines her early life experiences including her childhood in the Scottish Highlands and time spent in New Zealand. It highlights Sutherland's ability to make the most of her opportunities and to cultivate influential relationships. The second section examines the early years of Sutherland's welfare work under the authority of the Scots' Church leadership in Melbourne. The chapter argues that the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society flourished because of Sutherland's exertions. Her rise to prominence enabled the society to become the pre-eminent child rescue organisation in the colony.

### **Formative Influences**

Sutherland was born on 26 December, 1839, in the parish of Loth in Sutherlandshire, Scotland. Her father, Baigrie Sutherland, was a farm labourer on the large Sutherland estate.<sup>272</sup> The children also worked on the estate. Selina's brother was a shepherd and she herself was listed as a dairy maid in the 1861 census.<sup>273</sup> The family had several sources of income so the severe poverty that led to so much Scottish emigration during this period does not appear to have been the motivation for Sutherland's decision to leave Scotland in 1865, when she followed her sister Margaret to New Zealand.<sup>274</sup>

Generally, female philanthropists in Victoria during the colonial era came from the middle and upper classes of society. They were women who had time on their hands because of the financial support of their fathers or husbands.<sup>275</sup> Sutherland, in stark

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<sup>272</sup> Scotland, 1841 Census. *Householders Schedules for the Parish of Loth, County of Sutherlandshire*, Census Branch Files (Great Britain, 1841).

<sup>273</sup> 1861 Census. *Householders Schedules for the Parish of Loth, County of Sutherlandshire*, Census Branch Files (Great Britain, 1861).

<sup>274</sup> Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots Invention of the Modern World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2002), 290.

<sup>275</sup> Vicinus, *Independent Women*, 5.

contrast, came from a small, rural and largely poor community.<sup>276</sup> This background helps explain the success she enjoyed in developing trusting relationships with the poor children and families she sought to assist, even if many of these families found her manner somewhat abrupt. What she had, from the beginning, was an unwavering sense of self-belief. She was self-motivated and created her own opportunities in life, which suited the atmosphere pervading the colonies at the time. She was a strong-minded individual who always appeared to have an opinion and was willing to debate and dispute with any person, male or female, who disagreed with her. Her later behaviour suggests that she fought to maintain her own autonomy when challenged in her encounters with some in authority over her, and showed that she resented intervention in her work. Despite this characteristic she also, importantly, developed close trusting relationships with several key individuals who were able to temper some of her strongest tendencies but who also adamantly believed in her abilities.

The skills Sutherland developed as a nurse, and later a child welfare provider, were essentially self-taught. As Malcolm Prentis has argued 'Scottish education was broad, general and practical in its content, aimed at equal opportunity and wide availability, and had achieved both to a degree equalled by few nations until late in the nineteenth century.'<sup>277</sup> Selina benefited from this good formal education, and like many Scottish migrants, she 'brought to the colonies not simply an educated perspective but a motivation to contribute to the improvement of the society there'.<sup>278</sup> In departing Scotland she did not leave its people behind. Hundreds of thousands of Scottish migrants had previously migrated to New Zealand and Australia. In both these locations Sutherland

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<sup>276</sup> Culgower where Sutherland was born is located in a remote and sparsely populated part of the Highlands.

<sup>277</sup> Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scottish in Australia* (Melbourne: AE Press, 1987), 154.

<sup>278</sup> Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 352; Richards has argued that 'Scotland sent many well-educated men and women to the Australian colonies and Scotland influenced the development of the education system'. Eric Richards, "Australia and Scotland: The Evolution of a Long-Distance Relationship," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 56, no. 4 (2010): 496.

was able to benefit from the networks of Scottish expatriates who formed close ties in their new environments, and who often influenced political and social developments in the flourishing colonies.

In 1865 Sutherland arrived in New Zealand as a servant accompanying a paid passenger from Scotland.<sup>279</sup> Like many others who made their way to the colonies at the time, she was seeking to improve her station, attaining a status that would have been inaccessible to her at home. When she returned to the UK as a representative of the Victorian Government in 1897 she described herself as a 'lady philanthropist' disguising the fact that throughout her life she was a salaried employee of the various societies with which she was associated.<sup>280</sup>

Sutherland spent fifteen years in the Masterton region of New Zealand. She had arrived unannounced to join her sister Mrs Margaret Grant and for some years worked on the Grant family farm, receiving a share of its income.<sup>281</sup> However, she also developed a reputation as a self-taught nurse, riding in all weathers to assist patients in the Masterton district. In 1877, with much of the community's backing, she lobbied for the foundation of the Masterton Hospital. This meant rejecting calls to lend her support to raising money for the existing hospital at Greytown, which she justified by arguing that the hospital was too far away to be of use to the Masterton community which needed a hospital of its own.<sup>282</sup> She has been credited with almost singlehandedly raising the necessary funds for the project, apparently riding as far south as Wellington to gain support.<sup>283</sup> Throughout this period Sutherland was very successful. She worked essentially unsupervised and proved herself to be energetic in her endeavours. However, by the time the hospital at

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<sup>279</sup> K.A. Simpson, "Selina Murray Macdonald Sutherland", <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s54/1>, accessed on the 22 August 2012.

<sup>280</sup> "Miss Sutherland's Mission," *The Age*, 11 September 1897, 5.

<sup>281</sup> Hoban, "Selina Sutherland (1839-1909)"

<sup>282</sup> Miriam Florence Macgregor, "Selina Sutherland," In *Petticoat Pioneers; North Island Women of the Colonial Era*, (Wellington,: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1973), 189.

<sup>283</sup> C.J. Carle, *Masterton Hospital 1879 -1979* (Masterton, New Zealand: Centennial Book Committee, Wairarapa Hospital Board, 1979, 1979), 11.

Masterton opened in 1879 she had left the district having been appointed matron of the hospital in the capital city, Wellington.

Sutherland began working as matron of the Wellington hospital sometime in 1878.<sup>284</sup> Within the year she was in dispute with the local hospital board after a disagreement about the treatment of patients. A family member interviewed by Sutherland's first biographer, John Cecil Jessop, stated there were allegations that she had operated illegally on a patient the hospital doctor had considered too old for surgery.<sup>285</sup> The doctor was reportedly infuriated when the patient's condition improved after the operation and called for an inquiry. Accused behind closed doors of malpractice and mismanagement of hospital supplies, Sutherland defended herself vigorously, taking the stand and recruiting other witnesses. Letters of support also appeared in the local newspapers.<sup>286</sup> She was formally discharged from her position in March 1880 despite tenaciously maintaining her views. Sutherland's time as a matron had brought her into the media spotlight and damaged her career and reputation in a way that was to profoundly affect her. For the rest of her life she would actively seek to have complete autonomy over her work, despite opposition from those in powerful political or social positions, most of whom, she noted, were men.

One of the valuable lessons Sutherland took from her experience in New Zealand was the importance of building personal relationships with the press to progress her career. In her early fund-raising efforts in Masterton she had cultivated relationships with local journalists in order to raise her profile. Later, in Melbourne, she used this ability to successfully launch and fund all of the four societies she founded during her career.<sup>287</sup> She

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<sup>284</sup> Carle, *Masterton Hospital 1879-1979*, 11.

<sup>285</sup> John Cecil Jessop, *Selina Sutherland: Her Life and Work* (Elsternwick: Sutherland Homes for Children, 1958), 5. Jessop was a life long supporter of Sutherland's final organisation Sutherland Home for which he was treasurer.

<sup>286</sup> "The Hospital Matron," *Evening Post*, 4 December 1880, 3.

<sup>287</sup> Sutherland founded four organisations: The Scots' Church Neglected Children's' Aid Society (1881-1893); The Presbyterian Church Neglected Children's' Aid Society (1893-1894); The Victorian Neglected Children's' Aid Society (1894-1908); and Sutherland Homes (1908-1909). All societies were antecedent societies of current organisations which list Sutherland as their main founder.

had also learnt she could rely on sections of the broader population and the press to continue to support her even in the face of criticism of her methods. This ability for self-promotion would later define her work in Melbourne and most particularly her relationship with the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church.

Sutherland left New Zealand following her dismissal from the Wellington Hospital, although this was only intended as a holiday to recover from her recent distress. However, she later created her own providential narrative to frame her entry into child rescue work. She reported that her luggage was sent on a ship on which she was booked but had accidentally missed.<sup>288</sup> It was wrecked off the Victorian coast, so she later arrived in Melbourne on another ship, homeless and without many belongings. Here she met a wealthy widow, Mrs Maria Armour, who took her into her home.<sup>289</sup> Armour was already interested in helping poor children, leading Sutherland to later describe this meeting, as a moment of 'divine intervention' in her personal history.<sup>290</sup> In creating this narrative Sutherland was deliberately aligning her story with those of British child rescue advocates who told their own 'conversion' stories of being called by God to do his work.<sup>291</sup> In Sutherland's case the truth was more mundane. In fact, she had arrived in Melbourne early in 1881, working briefly as a nurse at the Melbourne Lying-in and Alfred hospitals before taking up the paid position as lady missionary at Scots' Church in June.<sup>292</sup>

Sutherland owed much of her early success to the support of Armour, who was already a significant leader in the work of Scots' Church.<sup>293</sup> Maria Lord Armour was born in Hobart, Tasmania in 1836. She was the daughter of a prominent businessman, Thomas Giblin, and her cousin, William Giblin (who also had a reputation as a social reformer),

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<sup>288</sup> "No Title," *Traralgon Record* 13 March 1888, 3.

<sup>289</sup> This story has been retold from reminiscences of Sutherland later in her life. See Swain, "Selina Sutherland," 110.

<sup>290</sup> Hoban, "Selina Sutherland (1839-1909)."

<sup>291</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 7.

<sup>292</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1881); Hoban, "Selina Sutherland (1839-1909)"; Simpson, "Selina Murray Macdonald Sutherland."

<sup>293</sup> KA. She is referenced numerous times in the case files nursing children back to health and providing temporary care for others in her own home.

was Premier of Tasmania from 1877 until 1884. Armour's maternal connections were not so elevated. Her mother was Caroline Riseley and was the illegitimate daughter of a notorious convict, Maria Riseley, who had been chosen from the Parramatta Women's Convict Barracks (NSW) as a servant by a Welsh Marine Officer, Edward Lord.<sup>294</sup> Maria Riseley, and her daughter Caroline, accompanied Lord to Tasmania where they later married. Caroline married Thomas Giblin in 1823 and their daughter (née Maria Lord Giblin, later Armour) was named after her maternal grandmother who had cast off her convict origins to become a well-known and successful business woman in Tasmania.

Maria Lord Giblin married Alexander Barrie Armour in St John's Church Newtown, in Tasmania, in 1856. The couple later moved to Melbourne and began to attend Scots' Church. Alexander Armour died in 1877 leaving Maria well provided for. She used her new freedom to pursue her activities in the church and was an able treasurer of the Scots' Church District Aid Society which oversaw the church's missionary work.<sup>295</sup> In 1881 she invited Sutherland to share her home at 9 Vincent Street East, Albert Park.<sup>296</sup> The relationship they forged was vital to the early success of the work at Scots' Church with Armour providing Sutherland with financial and emotional support. Armour was to have a steadying influence on Sutherland while the two worked together. As the Reverend John Thomson later declared '[Sutherland was] so headstrong, abrupt, and unceremonious that you can't work with her or at any rate without losing your freedom and self-respect ... [but] Mrs Armour could work with her and have her living in her house'.<sup>297</sup>

Sutherland and Armour were regular witnesses to the cramped and unsavoury conditions of some of the city slums. The church was located at the eastern end of Collins

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<sup>294</sup> "Armour, Maria Lord (1836–1893)." <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/armour-maria-lord-16395>, obituary accessed 14 May 2016.

<sup>295</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1884), 14.

<sup>296</sup> "Notes of the Week," *Weekly Times*, 8 August 1885, 8.

<sup>297</sup> Reverend John Thomson, "A Defence of Miss Sutherland and Rev. Alexander Stewart", (Melbourne: Stillwell and co. printers, 1894), 32.

Street in Melbourne, on a hill in an affluent section of the city. However, poverty was a stone's throw away. The lanes and alleys around Little Lonsdale and Little Bourke streets, described in an 1881 Royal Commission on the Police Force as the haunts of 'thieves, garrotters and other small-time criminals living almost promiscuously [and able] to associate and combine for vicious objects', were a focus of growing concern in the city.<sup>298</sup> Just around the block, the church had also built a hall in Black Eagle Lane, described by prominent journalist, the Vagabond, as 'one of the slums to the north of east Lonsdale Street ... not in itself quite a savoury locality'.<sup>299</sup> Scots' Church was one of many evangelical organisations which had sought to improve the area.<sup>300</sup> Its hall in Black Eagle Lane was the focus of many of the operations of the Scots' Church District Aid Society founded in October 1881 to provide meals, minister to the sick, and run Sunday school classes for the children. The work with neglected children arose out of these activities.

Sutherland arrived at a church that was presided over by a controversial minister, the Reverend Charles Strong, who throughout 1881 was in a theological dispute with members of his Presbytery.<sup>301</sup> Strong had been called to be minister of Scots' Church in the middle of 1875 and his preaching provided the rationale and governance for the missionary work of the church. As his biographer C.R. Badger reflected:

from the outset ... he began to teach his congregation that their religion was of little value unless they saw it as an obligation to serve their fellow men and especially those in need and those nearest to them. He was especially concerned with the slum areas, in and near Melbourne, which had grown up during the fantastic growth of the city in the last four or five years.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> See the description from the original Police Report of the period. *Royal Commission on Police: General Report on the Present State and Organization of the Police Force* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1883) xxi.

<sup>299</sup> John Stanley James, "The Story of a Street Arab Volume I," *The Argus*, 1 December 1885, 5.

<sup>300</sup> For example see Howe and Swain, *The Challenge of the City*, The Wesleyan Church was built in Lonsdale Street and quickly found itself in close proximity to this notorious area. As a result of this situation the church planned various outreach programs with mixed success.

<sup>301</sup> Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church*, 48-54.

<sup>302</sup> Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church*, 32.



Sutherland's religious background may well have been more conservative than Strong's, but evidence suggests that they shared similar views about social welfare. While Strong resigned from the Presbyterian Church in 1883, he continued to have connections with Sutherland through their joint interest in philanthropy.<sup>303</sup>

In the interregnum that followed Strong's resignation, Sutherland was able to harness the Church's extensive financial resources unhindered by the church leadership. From 1883 until April 1888 the church had a number of temporary ministers who lacked the authority of incumbency.<sup>304</sup> Led by Sutherland, the ladies of the church developed the work amongst the children without having to submit to the scrutiny of an established minister. This gave Sutherland a unique opportunity to pioneer child rescue in the city without having to justify her decisions.

#### **Early methods: 1881 to 1887**

Within a few years of taking up her position as Lady Missionary at Scots' Church, Sutherland adapted her role to become the head of a pioneering child rescue organisation. She adopted a boarding out system similar to existing government and non-government organisations, but it was unique in that it was not linked to an existing institution. Given the Victorian government's established practice of encouraging private providers she encountered few barriers to her new endeavour, and was not short of people willing to support her. Promoting the work through the local press, she emphasised its legitimacy by arguing that it resembled the boarding out system already used by the government. Such was her determination, that within a few short years she had become an important figure in Melbourne's voluntary philanthropic landscape, using the local networks of

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<sup>303</sup> "The District Nursing Society," *The Age*, 11 April 1885, 13.

<sup>304</sup> There were several temporary ministers, and some, such as the Reverend Cameron Lees came all the way from Scotland for a six month tenure. See "The Scots' Church the Reverend Cameron Lees to Be Sent For," *The Argus*, 18 December 1886, 11.

police, magistrates, ministers and city missionaries to develop a reputation as the 'go-to' person in child welfare circles.

The pace at which Sutherland set about building this reputation is remarkable. The first child rescue case, a twelve year old girl taken from her family and placed in service in the country, was officially acknowledged in the society's records in July 1881, only four months after Sutherland's arrival in the city. Over the next six years 420 children, defined in the Annual Reports as 'neglected', became the responsibility of the new society.<sup>305</sup> It was from this foundational work that Sutherland and the society she established were able to position themselves as central to the emerging child rescue field in Melbourne.

Table one provides details of the number of children who came under the care of Scots' Church in the early years of the society's operation. It also compares these statistics with the number of children received into the government's care over the same period. The aim of the table is to show how quickly the numbers of children entering the care of the society increased as Sutherland began to focus more and more on children in need rather than on the society's other activities.

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<sup>305</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1886).

**Table One: Total numbers of boys and girls entered as cases into the Scots' Church records from 1881 to 1887 compared with state admissions**

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	New Admissions Neglected Children received by State Department
1881	3	2	5	349
1882	7	15	22	517
1883	15	16	31	453
1884	22	13	35	425
1885	61	33	94	362
1886	66	49	115	409
1887	65	53	118	542
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>2,540</b>

*Kildonan UnitingCare Admission Book Case Notes 1881 -1887 and Reformatory and Industrial School Reports 1881 - 1887*

The annual reports available for the early years of the Scots' Church District Aid Society show that the focus of their missionary work was broader than solely providing for the needs of children.<sup>306</sup> Initially the work with children was part of a commitment to care for local families.<sup>307</sup> In their work for the society, Sutherland and Armour taught Sunday School, provided meals and gave money to the poor.<sup>308</sup> The move into child welfare was not a planned initiative but rather evolved from the society's other work. From July 1881, when the first child appears on record, until the end of that year, only five children came under the control of the society. The first placement arose when parents approached the society for assistance in finding suitable work situations for their older children.<sup>309</sup> These early admissions were accommodated initially in Armour's own home or with another committee member, Mrs Alexander Cameron Macdonald, before being sent to their permanent placement.<sup>310</sup> When she was asked to take in younger children,

<sup>306</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1884), 21.

<sup>307</sup> KA, Ward, *The Scots' Church Melbourne*.

<sup>308</sup> KA, Ward, *The Scots' Church Melbourne*.

<sup>309</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #1 and #5. Both these children were placed in work arrangements.

<sup>310</sup> Alexander Cameron Macdonald and his wife later became committed members of Strong's new church the Australian Church. See Colin Macdonald, "Alexander Cameron Macdonald (1828-1917)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macdonald-alexander-cameron-4079>, accessed on 25 September 2017.

Sutherland followed the practice established by the government scheme, locating suitable foster parents who were paid the departmental rate of five shillings a week for their services.<sup>311</sup>

Over the next two years the boarding out program achieved an increasing prominence and in 1884 it was recognised in a new section of the society's Annual Report exclusively devoted to the work with 'Neglected Children'.<sup>312</sup> The increasing number of children gave the work credibility with both the public and government alike. In early 1884 the *Argus* reported that the ladies had begun to seek the financial support to set up a receiving home which would be used to process the children before they were sent to foster homes or work placements, again mirroring the government system.<sup>313</sup>

In promoting this new work Sutherland borrowed heavily from the British child rescue movement. Magazines published by British child rescue societies in order to gain public support and to raise funds from the 1870s were circulated in Australia, and articles extolling their work were reprinted in local denominational publications.<sup>314</sup> Sutherland was a keen reader and by 1884 she was overtly using many of the child rescue tropes deployed in such magazines to promote her work.<sup>315</sup> In a pamphlet distributed in 1888 Sutherland clearly articulated a local version of what was by then a well-established narrative:

In Melbourne, as in all cities, there is much prevalent evil, and, consequently, there are many children whose parents are leading vicious and criminal lives, and, unless removed from such influence, the moral certainty is, that they will follow in their parent's footsteps. The object of this Society is, to remove these children from their

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<sup>311</sup> "Home for Neglected Children - Opening by Dr Cameron Lees," 7.

<sup>312</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1884).

<sup>313</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" 67.

<sup>314</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 90-92.

<sup>315</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1884).

unnatural, so called parents, and to place them in comfortable homes in the country districts.<sup>316</sup>

Sutherland, however, qualified the assumption of parental fault that such a narrative implied, noting that there was also 'unavoidable misfortune through sickness, and death of one or both parents' which was 'not the result of crime and debauchery'.<sup>317</sup>

While international child rescuers, particularly those in London, used their Evangelical networks to further their careers,<sup>318</sup> Sutherland chose instead to harness the power of the press, taking individual influential journalists into her confidence to promote her work.<sup>319</sup> The most notable of Sutherland's allies in the press was John Stanley James, who wrote under various nom-de-plumes, the most famous of which was 'The Vagabond'.<sup>320</sup> James had gained a reputation as an early investigative reporter, going undercover into various institutions to reveal details of their operations. The public loved his work and by the 1880s he was well known and, most importantly, widely read. At the time he was freelance but in the early 1880s often wrote articles for the *Argus*, which was a popular conservative-leaning newspaper in Melbourne.<sup>321</sup> Sutherland's friendship with James continued until his death in 1896.<sup>322</sup>

James echoed Sutherland's use of child rescue narratives in the early pieces he wrote in support of her work. As early as 1884 James wrote in a letter to the *Argus* that the Scots' Church work 'was established to get possession of boys and girls whose parents were vicious and disreputable, before their children could be contaminated by their own

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<sup>316</sup> KA, This pamphlet is held a Monash University Library. A copy has been given to Kildonan UnitingCare. Selina Sutherland, *An Appeal on Behalf of the Children's Aid Society*, (Melbourne: W. H. Williams, 1888), 3.

<sup>317</sup> KA, Sutherland, *An Appeal on Behalf of the Children's Aid Society*, 4.

<sup>318</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 20.

<sup>319</sup> For an analysis of Sutherland's special relationship with the Melbourne paper the *Argus* see Lane, "The *Argus* and Miss Sutherland," 93-103.

<sup>320</sup> John Stanley James, *The Vagabond Papers*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), Compiled Papers, 1-15 esp. 15. The editor Michael Cannon outlines James' career in the Introduction and notes his relationship with Sutherland; see John Barnes, "James, John Stanley (1843-1896)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/james-john-stanley-3848>, accessed 10 June 2011.

<sup>321</sup> Richard White, "Australian Journalists, Travel Writing and China: James Hingston, the 'Vagabond' and G. E. Morrison," *Journal of Australian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2008): 237-50.

<sup>322</sup> Swain, "Selina Sutherland: Child Rescuer," 114.

evil courses'.<sup>323</sup> In an article later that year he reported on the society feeding the local paper boys, presenting Sutherland as a central character in the piece. Approaching some of the many other ladies present who were assisting her, he was told to 'speak of Miss Sutherland. For it is her work and she is at the head of it'.<sup>324</sup> His description constructs Sutherland in classic child rescuer mode as 'a feature in the back slums of Melbourne. Going hither and thither in the very worst and lowest localities.'<sup>325</sup> Through such publicity the Vagabond provided the basis for Sutherland's later claim to be the Australian Dr Barnardo, the difference in gender left unmentioned.<sup>326</sup>

A further article that year gives some indication of Sutherland's popularity, not just with the general public, but those who received her help.<sup>327</sup> One boy who Sutherland had placed in the country recorded his gratitude with a £1 donation to the society via the *Argus*. In the report the boy stated that he had gone to Sutherland himself having become ill after living on the streets for several years.<sup>328</sup> Initially, he reported, Sutherland was reluctant to help and worried that he would misbehave. After receiving his assurance that he genuinely wanted her assistance she took him, and several other boys, to placements in the country. Here he proved himself and was so pleased to have received the help that he was anxious to support Sutherland's work through his donation. He also reported that all the other boys were also doing well.

Two further articles published in the *Argus* in 1885 built on this heroic image.<sup>329</sup> Reproducing the rural nostalgia that marked the child rescue literature coming out of Britain, they drew a sharp contrast between the darkness of the cities and the light of the

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<sup>323</sup> "Neglected Children," *The Argus*, 9 February 1884, 4.

<sup>324</sup> The Vagabond, "A Newsboys Feast," *The Argus*, 10 November 1884, 6.

<sup>325</sup> "A Newsboys Feast." 6.

<sup>326</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 19.

<sup>327</sup> "Published Daily," *The Argus*, 25 December 1884, 5.

<sup>328</sup> KA, The boy's record was located in Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #81 and he remained with his employer and later became a partner at the placement provided for him by Sutherland.

<sup>329</sup> The other major Melbourne newspaper, the *Age* mainly covered stories about some Scots' Church Annual Meetings. See "The Scots' Church Social Improvement Society: Annual Meeting," *The Age*, 3 June 1887, 5.

countryside in which the rescued children would be redeemed.<sup>330</sup> The first article evocatively described a journey into the laneways of Melbourne supposedly 'some of the vilest dens in the city', where James was able to record that Sutherland's 'mission among the slums' had brought her great respect.<sup>331</sup> In the second article, published one week later, James accompanied Sutherland to visit children taken from those vile dens who had been placed around the rural town of Wycheproof, enthusiastically concluding:

Enough that they are all happy and cared for in homes here when they could have been guttersnipes more or less in the city. The contrast between what is and the horrible might have been strikes one everywhere.<sup>332</sup>

As a result of such publicity, Sutherland and her work became synonymous with child rescue in the mind of the public.<sup>333</sup>

The case files reflect the impact of Sutherland's growing prominence through a shift in language used to describe the entry of children to the society's control. Increasingly, from 1884 the records reveal a constant stream of children being brought 'under the notice of the Society' rather than being 'rescued' from the streets by Sutherland or her workers.<sup>334</sup> Interested members of the public knew Sutherland by reputation and delivered the children to her door.<sup>335</sup> She was in the process of becoming what Jaggs has described as 'the doyenne of voluntary child rescuers in Victoria'.<sup>336</sup> By 1888 the Vagabond specifically compared the work of Sutherland with Barnardo, linking the two as child rescue pioneers.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 64-66.

<sup>331</sup> James, "The Story of a Street Arab Volume I," 5.

<sup>332</sup> "The Story of a Street Arab Volume II," *The Argus*, 8 December 1885, 5.

<sup>333</sup> Other local newspapers also interviewed Sutherland as her profile rose. For example see Una Hope, "Waifs and Strays," *The Herald*, 21 May 1889, 2; Hawkeye, "In the Slums of Melbourne," *The Argus*, 18 April 1891, 1.

<sup>334</sup> KA. 'Under the notice of the Society' was a term used frequently in the case notes during this period.

<sup>335</sup> Murdoch noted this feature in Barnardo's homes also. See Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 104.

<sup>336</sup> Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria* 50.

<sup>337</sup> The Vagabond, "From My Notebook," *The Age*, 10 March 1888, 4.

Sutherland was also well known to the courts of Melbourne. Twomey has argued that the role of magistrates was important in the provision of relief, a legacy from Britain where,<sup>338</sup> as Jennifer Davis has noted, 'many poor people attended the police courts neither to prefer charges nor to face them, but simply to ask for advice.'<sup>339</sup> Many of Melbourne's magistrates had wives who were involved with charitable societies, providing a referral pathway for cases in which the law was not the answer, a practice on which Sutherland was able to build.<sup>340</sup> City missionaries and other charity workers who attended at court to assist with such cases came to know Sutherland, and to refer children to her care.<sup>341</sup>

The influence and reputation Sutherland established in these courts was crucial to her success. Unlike London's most prominent child rescuers, Sutherland, as a woman, was not able to walk the streets at night looking for children. She was more likely to attend the local courts in person, pleading with the justices for children to be given into her care. In one case, reported in the *Age* in June 1885, she intervened in the case of two boys brought before the court. Impressed that the mothers of both boys had accompanied them to the court, Sutherland offered to take them into her care, arguing that 'honest, healthy work' in the country was their best road to reform. The magistrate accepted this offer in relation to the younger of the two boys, sentencing the older one to a term of imprisonment.<sup>342</sup> By September, the case records disclose the boy and also his two sisters were all placed in Sutherland's care.<sup>343</sup> By the middle of the 1880s, Sutherland no longer needed to actively

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<sup>338</sup> Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 171.

<sup>339</sup> Jennifer Davis, "A Poor Man's System of Justice: The London Police Courts in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 2 (1984): 309-45; For an examination of the role of police in managing the poor in Australia see Dean Wilson, "Policing Poverty," *Australian Historical Studies* 37, no. 125 (2005): 97-112.

<sup>340</sup> Twomey, "Courting Men," 231-46.

<sup>341</sup> KA, For example see Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #168 and #370.

<sup>342</sup> "Police News," *The Age*, 4 June 1885.

<sup>343</sup> KA, See Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #161. The boy did not appear in the case files until September, when he and his two sisters were placed into Sutherland's care. Eventually they were all sent on to Catholic institutions as this was their faith.



seek children.<sup>344</sup> She was regularly approached by parents and guardians seeking to find a home for their children.<sup>345</sup>

She had also garnered an extensive network of supporters who were convinced of the value of her work. Ministers from the Presbyterian Church recommended only a small number of cases.<sup>346</sup> Far more children came via the police. Throughout the nineteenth century the role of the police in the colony was in development, with much of their time being taken up with public order issues.<sup>347</sup> The police were called upon to deal with many cases of vagrancy, for example, and developed strong relationships with those who were seeking to assist the poor.<sup>348</sup> Sutherland, throughout her child welfare career, was to have a formidable relationship with local police.<sup>349</sup> Sergeant Bailey at the South Melbourne Police Court was a frequent source of supply.<sup>350</sup> Stationed at South Melbourne through much of the 1880s, he dealt with a broad range of matters including bringing children before the court as neglected.<sup>351</sup> What is significant is that from 1885 he chose to divert a large number of these children to Sutherland's care rather than have them committed to the Neglected Children's Department. Police courts at Prahran, Fitzroy, Collingwood, South Yarra, and Melbourne followed a similar practice choosing to send some children into Sutherland's care when their cases were deemed to be deserving.<sup>352</sup>

Also present in the courts were the Protestant city missionaries and they too began to advocate for children to be sent to Sutherland rather than see them committed to the department. The City and Suburban Mission Society, a non-denominational Protestant

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<sup>344</sup> Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 18.

<sup>345</sup> KA, For example see Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #136-138, #174, #212, and #245.

<sup>346</sup> KA, For example see Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #179 and #395.

<sup>347</sup> Wilson, "Policing Poverty."

<sup>348</sup> Swain, "Negotiating Poverty: Women and Charity in Nineteenth-Century Melbourne," 103,04,05 and 08. Several cases are listed in the article.

<sup>349</sup> She had a receiving home with a later organisation located at 64 La Trobe Street which was conveniently just around the corner from the Russell Street Police Headquarters, the local courts and the Melbourne Gaol. See Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 38.

<sup>350</sup> KA, The first case where Sergeant Bailey is mentioned was in October 1885 case #171.

<sup>351</sup> There are several reports like this in the local papers. For example see "Police," *The Argus*, 5 January 1880, 6.

<sup>352</sup> KA, For example see Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #15 and #48.

organisation, employed missionary evangelists in the poorer areas of the city and at its courts. The Annual General meeting in 1887 proudly proclaimed that 'Children had been taken off the streets, and some of them sent to the Protestant Orphanage, while others had been placed under the charge of Miss Sutherland.'<sup>353</sup>

The city missionaries referred about ten percent of the cases Sutherland dealt with.<sup>354</sup> The most prolific of the city missionaries was Mr George Hill who was attached to the police court.<sup>355</sup> He was very interested in child welfare and wrote the occasional piece for the local papers expressing his views.<sup>356</sup> In 1880 he reported details about a man brought before court for failing to care for his children because of his intemperate habits. The father was subsequently gaoled and the children were sent to the government Depot.<sup>357</sup> Hill knew many of the families in need and was often asked to speak when cases of neglect which were brought before the courts.

As a long-standing court missionary Hill was able to influence the magistrate to release children so he could place them in private organisations rather than have them committed to the department and he sent many children into Sutherland's care in this context. Many of these children had parents who were sent to gaol or charged with being drunk.<sup>358</sup> He also sometimes appeared to have taken children, particularly girls, from the street and brought them before the court as vagrants in order to bring them under Sutherland's care.<sup>359</sup>

In deciding whether to take children into her care, Sutherland drew on the definitions of neglect set out in the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act* 1864. Table two

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<sup>353</sup> "City and Suburban Mission," *The Age*, 11 February 1887, 6.

<sup>354</sup> For example see KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #323 and #403.

<sup>355</sup> The Vagabond, "The Outcasts of Melbourne," *The Argus*, 20 May 1876, 4.

<sup>356</sup> For example see Mr Hill, "Waifs, and Their Treatment in Melbourne," *The Argus*, 26 January 1888, 13. Hill refers to Sutherland in this article.

<sup>357</sup> "Parental Neglect," *The Weekly Times*, 24 April 1880, 19.

<sup>358</sup> KA, For example see Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #30, #61, and #132.

<sup>359</sup> KA, For example see Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #152, #193 (taken from Immigrants Home after mother sent there) and #306.

provides details of the justifications for removal employed in the early Scots' Church case files from 1881 to 1887.

**Table Two: Number of cases defined using definitions of 'neglect' from the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864* and total number of care 1881 to 1887**

Definitions under the <i>Neglected Children's Act 1864</i>	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887
found begging						1	1
homeless child		1	4	2	9	14	8
associating with thief or someone in gaol or disreputable			2	1	1	6	25
associating with vagrant		1		1	5	2	
associating with drunkard	1	2	13	7	18	11	19
living in immoral house or associating with those living immoral life		3		1	6	5	7
child committing a misdemeanour						1	
children in nightly employment							
TOTAL number of children defined under the 1864 Act (%)	<b>1(20)</b>	<b>7(32)</b>	<b>19(61)</b>	<b>12(34)</b>	<b>39(41)</b>	<b>40(35)</b>	<b>60(51)</b>
TOTAL CHILDREN IN CARE PER YEAR	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>118</b>

*Kildonan UnitingCare Admission Book Case Notes 1881 -1887*

By aligning her work with the existing legislation Sutherland was developing a system that was not controversial in the local conditions.

Given that the child rescue movement had developed in the wake of the British legislation on which the Victorian act was based, the commonality of language is not surprising. Sutherland used legislative definitions of neglect to argue for the need for active intervention to remove children from what she saw as dangerous environments,

and workers within the Victorian government child welfare scheme also borrowed their more colourful language. George Guillaume, the Secretary of the Victorian department from August 1881, was clearly influenced by child rescue rhetoric, adopting the term 'Street Arab' and arguing that such children were inevitably destined for a life of crime.<sup>360</sup> The Scots' Church records adopt a similar vocabulary, listing no less than thirty 'Street Arabs' apprehended by Sutherland or sent from the courts between 1885 and 1887.<sup>361</sup> Speaking a common language, Sutherland was able to work well with Guillaume, gaining his personal approval for her work.

Several of the other rationales for removal employed this shared vocabulary which was linked to the Poor Law concepts of the deserving and undeserving poor. The frequent use of the term 'drunkard', for example, denoted 'undeserving' parents. In 1883 several children whose parent was described as drunken were taken into care. For example a 16 year old girl whose mother was deceased and who lived with her father was placed in a work placement on the border with New South Wales and was later recorded as having married.<sup>362</sup> Three siblings were also taken in by Sutherland in 1886: their father was ill (he later died in 1889), while their mother was described in the files as 'a confirmed drunkard'.<sup>363</sup> The children were boarded out and described as 'adopted' meaning they found a permanent home with the families with whom they were placed and who were not paid for their service.

Sutherland had more freedom than Guillaume, both in applying such definitions and in deciding which children she was prepared to assist. The department had to provide care for all children judged in the courts as being neglected, defined in terms of the 1864 Act. Sutherland had much more flexibility. She could choose who she took into her care,

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<sup>360</sup> *Reformatory and Industrial School Report* (Melbourne: Robert S. Brain, Government Printer, 1883).

<sup>361</sup> For example see KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #97 in February 1885 for the first reference and #217.

<sup>362</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Case file #38.

<sup>363</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Case files #280-282.

including those whose need did not match the criteria set out in the Act, and she did not need to justify her decisions. For example, she was allowed to accept children who came to her directly. It was this freedom that allowed her in 1882 to take a 13 year old girl whose parents were beating her, a form of abuse not yet recognised by the law but of which Sutherland obviously disapproved.<sup>364</sup> There were others in later years. A 14 year old boy was accepted by Sutherland because his mother was described as 'a miserable, helpless woman with a large family' while his father was a 'drunkard'.<sup>365</sup> Sutherland could also choose not to take certain types of children. Generally she did not accept offending children in these early years. She also dealt with few very young babies.

Sutherland could also draw upon a wider range of remedies than Guillaume. In cases which she saw as 'deserving' she was prepared to use her resources to support a mother to keep her family together rather than remove the children from her care. Approached by a widow who was about to enter hospital seeking assistance for her two children, she arranged to have them boarded out locally, and instigated an appeal which raised sufficient money for the mother, on her recovery, to establish a boarding house through which she could support her family.<sup>366</sup> A similar appeal raised enough money for a mother of four, left penniless following her husband's suicide, to purchase a mangle and provide for her children by taking in washing.<sup>367</sup> In these situations Sutherland was both judge and jury but the women she accepted as deserving were able to avoid the inevitable separation from their children that an approach to the courts would have involved.

Sutherland was also able to be flexible in the type of care that the children she accepted would receive. Unlike the department, the Scots' Church society was able to be

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<sup>364</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Case file #22.

<sup>365</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #95.

<sup>366</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #299 -300. This case which was viewed with sympathy by the city missionary was also reported in the newspaper in order to raise further funds. See "Madness and Destitution - an Appeal to the Charitable," *The Argus*, 22 February 1887, 4.

<sup>367</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #189-192.

more flexible and offer emergency and temporary accommodation to children when a parent, mostly the mother, was ill and hospitalised. These children were not sent to the country but boarded out in the inner suburbs of Melbourne such as Carlton, Port Melbourne, South Yarra, West Melbourne and Prahran, where they could remain in contact with their families.<sup>368</sup> The regularity with which the names of the small group of mostly married women who provided this service appear in the files, over the seven year period, suggests that Sutherland saw this as an important resource to prevent family breakdown.

Even with apparently abandoned children, Sutherland explored the possibility of finding extended family members before dispatching them to homes in the country. Young children unable to give details of their family would be temporarily boarded with the society while efforts were made to locate other family members able to take responsibility for their care.<sup>369</sup> The searches were extensive with cases of relatives being located in other colonies or overseas. Once relatives were located an appeal could be launched to raise the funds to send the child to them.<sup>370</sup> More commonly aunts, uncles or even grandparents located nearby, but perhaps estranged from the child's parents, were persuaded to have the children placed in their care.<sup>371</sup>

Sutherland was also sympathetic to widowed or deserted fathers who were willing to pay the society for their children to be boarded out, locating foster homes close to town so that family contact could be maintained. She extended a similar sympathy to some single mothers arranging placements that would allow them to visit their babies.<sup>372</sup> There was no such sympathy for parents Sutherland judged to be undeserving. Like her fellow

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<sup>368</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #124, , 158, 160, 311-314,

<sup>369</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #142 and #264.

<sup>370</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files # 128, where a boy was sent to his grandmother in New Zealand.

<sup>371</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Case file #220 -221 and #348.

<sup>372</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #130.

child rescuers overseas, she saw such parents as a danger to their children. She was particularly judgmental of parents she believed were shirking their responsibilities, particularly those who left their children without financial support. It was their children she was keen to move quickly into country homes. Nor was she sympathetic when deserting parents returned and attempted to resume contact with their children.<sup>373</sup> However, unlike the department, she had no legal power to resist their claims should they insist on having their children returned, a problem that she found increasingly frustrating as her work grew.<sup>374</sup>

Over time, Sutherland's boarding-out scheme developed differently from the practices of the department. Initially all Sutherland's foster parents were paid the departmental rate of five shillings a week for their services.<sup>375</sup> By 1887, however, she was proudly proclaiming that the society only used 'Free Homes', where foster parents did not expect to be paid for their services.<sup>376</sup> The concept of free homes was a feature of the society's work for several years. The risk of sending children out to these types of situations where they could potentially be exploited as they could be viewed as needing to pay their way in working for their keep was not mentioned by Sutherland or her peers.<sup>377</sup>

Sutherland took personal responsibility for finding country homes for the children she accepted. Rather than establishing local committees, she relied on the support of local ministers, renewing her acquaintance with them when she brought more children to the district. Although they were mainly Presbyterians, there were occasions when she recruited other Protestant ministers, and even Catholic priests, to oversee placements for

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<sup>373</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files case #32 and #62-64.

<sup>374</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files #111 and #321.

<sup>375</sup> "Home for Neglected Children - Opening by Dr Cameron Lees," 7.

<sup>376</sup> KA. This was a description on many case files in this period.

<sup>377</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" 141. Musgrove discusses this issue in relation to children being exploited in work placements but it applies equally to younger children.

children of their denominations.<sup>378</sup> Without the need to have a local committee in place she could locate children in areas not used by the state system, making use of the burgeoning railway system which had by then, web-like, made its way across the colony.<sup>379</sup> In the early days she attempted to visit children she sent to the country, organising picnics and other events, and making strong connections in regional communities.<sup>380</sup>

Sutherland also took advantage of the government system by sending children she found unsuitable back to the department. As early as 1882, two girls came into Sutherland's care whom she later described as simply 'unmanageable'.<sup>381</sup> The younger girl was recorded as being sent to the department. Later that year another nine year old girl ran away from her placement.<sup>382</sup> Sutherland arranged for her to be placed in a reformatory as a ward of the state. Each year several children would be sent back to the government system. Most often this was because they were described as 'unmanageable', were ill or had absconded.<sup>383</sup> Sutherland used the department in this way to ensure that she could report that her system was successful in achieving its aims. The department had no such luxury. The decentralised system in the colony at the time gave private providers the advantage of choosing their methods and they were not encumbered by the need to take the difficult cases as the government was obliged to. In this environment private providers like Sutherland were able to flourish.

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<sup>378</sup> See KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #415.

<sup>379</sup> Andrew Waugh, "Victorian Railway Maps 1860 - 2000", <http://www.vrhistory.com/VRMaps/>, accessed on 22 July 2015, see year 1880.

<sup>380</sup> "Two Issues," *Euroa Advertiser*, 8 March 1889, 2. This article also mentions Sutherland visiting Warracknabeal with the Vagabond in James, "The Story of a Street Arab Volume II," 5.

<sup>381</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #6 and #7.

<sup>382</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #13.

<sup>383</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #155, #245 and #248, all these cases were boys.



## Conclusion

By 1887 Sutherland had built an extensive and influential child rescue society which found a place within Victoria's decentralised child welfare system. The primary goal of a child rescuer was to take children from the supposed polluting influences of the city and most importantly their natural, 'evil' parents. They generally believed such children should then be placed with suitable foster parents in the safety of the country.<sup>384</sup> But, having consolidated their child rescue schemes, child rescuers across the world were frustrated by their inability to have their authority over children recognised by law. Child rescuers, ranging from Barnardo in London, through to George Edward Ardill in neighbouring New South Wales, put great effort into seeking to have legal guardianship over their new charges.<sup>385</sup>

Sutherland had become the public face of work with poor children in Melbourne. She had raised her personal profile in order to receive financial support for her expanding work. The next chapter will examine how in 1887, as Victoria was considering changes to its 1864 *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act*, Sutherland was able to draw on her status in the community to request Chief Secretary, Alfred Deakin, to grant authority for voluntary citizens like herself to receive children officially from the courts. Sutherland had emerged at precisely the right moment but the way in which she was able to influence the development of the Victorian act says much about her ability to impress those in power with her competence and expertise.

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<sup>384</sup> For an analysis of this type of narrative see Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 64-66.

<sup>385</sup> See Swain and Hillel's discussion of the lack of success international child rescuers had in gaining legal guardianship over the children in their care. *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 141. George Ardill, having tried and failed to gain similar authority over children in New South Wales, eventually turned his attention to Indigenous children. Heather Radi, "George Edward Ardill (1857 - 1945)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ardill-george-edward-5048>, accessed 28 January 2014.



## Chapter Three: Sutherland and the *Neglected Children's Act 1887*

### Introduction

While Victoria had a population of well over half a million by the middle of the 1880s, those with the most power in the new colony were a small group of Melbourne's political, business and social elite.<sup>386</sup> In her short period in the colony, Sutherland had established herself as a person of some influence with recognised expertise. Her self-belief had given her the confidence to aspire to become the voice of child rescue in Melbourne, but she was a woman who had to navigate a social and political world which was dominated by male authority. Sutherland's earlier experiences had prepared her for this role, but she could not completely escape the limitations of gender, and within a few years was to lose control of the organisation she had created.

This chapter argues that Sutherland used the support she gained as a voluntary provider in Victoria to continue to develop her career. The first section argues that Sutherland consciously established supportive connections with several liberal-leaning politicians, and their associates, enabling her to influence the final shape of the *Neglected Children's Act 1887*. How she chose to use the new powers that the act gave her, however, was to have repercussions for her work and would bring her into conflict with the group of men who had authority over the society. Such was her belief in her own abilities that when confronted by the pressures of a looming financial crisis she remained steadfast and immovable in her confidence in her own judgement and assertively adapted her methods. As the latter part of this section contends, this brought her directly into conflict with the Scots' Church Minister, the Reverend Alexander Marshall, who by then was challenging Sutherland's supposed expertise and seeking to rein in her work. Unwilling to yield on

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<sup>386</sup> *Australasian Statistics for the Year 1880: (Eighth Year of Issue) Compiled from Official Returns with a Report by the Government Statist of Victoria* (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1881). While the general population of the colony had grown rapidly Melbourne had a stable group of wealthy individuals who grew richer as a result of booming and expanding economy which resulted from the gold rush.

any point of conflict, Sutherland fought for her personal reputation, which eventually led to the near collapse of the Scots' Church Society she had founded.

### **Sutherland and the 1887 Act**

By 1887 Sutherland had established several important relationships with political figures whose social welfare views aligned with her own. These types of networks, which formed around a common cause or idea, were transient and mutable, and were visible across jurisdictional divides throughout the imperial world. As Harvey has observed groups developed that 'might reflect common interests such as economics, politics, or philanthropy.'<sup>387</sup> Sutherland's work was given a significant boost when she proactively moved beyond her day-to-day work to make herself known to male authority figures who could further her growing cause. This was an important decision in the lead up to the child welfare legislation that was about to be drafted.

Central to Sutherland's success in cultivating these relationships was her on-going friendship with Strong, which remained firm despite his departure from Scots' Church in 1883. Strong was an important figure in many of Melbourne's liberal reform networks. The new church he had founded following his departure from Scots' Church was supported by many influential Melbournians who had an interest in the broader social good and were philanthropists in their own right. '[B]y its first committee of management, the Australia Church certainly appeared to be impressive and significant' with a membership including 'Jacob Goldstein, a founding member of the Melbourne Charity Organisation Society and William McCulloch, grazier and politician'.<sup>388</sup> Although Sutherland did not follow Strong to his new church she was associated with his wife, Janet,

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<sup>387</sup> Harvey, "'Layered Networks,'" 121.

<sup>388</sup> Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church*, 100. For details of some of these influential figures see Janice Brownfoot, "Goldstein, Jacob Robert Yannasch (1839–1910)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/goldstein-jacob-robert-yannasch-704>, accessed 17 May 2016; Samuel Mc Culloch, "Mc Culloch, William (1832–1909)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcculloch-william-4077>, accessed 17 May 2016. There were many other Melbournians of note who became members of Strong's church.

through their membership of the District Nursing Society committee and hence remained within the Strong's circle of influence.<sup>389</sup>

Through Strong, Sutherland was introduced to a range of liberal-minded politicians, some of whom she mixed with socially. William Harbison, for example, regularly had her as a guest at his substantial farm on Phillip Island.<sup>390</sup> He was also friends with another former parliamentarian, George Higinbotham, with whom Sutherland was associated through her work in the courts.<sup>391</sup> Higinbotham had been a lawyer, then parliamentarian, before moving onto a distinguished career in the judiciary where he dealt with cases of neglected children.<sup>392</sup> Later in their lives, Sutherland was in court when Higinbotham made his last appearance in 1893.<sup>393</sup>

Higinbotham, Strong and Sutherland had another shared interest, the women's suffrage movement.<sup>394</sup> There are very few references to Sutherland attending regular meetings but she seems to have presented herself as a celebrity supporter at specific times in her career. In 1885, at a Women's Suffrage Society meeting, letters of support from Higinbotham, Strong and Sutherland were read to the members.<sup>395</sup> She reengaged with the movement after she parted with the Presbyterian Church in 1894. because the Presbyterian Church leadership denied her demands for autonomy, citing that experience as evidence for the need for women to be given a voice in political affairs.<sup>396</sup> In 1895, she gave a similar speech to the Women's Franchise League.<sup>397</sup> In 1903 she gave another

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<sup>389</sup> For example see "The District Nursing Society," 13. Each month a similar report would appear in the local newspapers.

<sup>390</sup> There is a record of Sutherland's regular visits being noted in a local woman's diary of the period. Joshua Wickett Gliddon, *Phillip Island in Picture and Story* (Melbourne: Bush Nursing Hospital, 1958), 313. The local archive was visited but no record of this diary has been able to be located to confirm what the author reported.

<sup>391</sup> Charles Parkinson, "George Higinbotham and Responsible Government in Colonial Victoria," *Melbourne University Law Review*, 2001/04//2001, 181-217; A newspaper article recording his death. John Reid, "Memoir to George Higinbotham," *The Argus*, 18 May 1895, 6.

<sup>392</sup> "Prominent Topics," *Advocate*, 15 March 1890, 12. Higinbotham chastised Sutherland for pursuing the custody of a child who was believed to be Catholic.

<sup>393</sup> "Judge Higinbotham's Last Sentence," *The Bendigo Independent*, 4 January 1893, 2.

<sup>394</sup> Dianne Gardiner, "Women's Suffrage in Victoria," *Agora* 45, no. 4 (2010): 54-59.

<sup>395</sup> "The Women's Suffrage Society," *The Age*, 19 November 1885, 5.

<sup>396</sup> "Miss Sutherland," *The Herald*, 24 November 1894, 1.

<sup>397</sup> "Miss Sutherland on the 'Superior Sex'," *The Age*, 13 February 1895, 6.

speech to the Women's Suffrage Society advertising her work and highlighting her own success as a woman.<sup>398</sup> Clearly, she contributed to women's rights debates for her own reasons. Rather than listening to the women's movement, she used it to promote her own cause. Seeking to be heard in the political arena, she used every method she could find.

The most significant contact that Sutherland made through her ongoing supportive relationship with Strong was with the up and coming Member of Parliament - Alfred Deakin. Deakin and Strong maintained a strong personal friendship which eventually led Deakin to join Strong's Australian Church in 1896.<sup>399</sup> Alfred Deakin was a popular and accomplished local journalist who began his political career in 1879.<sup>400</sup> He was a supporter of the move to federate the colonies to form a national government and helped to create Australia's constitution. After Edmund Barton resigned in 1903 Deakin would become Australia's second Prime Minister.<sup>401</sup> In the early part of his political career, he was a member of the Victorian government and in 1885 he was made Chief Secretary—in this role his responsibilities included child welfare. It was Deakin's and Sutherland's joint interest in the child welfare which brought them to each other's notice.

It was in Deakin that Sutherland found a willing listener who was open to her suggestion that, as part of the changes he was seeking to introduce in relation to neglected children, he should include a clause giving private child rescuers powers of guardianship over the children who were taken into their care. These powers, she argued, would safeguard the families who were providing these children with homes.<sup>402</sup> Deakin described the new clause as 'a provision with reference to placing children gratuitously with persons desirous of adopting them'.<sup>403</sup> He acknowledged Sutherland as its

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<sup>398</sup> "Women's Suffrage. Public Meeting at the Town Hall.," *The Age*, 28 February 1903, 11.

<sup>399</sup> Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church*, 191.

<sup>400</sup> R Norris, "Deakin, Alfred (1856-1919)". <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/deakin-alfred-5927>, accessed on 1 October 2012; also the more recently published Judith Brett, *The Enigmatic Mr Deakin* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2017). Deakin worked for the *Age* newspaper before becoming a member of Parliament.

<sup>401</sup> Norris, "Deakin, Alfred (1856-1919)."

<sup>402</sup> *VPD*, (1887), 443. This debate took place on the 19th of July 1887.

<sup>403</sup> *VPD*, (1887), 443.

inspiration describing her as 'a most estimable lady, who has done good work in the back-slums of Melbourne'.<sup>404</sup> He couched his argument in support of the change in economic terms stating that '[Sutherland] with most praiseworthy and self-sacrificing exertions has established relations with a number of farmers and other residents in the country, and is able to place out a certain number of children every year with excellent foster parents', adding that 'when this can be done gratuitously and by means of a philanthropic agency there is no necessity for the state doing it and paying for it'.<sup>405</sup>

Deakin invoked two other names in support of the change, William Forster and William Groom, both of whom worked in the Try Society.<sup>406</sup> Their focus was on adolescent boys at risk of coming into conflict with the law,<sup>407</sup> and their advice was sought for a second bill currently before the house which dealt with so called 'criminal' children. Debated and passed in tandem in 1887, both the *Juvenile Offender's Act* and the *Neglected Children's Act* contained clauses authorising the activities of voluntary child rescuers, although the former required any individuals seeking custody under these provisions to provide a surety before the child would be released into their care.<sup>408</sup>

Unlike the 1864 Act, which had drawn heavily on the English industrial and reformatory school acts, Guillaume boasted that the new act was developed for Victorian conditions and contained 'valuable reforms and several novel provisions' which reflected local child welfare practice.<sup>409</sup> Swain and Hillel have argued that Sutherland's success in having child rescue authorised by government was in part because 'Australian child rescuers positioned themselves as improving on the state boarding out schemes'.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>404</sup>VPD, (1887), 443.

<sup>405</sup>VPD, (1887), 443.

<sup>406</sup>Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal*, 52.

<sup>407</sup>Cate O'Neill, "The Try Society," <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000402>, accessed 15 October 2012; See the reference Deakin makes to their work in Parliament on 19 of July 1887. VPD, (1887), 447.

<sup>408</sup> *Juvenile Offenders' Act*. Victoria, 1887.

<sup>409</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary for the Year 1887* (Melbourne: Robert. S. Brain, Government Printer, 1888) 11.

<sup>410</sup> Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 142.

Having aligned her work so closely with the existing state system, Sutherland was able to argue, as did Deakin, that her system was superior because the foster families took children without payment, motivated by altruistic not monetary concerns. Deakin pressed the point that there was no charge upon the government.<sup>411</sup> For a government already supportive of voluntary philanthropy, this argument aligned perfectly with the general opinion that voluntarily-run philanthropy was better and, most importantly for the government, cheaper than state provision. Child rescuers in the other Australian colonies were never able to match Sutherland's achievement. While they were able to lobby governments to have child rescue principles incorporated into child welfare legislation, no other colony gave voluntary individuals the powers that Sutherland gained through the 1887 Act.

Section Eight of the new act featured Guillaume's 'novel provisions' giving private persons and the societies they represented several means by which they could take authority over children. It gave individual agents authority to apply the legal definitions of neglect and apprehend children from the streets (in Section 19) and from brothels (in Section 21). Section 64 gave courts the authority to hand children over to voluntary providers such as Sutherland who then became the guardians of these children until they reached the age of eighteen, or twenty-one in particular cases.<sup>412</sup> Under the new legislation societies had to be registered to receive children legally under the act and could require parents to sign a transfer of guardianship over to the society.

Sutherland's relationship with Deakin, Strong and their associates had enabled her to influence the development of an Act, engaging in an arena that was usually the domain of male politicians. Sutherland not only successfully navigated this essentially male area of expertise, but her views were taken seriously by Deakin and his supporters. As a result

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<sup>411</sup> *VPD*, (1887), 443. This was part of the debate which took place on 19 of July 1887.

<sup>412</sup> *Neglected Children's Act*. Victoria, 1887.



of her intervention she received her reward. Sutherland was the first child rescuer licensed under the new Act,<sup>413</sup> and the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society was named as the first organisation that could receive and care for neglected children. However, while the amendments gave Sutherland extraordinary control over the families she was to come in contact with, she was discriminating in the exercise of her new powers.

### **The 1887 Act and its influence on Sutherland's methods: 1888 to 1893**

In 1887 the Secretary of the newly named Department for Neglected Children, Guillaume, made it clear that he hoped that voluntary providers would increase their involvement in managing children who would otherwise become the state's responsibility. In the Annual Report he mused:

The power to permit approved voluntary persons to take over the legal guardianship of both Neglected and Offending children from the court or from Parents, and also to trace out and remove any that may be living in bad houses, is one that should prove of vast service and encouragement to the *Scotch Church Boarding Out Society for Rescue work* [sic], and other agencies, in their philanthropic labours; and these provisions, if taken advantage of, will probably be found to have the effect, by extending voluntary benevolence, to gradually lessen the number of orphans and waifs and strays coming into the care of the department.<sup>414</sup>

He was not to be disappointed, as Sutherland continued to increase the numbers of children who came into her care.

Following the passage of the 1887 Act, other denominations developed their own Neglected Children's Aid Societies to prevent the proselytisation of their members by the

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<sup>413</sup> KA. This original document is still held in the archive of Kildonan UnitingCare.

<sup>414</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary for the Year 1887*, 13.

now dominant Scots' Church.<sup>415</sup> By 1893 several new societies had been formed, including by the Methodists, Salvation Army, Wesleyans, Church of England and Catholic Church, each with its own licensed agent, but none was able to challenge Sutherland's domination of the field.<sup>416</sup>

Sutherland, meanwhile, did not apply for all the powers that she could have been granted under the Act, nor did she fully use those that she had been given. In addition to giving the courts the power to place children directly through licensed organisations, the act also authorised societies to make parents sign a transfer of guardianship in front of a magistrate before their children were taken into care. Sutherland could have sought to take all children in her care under such strict conditions, effectively giving her the power to deny any parent access to their children. Her records from this period, however, indicate that she continued to take children in a similar manner to her previous work, primarily using her guardianship powers only for the children who came directly to her from the courts. Even with children who had been taken before the courts, there is evidence that Sutherland was prepared to take some on a temporary basis while waiting to see if other arrangements could be made to return them to their families.<sup>417</sup> Aware of Sutherland's flexibility, both the police and city missionaries continued to bring her children who they did not want to have legally committed, and she continued to accept them as voluntary placements.<sup>418</sup>

After the passage of the new Act, the official case notes recorded details of the legal status of each child in care: A simple 'V' signified a voluntary placement, 'CC' indicated

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<sup>415</sup> *Neglected Children's Act*. Victoria, 1890. In 1890 the *Neglected Children's Act 1887* was consolidated into a new *Neglected Children's Act 1890*. There were no substantial changes to the act at this time.

<sup>416</sup> KA, *Transcript of Conference of Private Associations and Societies under the Neglected Children's Act 1890*, (Melbourne Town Hall, 16 February 1893).

<sup>417</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files case #563-565 and #582.

<sup>418</sup> KA, Scots' Church Case File #740-742, but there are numerous examples from 1888 to 1893. A voluntary placement was a non-statutory placement which was supposedly used by choice by parents seeking to retain their legal rights over their children. In practice, however, parents were often denied access to the children or found it difficult to remove them, most particularly if they had fallen behind in any arrangement for payments towards their children's upkeep.

court committal and 'TG' was used for transfer of guardianship.<sup>419</sup> Table three shows the new powers never became the predominant conditions under which children came under Sutherland's care between 1888 and 1893, despite the fact that the overall number of children continued to grow.

**Table Three: Conditions under which children were admitted to the Home 1888 to 1893**

<b>Year Child Entered Care</b>	<b>1888</b>	<b>1889</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1892</b>	<b>1893</b>
<b>Court Committals</b>	0	5	1	1	7	3
<b>Transfer of Guardianship</b>	5	14	19	41	31	11
<b>Voluntary and temporary admissions</b>	129	158	111	103	91	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	134	177	131	145	129	73

*Kildonan UnitingCare Admission Book Case Notes 1888 -1893*

Court committals were never the main feature of the work. However, the number of children coming into care under a transfer of guardianship rose from approximately eight percent in 1889 to fifteen percent in 1890, peaking at twenty four percent in 1891. An examination of several of these cases illustrates the circumstances in which Sutherland chose to use this power. In the first recorded case where she assumed guardianship of a group of children, she clearly believed them to be in danger, removing them from an abusive stepfather and subsequently placing them with an aunt.<sup>420</sup> The second case involved children brought under false pretences from Ceylon. Here Sutherland used her new guardianship powers to take them temporarily under her care while raising the funds needed to return them to their parents.<sup>421</sup> In later years Sutherland would use transfer of guardianship to gain control of children who had initially been admitted as voluntary

<sup>419</sup> KA. These notes were placed on the files from 1888 onwards.

<sup>420</sup> KA, Scots' Church Case File #522 -524.

<sup>421</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files case #534 -536; "The Importation of Foreign Children," *The Argus*, 22 November 1888, 10.

placements, particularly in cases where parents had died, disappeared or failed to keep up their payments for the care of their children. Taking guardianship in such cases made her more confident in arranging country placements, or getting police co-operation to retrieve children who had run away.<sup>422</sup>

Sutherland was less comfortable in using her new power to actively remove children found residing in brothels. She was not alone in her reluctance. In the Annual Report of 1890 Guillaume expressed his disappointment that only three such children were taken that year and six in the year before.<sup>423</sup> None of these children had been removed by Sutherland who, despite her claims to being well known in the areas of the city where prostitution was common, only ever took two young girls, aged six and seven, in such circumstances.<sup>424</sup> The other children who had been taken from what was described as 'brothels' over this period came as court committals and were brought to her from court by a city missionary or the police.<sup>425</sup>

While Sutherland had gained more authority through the various provisions which the act presented, she continued to operate the society in her own indomitable and independent way. She used the various elements of the act as new additions to the series of management options she had available to her. She took children under the society's authority but rarely placed them under transfer of guardianship conditions. The provisions of the act were used only in emergency situations. Increasingly they became irrelevant, as Sutherland and the society struggled with an unprecedented and devastating economic depression, which challenged the very foundations of all Sutherland's previous assumptions about how best to deal with destitute children.

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<sup>422</sup> KA, Scots' Church Case File #600-601 and #738-741, but there are numerous examples from 1889 to 1893.

<sup>423</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary for the Year 1890* (Melbourne: Robert. S. Brain, Government Printer, 1891) 10.

<sup>424</sup> Despite this fact Sutherland still gained a reputation for taking children 'off the street' which scholars have uncritically repeated. For example see Hoban's summary description of Sutherland's work in Hoban "Selina Sutherland (1839-1909)."

<sup>425</sup> See KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files case #747 and #1006.

### **The crisis begins: the 1890s Victorian depression and its impact**

By the 1890s Sutherland was operating in economic conditions very different from those she had encountered when she began her work. During the 1880s some local banks had been speculating with the assistance of a rush of overseas funds. The ensuing land boom and bust caused a financial crash and by 1892 several local banks had failed, causing genuine panic and hardship.<sup>426</sup> While the number of people seeking Sutherland's help was growing, her funding sources were in decline as her supporters faced financial strain.

In 1887, the society had rented a premises in the inner suburb of Jolimont for an initial receiving home. It was called 'Kildonan' after a parish near Sutherland's home in Scotland.<sup>427</sup> This premises was only ever seen as temporary and the committee quickly engaged in a fund-raising drive, collecting enough by 1890 to take possession of a permanent receiving home in Flemington Road, North Melbourne. However, the new property was subject to a large loan and the costs of refurbishing the building added further to the debt.<sup>428</sup> Supporters within the church became concerned by the society's running costs, which continued to escalate as more and more children came into Sutherland's care.<sup>429</sup> At the height of the depression, in 1892, Sutherland took 129 children into care, only 26 of whom, aged between 14 and 17, were able to be placed straight into employment, mostly in the country.<sup>430</sup>

At first Sutherland continued to assume that many of the problems being experienced by the poor were the result of intemperate habits. In 1890, when she gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions, her views were clear. She stated that 'the majority of the poor were men and women who had incapacitated

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<sup>426</sup> Graeme Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1978), 15-16.

<sup>427</sup> "The Neglected Children's Aid Society," *The Argus*, 13 December 1887, 8.

<sup>428</sup> KA. The builder who completed these works was Dame Nellie Melba's father David Mitchell who was a member of Scots' Church. David Mitchell, 12 July 1890.

<sup>429</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1895), 7.

<sup>430</sup> See KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society Case Files #1080 & #1105.

themselves for work by intemperate habits'.<sup>431</sup> She held these views so strongly that she chastised the poor in her care. While giving out bread and butter and tea to local men in a packed Mission Hall, she apparently remarked, 'You wouldn't need this if you kept from drink, for you'd all have money to buy your own.'<sup>432</sup>

By 1892 Sutherland had changed her position, as more and more able bodied men began to find themselves unemployed with no way to feed their families. In February she joined with church ministers, local union leaders and philanthropists who were calling on the state to intervene.<sup>433</sup> Her view now was that families whose male provider was unemployed, and hence poor through no fault of their own, had to be spared from the indignities usually associated with charity.<sup>434</sup>

Sutherland worked alongside many of her philanthropic colleagues to establish an unemployment relief fund in 1892.<sup>435</sup> While attending a large gathering in support of the unemployed Sutherland was reported as saying:

There are certain kinds of poverty which will abide in our midst so long as drunkenness and crime hold their sway, which at present they do, but the distress which is begotten of want of employment by strong and hearty men ought not to be relieved by charity. The first duty of the State is to see that those who compose it should not suffer privation by reason of lack of work, but will provide suitable and remunerative employment. Charity steals away a man's independence, and pauperises him.<sup>436</sup>

In the absence of government action, Sutherland made every attempt to support the families caught up in this period of economic hardship. She bent the rules to assist families

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<sup>431</sup> "The Charities Commission," *The Age*, 22 November 1890, 15.

<sup>432</sup> "Temperance Notes," *Ballarat Star*, 4 July 1891, 1.

<sup>433</sup> "Sunday Afternoon with the Unemployed," *The Argus*, 9 February 1892, 4.

<sup>434</sup> "The Destitution in City and Suburbs", *The Argus*, 17 June 1892, 6.

<sup>435</sup> "The Distress among the Unemployed: A General Relief Fund Started," *The Argus*, 17 May 1892, 6.

<sup>436</sup> "Sunday Afternoon with the Unemployed," 4.

that in her opinion were in genuine need. At the height of the depression, Sutherland sometimes passed off older boys as adolescents in order to secure them some work.<sup>437</sup> In 1892 and 1893 there were two children whose details were fabricated by Sutherland. Neither the children listed nor their supposed foster parents were locatable in later audits. Sutherland appears to have diverted some of her funds to assist families in need but covered up her decisions by creating fake cases.<sup>438</sup>

Sutherland's continued independence, and her commitment to the unemployed, did not sit well with the conservative authorities at Scots' Church. In May 1892, Marshall and the committee of the District Improvement Society, which still oversaw the work with children, ordered Sutherland and her ladies' committee not to take in children on several occasions.<sup>439</sup> However, with the continued financial support of Armour, Sutherland was able to defy these instructions. When, in 1893, the receiving home was quarantined because of an outbreak of ringworm, she returned to the practice of housing new admissions in Armour's home now conveniently located at 167 Collins Street, diagonally opposite Scots' Church. Armour's home received 62 of the 71 children admitted that year.<sup>440</sup> It must have been galling for Marshall to see children playing across the street in active defiance of his orders. In 1893 Sutherland and her supporters continued their defiance, taking 71 children into care.<sup>441</sup>

Anxious to continue her work unhindered, Sutherland sought government backing and funds. It was a difficult request given that the same group of politicians had just a few years earlier supported her work precisely because it did not need such assistance. Yet, initially, there was cause for hope. An estimates hearing on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September

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<sup>437</sup> KA, Scots' Church Case File #1139 and #1151, both boys were reported by their placements as being much older than the 15 years their case records stated.

<sup>438</sup> KA, Scots' Church Case Files #1175 and #1184.

<sup>439</sup> KA, Selina Sutherland, *Statement of the Work in Connection with the Neglected Children from Jan'ry 1st to October 31st 1893*.

<sup>440</sup> KA, Sutherland, *Statement of the Work in Connection with the Neglected Children from Jan'ry 1st to October 31st 1893*.

<sup>441</sup> KA, Sutherland, *Statement of the Work in Connection with the Neglected Children from Jan'ry 1st to October 31st 1893*.

congratulated Sutherland on her work and John Murray, the member for Warrnambool, floated the possibility of it gaining government support. However, the conversation quickly returned to children selling newspapers and the funding did not eventuate.<sup>442</sup>

Sutherland then decided that she needed an opportunity to continue her work without interference from the leadership of Scot's Church.<sup>443</sup> In the following month, she wrote to the North Melbourne Presbytery of the Church asking the members to provide her with a new platform from which to carry on her work.<sup>444</sup> This request was then taken to the annual Presbyterian General Assembly for consideration in November. At the meeting Marshall was already on the defensive stating that the Scots' Church society's funding had actually increased annually since 1891. He appeared to be resigned to the idea that there would be two societies operating within the denomination asking simply 'first for a continuance of the countenance and help of the General Assembly and ... that the new society's work would be carried on' without interfering with the Scots' Church work.<sup>445</sup> He was appointed to the committee established to consider the request but was unable to outweigh the support that Sutherland had been able to muster and a new Presbyterian child rescue society was established with Sutherland as its licensed agent.

Fourteen members of the existing ladies' committee joined Sutherland's new Society, but Scots' Church was determined to continue the work of its existing society, and immediately advertised for a new agent.<sup>446</sup> In November 1893 Miss Margaret Stewart took the position. Sutherland's new society was called The Presbyterian Society for Destitute Children, but while this name was meant to distinguish it from the work associated with Scots' Church, not surprisingly, many of those who sought assistance were

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<sup>442</sup> "Parliament Legislative Assembly ", *The Argus*, 29 September 1893, 7.

<sup>443</sup> "Parliament Legislative Assembly ", *The Bendigo Advertiser*, 29 September 1893, 7.

<sup>444</sup> "Presbyterian Assembly," *The Argus*, 16 November 1893, 3.

<sup>445</sup> "Presbyterian Assembly," 3.

<sup>446</sup> "An Appeal on Behalf of Neglected Children: To the Editor of the Age," *The Age*, 9 November 1893, 4.



confused, especially given that Sutherland operated out of premises adjacent to the church.<sup>447</sup>

Despite her change of auspice, Sutherland remained the preeminent non-government provider in Melbourne. The number of children received by the Scots' Church society was significantly reduced with only 34 children admitted to its care between October 1893 and October 1894, while Sutherland took 174 over the same period.<sup>448</sup> The Scots' Church society was reduced to the status of the other denominational societies authorised under the act that had always been minor players.<sup>449</sup>

The reformed Scots' Church society sought to establish itself as a Presbyterian society run by and for Presbyterians. Stewart, the new agent, had previously been a member of the society's committee. On taking on her new role she conducted an immediate audit of all cases that the Scots' Church society still had on its books. She visited numerous districts to search for the children, asking Sutherland about cases where she had difficulty finding them.<sup>450</sup> Her audit exposed Sutherland's lack of adherence to the Act. For example, Stewart found that Sutherland had returned 41 out of 137 children taken either by court committal or transfer of guardianship between 1888 and 1893, although the act did not permit her to do this without the permission of the Chief Secretary.<sup>451</sup>

From the end of 1893 through most of 1894, Stewart recorded her visits in the case notes of children who had already been sent to foster placements. Her work was made more difficult by the loss of all the transfer of guardianship forms for 1893.<sup>452</sup> While case notes may have recorded some of the details of children over whom the society had authority they did not always record which Justice of the Peace or court was involved in

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<sup>447</sup> "The Presbyterian Society for Destitute Children," *The Argus*, 11 December 1893, 6.

<sup>448</sup> Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 31.

<sup>449</sup> "Commission of the Presbyterian Assembly", *The Argus*, 3 May 1894, 7. According to the Reverend Stewart there were nine other organisations in operation by 1894.

<sup>450</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files case #1009. This issue was later raised by Rentoul in a newspaper article. See "Those Little Ones," *The Herald*, 11 May 1894, 2.

<sup>451</sup> KA, Margaret Stewart, *Report on the Work of the Society from 1881 to 1893*, (1893).

<sup>452</sup> KA. Kildonan's archives contain all the transfer of guardianship forms from 1888 to 1940 except for the year 1893.

the process. They also did not necessarily give all the details of why children were taken by the society. This loss of documentation for the year in which Sutherland began to be at odds with the leadership of Scots' Church suggests that she may have taken these documents with her, in a deliberate attempt to obscure the facts about many of her contested cases, or simply to continue to have authority over them.

Mr William Gore Brett, the Inspector of Charities at the time of this upheaval,<sup>453</sup> was asked by Scots' Church to adjudicate in cases where the two societies were in dispute, primarily children admitted from January to October 1893.<sup>454</sup> He ruled that any children taken under guardianship conditions who were still under the age of 18 continued to be the legal responsibility of the Scots' Church Society rather than Sutherland.<sup>455</sup> However, in December 1893 Stewart was still trying to locate some of these children and it was only later that Sutherland informed her that 18 of these children had been returned to their families.<sup>456</sup>

In November 1893 Brett reported that Stewart had visited 70 homes in the country and 30 in the city. Altogether, he stated, 246 children had been 'visited, written to and personal information received on them', but Sutherland continued to move children without authority.<sup>457</sup> Some foster parents were confused about where their loyalty lay and Stewart recorded several who, years after Sutherland's departure, still contacted her when circumstances changed with the children in their care.<sup>458</sup> This was not a situation that those who supported the ongoing work of Scots' Church could tolerate.

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<sup>453</sup> Brett was employed in this position from 1890. *Victorian Government Gazette* (1890), 3041. The notice of his appointment appeared on the 1st August 1890.

<sup>454</sup> KA, William Brett, *Inspector of Charities Report*, (1893).

<sup>455</sup> On the 3rd of November Stewart was officially authorised under the act as the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society's new agent. Sutherland was reported in the same notice as resigning on 31 October 1893. *Victorian Government Gazette* (1893), 4342.

<sup>456</sup> "Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly: A Speech at Buninyong," *The Argus*, 8 May 1894, 5.

<sup>457</sup> KA, William Brett, *Inspector of Charities Report*, (1894). For example of Sutherland's behaviour with some of these cases see KA, Scots' Church Neglected Childrens Aid Society file #937 and #1176.

<sup>458</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file #1144. In case file #198 Stewart reports that the girl who was placed in care under Sutherland in 1886 was sent as a servant to the Melbourne Hospital in 1895 by Sutherland. Stewart visited her there to remind her she was still under the Scots' Church authority. The girl reportedly then wrote an

Marshall had allies within the church who were sympathetic to his concerns about two societies operating simultaneously. In a meeting of the North Melbourne Presbytery, the Reverend Doctor John Rentoul, the Principal of the Presbyterian theological training college, Ormond, with the support of his associate, Professor Andrew Harper, sought to limit Sutherland's work to only Presbyterian families in order to yet again contain her work.<sup>459</sup> While other ministers sought to defend the work of the new society, the vote to restrict the work was passed by 19 votes to 16.<sup>460</sup> There were two groups of ministers who were now on different sides of this debate. Sutherland was being told by the majority of her detractors how to manage the society and this did not sit well with a woman of such independent spirit.

By May 1894, Stewart's findings were known to many in the Presbyterian leadership, and disquiet about Sutherland's disregard for the legal restrictions on her activities began to spread. That same month the underlying tension between the two groups broke out in public. On Saturday, 7 May, the *Age* published a letter purportedly from a Jewish man, 'Mosha Sandris', which launched an extraordinary personal attack on one of Sutherland's key detractors: Rentoul. The letter quoted the verse 'love thy neighbour' but criticised Rentoul for only wanting to assist Presbyterian children rather than any child in need.<sup>461</sup>

On 8 May, the *Age* received a response from Rentoul. He began by stating that the earlier letter was a ruse to support the work, and more importantly the methods, of Sutherland. He argued it was Sutherland herself who had set the agenda for the new society including that they limit their work to Presbyterian children. He remarked that 'some of Miss Sutherland's more foolish and inconsistent supporters are now trying to

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'impertinent letter' to the Scots' Church committee requesting she be released from their care. As she was a voluntary placement they decided 'to have nothing further to do with her'.

<sup>459</sup> "Neglected Children - the Presbyterian Aid Society", *The Argus*, 4 April 1894, 6.

<sup>460</sup> "Neglected Children - the Presbyterian Aid Society", *The Argus*, 4 April 1894, 6.

<sup>461</sup> John Rentoul, "Professor Harper and Jewish Conversion," *The Age*, 5 May 1894, 7.

whittle down or conceal this fact'.<sup>462</sup> He stated that he was of the opinion that children should be taken into care under 'legal control ... instead of the method of indiscriminate voluntary admissions'.<sup>463</sup> Importantly, he noted that he had the 'support of Mr Brett, Mr Millar [of the Neglected Children's Department] and almost every experienced man who is acquainted with the rescue and training of neglected children'.<sup>464</sup>

But Sutherland had the support of the editors of the *Argus* who now provided her with an invaluable platform from which to defend her work. Following concerns growing within the Presbyterian Assembly, she used her press contacts to launch a counterattack against some of the members of the Scots' Church leadership.<sup>465</sup> In a speech given at the Buninyong Temperance Hall on Sunday, 6 May, she stated that 'the children dealt with were not from the criminal class but children of respectable parents who through the terrible depression and through injustice had been brought to suffering, want and death'.<sup>466</sup> In her view the children were in need of care not rescue. In a long speech she justified the work she had been undertaking over the previous few years. She claimed that 'she was ashamed of the Presbyterian [General Assembly] for requiring that children rescued should be Presbyterian' and stated that she had been admonished for letting the leadership of the Presbytery know that some 'men holding office in the church ... were at the same time receiving rents from houses used for immoral purposes'.<sup>467</sup> This was an explosive claim and one which would cause uproar in the Church.

The church establishment was quick to respond. A letter from George Tait, the Clerk of the General Assembly, was published in the *Argus* the very next day. This

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<sup>462</sup> "Mosha Sandris and Jewish Conversion," *The Age*, 8 May 1894, 6.

<sup>463</sup> "Mosha Sandris and Jewish Conversion," *The Age*, 8 May 1894, 6.

<sup>464</sup> "Mosha Sandris and Jewish Conversion," *The Age*, 8 May 1894, 6. Millar had taken over as Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department after the tragic death of Guillaume in 1892; The circumstances of his death were reported widely in all the local papers. For example see "The Death of Mr. George Guillaume," *The Argus* 25 April 1892, 6.

<sup>465</sup> This support was clearly articulated in this small but important article. See "Miss Sutherland: A Philanthropic Study," *The Argus*, 5 October 1893, 5.

<sup>466</sup> "Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly: A Speech at Buninyong," *The Argus*, 8 May 1894, 5.

<sup>467</sup> See "Miss Sutherland's Mission," *The Ballarat Star*, 2 May 1894, 4; "Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly: A Speech at Buninyong," *The Argus*, 8 May 1894, 5.

response led to a questioning of Sutherland's competence in an attempt to undermine the validity of her allegation. He accused Sutherland of not following church procedure in speaking publically about such an important allegation which instead 'ought first to have been brought before the session of the congregation'.<sup>468</sup>

It was too late for the church leadership to be able to stop a very public campaign as the dispute was now being reported in other papers.<sup>469</sup> The Reverend John Burns, whose church had been associated with arranging for Sutherland to give a talk on her work, now publically distanced himself from her comments.<sup>470</sup> By 22 May, 1894, an inquiry had been held by the leadership of the Presbyterian Assembly. Sutherland, as a woman, was unable to attend unless summoned but had been furnished with a list of questions regarding her allegations. She was most uncooperative, refusing to address the issues posed.<sup>471</sup> The Reverend Stewart, who had presided over the society since its foundation, resigned in response to the Presbyterian leadership's treatment of Sutherland. Yet the leadership did not move immediately against her and the dispute took some months to be resolved.

By August those whom Sutherland accused, who were never named publically, took their own evidence to the North Melbourne Presbytery. These men argued that they had indeed purchased properties which they had hoped the church would use but that had been judged unsuitable for the purpose. The properties in question had then been rented out through a reputable agent with instructions that only suitable tenants should be found. Brought before the Presbytery the agent stated that he had indeed followed

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<sup>468</sup> "Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly," *The Argus*, 9 May 1894, 5.

<sup>469</sup> "Country News Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly," *The Age*, 11 May 1894, 6; Rentoul also went to the *Herald* with his version of the dispute and they published his views in full. See "Those Little Ones," *The Herald*, 11 May 1894, 2.

<sup>470</sup> "Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly: Her Speech at Buninyong an Explanation," *The Argus*, 11 May 1894, 5.

<sup>471</sup> "The Presbyterian Assembly and Miss Sutherland," *The Argus*, 25 May 1894, 4.

these instructions. On the grounds of this evidence they dismissed Sutherland's salacious allegations.<sup>472</sup>

In November, Sutherland was called before the Presbyterian General Assembly once more to defend herself and explain her public statements.<sup>473</sup> Before a closed meeting she delivered a partial apology, arguing that while she knew that members of the Scots' Church Board of Management had properties which were used for these purposes, she was not implying their 'guilty knowledge' of this fact.<sup>474</sup> The Assembly found, however, that 'her conduct in casting aspersions on the good name of the church' and '[bringing] accusations against office bearers' was 'deserving of censure'. At this point, Sutherland lost her temper declaring that she could prove 'that certain church members frequented such houses [of ill repute]'.<sup>475</sup> The session erupted. Sutherland, having made it clear that she was unwilling to yield to the authority of church leaders, had no future in the church.

Feeling vindicated, Marshall personally led the push for Sutherland to be ejected from the Presbyterian society which could then be amalgamated with the Scots' Church society. He had the vocal support of Rentoul, known within the church as 'Fighting Larry', because 'he would employ any argument that met his purpose'.<sup>476</sup> Rentoul was personally scathing in his attacks on Sutherland and her chief supporter, Reverend Stewart.<sup>477</sup> The dispute continued to be played out the press in Melbourne and beyond and ended with Sutherland's resignation from the Presbyterian Neglected Children's Aid Society in October 1894.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> "Miss Sutherland's Case," *Geelong Advertiser*, 18 August 1894, 4.

<sup>473</sup> "Miss Sutherland," *The Herald*, 24 November 1894, 1.

<sup>474</sup> "The Presbyterian Assembly," *The Age*, 16 November 1894, 6.

<sup>475</sup> "The Presbyterian Assembly," *The Age*, 16 November 1894, 6.

<sup>476</sup> Stuart Macintyre, "Rentoul, John Lawrence (1846-1926)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rentoul-john-laurence-8184>, accessed 4 August 2015.

<sup>477</sup> "Care of Destitute Children," *The Argus*, 3 May 1894, 5.

<sup>478</sup> "Miss Sutherland and the Presbyterian Assembly: A Speech at Buninyong," *The Argus*, 8 May 1894, 6. Her resignation was reported in New South Wales. See "Religious Bickerings: Rash Assertions," *Evening News*, 17 November 1894, 4; South Australia. See "Charges against Church Officers," *The Kadina and Wallaroo Times*, 28 November 1894, 4.

## Conclusion

By the time she tendered her resignation to the Presbyterian General Assembly Sutherland had already taken steps to establish a new base. Claiming now a colony-wide coverage she founded a new organisation called the Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society. Again she was able to enlist the support of almost all the women who had worked with her in both the Scots' Church and Presbyterian societies. While her work had been for the most part extraordinarily successful she was not to be remembered fondly by those who remained in Scots' Church. Indeed, even in the book published honouring Kildonan's centenary, her role was only begrudgingly acknowledged.<sup>479</sup> While she was certainly a significant individual in the history of Scots' Church's work with neglected children, the manner of her parting proved painful for many left behind who were tasked with trying to re-establish the work with which Sutherland had been personally associated for so long.

Sutherland's continued work with neglected children in Melbourne hindered Scots' Church's ability to re-establish its place in child welfare and to obtain financial and material support from the broader population. Each time Sutherland resigned, the good will and most of the financial support followed her. However, the Presbyterian Church was not going to abandon its commitment to child rescue. In 1895 the two societies amalgamated to become the *Scots' Church and Presbyterian Neglected Children's Aid Society*. The next chapter will examine how this new society adapted and changed following the departure of their high profile founder.

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<sup>479</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 10. Robinson had to acknowledge the extent of Sutherland's work in the Scots' Church society in part because of her continued success in the field; Some in the Presbyterian Church, such as Aeneas Mac Donald writing in 1937, acknowledged Sutherland's contribution to the Scots' Church and Presbyterian's child rescue work in a much more favourable light. See Mac Donald, *One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Victoria*, 96-97.

## Chapter Four: Sixty-five years of organisational stasis

### Introduction

Sutherland's ghost loomed large for Scots' Church as it sought to maintain its work and distinguish itself in the crowded child rescue field. The Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society came to view her centralised and personality-driven style of leadership as a costly mistake, and opted instead for a more co-operative, compliant approach. This chapter argues that while this shift ensured that the organisation was managed efficiently it became more inward looking and lacked the innovation that had marked its early years. The new approach guaranteed the continuing financial support of the Presbyterian Church and its members from across Victoria but the work entered into a period of stasis, with methods remaining remarkably unchanged over a period of sixty-five years. In this it was not alone. Most of the other child welfare organisations which were operating in the first half of the twentieth century also settled comfortably into patterns established in the previous century with little appetite for change.<sup>480</sup>

Through an examination of the history of Kildonan, this chapter provides evidence of policy stagnation which Murphy argues was a direct result of the dichotomous nature of the welfare sector at this time.<sup>481</sup> Murphy sees this period as being marked by an 'institutional inertia' which he argues was the inevitable consequence of a system in which government legislation had enshrined the important role of voluntary organisations, but left them free to continue providing their services relatively unregulated.<sup>482</sup> Private child welfare providers' responses to the social disruptions that marked the first half of the

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<sup>480</sup> For several examples of the history of other homes in this period see Howe and Swain, *All God's Children*, 55-78. Chapter Four; Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 75-166.; Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 65-135. The last of these organisations was run by Sutherland herself until 1908; Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 75-116.

<sup>481</sup> Murphy has argued that the interwar period was marked by stagnation, not only child welfare, but social welfare policy more generally. See John Murphy, "Path Dependence and the Stagnation of Australian Social Policy between the Wars," *Journal of Policy History* 2, no. 4 (2010): 450-73.

<sup>482</sup> Murphy, "Path Dependence and the Stagnation of Australian Social Policy between the Wars," 451-52.



twentieth century typically emphasised continuity rather than change, focusing on organisational survival rather than innovation.

The first section of this chapter focusses on the years immediately after Sutherland's departure, and argues that the change in leadership style removed the society from its position as a leader in the child welfare field. This period saw a decline in the numbers of children being accepted under the authority of the society. As the second section demonstrates, the broader sector itself was also relatively inert, both in the non-government and government arena, with few changes in policy and legislation from 1900 to 1950. The lack of charismatic leadership in child welfare organisations simply reinforced this malaise. The turbulence of two World Wars and the Great Depression had an impact on the work of all child welfare organisations, but changes in response to new social needs were slow and incremental. The final section explores this long period of stasis in Kildonan's history, with an eye to the small number of areas where changes did take place.

### **Rebuilding the Work**

In bringing together the two societies, Stewart displayed a very different set of priorities from Sutherland. While Sutherland used her personal profile to advance the work and resources of the new Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society, Stewart quietly set about redesigning the Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society for which she was responsible in line with the Assembly's instructions. The society was to be a mission resource for Presbyterian families, supported by Presbyterian congregations, and Stewart was content to be a low-profile agent who worked within the church rather than seeking to build a personal profile by appealing to the masses through networking and the press.

The Scots' Church society struggled to emerge from under Sutherland's strong influence in the years following her departure. She maintained her personal relationships with many of the children and the families that she had worked with while associated with the church. According to the case notes, one mother removed her child from a work placement 'on the advice of Miss Sutherland' in 1895.<sup>483</sup> There were also some foster families who wished to remain under Sutherland's supervision well after she departed in 1893.<sup>484</sup> Their loyalty was to Sutherland personally, rather than the society she had formerly led.

Sutherland's legacy was also apparent in the numbers of children for whom the Presbyterian Society was responsible. As Tables Four and Five (on the following page) indicate, the society continued to supervise large numbers of children admitted during the Sutherland era. It was limited, however, in its ability to draw in more, the bulk of the previous clientele, and the referral paths through which they came, being redirected to Sutherland's new organisation. While in 1895 it was the largest child (as against boy) rescue society working under the Act, by 1900 it was clearly in decline with Sutherland's Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society now dominating the field. The tables also provide evidence that the *modus operandi* of the two organisations had diverged, with Stewart following the Church's instructions to favour children taken under the act over voluntary admissions, while Sutherland continued to favour the latter.

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<sup>483</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file case #631.

<sup>484</sup> KA, Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society file case #577.

**Table Four: Children in the Care of Voluntary Providers in 1895 as licensed under the *Neglected Children's Act 1890*.**

<b>Name of Society</b>	Under Supervision on 31.12.1894	Court Committals	Transfer of Guardianship	Voluntary Admissions	Under Supervision on 31.12.1895
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	200	2	...	130	307
"Clifden" Society	25	...	5	...	37
Gordon Institute	209	13	4	199	218
Try Excelsior Class, Hawksburn	1	1	...	...	2
Wesleyan Neglected Children's Aid Society	112	8	3	...	123
Burwood Boy's Home	...	...	6	1	6
Church of England Deaconesses	22	1	2	14	37
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	473	41	62	13	523
Try Society St Kilda	54	2	...	68	124
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>1,377</b>

*Taken from the Annual Report of the Department of Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools 1895 page 7*

**Table Five: Children in the Care of Voluntary Providers in 1900 as licensed under the *Neglected Children's Act 1890*.**

<b>Name of Society</b>	Under Supervision on 31.12.1899	Court Committals	Transfer of Guardianship	Voluntary Admissions	Under Supervision on 31.12.1900
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	459	5	25	104	554
Wesleyan Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	185	4	9	...	195
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	373	4	22	10	358
Church of England Deaconesses	54	6	...	5	65
"Clifden" Home	65	...	5	5	75
Gordon Institute	200	3	33	85	305
Try Society Surrey Road	123	...	...	87	93
Burwood Boys Home	45	...	20	8	52
Fitzroy Streets Mission	12	1	...	7	14
Geelong "Try" Boys Brigade	181	...	...	65	191
La Trobe Street Ragged School Mission	313	1	5	170	345
St Joseph's Home Surrey Hills	218	...	1	46	200
Ballarat Rescue and Children's Home	Nil	1	3	7	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>2,454</b>

*Taken from the Annual Report of the Department of Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools 1900 page 8.*

Freed from the restraints of the Presbyterian Church and its male committee Sutherland continued her successful child welfare career. Her Victorian Neglected Children's Society was to be a non-denominational organisation assisting families in need, and she was able to call on her contacts in Melbourne's establishment for support. Both Deakin and his wife Pattie played prominent roles. In 1895 Alfred Deakin joined the Council which oversaw the work of Sutherland's new ladies committee.<sup>485</sup> In 1906 Deakin, by then Prime Minister of Australia, gave a speech at the Annual Tea Meeting. His wife was by then the society's president.<sup>486</sup> Sutherland was employed as the society's agent for fourteen years, quickly re-establishing herself as Victoria's pre-eminent child rescuer.<sup>487</sup> By the middle of the 1890s she had reached the peak of her career. Her fame was well established and she was consulted on all issues relating to children, with her opinions regularly reported in the local papers.<sup>488</sup>

In 1897, at the height of her influence, Sutherland was sent by the Victorian government to England to examine its industrial and truant schools.<sup>489</sup> In London, where she presented herself as a 'Lady Philanthropist', she was interviewed by *Reynold's Newspaper*, a left-leaning paper targeted at the lower and middle classes.<sup>490</sup> She delighted in musing that the metropolis of London did not care for children in need as well as the colonies (meaning Melbourne). For Sutherland, this was to be the highlight of her career. She kept a copy of a local newspaper report of her visit to London in her bible until her death.<sup>491</sup> She was, however, getting older and the work was arduous and relentless. It would eventually take its toll, threatening the reputation she had fought so hard to build.

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<sup>485</sup> Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 37.

<sup>486</sup> Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 77.

<sup>487</sup> Swain, "Selina Sutherland," 109-16.

<sup>488</sup> Sutherland gave her opinion on a range of welfare issues. For example infant mortality. "Traffic in Babies," *The Argus*, 1 Jan 1894, 6; She also went into country areas and gave speeches about her work. See "Neglected Children - Miss Sutherland," *Kilmore Free Press*, 26 April 1894, 3.

<sup>489</sup> "Personal," *Table Talk*, 23 April 1897, 2.

<sup>490</sup> "Notes and Gossip," *Reynold's Newspaper*, 18 July 1897, 2.

<sup>491</sup> *Miss Sutherland's Bible*, Sutherland Homes for Children (1895-1991), Berry Street Archives.

By 1908, at the age of 68, the cracks had begun to show. Her ladies committee had lost faith in her ability to manage her large workload and were concerned by reports they had heard of her behaviour towards some of the children in her care.<sup>492</sup> She was alleged to have treated one child with a mixture usually meant for cows and accused of beating another.<sup>493</sup> The committee tried to convince Sutherland to retire, or at the very least to minimise her role. They even offered her an honorary position so she could still have influence in the organisation but Sutherland would not yield to their request. When she refused to relinquish her position she was dismissed by the committee but took up residence in the receiving home in the city which had been rented in her own name.<sup>494</sup> Some of the allegations were deemed to be so serious that the government was pressured to hold an inquiry into the matter.<sup>495</sup>

Mr John Keogh, the Police Magistrate and member of the new Children's Court, was appointed to undertake the inquiry.<sup>496</sup> Beginning in October 1908 it heard a litany of allegations with the press reporting daily on the details. In her defence Sutherland was able to muster many more witnesses than those who had come forward to accuse her.<sup>497</sup> On the 4 November, 1908, the inquiry brought down its findings. Keogh noted that there were only 16 witnesses called to support the allegations and he stated that 'the evidence

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<sup>492</sup> Like Sutherland's earlier disputes, the saga was played out in all the local papers: Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 80-95; For example see "Miss Sutherland's Attitude 'Will Hold the Fort'," *The Argus* 5 May 1908, 4; "Miss Sutherland's Childrens Home Imbroglio," *The Age*, 26 September 1908, 7; *The Argus* also reported the dispute but sided with Sutherland. See "Miss Sutherland Investigation of Charges: Evidence Taken," *The Argus*, 26 September 1908, 21.

<sup>493</sup> "Miss Sutherland's Home: The Special Inquiry Vice-President's Evidence," *The Age*, 7 October 1908, 10.

<sup>494</sup> "Miss Sutherland's Attitude 'Will Hold the Fort,'" *The Argus*, 5 May 1908, 4.

<sup>495</sup> "Miss Sutherland's Home: The Special Inquiry," *The Age*, 8 October 1908, 6.

<sup>496</sup> The Children's Court was established under new legislation which passed into law in December 1906. It dealt with children separately from the adult judicial system. John Keogh became a Special Magistrate to the Children's Court on 1 July 1908. See *Victorian Government Gazette* 1908, 3147. The advent of the Children's Court will be discussed more fully in the next section.

<sup>497</sup> Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 80-95. This period is covered in Chapter Six. The government inquiry which adjudicated on the issues raised by the society and its committee against Sutherland was reported on every day. For example see "Miss Sutherland's Home: The Special Inquiry," *The Age*, 8 October 1908, 6; "Miss Sutherland's Home," *The Age*, 13 October 1908, 6; "Miss Sutherland's Home: The Special Inquiry Vice-President's Evidence," *The Age*, 7 October 1908, 10; It was also reported as far away as New Zealand. See "Local and General," *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 20 November 1908, 4.

of the inmates and employees of the home was unreliable'.<sup>498</sup> He dismissed all the accusations as unfounded, leaving Sutherland free to continue her work with children.

Following her exoneration Sutherland moved to found her final organisation, Sutherland Homes for Children.<sup>499</sup> She was now 68, although none of her contemporaries could be sure of her age, as she had perjured herself at the Inquiry stating she was ten years younger.<sup>500</sup> Yet again, with the assistance of the press, the public rallied to her cause.<sup>501</sup> One of her key supporters was Miss Augusta Meglin who gifted her property on the outskirts of Melbourne to the Sutherland Homes Trust.<sup>502</sup> On Meglin's death in August 1909 she also left half of her remaining fortune to the home.<sup>503</sup> Unfortunately Sutherland failed to see her new charges move to the Diamond Creek site as she passed away on the day of the scheduled move to the country in October 1909.<sup>504</sup> Her large funeral was a testament to the durability of her public profile.<sup>505</sup>

In 1895 Stewart had clear control of the recently amalgamated Scots' Church and Presbyterian Neglected Children's Aid Society. She had full knowledge of all the boarded out children and had improved the supervision procedures by either regularly visiting or writing to them. She had replaced the committee members who had followed Sutherland with a new committee of forty ladies, most of whom were drawn from the Scots' Church congregation.<sup>506</sup> In 1896 she was able to report:

In connection with the resolution passed in February 1893 – "That the children must be taken under legal guardianship, and only in very exceptional cases as

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<sup>498</sup> "Miss Sutherland: Enquiry Board's Report," *The Age*, 5 November 1908, 7.

<sup>499</sup> This new organisation is also featured in Jessop's work. See Jessop, *Selina Sutherland*, 1-30. This organisation was particularly influential in seeking to maintain Sutherland's reputation after the disaster of the government inquiry.

<sup>500</sup> "Official Inquiry Miss Sutherland's Evidence," *The Argus*, 27 October 1908, 7.

<sup>501</sup> "Children's Aid Work: Miss Sutherland's Sympathisers," *The Argus*, 26 June 1908, 6.

<sup>502</sup> "The Death of Miss Meglin," *Fitzroy City Press*, 6 August 1909, 4.

<sup>503</sup> During her lifetime Meglin was a recluse who gave to charity anonymously. "An Eccentric Buyer," *The Argus*, 21 September 1909, 4.

<sup>504</sup> "Death of the Children's Friend," *Ashburton Guardian*, 9th October 1909, 3.

<sup>505</sup> Swain, "Selina Sutherland," 116.

<sup>506</sup> KA, Brett, *Inspector of Charities Report* (1894).

voluntary admissions” – the Agent [Miss Stewart] wishes to draw attention to the effect of a strict adherence to that rule by stating that the numbers of those under “legal control” have been nearly doubled, while those admitted as “voluntary admissions” have been reduced nearly one-half. It is confidently hoped that before another three years have elapsed there will be no “voluntary admission” cases left on the books.<sup>507</sup>

This strict adherence to the confines of the act was also a contributing factor to the society’s reduced numbers. It is reasonable to conclude that parents were unwilling to sign their children away permanently if they only needed temporary care.

Rather than appealing to the general public, the society looked to the church community for their funds. It started producing a magazine for Sunday school children called *Home for the Homeless*, modelled on similar publications produced by British child rescue societies.<sup>508</sup> Stewart was supported by Miss Cecelia Black who was employed as matron of the receiving home in Flemington Road, North Melbourne, in 1895.<sup>509</sup> Together these two women worked effectively and collaboratively to improve the administration of the society, ensuring its stability well into the twentieth century, even if it was no longer an innovative organisation in the field. It was efficient, reducing its capacity and focusing primarily on Presbyterian children and, importantly for the church leadership, avoided any scandal.

Stewart retired from her work with the Presbyterian and Scot’s Church Neglected Children’s Aid Society in 1911 after eighteen years in the role. She also chose to resign her membership of its committee on which she had served since 1888 when Sutherland still

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<sup>507</sup> KA, *Scots’ Church Annual Report* (1896), 21. Quoted from Stewart’s report for the Presbyterian and Neglected Children’s Aid Society.

<sup>508</sup> KA. There are three copies of the *Home for the Homeless* from 1897 and 1899 in Kildonan’s archive. This periodical was based on similar publications used by British child rescue organisations in the period. For an analysis of such publications see Shurlee Swain, “Sweet Childhood Lost: Idealised Images of Childhood in the British Child Rescue Literature,” *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 2009, Vol.2 (2): 198-214. For an example of these types of publications overseas see *The Waifs and Strays*, <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/>, accessed on 28 August 2015.

<sup>509</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 14.

led the organisation. After her retirement she remained a member of Scots' Church and continued to be associated with its mission work, further evidence that she saw the children's work as part of her wider commitment to the church rather than as a route to personal advancement. The society was able to ensure a seamless transition by appointing Cecelia Black, the current Matron of the home in North Melbourne, as Stewart's replacement. According to the 1912 annual report of the church Black had 'given unqualified satisfaction in her role' and the work continued solidly, though unremarkably.<sup>510</sup>

### **Child welfare reforms 1900 to 1950**

By the turn of the twentieth century voluntary and government child welfare organisations had been established in all colonies in Australia. Following Federation, in 1901, the colonies became states but, under the terms of the new constitution, they retained responsibility for numerous key functions, including child welfare. In Victoria, the government made only minor adjustments to child welfare legislation over the next several decades. The government's policy settings, however, were challenged by a series of social upheavals, including two World Wars and the Great Depression, which led to various pressures on its ability to provide for the children being made wards. These tumultuous events challenged the boarding out system, but the government remained opposed to opening new institutions of its own, continuing to board out the majority of its wards. This unwillingness to change its approach to child welfare led to a series of developments which, over the early part of the twentieth century, increased the government's reliance on private providers. In turn non-government organisations were able to continue to carry on their work as they saw fit.

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<sup>510</sup> *Scots' Church Annual Report (1912)*, 27.



One of the few government led changes which did take place in this period was the introduction of the Children's Court in Victoria in early 1907 after legislation for its development passed in late 1906. Amongst other functions, it offered alternative pathways to prevent some children coming under government control. Once more voluntary providers and their agents were included in the provisions of this new initiative. The court was responsible for hearing criminal charges against children under the age of seventeen and all determinations under the *Neglected Children's Act* and the *Juvenile Offenders' Act*.<sup>511</sup> The child rescuers who were licensed under the *Neglected Children's Act 1890*,<sup>512</sup> including Stewart and Sutherland, now also became licensed as probation officers with this new court, responsible for supervising children in order to prevent their being placed in child welfare institutions.<sup>513</sup> However, the case notes of the period reveal that Stewart simply continued her work and did not use these new powers to manage those under her authority.<sup>514</sup> The development of the probation system represented the only major event where the government led child welfare reform in this period.

The other changes to the legislation in this period were insignificant and did not affect the methods of either the government or non-government providers. The major change introduced through the *Children's Welfare Act 1925* was nomenclature, with the Department for Neglected Children now renamed the Children's Welfare Department.<sup>515</sup> While the name change softened the apparent response to children in need by ceasing to identify the department as assisting 'neglected' children, it did nothing to assess or

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<sup>511</sup> "History of the Children's Court of Victoria" <https://www.childrenscourt.vic.gov.au/about-us/history>, accessed 9 November 2012.

<sup>512</sup> There were no substantial changes to the act only minor administrative ones which did not affect Sutherland's work.

<sup>513</sup> Stewart's letter acknowledging her new role as an authorised Probation Officer of the Children's Court is contained in the Kildonan Archive: *Notification of Appointment as Probation Officer at Children's Court*, (10 May). *The Victorian Government Gazette* also published the details: both Sutherland and Stewart appear in the list of probation officers for Melbourne published on 1 May 1907, (see p. 1972).

<sup>514</sup> KA, Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society files 1906-1910.

<sup>515</sup> *Children's Welfare Act*. Victoria, 1928.

address the treatment of those who were institutionalised or fostered out. Another small amendment to child welfare legislation was made in the *Children's Welfare Act 1933* which expanded the definitions of neglect to include females soliciting and wandering, and children whose lifestyle was viewed as potentially leading them into crime.

The major drivers of change in the government system were financial. As Musgrove has noted: 'Serious problems in the boarding-out system had been apparent throughout the 1920s. The rate of payment had not nearly kept pace with the rise in the cost of living.'<sup>516</sup> The government recognized that this was an issue and responded in 1920 by increasing the payments to families:

Owing to the continued high cost of living, the rate of payment was, on the 1st November, 1920, increased from 10s. per week to 11s. 6d. per week in the case of children under the age of twelve months, and from 7s. per week to 8s. per week for children over that age.<sup>517</sup>

The government hoped that this would enable its system to continue. However, while the numbers of children being placed in foster care remained steady for the increased payments did not persuade new families to join the scheme and, as a result, overcrowding became a serious concern at the government's Royal Park Depot.<sup>518</sup>

The Depot, was now the only residential facility under Department control. Designed as a receiving home, it was also the placement of default for children who proved hard to place or retain in foster care.<sup>519</sup> During the 1920s the number of such children began to rise. There were 173 children at Royal Park in 1920 while 1,359 children had

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<sup>516</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 – 1954," 77.

<sup>517</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1920* (Melbourne: Albert J. Mullett, Government Printer, 1921), 2.

<sup>518</sup> In 1920 when the payment was increased there were 4,128 children in placements. *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1920*, 2. By 1922 there were still only 4,189 children being boarded out despite the increase in payment. *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1922* (Melbourne: Albert J. Mullett, Government Printer, 1923) 5.

<sup>519</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 – 1954," 83.

been temporarily placed in the home over the previous twelve months.<sup>520</sup> By the end of 1925, the Depot accommodated 211, an increase over five years of about 22 per cent.<sup>521</sup> This was precipitated by an increasing number of children who the voluntary societies were not prepared to accept.<sup>522</sup> The Medical Superintendent of the home noted, 'unless there is some radical change in the conditions affecting committal and return of children to the Depot, I consider that plans for the future should make allowance for continued increase'.<sup>523</sup> His prediction proved correct as by 1928 the number of children in the government's foster care program had reached its peak.<sup>524</sup>

Despite the apparent success of the boarding out scheme, the government had always had a certain number of children who were difficult to place out in the family setting. It needed alternative arrangements for these children who were permanently housed at the Depot. As early as 1904 some provision was being made for these wards in selected privately run congregate care homes:

being sent as soon as possible after admission thereto to foster homes situations, or to other institutions for dealing with State wards. The other schools are under private management and receive a capital allowance from the Government for those inmates who are wards of the Department. (emphasis added)<sup>525</sup>

This statement marks the beginning of a policy which came to be relied upon more and more by the government and would eventually be used for other wards under its authority.

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<sup>520</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1920*, 3.

<sup>521</sup> *Children's Welfare Department and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1925* (Melbourne: H. J. Green, Government Printer, 1926), 9. This figure included eight children who were classified as being in the Royal Park Reformatory.

<sup>522</sup> *Children's Welfare Department and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1924* (Melbourne: H. J. Green, Government Printer, 1925), 5-6.

<sup>523</sup> *Children's Welfare Department and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1925*, 5.

<sup>524</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 – 1954," 77.

<sup>525</sup> The figures presented here, and elsewhere in this research, are taken from the section of the report entitled 'Social Condition'. Available at <http://www.abs.gov.au>. *The Victorian Year Book 1904* (Canberra Bureau of Statistics, 1873-2002), 214.

In 1905 the department reported that 135 children 'were inmates of institutions for neglected children'.<sup>526</sup> Just how many children were in privately managed institutions is hard to extrapolate from the government's statistics, as they were presented in the data as 'those in institutions' which also included the government's receiving home as well as hospitals. But the figures from 1910 show an increasing number of children accommodated in institutions, with a rise from 120 in 1906 to 343 in 1910.<sup>527</sup> The department's report for the year 1910 does not give details of how many of these children were in the receiving home but clearly the number of children in institutions was on the rise.

By 1915 the First World War had had an impact on the number of children in care. The department secretary gave specific details of the numbers of children under his care in that year:

8,040 were maintained in foster homes, 72 were in Government receiving depot, 45 were in private industrial schools, *254 were in other institutions*, 625 were at service earning their own living. 30 were in hospitals, 7 were on visits to friends, and 911 were with relatives and others at no cost to the State (emphasis added).<sup>528</sup>

While boarding out remained the government's favoured system, the 1920 annual report clearly identified the institutions in which some wards categorised as 'neglected', 'who cannot be boarded out or sent to situations', were being placed.<sup>529</sup> Six private institutions were receiving wards. Catholic girls were sent to the Abbotsford Industrial School and the boys were sent to St Augustine's in Geelong. Protestant boys were sent to the Salvation Army Homes in Bayswater or Box Hill, while girls were sent to its training

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<sup>526</sup> *The Victorian Year Book 1905*, 272.

<sup>527</sup> *The Victorian Year Book 1910*, 340.

<sup>528</sup> *The Victorian Year Book 1915*, 608. These details do not include children in reformatories only those who were categorised as 'neglected' by the department.

<sup>529</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1920*, 3.

home in East Melbourne or the Catherine Booth Home in East Kew.<sup>530</sup> The government reported that 302 children were in these institutions at the end of 1920 compared with 4,189 who were still boarded out.<sup>531</sup> By 1930 the number of children in non-government institutions had risen to 417, with the boarding out system accommodating 4,171 children.<sup>532</sup>

With the deteriorating economic situation brought about by the depression, the number of children being kept in institutions increased exponentially from 750 in 1931 to 1,680 in 1935. While these figures included the Depot it is clear that these years saw the beginning of a substantial reliance by the government on the state's private providers. For the providers who were also experiencing the stresses of another depression, a regular payment from the government for caring for a ward must have seemed attractive as parents were often unable to pay for children they placed in voluntary positions. By 1939 275 of the government's 3,800 wards were placed in the Royal Park receiving home and 1,739 in 70 non-government institutions across the state.<sup>533</sup>

By 1940 the government had expanded its description of the system which it now used for its wards, explaining:

According to the circumstances existing at the time of committal, the children are boarded out for payment in private foster homes or with relatives or are placed in institutions. Only one institution is governmentally controlled, viz., the department's Receiving Depot at Royal Park which is used as a clearing house. The remaining institutions are conducted by the various religious denominations or

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<sup>530</sup> *The Victorian Year Book 1920*, 405.

<sup>531</sup> *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the Year 1920*, 3.

<sup>532</sup> *The Victorian Year Book 1930*, 214. Details for the years 1928 and 1930 provided.

<sup>533</sup> Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal*; *The Victorian Year Book 1939*, 275. For year 1939, 2,045 children were reportedly in institutions.

private charitable committees, and a capitation fee is paid for wards maintained therein.<sup>534</sup>

The department produced a table which, for the first time, gave details of the number of children in its own receiving home, 251, and those in the other homes, 1,780.<sup>535</sup> The number of wards in the care of other institutions peaked in 1942 when 2,002 children were institutionalised. By 1946 this number had decreased substantially to 1,379 before rising again to 1,567 in 1951.<sup>536</sup>

While Kildonan and other non-government institutions were becoming more closely linked with the government through receiving some of its wards,<sup>537</sup> the government did not provide much oversight or policy direction. Kildonan primarily received reliable financial support. When government officials did come to Kildonan during the 1930s these instances were described by the organisation as 'visits'.<sup>538</sup> The existing reports from 1940 onwards make bland remarks about the buildings and staff, but never mention a child by name.<sup>539</sup> So established was this pattern that when, in 1947, several state wards were interviewed it was mentioned as an innovation in both the inspector's report and the Home Committee Minutes.<sup>540</sup>

Despite the obvious difficulties it was facing, the government responded with ad hoc changes as piecemeal solutions. For example, the 1945 Children's Welfare Department Annual Report outlined its financial support for the development of hostel accommodation for some of its wards who were now of working age.<sup>541</sup> The domestic service and farm placements that had provided wards with accommodation as well as

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<sup>534</sup> *The Victorian Year Book* 1940, 302.

<sup>535</sup> *The Victorian Year Book* 1940, 302.

<sup>536</sup> *The Victorian Year Book* 1946, 469 and *The Victorian Year Book* 1951, 486.

<sup>537</sup> KA, Kildonan received its first wards in 1935.

<sup>538</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1939), 19.

<sup>539</sup> DHHS, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01. There are several reports in the file dated from 1940 to 1969.

<sup>540</sup> DHHS, The report was prepared on the 30th of January 1947 and was written by Miss Gilpin. See Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01; KA, A reference to this visit and the meetings with wards was also noted in the *Home Committee Minutes*.

<sup>541</sup> *The Victorian Year Book* 1945, 468.

employment were now in decline. Many girls now worked in shops and boys in factories. By 1950 there were ten hostels being operated by the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army and the Anglican Church accommodating such young workers. These services became another voluntary contribution which was vital to the government's program.<sup>542</sup> The development of hostels provides yet another example of the government's tendency to be reactive, responding to urgent issues which required immediate solutions, rather than seeking to manage its child welfare department in an innovative planned manner.

In comparison with the department, in the early part of the twentieth century it was the voluntary sector that laid foundations for development by researching, debating and discussing child welfare concerns in new collaborative forums. Such discussions, initially, did not include the department. The non-government sector took its first steps towards becoming more organised through the development of a peak body in 1910. The Child Saving Council, which took the title of the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria (CWAV) in 1912, was established to provide a co-ordinating body for voluntary agencies operating in the child welfare sector.<sup>543</sup> Initially this group spent much of its time informing its members through inviting guest speakers to its meetings and visiting various residential institutions in order that 'the committee [would] have an intimate knowledge of the working of each organisation'.<sup>544</sup>

Later the CWAV became a forum in which the various providers could share their expertise and experience. From these small beginnings it grew to become an influential voice in debates regarding child welfare practices in the state. In the 1920s it began to

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<sup>542</sup> *The Victorian Year Book 1950*, 485.

<sup>543</sup> "Child Welfare Movement," *Weekly Times*, 19 September 1914, 13.

<sup>544</sup> "Children's Welfare Committee," *The Argus*, 10 March 1915, 16.

offer conferences and seminars on various child welfare concerns.<sup>545</sup> The 1922 annual syllabus proclaimed that the association had three aims:

1. To stimulate interest in social work among children
2. To inspire desire to render voluntary service to the cause
3. To encourage co-operation amongst the various children's institutions with a view to promoting economy and efficiency.<sup>546</sup>

To achieve these aims the association continued to arrange visits to institutions and provided lectures on popular topics regarding child welfare. Although it had no authority over the organisations involved, it was a valuable vehicle for discussions across the sector.

The association was also quickly involved in informally educating the sector about what was happening overseas. Its long-term Honorary Treasurer, Stanley Greig Smith, provided great leadership in researching these international trends.<sup>547</sup> Emigrating from England in 1909, the 25 year old Smith began his welfare career as the secretary of Melbourne's Charity Organisation Society.<sup>548</sup> As Scott and Swain have argued the 'position was a powerful one, placing the young Smith at the head of an organisation that was increasingly successful in claiming a leadership role in the local philanthropic community.'<sup>549</sup> Although he had no formal training in social work throughout his career he was an advocate for professionalism and training in the child welfare sector.

As Peel has suggested, Greig Smith 'was one of the bridges that carried charity towards social work'.<sup>550</sup> Smith believed that the non-government sector could lead improvements in child welfare by utilising new theories and methods from abroad. In the

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<sup>545</sup> The State Library which houses the early history of the organisation only has a small collection of conference materials listed in its catalogue for this period. For example see *Syllabus* (Melbourne: Children's Welfare Association, 1922).

<sup>546</sup> *Syllabus*, 2.

<sup>547</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Smith, Stanley Greig (1884-1970)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/smith-stanley-greig-11725>, accessed 18 August 2015.

<sup>548</sup> Swain, "Smith, Stanley Greig (1884-1970)".

<sup>549</sup> Scott and Swain, *Confronting Cruelty*, 61.

<sup>550</sup> Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse*, 40.



1922 CWAV syllabus a library was advertised as available for use by the members.<sup>551</sup> The syllabus noted that a 'complete record is kept of all reports issued by Child Welfare Institutions and State Departments of Australia, New Zealand, England, America, Canada and South Africa as well as reports and publications of all other Social Welfare Organisations.'<sup>552</sup> While not every member may have used the library, it gave the voluntary sector access to research trends and changes that were being discussed across the Western world.

Another organisation which would later become very influential, was the Superintendents and Matrons Association founded in 1940.<sup>553</sup> In a newspaper report about its role the association claimed it was supporting the development of social work training.<sup>554</sup> Its members also lobbied the government for other practical support for the children in their care. In 1945, for example, they petitioned the Minister for Health regarding dental care for children in all homes providing their annual report to the *Argus* so that their progress in this matter could be reported on.<sup>555</sup> By 1949 they were responsible for advertising and interviewing staff for some of the organisations they supported.<sup>556</sup> Again, many of the leaders in the sector used this group to discuss how they managed their institutions.

### **Continuing Kildonan**

Like the department, the Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society resisted change and only reacted to fluctuations in the broader environment in which it operated when absolutely necessary. From the turn of the century until 1950 it continued

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<sup>551</sup> Greig Smith Memorial Library Records, (University of Melbourne Archives, 1971). Greig Smith's extensive library was eventually amalgamated with the Victorian Community Sector library in 1985. The University of Melbourne archives hold a collection of the items that Greig Smith acquired over his decades in the sector.

<sup>552</sup> *Syllabus*, 2.

<sup>553</sup> "New Career Opening for Girls," *The Weekly Times*, 23 March 1940, 13.

<sup>554</sup> "Co-Operation Needed in Social Work," *The Argus*, 27 April 1940, 8.

<sup>555</sup> "The Life of Melbourne," *The Argus*, 21 July 1945, 12.

<sup>556</sup> "Superintendents and Matrons Association," *The Argus*, 24 March 1949, 15; See two further advertisements also in another local newspaper. "Advertising," *The Age*, 24 March 1949, 12.

to be overseen by the volunteers on its various committees, many of whom were active over several decades. Together they supervised what would become a congregate care home. Continuing to enjoy financial, and in kind support from the Presbyterian Church, the leadership of the organisation used these reliable resources to consolidate rather than question its methods.

The society did not actively seek any form of government funding. It now relied more fully on church donations rather than appealing to the public. These contributions could be substantial or small. The 1900 report provided a list of all donors, including several amounts received from children, one of which was simply described as being from 'Mrs Howlett's little ones'.<sup>557</sup> Sunday schools that subscribed to *Home for the Homeless* also donated.<sup>558</sup> By accepting and acknowledging these very small amounts the society was encouraging everyone in the Presbyterian Church to support its work in whatever way they could. As the 1904 Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society report clearly articulated, this 'arrangement secures a measure of financial support which enables the Society to carry on its operations on a scale which would otherwise be impossible'.<sup>559</sup>

Presbyterians were encouraged to view the work of Kildonan as their mission, much like supporting the work of overseas missionaries.<sup>560</sup> In addition to the Sunday school children, many wealthy parishioners supported the work both through regular donations and by leaving substantial bequests to the society.<sup>561</sup> Alexander Dick, who was a member of the Scots' Church board of management during Sutherland's era, left a

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<sup>557</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1900), 23-24.

<sup>558</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1904), 25.

<sup>559</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1904), 19.

<sup>560</sup> A similar attitude was shown by Methodist church members who supported the work of the Methodist Home. See Howe and Swain, *All God's Children*.

<sup>561</sup> Examples of these regular bequests and the interest that the society used to fund its programs can be found in the financial records at the end of each report. For example see *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1911), 38.

bequest of nearly £500.00.<sup>562</sup> The society's financial situation was greatly enhanced by such bequests which were generally invested to provide a regular stream of income from the interest accrued on the balance.<sup>563</sup>

Kildonan benefitted from congregational support in ways that overseas missions could not. The Annual Reports record a steady stream of both perishable and non-perishable items such as clothes and foodstuffs ranging from the relatively insignificant, such as three scarves, or some sweets, through to such substantial contributions as '16 dozen eggs, three cases [of] fruit, [and a] large Christmas Cake', sent by a single donor in 1903.<sup>564</sup> Huge supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables were received every year from nearly 200 harvest festivals held across the state creating the need for a major effort to bottle and pickle the produce for later use.<sup>565</sup> To ensure that such generosity continued, all donations, no matter how trifling, were listed in the Annual Reports.<sup>566</sup> Such donations gave the organisation the stability to continue its work confidently.

Like the government, Kildonan continued to promote boarding out as its favoured model of care despite the decrease in the number of placements that were made in the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>567</sup> In 1900 only 13 of the 36 children received by Kildonan were able to be placed in free homes, or 'adopted'.<sup>568</sup> The shift was accelerated by a decline in the number of people willing to take younger children, evident from the turn of the century. From 1900, when 299 children were in some type of placement to

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<sup>562</sup> For example see details of several bequests. *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1911), 41; For details of the Alexander Dick estate see *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1918), 40.

<sup>563</sup> See *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1900), 23-24.

<sup>564</sup> *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1901), 25-26; *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1903), 24.

<sup>565</sup> KA, There is a list provided under the heading 'donations' of nine churches who donated goods after their Harvest Festivals. See *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1904), 23; By 1918 there were well over forty churches in this category. See *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1918), 45-47.

<sup>566</sup> For example see KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1900) 35-40; *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1914). The list of donations was a regular feature of these early Annual Reports; From the 1890s these donations were included in the reports. See *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1896) 28-30.

<sup>567</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1907), 27.

<sup>568</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1900), 20.

1939 when only 27 were not in the home, there was a steady and gradual decline in the number of children who were boarded out.<sup>569</sup>

According to the annual reports of the period, it was older children who could obtain work placements who remained popular with foster families. Their numbers remained relatively steady until the 1930s.<sup>570</sup> People were writing to Kildonan asking for children who could work well into the 1940s.<sup>571</sup> By this time, however, Kildonan was unwilling to accept these offers choosing instead to keep children under their care. The organisation frequently made responses to such requests in this period, stating they did not have children available.

Despite the fall in the numbers of children placed after the turn of the century the society did occasionally make renewed appeals for foster families from the entire Presbyterian Church in times of greater need.<sup>572</sup> For example, the society was able to call on its loyal Presbyterian supporters to make an extra effort as the general economic situation worsened at the beginning of the Great Depression. Despite the difficult economic conditions the home managed to secure new placements for extra children. In 1931, for example, 29 homes, which included some work and temporary placements, were found for children.<sup>573</sup> Towards the end of the 1930s, however, an ever decreasing number of children were placed out, and by the early 1940s the practice had come to an end.<sup>574</sup>

The shift to congregate care which began in 1914 was in part predicated on a change in the prevailing views of some private providers. It was argued that congregate

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<sup>569</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1900) 19; *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1939), 28.

<sup>570</sup> KA, Twenty seven children were found homes in 1938. These were work placements. See *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1939), 35.

<sup>571</sup> KA. Almost every week, well into the 1940s, the committee had requests from people seeking a 'girl' for housework duties. Generally a note was placed after these records simply stating 'none available'. *Home Committee Minutes*.

<sup>572</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1939), 23.

<sup>573</sup> "Presbyterian Children's Aid Society," *The Argus*, 9 June 1933, 7.

<sup>574</sup> KA, *Your Kildonan 61st Annual Report* (1942-1943), 8. Two children were placed in homes in 1942 and five boys were permanently adopted.

care was safer and that no effort needed to be made to find children placements. By early in the twentieth century, some in the sector, including Sutherland, had come to the view that managing children within an institution safeguarded against cases of abuse which had been a small but persistent problem for the boarding out system.<sup>575</sup> Highly publicised incidents of abuse of boarded out children led to a questioning of the system, particularly among non-government organisations unable to sustain effective inspection.<sup>576</sup> These events galvanised those who sought to change their method of care to keep children safe in the confines of a congregate home and away from unsuitable placements.

The increasing focus on congregate care forced the organisation to make expensive changes. The Kildonan home in Flemington Road, founded in 1890, had been designed as a receiving home but was now increasingly used to provide long term care. While the Society continued to argue that the Flemington Road property was used to ensure that children were 'comfortably housed and fed' before being 'drafted to the country as soon as opportunity offers', the addition of a new wing in 1902 points to a new reality.<sup>577</sup> The home, which could only cater for 18 children previously, could now accommodate 27.<sup>578</sup>

Increased family disruption during and after the First World War significantly altered the nature of the demand for Kildonan's services. The number of voluntary admissions began to increase, as mothers who needed to go to hospital or could not provide for their children while their husbands were at war approached Kildonan seeking temporary care. Able to make some contribution towards the cost of the children's keep, those who sought voluntary placements were given some control about the way in which they would be cared for, and wanted to be able to make regular visits. This change meant

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<sup>575</sup> Jessop, *Selina Sutherland*, 2. Jessop reported that at the end of her life Sutherland had believed that caring for the children in a home in the country and supervising them herself was the best method of care.

<sup>576</sup> Although such reports about government wards rarely made it into the newspapers some caused a scandal. In 1890 a farmer was charged with beating his foster son. See "Sale General Sessions," *The Age*, 5 March 1890, 6. A foster mother came under a great deal of scrutiny after a toddler who was a ward of the state died in care: "Death of the Child Pledger," *The Age*, 20 March 1896, 6.

<sup>577</sup> "Scots' Church Children's Aid Society," *The Age*, 19 September 1902, 7.

<sup>578</sup> "Scots' Church Children's Aid Society." *The Age*, 19 September 1902, 7.

that rather than being placed in country homes at a distance from Melbourne, children needed to be closer to their families. By 1918 the number of voluntary admissions exceeded those received under transfer of guardianship with most children in both categories now being accommodated in the North Melbourne home.<sup>579</sup>

There were several advantages to the shift to congregate care. It meant that the receiving home in Flemington Road became the major focus of the society's work. Its position close to the centre of Melbourne made it easily accessible to Presbyterian supporters who could see the children in the home and participate in its everyday life. This connection enabled church members to engage with the work directly, giving donations and bequests to the Kildonan home that they were welcome to visit. The Home Committee, which had previously assisted the agent to manage the boarding out system, was now actively involved in the day-to-day work at the home including monitoring the children's schooling, devotions, health and all aspects of their lives in one place.

Bill Smith, who was placed in Kildonan in the late 1920s, and later wrote of his experiences, provides rare access to a child's voice from this period. As with many other Care Leavers, his first moments in the home were etched on his memory.<sup>580</sup> As Swain has argued 'the point of entry to the institution' was a significant moment of Care Leaver memory 'where the description of the building vividly signified a change of status'.<sup>581</sup> Smith talks of this point of entry in bodily terms remembering, 'now we entered the hall, and as we stood waiting, my pounding heart seemed to be the only movement in a body paralysed by fear of the unknown'.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>579</sup> KA, For examples see *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1911), 28; *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1914), 35.

<sup>580</sup> For examples of other Care Leaver memoirs see Frank Golding, *An Orphan's Escape: Memories of a Lost Childhood* (South Melbourne, Vic.: Lothian Books, 2005); Penglase, *Orphans of the Living*; Kate Shayler, *The Long Way Home* (Sydney NSW: Random House, 2001); The Senate Committee received hundreds of submissions from Care Leavers who reported similar experiences of care. See Committee, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*.

<sup>581</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Institutionalized Childhood: The Orphanage Remembered," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 8, no. 1 (2015): 20.

<sup>582</sup> Bill Smith, *Better Off in a Home* (Albert Park, Vic: Yvonne Burns, 1982), 18.

Smith also recalls the distress associated with the set visiting times that were typical of congregate care at the time. He writes of how the children were all escorted across Flemington Road to play in the grounds of Royal Park. Here they watched cars pass by, waiting anxiously for visitors. While some children would be called back to see their families for others, like Smith, this time highlighted their feeling of being alone. As he stated: 'On those visitless days I would become less and less optimistic until the realisation of my aloneness would submerge me in a sea of self-pity. Like many others, I would secretly isolate myself and cry till I could cry no longer.'<sup>583</sup> However, Smith comments that he was lucky, as he got visitors sometimes, unlike some of the other children.

Smith also had some positive memories of his time at Kildonan. He remembers Nurse Frances treating him kindly when he first arrived stating that 'she proved to be as jolly as she looked. Her friendly laughter soothed and eased the tension that I felt.'<sup>584</sup> His first meal was also a surprise as it consisted of a 'nice pasty covered with rich brown gravy followed by rice pudding with plenty of milk.'<sup>585</sup> Although 'the meals at Kildonan were not all as pleasing ... they were an improvement on those [he had experienced] at home'.<sup>586</sup> He also remembers the friendships that he formed and the solidarity created with other children.<sup>587</sup>

These relationships were sustained when the boys were removed to Kilmany Park, a farm home in rural Victoria.<sup>588</sup> The founding of Kilmany Park Boy's Home in 1924 fortuitously for Kildonan it provided them with an opportunity to place adolescent boys in the country and had the advantage of not having to find them work placements.<sup>589</sup> The

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<sup>583</sup> Smith, *Better Off in a Home*, 24.

<sup>584</sup> Smith, *Better Off in a Home*, 18.

<sup>585</sup> Smith, *Better Off in a Home*, 19.

<sup>586</sup> Smith, *Better Off in a Home*, 20.

<sup>587</sup> Smith, *Better Off in a Home*, 17, 22. In particular Smith speaks about his ongoing relationship with 'Spud'.

<sup>588</sup> Smith, *Better Off in a Home*, 27-140. Smith describes his experiences at Kilmany Park in the later part of his memoir from chapter four onwards.

<sup>589</sup> "Kilmany Park Boys Home," *The Gippsland Times*, 1 May 1924, 2.

boys, however, experienced much tougher conditions. Kilmany Park had been a large estate in the south east of Victoria before it was sold to the Presbyterian Church which set it up as a home to teach boys farming practices. While Kilmany Park was always independently managed by a group of Presbyterian ministers and volunteers, very quickly a policy was developed which enabled Kildonan to free up places in its own receiving home by sending boys to the Gippsland home in the south east of the state. At the end of each year during the school holidays any boys who had turned eleven were automatically sent to Kilmany. This policy remained in place until 1960.

When Smith arrived at the Kildonan home in 1925, it was already operating near its capacity of 48.<sup>590</sup> He was never sent to a boarding out placement, but remained in what was effectively a congregate care home, which was now accommodating 44 children.<sup>591</sup> With the onset of the depression, the society reached a crisis point, unable to accommodate all the requests they received.<sup>592</sup> Many fathers had to relocate for work and some mothers were left alone to care for their families. Some became ill and while others appeared from the notes in the Home Committee to have nervous breakdowns because of the financial pressure.<sup>593</sup>

The dire economic conditions during the 1930s not only increased the number of applications received for voluntary admission but also often left parents unable to keep up with their payments. Costs were increasing and the contributions of parents were vital, so the committee was forced to regularly monitor voluntary payments, instructing parents to remove their children if they fell too far behind.<sup>594</sup> It was at this point, in 1935, that Kildonan began to accept state wards whose payments were at least more reliable.

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<sup>590</sup> "Presbyterian Assembly," *The Age*, 12 May 1925, 11.

<sup>591</sup> KA, *Presbyterian and Scots' Church Executive Minutes* (1918-1930).

<sup>592</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1931), 19. The *Home Committee Minutes*, also record that the home was full from time to time in the 1920s.

<sup>593</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, See 3 October 1934.

<sup>594</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report*, (1939) 36.



Despite these serious financial constraints the society was committed to expanding its facilities. The depression delayed their plans by several years. In 1929, the committee had purchased land in the then rural area of Burwood, east of the city. The plan was to build three new buildings on the new site, a boys' and girls' cottage, and an administration block, and to redesign what was simply described as 'an older building' as the hospital wing. The total build was estimated to cost £10,000.<sup>595</sup> Despite receiving some generous donations in order to commence the planning process the society would spend several years fundraising to accumulate the capital required.<sup>596</sup> Finally, in May 1936, a large donation from a generous church member enabled building on the new site to commence.<sup>597</sup>



Figure 2: The Kildonan administration building built in 1937 is still in use today.<sup>598</sup>

With everything in place plans were now made to move all the children to their new surroundings. A call for tenders was put out in October 1937 for the 'removal of furniture and equipment' from Flemington road to Burwood.<sup>599</sup> On Saturday, 11

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<sup>595</sup> "Kildonan Children's Home," *The Age*, 16 May 1936, 24.

<sup>596</sup> "Excellent Work for Children," *The Argus*, 3 July 1936, 3.

<sup>597</sup> "Kildonan Children's Home," *The Age*, 16 May 1936, 24.

<sup>598</sup> KA, Image taken at a reunion of Kildonan past residents when they visited the site in 2014. It is now used by Deakin University as part of its Burwood campus.

<sup>599</sup> "Tender," *The Age*, 16 October 1937, 23.

December 1937, the Home was officially opened by Lady Huntingfield, the Victorian Governor's wife.<sup>600</sup> Amongst supporters who attended the opening was the Reverend Charles Strong who, at the age of 93, had come to join the celebration.<sup>601</sup> In January 1938 fifty children were finally relocated to Burwood. The initial buildings had accommodation for 75, and a further three buildings were planned, so Kildonan management believed it was well placed to cope with increasing demand.

The larger style of congregate care placed greater financial pressure on the organisation both in regards to set up and ongoing costs. More staff were needed to supervise what were now two separate cottages for boys and girls. A nurse was to be engaged to relieve in both cottages. For the first time the society decided to appoint a male member of staff as 'attending to the boiler was too heavy for the [female] staff or any of the boys'.<sup>602</sup> Although child care staff were not well paid, the demands on the budget increased.<sup>603</sup>

The committees were equally committed to further expansion, providing a specially designed kindergarten and a further 25 places for children, appealing for the funds needed to complete their master plan.<sup>604</sup> These new buildings added to the day-to-day running costs. Kildonan's new kindergarten building was to be located on the other side of the site from the boys and girls cottages. It was designed to have two large day nursery rooms, separate dressing rooms and a night nursery room. The nurseries were divided into smaller bays each containing eight cots. The children were kept under observation through a specially designed window linked to the staff quarters. Each child was allocated their own cupboard. The building also included room for staff quarters,

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<sup>600</sup> "New 'Kildonan' Homes," *The Age*, 13 December 1937, 3.

<sup>601</sup> "New 'Kildonan' Homes," 3.

<sup>602</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, note made at the meeting on 11 November 1937.

<sup>603</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1939), 3.

<sup>604</sup> "Kildonan Children's Home," *The Age*, 16 May 1936, 24.

including a separate staff dining room, living and sleeping quarters.<sup>605</sup> The cottage was opened by Mrs R. G. Menzies, the wife of the current Prime Minister of Australia, in 1941 with a great deal of publicity.<sup>606</sup>

The cost of the kindergarten delayed plans for a much needed sick bay. Contagious diseases spread more easily in congregate care. Without the means of isolating infected children diseases like chickenpox, scarlet fever and measles, could spread quickly within the home. When outbreaks occurred within the home, it was placed in quarantine, preventing children from going out for holidays. As a precautionary measure children were also kept at home when epidemics occurred in the outside community.<sup>607</sup> However, it was 1945 before Kildonan had the resources to construct its sick bay.



Figure 3: A bedroom in Minnie Mailer cottage (late 1950s)<sup>608</sup>

The congregate care system made no claim to bring the children up in a family environment. Children were segregated by age and gender on the new site. The older girls left behind when their male peers were transferred to Kilmany Park were accommodated

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<sup>605</sup> "Architecture Modern Kindergarten," *The Argus*, 24 October 1940, 24.

<sup>606</sup> "Cottage for Toddlers Kildonan Home," *The Age*, 23 August 1941, 7.

<sup>607</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes* There are numerous examples listed across the minutes of the home being closed due to illness.

<sup>608</sup> KA, Taken from a slide collection in the Kildonan archive.

in 'Minnie Mailer' cottage, named in honour of the widow of Dr Ramsey Mailer who gave £6,000 towards the building. It offered more privacy, with four rather than eight girls per room, and provided training to the residents who could stay at the cottage until they were 21.<sup>609</sup>

A submission made to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care in 2004 records one child's experiences at the new Kildonan. Having only recently been made a ward of state the girl was still distressed at being placed in care when she spent several weeks with her sister at the new site.<sup>610</sup> She recalled what she considered a large girls' dormitory but could not remember whether her sister was placed in a bed beside hers.<sup>611</sup> In her distress she wet the bed and the floor but, in retrospect, was surprised that she was not punished by the cottage mother, unlike the common practice in many other institutions at the time.<sup>612</sup>

The increased capacity positioned Kildonan well to respond to approaches from the department to accommodate state wards, a move that would also relieve some of the financial strain with payments from government more reliable than those from parents.<sup>613</sup> In 1935, the Home Committee minutes recorded that six children were transferred directly from the Children's Welfare Department. During the 1930s the proportion of state wards remained low,<sup>614</sup> with only 18 wards out of a possible 75 children at the end of the decade. However the Children's Welfare Department contributed £158 to the society for the care of these children while the parents of the remainder paid only £275.<sup>615</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> "Presbyterians Extend Social Service Work," *The Age*, 8 October 1949, 24.

<sup>610</sup> 'Submission 408 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care'.

<sup>611</sup> 'Submission 408 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care'.

<sup>612</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 - 1954" 115-16.

<sup>613</sup> The term 'ward' was first used officially in the state after the introduction of the 1887 to refer to children under government authority. See <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000214>, accessed on 22 July 2018.

<sup>614</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, Report made on the 3 of October 1935.

<sup>615</sup> KA, *Scots' Church Annual Report* (1939), 36.

The Second World War brought more challenges. The home was now experiencing ongoing staff shortages although, fortunately, its volunteers remained loyal and reliable. Rapid staff turnover at the home was exacerbated by wartime conditions and, most importantly, leadership roles became much harder to fill. Catholic institutions were staffed by celibate Religious but Protestant organisations had to recruit their staff in a market which, as unemployment levels fell, became increasingly competitive.<sup>616</sup> The staffing situation at Kildonan reached a crisis point in 1942 when both the manager and matron resigned.<sup>617</sup> Finally, with the arrival of Miss Frances Cumming in 1943, some stability was regained, at least in the management staff, as Cumming remained in the role until 1954. Amongst the other staff, mostly young single women, turnover was high with sickness, marriage or the ability to obtain higher wages elsewhere the most common reasons for leaving.<sup>618</sup>

Concerns about the organisation's ability to train and maintain staff were raised constantly in the Home Committee Minutes from the 1930s to the 1950s. When staffing problems reached crisis point the only solution was to admit fewer children. The number of children admitted to Kildonan began to decline in 1945, and by June 1951 there were only 57 children in an institution that had accommodated up to 100 in the past. Yet even with the reduction in numbers, it was difficult to secure and retain sufficient good staff. One child's memory of being cruelly punished for her enuresis by her cottage mother in the early 1950s is a reminder that some of the staff who could be found had little preparation for their role, and few skills to deal with the difficult problems they could face.<sup>619</sup> The quality of care was even more difficult to monitor where staff were transient and only received training on the job as they undertook their roles.

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<sup>616</sup> Scott and Swain, *Confronting Cruelty*, 90.

<sup>617</sup> KA, Several other staff members reportedly also resigned. See *Your Kildonan 61st Annual Report (1942-1943)*, 1.

<sup>618</sup> KA, *Your Kildonan 61st Annual Report (1942-1943)*.

<sup>619</sup> 'Submission 492 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care'.

Kildonan was able to weather all the tumultuous changes in social conditions in the first half of the twentieth century because of the continuity of its core leadership and voluntary supporters. For example, Black, who had begun her work as Matron of the home in 1895, had also overseen the redevelopment of the Flemington Road home in 1913 and worked on as agent until 1921. By the time she retired she had worked with the society for over twenty-five years. She continued to use her knowledge and influence by joining the Home Committee after her retirement. When she finally resigned in 1943 at the age of eighty one, she had contributed to the society for forty eight years.<sup>620</sup>

From the turn of the century, the Home Committee was comprised of three permanent members from the Executive Committee and two places which rotated monthly. They met with the agent at Scots' Church every week and after the move, travelled out to the Elgar Road Home three out of every four weeks.<sup>621</sup> Home Committee members made day-to-day determinations regarding staffing, maintenance and most importantly care arrangements for the children.<sup>622</sup> They also inspected the home each week and oversaw the children's education until 1929 when the Education Committee was formed to assist children to go on to secondary school or training.<sup>623</sup>

After the Second World War men became increasingly involved in the management of the home. Kildonan's first 'honorary' manager was Mr David Bain who had been on the Executive Committee since 1940. Given the title 'Convenor' in 1942, Mr Bain was actively involved in managing the home, especially in relation to the maintenance of the property.<sup>624</sup> By June 1945 Mr Bain had been given the title of honorary Manager a position reported in the Annual report as necessary to 'satisfy certain legal requirements'.<sup>625</sup> He continued

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<sup>620</sup> KA, *Presbyterian and Scots' Church Children's Aid Society Kildonan Home Annual Report (1943 -1944)*, 4.

<sup>621</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, see reports from 1938.

<sup>622</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 14-15.

<sup>623</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*.

<sup>624</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 52.

<sup>625</sup> KA, *Your Kildonan 61st Annual Report*, (1942-1943), 3.

in this role until 1952 when Kildonan employed its first male manager, the Reverend James George, who remained in the role until 1956.

### **Conclusion**

From the late nineteenth, to the middle of the twentieth century there was little change in child care methods. Both the government and voluntary sector settled into what Murphy has described as 'a period of stagnation'.<sup>626</sup> This was despite the challenges brought by two World Wars and a devastating depression. However, Kildonan, like other non-government child welfare organisations had developed support systems and political connections which enabled it to survive such pressures. As late as the end of the 1950s these children's homes were often still largely run by volunteers and low paid staff.

Overseas, however, there were a series of important events which, in the post war era, would challenge the existing complacency about the quality of child welfare in Victoria. In both America and Britain, to which Victoria looked for advice, there was significant research which highlighted the detrimental effects of congregate care. Given the decentralised nature of the Victorian child welfare system, and the relationships that had developed between the government and non-government providers from the 1930s, Kildonan and its peers were inevitably influenced by, and involved in, responding to these challenges.

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<sup>626</sup> Murphy, "Path Dependence and the Stagnation of Australian Social Policy between the Wars," 450.

## **Chapter Five: Mid-Twentieth Century Social Work Developments**

### **Introduction**

The networks developed among voluntary agencies, from the early 1900s, facilitated most importantly by the CWAV, positioned them well to participate in reforms in child welfare in the post-Second World War era. The decentralised nature of the sector also encouraged these private organisations to innovate as they considered themselves largely independent, autonomous and self-regulated. Several important overseas developments would eventually influence changes in child welfare practice in Victoria. In the United States the development of professional social work, from the turn of the twentieth century, attracted the attention of individuals interested in professionalising family casework in Victoria. Several non-government leaders travelled to the United States during the 1930s and 1940s to be trained in social work and brought back news of the changes and innovations which were now being implemented. It was these leaders who were to play a role in reshaping the policies and priorities of the child welfare sector.

The challenges made to existing methods was also influenced by developments in Britain after the war. As a result of growing awareness of the lack of quality in some British child welfare organisations a review of both government and non-government providers was led by Myra Curtis. The Curtis Report, as it became known, was an internationally influential document which assessed the current arrangements for children under the control of all institutions, including privately managed ones, in Britain after the war. The first section of this chapter argues that the development of social work in the United States aided pioneering social workers in Victoria to improve their qualifications and to push for the professionalising of services for children and their families. The second section argues that the re-examination of child welfare methods in



the wake of research coming out of the UK led those who managed child welfare institutions in Victoria to question their existing methods.

### **The rise of social work in the United States**

Until 1900, many child welfare programs across the Western world had largely been managed by independent philanthropic efforts. From early in the twentieth century, however, with the professionalisation of social work, a growing emphasis was placed on the importance of expert advice for the development of healthy family relationships. The various voluntary Charity Organisation Societies that had flourished in the nineteenth century had promoted some of these earliest forms of casework.<sup>627</sup> At the same time a new emerging discipline of child psychology began to critique aspects of child development and attachment theory. The rise of these two fields of expertise in the United States was noted by those interested in Victoria's child welfare system.

In America, early in the twentieth century, some charitable organisations sought to professionalise casework.<sup>628</sup> One of social work's most famous pioneers was Mary Richmond who initially worked for the Charity Organisation Society at its Baltimore office.<sup>629</sup> She not only contributed to the development of social work as a profession, but also actively educated the public about the difference between those who assisted others in a philanthropic capacity and the newly developing role of trained social workers.<sup>630</sup> She used examples such as the professionalisation of nursing through the efforts of Florence Nightingale and others in her writings to argue that social work was another emerging

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<sup>627</sup> Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse*, 44-46.

<sup>628</sup> Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse*, 259-260

<sup>629</sup> Lawrence, *Professional Social Work in Australia*, 7. Lawrence's work has been critiqued by more recent historians seeking to analyse social work history. For example Gleeson has researched the role of Catholic social workers in the development of the profession in Australia. See Damian J. Gleeson, "Some New Perspectives on Early Australian Social Work," *Australian Social Work* 61, no. 3 (2008): 207-25; Damian John Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare" (PhD Thesis, University of NSW, 2006), esp. 50-54 which provides a useful summary of some of the American and British influences in the foundations of the social work profession in Australia.

<sup>630</sup> Jennifer Cote, "'The West Point of the Philanthropic Service': Reconsidering Social Work's Welcome to Women in the Early Twentieth Century," *Social Service Review* 87, no. 1 (2013): 131-57.

profession.<sup>631</sup> Her writings and advocacy about the development of the casework method were to be influential well beyond America.<sup>632</sup> By 1910 there were five schools in the USA offering professional training, and these became centres for research, the results of which were widely disseminated.<sup>633</sup>

Richmond's writings reflected the emphasis that these early social workers placed on the family unit rather than dealing more specifically with children.<sup>634</sup> In her popular 502 page work, *Social Diagnosis*, published in 1917, she describes the importance of children's institutions knowing the family background of the children in their care:

Children's institutions that are excellent witnesses as to their own experiences with inmates may still have only the vaguest of extra-mural data about them. They may admit them, discharge them, send them home temporarily at vacation time, and place them permanently with relatives or with strangers on knowledge that would be regarded as inadequate by any humane person who was seeking a home for a stray cat or dog.<sup>635</sup>

Richmond was arguing for children's institutions to use the data which could be collected by social workers. She also maintained this view in relation to assessing neglected children and provided an eight page questionnaire which social workers could use if they worked in the courts or in other environments where they might be called on to assess family situations.<sup>636</sup> Again the neglected child was positioned as part of a family unit.

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<sup>631</sup> Allison D. Murdach, "Mary Richmond and the Image of Social Work," *Social Work* 56, no. 1 (2011): 92.

<sup>632</sup> Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse*, 47.

<sup>633</sup> There is a body of research which has examined the history of American social work. For example see Catherine N. Dulmus and Karen M. Sowers, *The Profession of Social Work: Guided by History, Led by Evidence* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2012). Feminists have examined the rise of social work in America. For example see Susan Kemp and Ruth Brandwein, "Feminisms and Social Work in the United States: An Intertwined History," *Affilia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 341-64; Rebecca Stotzer and John Tropman, "Professionalizing Social Work at the National Level: Women Social Work Leaders, 1910-1982," *Affilia* 21, no. 1 (2006): 9-27.

<sup>634</sup> In chapter seven four pages are devoted to the role of the child within the family context. See Mary Ellen Richmond, *Social Diagnosis* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917), 152-56.

<sup>635</sup> Richmond, *Social Diagnosis*, 299.

<sup>636</sup> In chapter 13 Richmond presents the comprehensive questionnaire devised by Dr Catherine Brannick to assess the 'Neglected Child'. Richmond, *Social Diagnosis*, 405-13.

Richmond only made reference to the role social work could play in defining dysfunctional families rather than how it might address the quality of care in children's institutions.

The charitable societies that worked in the welfare field were not the only organisations to begin to train social workers. In America medical social work was more successful in promoting itself as a profession in the earliest years. In part this was because it was linked to the health sector which had a greater status than welfare work which tended to be a predominantly female field. One of the most celebrated schools of medical social work was run from the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. The medical social work model developed by Richard Clarke Cabot (1868–1939) in this hospital attracted particular interest amongst workers in the social service field in Australia, several of whom travelled to see his work, or to study in the schools that had inspired such research.<sup>637</sup>

Cabot postulated that 'of the 500 people' who were coming into the hospital in Massachusetts everyday '50 of them were ill ... because of unspoken but critical deficiencies in their lives or in their surroundings'.<sup>638</sup> He argued that physicians rushed to treat the illnesses without examining the broader concerns surrounding their patients. It was here that he found the place for '[t]he social worker, located within the hospital clinic itself, [who] would explore the "sociologic side" of the patient's distress.'<sup>639</sup> Cabot served at the hospital from 1905 to 1919, initially funding his burgeoning social work service himself. By 1919 he had persuaded the state to fund this new service.

In 1907 Ida Cannon joined Cabot's social work team, firstly as a volunteer after completing her social work training then in 1908 as a paid member of staff.<sup>640</sup> She shared

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<sup>637</sup> Laura J. Praglin, "Ida Cannon, Ethel Cohen, and Early Medical Social Work in Boston: The Foundations of a Model of Culturally Competent Social Service," *Social Service Review* 81, no. 1 (2007): 27.

<sup>638</sup> Praglin, "Ida Cannon, Ethel Cohen, and Early Medical Social Work in Boston," 29.

<sup>639</sup> Praglin, "Ida Cannon, Ethel Cohen, and Early Medical Social Work in Boston: The Foundations of a Model of Culturally Competent Social Service," 29-30. The term 'sociologic side' was developed and used by Cabot himself in 1905.

<sup>640</sup> Walter Bradford Cannon, "Ida Maud Cannon 29 June 1877- 7 July 1960," in *Notable American Women: The Modern Period* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

his commitment to creating a professional service with high standards of care. While Cabot provided the theoretical support necessary for the development of social work practice it was Cannon who was instrumental in overseeing its adoption nationwide.<sup>641</sup> She was an able administrator and advocate for the new service, recognising the necessity to get other medical staff on side by educating them about the service. In order to further the cause she also argued that these early social work pioneers needed a professional education.

Cannon and Cabot were not alone in promoting this new profession in Boston. Ethel Cohen was working in the Bethel Israel Hospital from 1928.<sup>642</sup> Here she developed a medical social work practice which rivalled that provided at the Massachusetts General Hospital which was managed by Cannon. Bethel Israel Hospital had prestigious connections as it was affiliated with the medical schools of both Harvard and Tufts. This gave Cohen the opportunity to write several important articles about social work in contemporary medical journals, further enhancing the status of the new profession. In 1935 she wrote about the importance of medical students understanding the social situations of their patients.<sup>643</sup> She also authored several articles about the need to treat patients, particularly children, in a holistic manner by understanding their home and social environments.<sup>644</sup> These journals were available to not only local subscribers but obviously overseas ones too.

Psychologists and psychiatrists in America were also developing research interests in relation to children and their work informed social work education. As Alice Smuts observes:

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<sup>641</sup> Cannon, "Ida Maud Cannon 29 June 1877- 7 July 1960."

<sup>642</sup> Praglin, "Ida Cannon, Ethel Cohen, and Early Medical Social Work in Boston," 37-38.

<sup>643</sup> E. Cohen and H. A. Derow, "Teaching Medical Students Objectives for Care of Patients and Social Aspects of Illness," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 56, no. 2 (1935).

<sup>644</sup> For example see Ethel Cohen, "The Social Component in Heart Disease," *American Heart Journal* 16, no. 4 (1938): 422-30; Ethel Cohen, "Social Planning for Children with Rheumatic Heart Disease," *Child* 5, no. 7 (1941): 164-70; Ethel Cohen, "A Medical-Social Worker's Approach to the Problem of Poliomyelitis," *American Journal of Public Health and the Nation's Health* 38, no. 8 (1948): 819-23.

In 1918 only three psychologists and two psychiatrists were full-time scholars of childhood. By 1930 there were more than six hundred such professional researchers, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century there are an estimated eight thousand ... Unlike the establishment of the adult sciences of human nature, which took place over a relatively long period, the child sciences were institutionalized and professionalized in dramatic developments in the decade and a half following the end of World War I.<sup>645</sup>

Early child welfare reformers drew upon the outcomes of this research and used it as the basis to argue for child welfare reform.

In the United States the Children's Welfare Bureau, founded in 1912, became a powerful lobby group that made use of this new interest in quality child rearing methods.<sup>646</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, it lobbied successfully for changes to child welfare policy in relation to infant and maternal mortality and child labour. The federal government of the United States generously supported the work of the Bureau and by 1930 it was receiving \$395,000, more than twelve times its budget in 1912.<sup>647</sup> Child psychiatry formed one of the research pillars from which child welfare services in all jurisdictions were eventually critiqued. During the 1930s depression American social workers also became involved in actively advocating for changes to child welfare, supporting Franklin D. Roosevelt in the implementation of his New Deal policies.<sup>648</sup> In 1932 Jane Hoey was appointed to oversee these new social work developments which,

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<sup>645</sup> Alice Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935* (New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>646</sup> Miranda Lynch Thomas, "One Hundred Years of Children's Bureau Support to the Child Welfare Workforce," *Journal of Public Child Welfare* 6, no. 4 (2012): 357-75.

<sup>647</sup> Price V. Fishback, "Relief During the Great Depression in Australia and America," *Australian Economic History Review* 52, no. 3 (2012): 230.

<sup>648</sup> Eric Rauchway, *Great Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction* (Cary, USA: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2008), 25; see Catherine E. Rymph, "From 'Economic Want' to 'Family Pathology': Foster Family Care, the New Deal, and the Emergence of a Public Child Welfare System," *Journal of Policy History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 7.

'promoted the use of social workers in child welfare work at both the state and federal level', incorporating them into government organisations as well as voluntary agencies.<sup>649</sup>

Through this early advocacy and activity social work in the United States was recognised as a profession which could influence government policy. It was able to influence federal policy development because of its 'broader and holistic approach' and ability to align itself with 'professional family welfare agencies'.<sup>650</sup> The success of the profession attracted some Australians to further their own careers by completing social work courses in America. On their return some chose to use their training to promote their own professional standing and challenge prevailing ideas about child welfare in Victoria.

### **The burgeoning influence of social work in Victoria**

The first example of social workers gaining influence in child welfare in Victoria came from within Catholic organisations. In the 1930s two West Australian Catholic lay women, Norma Parker and Constance Moffit, received scholarships to study at the Catholic University of America in Washington. They had been encouraged by Dr Ethel Stoneman, a psychologist and their lecturer at university who had studied in America earlier.<sup>651</sup> On their return to Australia they had to overcome strong resistance to their new methods from both within and outside the Catholic Church. After lobbying for several years, and taking social work roles in other locations, in 1935 they were employed in the newly established Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in Melbourne having secured the support of the Archdeacon Vicar General Monsignor John Lonergan.<sup>652</sup>

As part of their new role these women questioned why poor children whose families were otherwise intact were finding their way into state and church care. Having

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<sup>649</sup> Dulmus and Sowers, *The Profession of Social Work: Guided by History, Led by Evidence*, 24.

<sup>650</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," 53.

<sup>651</sup> "Parker, Norma Alice," <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0023b.htm>, accessed on 16 June 2017.

<sup>652</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," 147.

received Lonergan's backing they were charged with reviewing all applications for placements in Catholic institutions throughout the state. As a result of their intervention they prevented thirty five percent of six hundred applicants from being placed into care.<sup>653</sup> In the wake of this review the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau was given the responsibility of assessing all families applying for their children to be admitted to Catholic orphanages. However, despite their success, the social workers still had no power to influence the quality of care children received once they entered the homes.

The Catholic social workers were not the only group to develop their professional standing in Victoria. The first social workers to receive training in the state worked as almoners in the state's public hospitals from the late 1920s.<sup>654</sup> Almoners were trained to manage patients' welfare and to support their after-care regime. This at times included finding placements for patients' children. These early social workers did not merely seek improvements to the existing methods, but openly and critically questioned many of the prevailing assumptions and practices. Later graduates of the Social Studies Department at the University of Melbourne would use these skills to question the need for children to be placed into care. Social work was to provide the theory, primarily derived from the overseas training and research, and set the scene for serious changes. All aspects of current child care practice were to be reviewed; from how children came into care to the type of care they received.

In Victoria, the CWAV took the lead in bringing the influence of social work into the area of child welfare reform, distributing literature, and organising seminars and conferences at which the new ideas could be discussed.<sup>655</sup> From as early as 1922 the

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<sup>653</sup> Gleeson, "Some New Perspectives on Early Australian Social Work," 148.

<sup>654</sup> O'Brien, Laurie, and Cynthia Turner. "Hospital Almoning: Portrait of the First Decade," *Australian Social Work* 32, no. 4 (1979): 7-12.

<sup>655</sup> The CWAV ran an annual conference with guest speakers who discussed international developments. For example see *Syllabus*; "Centenary Congress of Child Welfare Workers," (Melbourne: Children's Welfare Association, 1935).

Association had been providing what it described as 'seminars on social work'.<sup>656</sup> While its role was voluntary and collaborative, it was successful in galvanising support from child welfare agencies, boasting in 1939 that all the children's institutions in Victoria were represented in its membership.<sup>657</sup> Its aim was to provide education, advice and opportunities for collaboration to all the independent child welfare organisations in the state. Most often its message was one of reassurance that the methods in Victoria were as good as interstate and overseas.<sup>658</sup>

Like its British equivalent, led by Greig Smith, the local COS undertook an early form of casework with families with children in order to ascertain what type and amount of assistance the family should receive.<sup>659</sup> Working with representatives of the growing number of almoners, Greig Smith was influential in persuading the University of Melbourne to provide training for professional social workers through a Social Studies Department.<sup>660</sup> He was also able to persuade established agencies in the child welfare sector to offer placements to students enrolled in the new course, providing them with practical experience while they were able to show the agencies what professional social work could offer.<sup>661</sup>

The Children's Welfare Department was slow to invest in the emerging expertise which these early social work students could provide. The first professionally trained social worker employed by the department was a Catholic woman who had trained in Victoria before later travelling to the USA in the 1940s. Teresa Wardell was appointed as a 'classification officer' in the Children's Welfare Department in 1952.<sup>662</sup> However, she

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<sup>656</sup> "Child Welfare," *The Argus*, 25 March 1933, 10.

<sup>657</sup> "Welfare of Children - Annual Meeting Discussions," *The Age*, 29 April 1939, 10.

<sup>658</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 103.

<sup>659</sup> Nell Musgrove, "'Filthy' Homes and 'Fast' Women: Welfare Agencies' Moral Surveillance in Post-Second World War Melbourne," *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 80 (2004): 112.

<sup>660</sup> Peel, *Miss Cutler & the Case of the Resurrected Horse*, 42.

<sup>661</sup> Scott and Swain, *Confronting Cruelty*, 97-105.

<sup>662</sup> D. J. Gleeson, "The Forgotten Wardell: Victorian Welfare Reformer," *Victorian Historical Journal* 79, no1 (2008): 107-21.



found it difficult to gain any authority in the department as it was still headed by male administrators with no social work experience. Her 'interest in therapeutic casework did not fit easily with the approach of existing staff'.<sup>663</sup> She first came into conflict with the department head for questioning the treatment of children in Royal Park. He admonished her for insubordination and did not renew her contract when it came up for review in May 1953, leaving her to advocate strongly for families in need and the quality of care in children's homes more generally from outside the department.

Despite the increasing advancement of the social worker in the broader welfare field, by the early 1950s none had been employed in children's homes run by the government and the voluntary sector. The small and under resourced Children's Welfare Department was run by a male dominated workforce which resisted social work's first foray into the area. The non-government homes were still generally managed by long standing committees, or Religious who were yet to yield to any new ideas about their methods. However, new ideas emanating from the United Kingdom would challenge every aspect of the current Victorian child welfare system, and create a space for social workers in its administration.

### **Examining child welfare methods in Britain**

Victoria had always been influenced by British child welfare policy, a situation which had not changed, despite some individuals showing increasing interest in the development of social work practice emanating from the United States. When voluntary organisations sought to change their methods or build on new sites, they looked to their English counterparts and measured their achievements against British models. However, this interest often led those who managed child welfare organisations to too readily adopt

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<sup>663</sup> Nell Musgrove, "Teresa Wardell: Gender, Catholicism and Social Welfare in Melbourne," in *Founders, Firsts and Feminists: Women Leaders in Twentieth-Century Australia* (Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne, 2011), 138.

overseas examples without questioning the rationale behind the development of these systems or seeking to understand whether these models were suitable for use in the local context.

A debate in the late 1920s and early 1930s in England brought some changes to the administration of residential care, but initially it focused on the prevention and treatment of the perceived problem of juvenile delinquency. The *Children and Young Persons Act* 1933 established 'a much more comprehensive framework than had previously existed ... the penal system, the educational apparatus, the organisation of social assistance and psychological, medical and psychiatric expertise united to form "a multi-dimensional social network"'.<sup>664</sup> While the Act focused on juvenile crime it also briefly covered definitions of neglect and formalised the relationship between the state and voluntary residential service providers.<sup>665</sup> Some children were still placed under Poor Law provisions but the system lacked consistency in regards to the rules and regulations which governed child placements.

The Act, however, did nothing to alter the day-to-day care of children in either state or voluntarily run residential homes. Most major changes in child care management undertaken in Britain resulted from the experiences in Second World War.<sup>666</sup> The evacuation of approximately 600,000 children in September 1939 gave researchers a unique social experiment from which to challenge existing assumptions and develop new

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<sup>664</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989*, 187.

<sup>665</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989*, 185.

<sup>666</sup> Harry Hendrick provides the best analysis of the child welfare system in Britain. See Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989*. Discourses used to describe and define children who experienced the welfare system have been studied by various other authors. For example John Welshman examines children as part of the broader narratives about the poor and also delinquency: John Welshman, *Underclass: A History of the Excluded, 1880-2000* (London, GBR: Continuum International Publishing, 2007); John Welshman, "Knives and Pawns: Behaviour and the Welfare State," *Renewal* (0968252X) 20, no. 2/3 (2012): 116-22. Kate Bradley's work examines later tropes about juvenile delinquency: Kate Bradley, "Juvenile Delinquency and the Public Sphere: Exploring Local and National Discourse in England, C. 1940-69," *Social History* 37, no. 1 (2012): 19-35. Janet Fink examines the system which housed children in the middle of the twentieth century: Janet Fink, "Inside a Hall of Mirrors: Residential Care and the Shifting Constructions of Childhood in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain," *Paedagogica Historica* 44, no. 3 (2008): 287-307. For an earlier work in this area see: Jean S. Heywood, *Children in Care: The Development of the Service for the Deprived Child* (Sydney: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959).

responses to many child welfare concerns.<sup>667</sup> A series of influential reports analysing the process and outcomes of the mass evacuation were released towards the end of the war. The first was *Our Towns: a close up* published in September 1943 by the Women's Group on Public Welfare, the committee responsible for the oversight of the evacuees in the country.<sup>668</sup> The report, which outlined many disturbing features of the emotional distress experienced by the majority of children removed from their families, provided a basis for a questioning of the value of removing children from their families.

Some of the members of this Women's Group on Public Welfare were, or became, social commentators and used their influence to highlight the findings of their report. The most influential was Lady Marjory Allen, the widow of the active Labour party member, Sir Clifford Allen, and chair of the British Nursery Association from 1942.<sup>669</sup> She used her experiences to advocate for better standards of care for all children, not just evacuees, but by extension, those in institutional care.<sup>670</sup> In letters published in *The Times* in 1944, and the pamphlet *Whose Children?* which she published in 1948, she used the findings of the research among evacuees to argue for better standards for all children in out-of-home care.<sup>671</sup>

Anna Freud, youngest child of Sigmund Freud, was one of the researchers whose work provided the evidence that supported Allen's critique. She focused on the psychoanalysis of children, examining their emotional and intellectual responses to

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<sup>667</sup> There has been some historical analysis of this event. For example see John Welshman, *Churchill's Children: The Evacuee Experience in Wartime Britain* (Oxford, GBR: Oxford University Press, 2010); John Welshman, "Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our Towns Report of 1943," *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 3 (1999): 781-807; Niko Gärtner, "Administering 'Operation Pied Piper' – How the London County Council Prepared for the Evacuation of Its Schoolchildren 1938–1939," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 42, no. 1 (2010): 17-32; and for the Scottish experience see John Stewart and John Welshman, "The Evacuation of Children in Wartime Scotland: Culture, Behaviour and Poverty," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 26, no. 1/2 (2006): 100-20.

<sup>668</sup> Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Towns, a Close-Up: A Study Made in 1939-42 with Certain Recommendations by the Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare (in Association with the National Council of Social Service)* (London, 1943); For an analysis of this report see Welshman, "Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy," 781-807 particularly 781.

<sup>669</sup> Bob Holman, *Champions for Children, Revised: The Lives of Modern Child Care Pioneers* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2013).

<sup>670</sup> "Letter to the Times That Saved 'Army of Sad Children'," *The Times* (London, England), 28 July 2008.

<sup>671</sup> Holman, *Champions for Children*, 35-40.

various stimuli during the war.<sup>672</sup> Freud used funding from an American charity to embark on an observational experiment with eighty children placed in residential care under her supervision.<sup>673</sup> Many had been in London during the Blitz and had experienced the bombing of London's East End. Freud's initial interest was in the impact this trauma had on their behaviour. What she found more traumatic, however, 'was the reaction of these young children to a sudden separation from their families'.<sup>674</sup> She reflected in a later report that 'observers seldom appreciate the depth and seriousness of this grief of a small child'.<sup>675</sup> She described the numerous behaviours which could accompany this separation. The anxieties associated with this trauma, Freud noted, were not expressed verbally, but played out in various behaviours such as regression, playing war games, and aggressive behaviours such as tantrums.<sup>676</sup> Her conclusion was that while evacuation may have saved children from death or injury it subjected them to another type of harm.

John Bowlby was a British psychologist credited with the development of attachment theory. He used evacuation data as evidence to support his theory, which questioned a child's ability to develop into a healthy human being, without the care of a mother or significant other figure.<sup>677</sup> For Bowlby a child's success in growing into a well-adjusted adult lay in the quality of its maternal relationship. In his 1951 report for the World Health Organisation he argued that 'mother-love which a young child needs is so easily provided within the family, and is so very difficult to provide outside it'.<sup>678</sup> The logical corollary of this conclusion was that children could not thrive in institutions

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<sup>672</sup> A. J. Solnit, "A Legacy: Anna Freud's Views on Childhood and Development," *Child Psychiatry And Human Development* 28, no. 1 (1997): 6.

<sup>673</sup> Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud, *Infants without Families: the Case for and against Residential Nurseries* (London,: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1943); Nick Midgley, "Anna Freud: The Hampstead War Nurseries and the Role of the Direct Observation of Children for Psychoanalysis," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 88, no. Pt 4 (2007): 939-59.

<sup>674</sup> "Anna Freud: The Hampstead War Nurseries and the Role of the Direct Observation of Children for Psychoanalysis," 945.

<sup>675</sup> Burlingham and Freud, *Infants without Families*, 183.

<sup>676</sup> Midgley, "Anna Freud," 946-47.

<sup>677</sup> John Bowlby and Margery Fry, *Child Care and the Growth of Love* (Melbourne,: Penguin Books, 1953).

<sup>678</sup> John Bowlby, "Maternal Care and Mental Health," (New York: World Health Organisation, 1951), 67.

without a strong maternal bond. Bowlby went on to criticise 'those responsible for institutions' declaring that 'some had been resistant to acknowledging that children are often better off even in quite bad homes' despite it being 'the conclusion of most experienced social workers with mental health training'.<sup>679</sup> Instead he argued that a child 'may be ill-fed and ill-sheltered but unless his parents have wholly rejected him, he is secure in the knowledge that there is *someone* to whom he is of value'.<sup>680</sup>

The most significant inquiry to result from the assessment of the evacuation and the resulting scrutiny of child services took place in 1945. Headed by Myra Curtis, the principal of Newnham College Cambridge, it was charged with examining 'the care of children deprived of a normal home life.'<sup>681</sup> Using the research completed by Bowlby, Freud and others, the Curtis committee set out to measure the quality of all types of residential and foster care in Britain; not surprisingly, they found it wanting.

The scope of this unprecedented study was breathtaking. It was a thorough examination of all aspects of out-of-home care provided for children across Britain. As part of the initial process various members of the committee visited 451 institutions, both government and voluntary.<sup>682</sup> Foster homes were also examined in 20 areas.<sup>683</sup> These visits were not pre-arranged but sought as far as possible to see the homes under their regular conditions.<sup>684</sup> The committee received over 100 submissions from individuals and government departments and interviewed staff from 58 local boroughs as well as 229 staff from private welfare institutions. Its work provided a broad-based analysis of all aspects of the care offered to approximately 33,000 children.<sup>685</sup> The findings were varied,

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<sup>679</sup> Bowlby, "Maternal Care and Mental Health," 68.

<sup>680</sup> Bowlby, "Maternal Care and Mental Health," 68.

<sup>681</sup> Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872-1989*, 214.

<sup>682</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 5.

<sup>683</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 115.

<sup>684</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 71,115. This point was made about both voluntary establishments (71) and foster homes (115).

<sup>685</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 71.

reflecting the wide variety of institutions accommodating children taken from their families.

The report found some practical advantages in the larger institutions it examined. They were able to provide good facilities, such as 'swimming baths, gymnasia, and large halls for entertainment' and offered children 'a greater choice of friends and activities than in the small voluntary home'.<sup>686</sup> Larger voluntary organisations often had effective recruitment strategies and were able to employ good quality staff.<sup>687</sup> The report argued that most organisations were committed to children continuing their relationships with their families. It noted that 'contact with relatives is encouraged and on the whole is well maintained'.<sup>688</sup> Although the report concluded that 'there was no indication that as a group the voluntary Homes fell below the general level of child care now obtaining throughout the country', it was critical of the lack of regulation of voluntary organisations.<sup>689</sup> Only those that were registered to receive children under the Poor Law were subject to any regulation.<sup>690</sup>

The committee prioritised institutional care which would mimic the family unit. It was more condemnatory of the 'large number of institutional homes of the "barrack" variety often with imposing buildings, built as a symbol of Victorian Philanthropy' in which 'the rooms were often bare and comfortless and so large that it was impossible to set aside any place for quiet occupations and hobbies'.<sup>691</sup> It noted that only a small number of voluntary homes had embraced the cottage system, which it considered 'represent[s] in their smaller groups ... a great advance upon the Institutional home'.<sup>692</sup> There were only a few 'scattered homes' which were already in operation under the management of a

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<sup>686</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 159.

<sup>687</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 71.

<sup>688</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 83.

<sup>689</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 71.

<sup>690</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 72.

<sup>691</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 72.

<sup>692</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 72.

handful of local Poor Law authorities which the report did not name. This method had not been embraced by any of the voluntary organisations.<sup>693</sup> It was this type of care that the Committee viewed as providing the model closest to that of the nuclear family unit.

The most serious criticism the report levelled at the homes was that children lacked bonded relationships with their carers. Appealing to the value of a parent child relationship, the report lamented that:

by far the larger number were content to deal with the children in the largest group allowed by the premises at their disposal. If in any degree the voluntary Homes fail in their special purpose, it is in giving too much weight to traditional methods and too little to the modern outlook in child-care.<sup>694</sup>

Poor staff ratios and the lack of training of staff in some homes added to this problem. Only half the Superintendents were trained, and then often in other fields, such as for religious orders, nursing or teaching. The unqualified staff they described as 'often helpful and kindly, and even outstanding in sympathy and common sense, [but] ... only qualified by experience', noting that 'few had had little to do with children before they found a place at the Home through the wartime shortage of staff'.<sup>695</sup> The relationship between staff and the children was viewed as critical to the children's welfare in any institution.

The last section of the report contained the committee's recommendations. Despite its criticism of the lack of governance and cohesion in the sector as a whole, the committee strongly rejected the view of some advocates that the whole sector should be centralised, recommending work through existing local authorities. Endorsing standards for all voluntary homes, the report recommended that they should be subject to registration and inspection.<sup>696</sup> Primary responsibility for children's welfare was to be

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<sup>693</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 72.

<sup>694</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 72.

<sup>695</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 76.

<sup>696</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 141.

vested in the local authority which could then coordinate the collaboration between the large and small voluntary organisations operating in its area.<sup>697</sup>

The new guidelines for voluntary children's homes were set out in the section of the report entitled 'Home Finding for the Normal Child'.<sup>698</sup> Emphasising 'the extreme seriousness ... of taking a child away from even an indifferent home',<sup>699</sup> the report reflected the findings of Bowlby. It also recommended that if it was necessary to remove a child then the first preference should be adoption or a foster home, and only as a last resort should a residential placement be considered. Where institutional care was the only option the aim should be to make 'it as good a substitute for the home as it can be'.<sup>700</sup>

Whatever the form of care, it was the quality and longevity of relationships between children and their cottage mothers and fathers which were of primary importance. The report recommended that ideally children should be placed 'from the earliest possible age in a small group of children under the care of a trained and sympathetic housemother, or house mother and father',<sup>701</sup> and that 'once admitted to the group the expectation would be that the child should grow up to be 15 or 16 as the house mother's personal charge'.<sup>702</sup> Where '[l]ocal authorities and voluntary organisations now house children in their care in large institutional buildings ... they should attempt to introduce the group system by breaking up the community into small units, each with its own house mother, occupying one floor or set of rooms'.<sup>703</sup>

The group home method was recommended for children 'aged 2 to 15 years' while younger children were to be cared for in nurseries, which were to be managed by either voluntary or local authority auspice. 'Sexes should be mixed' and importantly 'brothers

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<sup>697</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 142.

<sup>698</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 148.

<sup>699</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 148.

<sup>700</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 159.

<sup>701</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 160.

<sup>702</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 161.

<sup>703</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 162-63.



and sisters should be kept together'.<sup>704</sup> The report recommended no more than twelve children to each home although its preferred number was eight.<sup>705</sup> Cottages built on existing sites, which the report described as 'grouped homes', should be improved by having fewer children in each, providing older children with their own rooms and having a garden for children to play in rather than an asphalted yard.<sup>706</sup>

However, the report also canvassed the possibility of developing more examples of what it called 'scattered homes' described as a 'small residence, generally an ordinary house in a street' and 'placed [not] too far from centres of urban or village life'.<sup>707</sup> It argued 'from some points of view this type of home is preferable, as the children may be more readily absorbed into the life of the neighbourhood, and less marked out from their fellows as institutional children'.<sup>708</sup> However, it also warned that there was one major disadvantage to the system as the children were more isolated and hence at risk if staff failed in their duty of care. For the scattered cottage model to be viable, the house mother would need to be subject to both oversight and support.<sup>709</sup>

In response to the Curtis Report the Labour government in Britain enacted the *Children's Act* 1948 which spelt out the priorities for children in need. It adopted the committee's key recommendation that children would stay with their parents if at all possible; if that were untenable then foster care was the next choice and finally, as a last resort, care within an institution, preferably cottage style family group homes. All the children in care, whether in voluntary or government run homes, were to be assessed and supervised by case managers from within the local authorities.

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<sup>704</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 163.

<sup>705</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 164.

<sup>706</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 164.

<sup>707</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 164.

<sup>708</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 164.

<sup>709</sup> *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 164.

The Curtis Report reflected renewed interest in the welfare and development of children more generally as part of the post-war rebuilding strategy formulated by the British government. In 1942 the wartime government commissioned William Beveridge, a well-known and respected economist, to develop an economic scheme to assist social reconstruction after the war. His work formed the basis for the welfare state implemented by the post-war Labour government and the Curtis reforms need to be understood in that context.<sup>710</sup>

The Curtis Report itself was not without its critics. In his 1951 report for the World Health Organisation Bowlby argued that the report had been ‘confined to considering the symptoms — homeless children’ — and did not address ‘the more profound social disturbances lying behind these symptoms’, as it had not designated ‘one authority [with] clear responsibility for preventing the neglect or ill-treatment of children in their own homes or of preventing family failure’.<sup>711</sup> Bowlby wanted a new set of priorities which combined child and family welfare, establishing a child care service, staffed by skilled professionals, that would be ‘first and foremost a service giving skilled help to parents, including problem parents, to enable them to provide a stable and happy family life for their children’.<sup>712</sup>

Both the work of the Curtis review and the research of Bowlby would be used by reformers in the non-government sector in Victoria to argue for changes to the child welfare system. However, when the Victorian government introduced a new welfare bill, the *Children’s Welfare Act 1954*, it failed to prioritise the concerns raised in the British report.<sup>713</sup> Instead, it was left to leaders in the private sector to push for much greater reform, assisted by a small number of social workers. Their calls for change drew on

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<sup>710</sup> Brenda Goh, "The Welfare Statesman," *New Statesman* 139, no. 4983 (2010): 39.

<sup>711</sup> Bowlby, "Maternal Care and Mental Health," 151.

<sup>712</sup> Bowlby, "Maternal Care and Mental Health," 151.

<sup>713</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 102-04. Jaggs argued that the Curtis report was used to frame Victorian welfare reforms but the act show little use of its recommendations.

Bowlby's attachment theory and the Curtis Review to argue for the importance of the family model in institutional care

## **Conclusion**

In the wake of the Second World War there was renewed interest in the methods used to care for children. Advances in child psychology had focused attention on the individual needs of children, a priority which the existing services were ill equipped to meet. The Curtis Report found the old systems to be failing children. It called for a renewed push to modernise child welfare approaches. This new advocacy emphasised the importance of quality relationships and sought to use the nuclear family unit as the new model for out-of-home care services.

Kildonan was swept up in this international call for change. Drawing on the expertise of two very different leaders, Kildonan moved from the isolated institutional model to scattered family group homes. Its leaders were supported by colleagues in the private sector who also sought to make monumental changes to their child welfare methods. The two chapters that follow document the contribution of Kildonan's leaders who helped lead innovations in the sector and measure the costs and benefits of the changes they were able to bring about.

## Chapter Six: The individuals who changed Kildonan Services

### Introduction

This chapter examines the leaders whose planning influenced the decentralised Victorian child welfare sector in the 1950s and 1960s. The Victorian *Children's Welfare Act 1954* did little to directly change the day-to-day arrangements for children in care. It was the private sector that took the lead, drawing on theories of child development from Britain and the United States to shape a sector that was more responsive to children's needs. The decentralised nature of the Victorian child welfare system created a space in which these individuals could embark on the reform project confident they had the implicit support of the government and a growing group of professionally trained social workers who would help in the implementation process.

Kildonan was the earliest private organisation to move fully from a large institution into the community-based family group home model of care. This massive adjustment has long been attributed mainly to the leadership of Alfred Spencer Colliver who became the Superintendent of the Home in 1957.<sup>714</sup> But this analysis has ignored the role played by Alison Player (later Mathew) who, as an experienced and knowledgeable social worker, provided support and advice to the committee of Kildonan as they drafted the changes which Colliver would be appointed to implement. Her significant contribution has not been acknowledged in the organisation's official history.<sup>715</sup>

Player was one of Victoria's earliest and, by the time she came to Kildonan, most experienced social workers. She joined Kildonan as a volunteer in 1955 and served as an advisor to the Executive Committee before Colliver arrived. The first section of this chapter will outline Player's career as one of a small group of experienced social workers

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<sup>714</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 37.

<sup>715</sup> Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 37.

operating in Victoria by the 1950s. It will argue that her advice, based on extensive social work experience, was vital to Kildonan's redevelopment, pointing committee members to overseas reports and research that could inform their strategy.<sup>716</sup> Despite her wealth of experience, her gender inhibited her career opportunities. As a female she was restricted to an advisory role rather than being entrusted with implementing the changes she had helped design. Leadership in the sector was decidedly male dominated, and it was only during the 1960s, when Player re-joined Kildonan as its first senior social worker, that she was able to utilise her extensive welfare experience as a paid employee of the organisation. She piloted a series of programs and became a key support to Colliver as he developed his expertise in the area.

Colliver, by contrast, benefitted professionally from his tenure as superintendent of Kildonan. He came to the organisation in May 1957 having previously worked in education. An inexperienced but highly motivated leader, he quickly rose to prominence in the sector, developing his expertise both through his academic studies, enrolling in a Diploma in Social Studies, and through consultations with colleagues both within and beyond his organisation. The second section of this chapter examines these developing relationships which in a decentralised child welfare environment were critical to Colliver and Kildonan's success. It will reveal the extent to which Colliver, as a new breed of male superintendent, was able to utilise these formal and informal connections to become a significant social welfare leader, not just in the state, but later at a national level. By the 1960s professionalism was on the rise in the sector but as the Kildonan situation highlighted, leadership was now male.

### **The important influence of Miss Alison Player**

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<sup>716</sup> KA, Reference to this work is made in the Annual Report. See *Kildonan Village of Homes 75th Annual Report 1881 - 1956* (1956), 3.



Figure 4: Mrs Alison Mathew (nee Player) approx. 1961<sup>717</sup>

By 1954, the day-to-day running costs of Kildonan, without paying off debt accrued through the building program, totalled £11,755 but only £14,474 had been received through donations, government payments and parental contributions.<sup>718</sup> Two years later the situation was much worse, forcing Kildonan to draw on capital to cover its deficit of approximately £1,700.<sup>719</sup> The deficit was attributed primarily to the rising cost of wages needed to attract staff when employment was plentiful.<sup>720</sup> In 1954 the salary bill was £6,467. In 1955 these costs rose again to £7,822, and by 1956 it had reached £8,588, although there had been no change in the type and number of staff. In the face of this growing debt, Kildonan was forced to re-examine the services it could deliver. Fortuitously it was at this point that Player joined the Executive Committee.

<sup>717</sup> KA, Image from slide collection located in the Kildonan archive.

<sup>718</sup> KA, *Comparison Statement of Receipts for Twelve Months 1954 - 1957* (1957).

<sup>719</sup> KA, *Comparison Statement of Receipts for Twelve Months 1954 - 1957*.

<sup>720</sup> For other organisations in Victoria financial issues were also a constant source of strain. For example the Methodist Home struggled with its costs in the 1930s. See Howe and Swain, *All God's Children*, 105-08; Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 98-100. For the Catholic homes finances were a problem because they did not receive the level of supporter bequests of their Protestant counterparts and at times lacked the money to feed and clothe the children. See Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 179-80.

Player had both an economic and social advantage which enabled her to pursue her interest in social welfare. Born in Malvern, an upper-middle-class Melbourne suburb, in 1906, she was one of several daughters of a local general practitioner, Dr Charles Player. Members of her family were involved with various philanthropic committees, and her father served as a special magistrate in the Children's Court from 1923 until his death in March 1931.<sup>721</sup> He was an associate of Alexander McKinley who was the first President of the Children's Court when it was established in 1907.<sup>722</sup> Her father's involvement in early child welfare work may have inspired her interest in families in crisis.

Despite having the advantage of being able to give her time as a volunteer as others had done before her, Player was determined to pursue a professional career. Her background was typical of many of the early students attracted to the new profession of social work.<sup>723</sup> A young female from an upper-middle-class background, she described her parents as protective and conservative.<sup>724</sup> Her father did not approve of women working if they did not need to and she remembered that he believed he should support his daughters until they married. Player had completed her schooling by the age of 14 and spent the next twelve years living at home. Following her father's death she applied for admission to the recently established Almoners' Course and in later life suggested that her acceptance was due to the fact that the chairman of the selection committee had known her father professionally for many years.<sup>725</sup> Player was one of the first almoners trained in Victoria by Agnes McIntyre, the almoner brought over from England to oversee the new program. Player completed her course in 1934 and began her career.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>721</sup> His appointment was noted in the Government Gazette on 12 December 1923. See *Victorian Government Gazette* 1923, 3458.

<sup>722</sup> "Death of Mr A. Mc Kinley," *The Argus*, 19 April 1927, 10.

<sup>723</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," 41.

<sup>724</sup> Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>725</sup> Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>726</sup> Laurie O'Brien and Cynthia Turner, "Hospital Almoning: Portrait of the First Decade," *Australian Social Work*, no. 4 (1979): 8.

Player was quick to establish a reputation as an innovator. Her first position at the Alfred Hospital involved administrative and practical work, such as giving out crutches to patients. Seeing this as too restricted, she collaborated with a colleague to provide a more holistic type of care, organising for some patients to receive food sustenance as well. She also began to undertake her own research, reading articles about medical social work in American journals, but struggled to find others who shared her enthusiasm for these ideas.<sup>727</sup> Initially she furthered her study by completing the newly designed Social Studies Diploma at the University of Melbourne and, in 1940, used her own funds to undertake an extended trip to Boston, the epicentre of medical social work practice in America.<sup>728</sup>

On arriving in Boston Player made her way to the University of Massachusetts, to study its pioneering social work course. She also made contact with the Association of Medical Social Workers, whose educational officer assisted her to learn about the American model. For several months she observed the work of social workers at the university and in various hospitals around Boston.<sup>729</sup> She was also granted permission to go and work on a voluntary basis at Bethel Israel Hospital under the tutelage of Ethel Cohen.<sup>730</sup>

Returning to Australia in 1941 Player sought an opportunity to utilise the methods of the American social workers with whom she had studied. She moved to Sydney and became a social worker of the Family Welfare Bureau funded through the Lord Mayor's Fund.<sup>731</sup> In Sydney she found a peer group of Protestant supporters and medical men interested in the new profession.<sup>732</sup> By 30 July, 1942, she had risen to become the Director

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<sup>727</sup> Mathew, Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording].

<sup>728</sup> Mathew, Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording].

<sup>729</sup> Mathew, Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording].

<sup>730</sup> Praglin, "Ida Cannon, Ethel Cohen, and Early Medical Social Work in Boston: The Foundations of a Model of Culturally Competent Social Service," 27.

<sup>731</sup> "Social Worker," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 August 1941, 5.

<sup>732</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," 60-61.



of the Family Welfare Bureau and also worked on various committees responding to wartime conditions.<sup>733</sup> As part of her role, Player worked with soldiers' families and in a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* described the difficulty many women were having in finding suitable accommodation for their families in Sydney while their husbands were away fighting. She noted that 'many a mother [had] to leave their children in institutions' and added her support to proposals to house such families in the country where there were many more vacancies.<sup>734</sup>

In addition to furthering the cause of social work Player sought any opportunities to apply her new skills and to mentor others. Social work was still developing as a profession in Sydney at this time and Player was at the centre of its evolution. Her work at the Bureau gave her the space to innovate and develop new projects. She also provided supervision to many students as part of her role, expanding and supporting the availability of training through the work of the Bureau. This included becoming involved in training welfare workers to support the Army's Women's Services.<sup>735</sup>

One aspect of her role would be particularly relevant to her later work with children's institutions in Victoria. Intent on keeping children with their families and out of institutional care, in 1943 Player collaborated with the National Council of Women, the Red Cross and several other organisations to develop an emergency housekeeper service.<sup>736</sup> The aim of the new program was to provide working mothers with assistance if they fell ill, were pregnant or had other serious issues. As the honorary treasurer of the new service Player saw how collaboration within the welfare sector could enable projects to be realised. She recognised the importance of experimenting with new responses to social issues drawing upon her social work skills.

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<sup>733</sup> "Social and Personal," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 July 1942, 3.

<sup>734</sup> A Staff Correspondent, "Housing Soldiers Families Children Living in Sydney Slums," 26 November 1941, 10.

<sup>735</sup> "Welfare Officers for Womens' Army Service," *The Argus*, 7 March 1944, 6.

<sup>736</sup> "Housekeepers' Service Emergency Plan," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 October 1943, 3.

In 1944 she returned to Victoria as a much more experienced social worker, committed to applying and extending her knowledge of professional trends in social work.<sup>737</sup> Her first position was as chief trainer at the Melbourne Institute of Almoners where she was remembered for her 'keen and sensitive awareness of the trends in intensive casework' and her 'desire to incorporate in Australian practice significant developments in medical-social work from both sides of the Atlantic'.<sup>738</sup> In March 1947 she undertook a second tour, this time travelling to England, America and Europe 'studying the latest methods overseas'.<sup>739</sup> On her return she became one of the first lecturers in medical social work at the University of Melbourne, while also employed as the Chief Almoner at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.<sup>740</sup>

Player's initial impact on Kildonan has been obscured by the lack of records available in the archive. Rather than announce that such an experienced social worker had joined the Executive Committee, her inclusion is only mentioned in passing when a record was made detailing the decisions of the Annual Meeting for 1955.<sup>741</sup> No mention was made of the skills she brought to the position, rather she was simply listed as a new member of the council. Despite this omission, Player made her mark on the committee. All other current and new members had the traditional church background. Player alone had the expertise to challenge the practices of the home. Yet, despite her extensive experience, her gender placed her in the same category as the other female volunteers on whom the work of the home had for so long depended.

Despite this quiet entrance into Kildonan, Player's influence became apparent in the following year when the Executive Committee established a sub-committee, known as

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<sup>737</sup> Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>738</sup> "Australian Association of Almoners — (Victorian Branch)," *Australian Journal of Social Work* 5, no. 3 (1951): 5-6.

<sup>739</sup> Marie Veanisan, "What Causes Those Downcast Faces?," *The Argus*, 28 September 1948, 2.

<sup>740</sup> O'Brien and Turner, "Hospital Almoning: Portrait of the First Decade," 21.

<sup>741</sup> KA, *Report of Annual General Meeting* (July 1955).

the Planning Committee, 'to examine the possibility of establishing family group home units in the home' in line with the recommendations of the Curtis Report.<sup>742</sup> The committee took some time to develop a comprehensive plan with Player encouraging them to read Bowlby's work and other literature that gave an insight into some of the disadvantages of the congregate care model. On the basis of this reading they drew up a plan to redevelop the Burwood site and create family flats.<sup>743</sup>

The Annual Report of that year encouraged supporters to embrace the need for change.

We hope to be able to benefit from all the present research and experimentation which is going on in the realm of child care, and to take advantage of the awakened public and government interest in the problems of the child in need. It is quite evident that some very definite improvements in the work must be faced by the Committee, and that the equivalent of almost a new field is opening up before us. That this will make new financial and other demands upon our organisation and upon the church as a whole is certain, and so as we bring with this 75<sup>th</sup> Report a challenge to the Church to join with us in prayer and support so that we will not be found wanting when seeking to meet these new demands of the work.<sup>744</sup>

There is no evidence that the Committee ever considered offering Player the opportunity to lead the organisation through this process of change.<sup>745</sup> Few of the other child welfare organisations had access to this level of social work expertise at this stage but George was still the manager of the home and Player remained a volunteer.<sup>746</sup> As it was a newly developing profession many of the social workers in Victoria were relatively

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<sup>742</sup> KA, *Kildonan Home*, (1957). In the section entitled 'Looking Forward' (no page numbers in Annual Report).

<sup>743</sup> KA, Price, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan*. (1959).

<sup>744</sup> KA, *Kildonan Village of Homes 75th Annual Report 1881 -1956*, (1956), 2-3.

<sup>745</sup> KA, *Kildonan Village of Homes 75th Annual Report 1881 -1956*, (1956), 2.

<sup>746</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Women & Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0636b.htm>, accessed on 21 July 2018. Swain makes a similar argument about the sector more broadly being biased against female leadership in the section entitled 'Social Work'.

new graduates with little experience. Importantly they were predominantly female. As Swain contends 'the early social workers had to tread a cautious path in order to advance the claims of the new profession without alienating either the philanthropic women who until then had commanded the field, or the male professionals and agency or department managers on whom they depended for their support'.<sup>747</sup>

The earliest social workers who managed to gain employment in the child welfare sector often faced resistance from the newly established male authority structures which began to dominate many of these organisations from the late 1950s.<sup>748</sup> The non-government sector was not totally resistant to employing social workers, however, but agencies were unsure how to utilise this new profession within their existing service model. In April 1954 the Melbourne Orphanage became the first voluntary child welfare organisation to employ a social worker. However, she resigned just a few months later frustrated by her lack of progress.<sup>749</sup>

Kildonan had been taking students on placements from the University of Melbourne's Department of Social Studies from as early as 1942 although it never employed any of these student graduates.<sup>750</sup> Social studies graduates, at the time, were mostly employed in hospitals while a few were employed by the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.<sup>751</sup> Few stayed in the profession for an extended period as the majority of graduates were women,<sup>752</sup> who left the workforce when they married.<sup>753</sup> Player had a remarkable level of expertise and Kildonan had been fortunate to benefit from her advice, not least since she worked as a willing volunteer.

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<sup>747</sup> Swain, 'Social Work'.

<sup>748</sup> Scott and Swain, *Confronting Cruelty*, 98-99.

<sup>749</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 106-07.

<sup>750</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 5 August 1942.

<sup>751</sup> Gleeson, "Some New Perspectives on Early Australian Social Work," 209.

<sup>752</sup> Crawford, Frances, and Sabina Leitmann. "The Midwifery of Power? Reflections on the Development of Professional Social Work in Western Australia," *Australian Social Work* 54, no. 3 (2001): 43-54.

<sup>753</sup> Elaine Miriam Wilson Martin, "Gender, Demand and Domain: The Social Work Profession in South Australia 1935-1980" (PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1990).

When Kildonan's Superintendent resigned in 1956, the men who dominated the Executive Committee did not consider the recently married Player to take on the role. In a world in which married women rarely participated in the workforce both her gender and the recent change in her marital status would have been seen as disqualifying her from consideration, despite the contribution she had made to formulating the plans that the incoming superintendent would be expected to implement. Although the Kildonan committee was very willing to accept the work of women as volunteers it was not yet comfortable employing a female in a leadership role.<sup>754</sup>

In early 1957, however, Player found a professional position in child welfare as Assistant Superintendent of the Royal Park Depot, which since 1955 had been known as Turana, and resigned from the Kildonan committee.<sup>755</sup> At Turana, she continued to question and change prevailing methods. One of her most important projects was to establish contact with parents so that they could assist in the future planning for their children.<sup>756</sup> No one had previously involved parents in this way as, from the earliest days of child rescue, parents who relinquished their children were condemned for their actions and seen to have nothing to offer their child.<sup>757</sup> Player found that parents were surprised at being contacted and most enthusiastically made arrangements to meet with her.<sup>758</sup>

Turana was the site of the department's first experimentation with the cottage system when a building within the Depot was redeveloped as two flats in 1954. Thus, in her new role, Player was able to observe family group methods and make her own judgements on their successes and failings. The units accommodated five and six children respectively presided over by a house mother. They provided a home for 'physically

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<sup>754</sup> Martin, "Social Work, the Family and Women's Equality in Post-War Australia," 245-68.

<sup>755</sup> KA, *Kildonan Home*, (1957), 4.

<sup>756</sup> Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>757</sup> Musgrove, "'The Scars Remain': Children, Their Families and Institutional 'Care' in Victoria 1864 – 1954," 151-249. Musgrove examined the relationship between the Victorian child welfare system and the parents of children in care.

<sup>758</sup> Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

handicapped' or 'problem' children who had proven hard to place elsewhere. It was soon reported that the extra care from one significant adult saw an improvement in ten of the eleven children, rendering them more confident and able to be more independent than previously.<sup>759</sup> This pilot provided others in the sector with the first example of some of the improvements children could make when placed in what were considered more home-like environments.

Player's tenure at Royal Park ended after eight months when she was forced to resign due to her marriage to Hamish Connolly Mathew. At the time it was both social convention and government policy that married women were not able to continue to work, even if they were beyond child-bearing age as Mathew was. As Martin would later argue these female social workers experienced 'structural and attitudinal constraints which ... hindered women's involvement and achievement in the public sphere'.<sup>760</sup>

Player's new husband, who was originally from New Zealand, was ordained in the Presbyterian Church and had served in the First World War.<sup>761</sup> Later he studied at Yale University in America where he gained a diploma in Social Studies. In 1942, after returning from America, he wrote a book entitled *The Institutional Care of Dependent Children in New Zealand* for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.<sup>762</sup> He subsequently moved to Victoria where he was appointed Superintendent of the Langi Kal Kal prison in January 1951, and after their marriage his new wife joined him there.<sup>763</sup>

As a couple, the Mathews had considerable experience and influence within the welfare sector in Victoria. After the passage of the *Social Welfare Act 1960*, Hamish Mathew became head of the Probation and Parole Section of the new Social Welfare

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<sup>759</sup> *Children's Welfare Department and Department for Reformatory Schools: Report of the Secretary for the Year 1954* (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1956) 6-7.

<sup>760</sup> Elaine Martin, "Themes in a History of the Social Work Profession," *International Social Work* 35, no. 3 (1992): 330.

<sup>761</sup> "50 Years Jubilee Issue," *Australian Social Work* 32, no. 4 (1979): 3-4. A photograph of Mr and Mrs Mathew was included in this edition.

<sup>762</sup> Hamish Connolly Mathew, *The Institutional Care of Dependent Children in New Zealand*, Educational Research Series (Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1942).

<sup>763</sup> *Victorian Government Gazette*, 838. The details were printed on the 31st January 1951.

Department. He retired from this role in 1962,<sup>764</sup> but returned to public service as a member of the Parole Board in 1969.<sup>765</sup> Alison Mathew's opportunity to re-engage with the child welfare sector came in 1959 when she was asked by Leonard Tierney, head of the Citizen's Welfare Service (CWS), the successor organisation to the COS, to work part-time helping to develop a pilot foster care program.

Tierney was a leader in the emerging field of social work. He had shown early academic ability. After graduating with an Arts degree from the University of Melbourne with honours in psychology, he completed a Diploma of Social Studies, and was one of that program's earliest graduates. His first role, funded by the Returned Services League, was with the Family Welfare Bureau in Melbourne.<sup>766</sup> However, like Player, he decided to further his career by studying overseas, and moved to America to enrol in a Master of Social Work at Columbia University in New York.<sup>767</sup>

Tierney backed up his new knowledge by obtaining more experience in the United Kingdom before returning to Australia. On his return to Melbourne in 1954 he took a position as the first social worker employed at the CWS.<sup>768</sup> In this role Tierney was able to build a network of other social workers in the city, and to accumulate the research material on which he would base the doctorate he completed during a second period at Columbia. Appointed head of the Social Studies Department at the University of Melbourne he trained and mentored Victoria's social work students for several decades.

Tierney was a leader in recognising the potential of women in the social work profession. Martin has argued that female social workers faced resistance to their

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<sup>764</sup> *Social Welfare Department: Annual Report Year Ended June 30 1962*, (Melbourne: A. C. Brooks, Government Printer, 1963) 6, 62. See page six for details of Mathew's role in the Department and page sixty-two where he is thanked for his contribution.

<sup>765</sup> *Victorian Government Gazette*, 1799, 978. See H.C. Mathew authorised as a Magistrate on the 9th of April 1952 and as a Parole Board Member on the 2nd of July 1969.

<sup>766</sup> Dr Elizabeth Ozanne and Cath James, "Obituary, Leonard John Tierney, Dr OAM." *Australian Journal of Social Work* 49, no. 2 (1996): 53.

<sup>767</sup> Leonard Tierney Biography", <http://socialwork.unimelb.edu.au>, accessed on 14 September 2014; Also Ozanne and James, "Obituary, Leonard John Tierney, Dr OAM," 53.

<sup>768</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," 73.

emerging influence even from within their own peak body. She has noted that throughout the 1950s the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) tended to take a conservative stance on women's rights.

Disagreement among the Executive members is clear from the records, though their names and gender details are missing. On the one hand, it was pointed out that married women were not actually barred from employment, and that many married women might prefer not to make careers or participate in superannuation schemes. On the other hand, it was stated that a principle was involved, and that women should have the opportunity of permanency, promotion and superannuation.<sup>769</sup>

Mathew was very involved with the AASW having been in their leadership group, and she later reported she was aware of this conservative bias in the early years of social work.<sup>770</sup> Clearly her own career was marked by limitations imposed on women.

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<sup>769</sup> Martin, "Social Work, the Family and Women's Equality in Post-War Australia," 253.

<sup>770</sup> Mathew, *Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.



## Leading Kildonan in a changing welfare environment.



Figure 5: Alfred Spencer Colliver in approx. 1961.<sup>771</sup>

While Player pursued career opportunities outside Kildonan the organisation moved forward with its plan to appoint a male leader. The Executive Committee appointed Colliver as Superintendent in May, 1957. He was charged with the specific task of overseeing changes to services the Planning Committee and Mathew had researched in 1956. Colliver had a background in education having taught for over a decade before taking up the new appointment.<sup>772</sup> He was also an active member of his local Church, volunteering in its various youth activities. He was motivated to move to Kildonan, he explained, because he wished to improve the system for children in need.<sup>773</sup> His subsequent career provides a case study of how change in the sector was achieved, and the role individuals played in bringing about reform.

Despite being a novice in the sector, Colliver's youthful masculinity ensured that he was immediately viewed in a positive light by members of the government. D. W.

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<sup>771</sup> KA, Image taken from slide collection located in the Kildonan archive.

<sup>772</sup> KA, Colliver was introduced to supporters in a section entitled 'Our New Superintendent', *Kildonan Home*, (1957), 3.

<sup>773</sup> KA, *Kildonan Home*, (1957), 3.

Maloney, the government Inspector of children's institutions, for example, remarked after his first encounter with Colliver:

He is a young married man with two boys of his own, and he seems very competent too with staff problems and general handling of the children. He has very advanced ideas on the care of institutionalised children and I feel that through his efforts that cottage homes are now being considered for Kildonan.<sup>774</sup>

Colliver made a singular effort to capture the support of those in authority in the sector and was successful in making use of what were essentially male power structures within the department and the government.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was no formal structure in place for meetings with the Chief Secretary. Most of the conversations and learnings shared between key individuals in the sector were not formally documented, leaving much of the evidence to be inferred. However, some evidence of these strategic connections was recorded in the Kildonan executive minutes from this period.<sup>775</sup> These informal links also left traces in both Kildonan's and the department's records where brief hand written notes and formal reports recorded meetings and phone calls.<sup>776</sup> From such evidence it is apparent that Colliver established connections with the Chief Secretary and key members of the Social Welfare Department, including its head, Alexander Whatmore.

Colliver appears to have been particularly successful with Chief Secretary Arthur Gordon Rylah who took a personal interest in Colliver's work at Kildonan and even visited occasionally, including for the opening of the first family group home in 1958.<sup>777</sup> Colliver strengthened his ties with the department by choosing to invite the government to send

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<sup>774</sup> DHHSA, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01. This quote was contained in a Children's Welfare Department report written about Kildonan in 1957.

<sup>775</sup> KA, *Kildonan Executive Committee Minutes*, (June 1959 to June 1964).

<sup>776</sup> DHHSA, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01.

<sup>777</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, Rylah reportedly visited the home on the 8th of August 1957. He also opened the first family group home as noted on 23 October 1958.

wards for his first pilot rather than to give children already under the management of Kildonan the opportunity to be part of the new family group home. The request for wards for the new program was made directly in a phone call to the head of the Children's Welfare Department and Dr Phyllis Tewsley, the Superintendent of the Royal Park Receiving Home, was contacted as a result.<sup>778</sup>

Colliver sought to collaborate with his peers within the sector in order to further the development of better quality services for the children in institutional care. He joined the small group of enthusiastic male superintendents who were now leading some of the most progressive organisations in Victoria. Like Colliver, most of these men were well educated but had received no formal social work training. To take every advantage of the views of this emerging group Colliver became a member of the CWAV and the Superintendents and Matrons' Association, and used these as a basis for establishing relationships with key individuals in order to further his career.

Keith Mathieson, the Superintendent of the Methodist Homes, was probably one of Colliver's most important early mentors. Both homes were located in Elgar road Burwood making it easy for the two colleagues to meet regularly.<sup>779</sup> Mathieson had played a leading role in the sector throughout the 1950s and was an influential member of the Children's Welfare Advisory Council established under the 1954 Act. He used his experiences in Victoria and the results of an overseas study tour as the basis for his doctorate entitled *Residential Care of Dependent Children*, awarded by the University of Melbourne, and he disseminated its findings in other publications.<sup>780</sup> By integrating research and practice, Mathieson served as an influential role model for Colliver.

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<sup>778</sup> DHHS, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01. There was a note made of this conversation and placed in the Kildonan file within other items of this date but the note itself did not record the date of the conversation.

<sup>779</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, July 1961.

<sup>780</sup> J. K. W. Mathieson, "Residential Care—One Facility for Helping Dependent Children in Victoria," *Melbourne Studies in Education* 6, no. 1 (1963): 367-431.

Colliver had two other male colleagues who had also begun their careers at a similar time to him and who were also actively embracing the new developments in child welfare; Ian Cox, who was appointed as superintendent of Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm in 1957, and John Janicke, who had been employed to head the Melbourne Orphanage in January 1956. Together these men formed what Cox described as 'a small quorum of interested people with whom to work on matters of change'.<sup>781</sup> This small group of male leaders formed an influential support network which sought to change the methods used by the sector.

Colliver was also willing to learn whatever he needed to become a better leader. Acutely aware of his own inexperience in the child care field, in 1959 he began studying part-time for a Diploma in Social Studies at the University of Melbourne.<sup>782</sup> He thrived in the academic environment and quickly attracted the attention of Leonard Tierney. In March, 1960, the ladies of the Home Committee congratulated Colliver 'for his success in his university results. He was the only student in Social Work II to obtain first class honours'.<sup>783</sup> His social work qualification gave him further authority in the sector, and his newly developed interest in research added to his enthusiasm for changing Kildonan's methods. In 1961, as a result of his growing appreciation of the potential for social work to change the child welfare sector, Colliver approached Mathew to rejoin Kildonan, this time as a paid employee. Mathew accepted a position as a full time senior social worker and worked with Colliver to manage Kildonan's move to scattered group homes. Her expertise was finally recognised and rewarded, and Colliver benefitted greatly from her wisdom as together they steered the organisation through a period of fundamental change.

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<sup>781</sup> KA, Ian Cox, *Tally Ho Boys Village Associate Professor Ian Cox Superintendent 1957 – 1962*, (1987), 6.

<sup>782</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 19 March 1959.

<sup>783</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 17 March 1960.

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Kildonan provides an example of two of the different types of leadership that reshaped the child welfare sector in Victoria. The first, represented by Player, was the professional social worker, who often trained initially as almoners before receiving further training or taking extended study tours overseas, both to America and Britain. After travelling extensively and working interstate Player wished to contribute to improving family welfare services, and child welfare formed an important area ripe for review. She gave her time voluntarily initially out of a personal interest in the plight of families in need.<sup>784</sup>

While Mathew's early contribution laid the ground work for the implementation of the suburban based family group method, it was Colliver who showed a willingness to learn, both on the job and by becoming qualified in social work. His was a collaborative style which led the organisation as it became a showcase for this new method of care. Colliver was able to use the overseas research which was readily available to social work students and rose to importance within the sector on the basis of his successful leadership of Kildonan. The next chapter examines Kildonan's transformation and evaluates Colliver and Mathew's contributions to the organisation and the child welfare sector in Victoria.

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<sup>784</sup> Mathew, Alison Mathew Interviewed by Marjorie Glasson in the Australian Association of Social Workers Oral History Project [Sound Recording].

## Chapter Seven: The Family Group Home Method



Figure 6: An image of a group home located in suburban Blackburn (early 1960s)<sup>785</sup>

### Introduction

Together, Colliver and Mathew represented a new type of leadership in Victorian child welfare, which was seeking to change not only the organisation with which they were associated, but also the sector as a whole. Such was the relationship that had been forged between the government and the private sector that these leaders believed they could improve the quality of care that all children in both private and government institutions in the state received. While this ambitious plan reflected the level of influence that leaders in the private sector enjoyed, unintended consequences and setbacks showed the limits of their approach.

Despite the passage of the *Children's Welfare Act 1954*, which the CWAV had hoped would significantly reform child welfare in the state, much of the system remained

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<sup>785</sup> KA, Image taken from a collection of slides housed in the Kildonan archive.

resistant to change until well into the 1970s. The new models of care being developed by some of the leading non-government agencies, and in some sections of the department, were not replicated across the sector where congregate care continued to prevail despite the growing evidence of its negative impact on children. Part of the reason for the slowness of change was the unwillingness of government to finance the extra costs that accompanied the new models of care.

The first section of this chapter contends that a small group of reformers anxious to see change in the sector began mobilising after the Second World War. These non-government child welfare advocates and leaders collaborated to lobby the department and government to bring about change and at times were able to engage sections of the print media to support their cause. Despite their activities the government seemed intent on maintaining much of the current system and continued to provide little regulatory oversight. During the 1950s they were joined in their concerns by professional social workers such as Player, but this emerging group of female experts did not automatically receive a place in negotiations around a new child welfare act and its outcomes. They were forced to work through other leaders within the sector, mainly men such as Colliver and his associates.

The second section of this chapter charts the first years of the Victorian Children's Welfare Advisory Council's work, showing that the government failed to act on the advice the group was so anxious to impart. The third section presents an overview of the development of group homes. The final section assesses the development of the family group home method. It argues that Colliver remained committed to the concept of group homes regardless of growing evidence that they were expensive to manage and that the government was not willing to increase its funding so other institutions could follow Kildonan's example. Despite the early enthusiasm for the scattered suburban family group

home method, the evidence suggests that there were some very serious and unforeseen consequences of the change which would have repercussions for the broader sector.

### **Laying the foundations for change in the Victorian child welfare sector**

Until the end of the Second World War the non-government part of the Victorian child welfare system was composed of a collection of stable, voluntary organisations many of which had been founded in the late nineteenth century. They were still largely independent and, at best, lightly regulated. Many had recruited young male leaders to set their direction in the post-war world. Some of these leaders had social studies training, but most were learning on the job. Working through networks, such as the CWAV, and using other more informal connections, they were outspoken in calling on government to update its child welfare legislation and the services it provided to children. They were to be supported in their push for change by the emerging influence of social work and the local research that began to be carried out later in the decade.

By the end of the Second World War some of these new leaders were looking to the state to begin the process of improving the child welfare system as a whole through new legislation. The individual who had to deal with these expectations was Edward James Pittard who had been the secretary of the Children's Welfare Department since 1938.<sup>786</sup> An able administrator and a war hero, he had worked in the Victorian public service since his demobilisation. Unlike many of his predecessors in this position, he also had a personal interest in child welfare, having been the first secretary of Legacy, an organisation formed by ex-servicemen to assist the children and families of men wounded or killed in the First World War.<sup>787</sup>

As Pittard was appointed to head a department that was extremely under-funded and lacking in status compared to its interstate counterparts, he needed active support

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<sup>786</sup> His appointment was announced on Wednesday 27 July 1938. *Victorian Government Gazette*, 2200.

<sup>787</sup> "Legacy Club," *The Argus*, 23 October 1923, 4; "Was War Hero Friend of Children," *The Argus*, 27 July 1938, 3.



from the system's private providers in order to lobby for change.<sup>788</sup> Jaggs has argued that after the end of Second World War Pittard encouraged the emerging leaders in the field to mobilise to bring about changes in child welfare<sup>789</sup> This began in a co-ordinated way after the establishment of the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) in 1946, constituted as a lobby group to bring the concerns of the voluntary sector before government.

These reformers began to seek the support of the print media to highlight conditions in the congregate homes in Victoria. Max and Marg Liddell have argued, however, that the print media was generally unreliable in its reporting of cases of child abuse or neglect more broadly.<sup>790</sup> The newspapers at the time rarely reported on conditions in the various congregate homes which now housed an increasing number of wards and private admissions. When they did engage with the sector they often focused on one issue and as a result their coverage was limited, failing to critique the system as a whole. There was very little information available to the public about the conditions under which thousands of children were living. The print media was an important vehicle for examining the situation but it had proved reluctant to report on the sector.

The first newspaper to examine the state of Victoria's child welfare system in any great detail following the Second World War was the *Herald*. In March 1946, one of its reporters visited 23 of the 70 children homes in Victoria and, over a one week period, presented a six part review of the system. This represented an important breakthrough for those lobbying for change. The six reports provided the most comprehensive review of the treatment children were receiving in children's homes in the state. Despite the scope of these stories the reporter did not get a by-line. The initial article was broadly

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<sup>788</sup> Scott and Swain, *Confronting Cruelty*, 76.

<sup>789</sup> Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria*, 145.

<sup>790</sup> Marg Liddell and Max Liddell, "Do Abused Children Deserve Investigative Journalism?: A Case Study," *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*, no. 43 (2015): 17-28.

scathing of the entire child welfare system without naming specific homes or providing examples supporting its claims. The journalist's approach was self-described as 'a restrained and balanced survey' despite the inclusion of 'harrowing and sensational stories'.<sup>791</sup>

When the six articles are read as a whole, it is clear that the reporter, and his informants in the sector, were using his visits to lobby for an external, government-funded review and upgrade of the entire system. Several of the articles make it clear that he did not wish to blame either the department, or the private providers, for the current state of the system. Rather his aim was to inspire the public to back the sector's own calls for reform.

The harshest criticisms were contained within the first article which made sensational claims about the general conditions in children's homes. The reporter argued that children were being raised under '[s]tiff regimentation and discipline with little hope for individual expression'.<sup>792</sup> He opined that there was in fact 'obvious repression and virtual imprisonment of hundreds of high spirited girls and boys, particularly girls — behind barbed wire and high walls'.<sup>793</sup> The children were 'treated in bulk' with 'unhappy misfits cluttering up' institutions which were designed for 'children of average intelligence'.<sup>794</sup> From this observation the reporter contended that children were not likely to receive individual attention and care.

The reporter argued that the most troubling feature of the current system was that there were no standards for even the most basic parts of the system and, most especially, for children who were privately placed. The author noted that 'no central authority maintains minimum standards of food, clothing, living conditions, recreation, health, or

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<sup>791</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," *The Herald*, 16 March 1946, 4.

<sup>792</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," *The Herald*, 16 March 1946, 4.

<sup>793</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," *The Herald*, 16 March 1946, 4.

<sup>794</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," *The Herald*, 16 March 1946, 4.

training in these institutions'.<sup>795</sup> This was despite the government having legal control over children who had been placed in both privately-run and government institutions as state wards. He stated: 'Only 2000 of the 5000 children living in institutions are wards of the state. The other 3000 are placed there privately and the state has no supervision over them.'<sup>796</sup> He also criticised the lack of training in child welfare which was evident in the staffing of the department itself. It employed individuals whose only experience was from within other public service departments, such as treasury.<sup>797</sup> He concluded that there were serious deficiencies in the regulation of the whole child welfare regime in Victoria.

The greatest criticism was levelled at the reformatory system, most of which was privately managed, but which took in children who had committed crimes, ranging from the petty to the serious. The reports suggested that it emphasised harsh treatment rather than rehabilitation.<sup>798</sup> By far the strongest concern related to the exploitation of female reformatory girls who provided cheap labour under arduous, prison-like conditions.<sup>799</sup> While the articles were very critical of some conditions within the homes visited, there were only two instances where staff were seen as being at fault for the children's situation. The journalist was unable to develop a personal rapport with the nuns in charge of the reformatories at Oakleigh and Abbotsford, unlike other managers, describing them as 'pitiful old crones, often feeble minded, dwarfed or misshapen'.<sup>800</sup>

The reporter made recommendations as to how the situation could be improved. He noted that reformatory children 'need special individual care and affection; without it many grow up with a warped grudge against the world — which may explain why so many young criminals come from children's homes'.<sup>801</sup> He also highlighted what he viewed as

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<sup>795</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," *The Herald*, 16 March 1946, 4.

<sup>796</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," *The Herald*, 16 March 1946, 4.

<sup>797</sup> "Commission on Child Welfare," *The Herald*, 22 March 1946, 4.

<sup>798</sup> "Reforming Boys in Old Bush Ranger Gaol," *The Herald*, 20 March 1946, 4.

<sup>799</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," 4.

<sup>800</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," 4.

<sup>801</sup> "Give Child Homes a New Deal," 4.

good policy. He praised three homes which were taking reformatory boys, Morning Star Home in Mornington run by Franciscan monks, the Salvation Army Homes and Tally Ho,<sup>802</sup> all of which provided the boys with opportunities to learn trades.<sup>803</sup> In the same article he noted that the managers of Royal Park were also attempting to introduce training into their reformatory.

In his third article, the author was extremely complementary of the work of both non-government and government institutions and highlighted what he considered was the thoughtful management of leaders in both sectors. The articles suggest that he was viewing the orphanages through the eyes of the staff and he seems to have made no attempt to speak with any of the children. He described the Ballarat and Melbourne Orphanages as two examples of well-run organisations. With regards to the Melbourne Orphanage he simply stated 'the 150 youngsters are so free and fit, natural and happy that you don't feel sorry for them — which is as good a test as you can get.'<sup>804</sup> He based his view on the physical environment and the initial impression that the children gave, neither examining exactly how they were managed, nor by speaking directly with the children he described.

Pittard himself was singled out for praise and received a glowing endorsement, suggesting he may have been privy to the journalist's agenda. 'Leaders of all the institutions I visited praised the work of the head of the Children's Welfare Department E.J. Pittard and some of his staff.'<sup>805</sup> Certainly the articles' emphasis suggest that far from being fearful of a visit by this journalist many of the home managers were prepared to put their views to the reporter and saw him as an ally. This suggests that sector leaders were using these articles to raise some of the issues which they found frustrating in order to

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<sup>802</sup> Several of these homes have been criticised in more recent inquiries.

<sup>803</sup> "Modern Training Farms Emphasise Education," *The Herald*, 21 March 1946, 4.

<sup>804</sup> "Close to Home Life," *The Herald*, 19 March 1946, 4.

<sup>805</sup> "Commission on Child Welfare," *The Herald*, 22 March 1946, 4.

gain more political and financial support from the government and support from the wider public.

The final article provides more evidence about the motivation for this expose. The author argued that while some individuals were doing good work, and most were doing the best they could under the current trying conditions, the sector needed overall regulation and management. He acknowledged that no governing body was currently in existence. Having canvassed the thoughts of various leaders in the sector the journalist used his concluding article to argue that a commission of inquiry should be set up with leaders from the sector headed by Pittard himself.<sup>806</sup> This commission, it was argued, could form the basis of a Child Welfare Board which would oversee all children's homes in the state.

The journalist also set out the initial priorities for this newly formed board, again indicating that he was being advised by someone with a great deal of knowledge of the working of the sector. The first of these priorities would be to train staff and to employ a researcher who could audit all the children's homes in the state. It would be more than a decade before such action was taken. For now the *Herald* had simply raised the profile of some of the issues which the sector faced and had proposed a solution to its lack of oversight.

Those in the sector who wished to reform child welfare were also assisted when the *Age* reported on the outcome of the Curtis review in October 1946.<sup>807</sup> The article appeared on page two which gave it prominence in the paper. It also had a sensational title headed 'Appalling Neglect of Children', highlighting the report's use of the word shocking, and the immediate twenty-four hour response of the British government to implement the report's recommendation. Despite the fact that Curtis had given a mixed

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<sup>806</sup> "Commission on Child Welfare," *The Herald*, 22 March 1946, 4.

<sup>807</sup> "Appalling Neglect of Children," *The Age*, 25 October 1946, 2.

report on the children's homes in England, the newspaper article focused exclusively on the negative outcomes of the report. It did not speculate as to whether the findings would have some relevance in Victoria, nor did it follow up its article by sending a reporter to examine the local regime. By mentioning the report, however, the paper highlighted some of the local issues child welfare reformers wished to see addressed, giving vicarious support for their agenda.

Other local papers reported only haphazardly on conditions in the child welfare sector. In 1949 an article in the *Argus* described a visit to the Royal Park Depot where the staff were praised as showing 'sympathy and kindness for children who are the discards of our society' and the children described as well looked after.<sup>808</sup> In contrast, the most damning report about the inadequacy of the government system appeared in the same paper in February 1951. It was scathing of the Royal Park receiving home which was criticised as being overcrowded, mixing normal children with those described as 'sub-normal' or, even worse, with juveniles who had already committed serious crimes, even murder.<sup>809</sup> These problems, it was argued, required an overhaul of the entire child welfare system. However, while both private and government leaders were willing to implement new methods, a major dilemma was how such large systemic changes could be implemented and regulated in a decentralised sector.

By the early 1950s the CWAV, in partnership with VCOSS, was actively lobbying the state government to develop a system of regulation which both echoed and moved beyond the recommendations of the Curtis review. There were five areas which were prioritised. These included 'a Curtis-style systemic relationship between voluntary organisations and the Children's Welfare Department, a code of enforceable standards, more specialist services for intellectually and emotionally handicapped children, trained

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<sup>808</sup> Betty Lee, "Abandoned Children Find Kindness at Royal Park," *The Argus*, 7 June 1949, 3.

<sup>809</sup> Pamela Ruskin, "Dangers Abound in Crowded Depot," *The Argus*, 8 February 1951, 2.

workers and a network of preventive services'.<sup>810</sup> As part of a report produced in 1952 the CWAV also proposed the development of an Advisory Council 'as a democratic way of tendering advice to the Minister on specialised problems in the care of children'.<sup>811</sup>

Despite a great deal of work going into recommendations for the new act reformers were destined to be disappointed with the outcomes. Rather than embrace the private sector's enthusiasm for innovation the passage of the bill was most notable for the nostalgia with which it was presented in parliament. Despite being described as a modernising piece of legislation, the bill kept many of the nineteenth-century Act's features. This left little room for those seeking to truly reform the sector. When presenting the bill to parliament, the Chief Secretary, Leslie William Galvin, drew on his own history to look back to the past. He told members that he had first walked into the Children's Welfare Department's Flinders Street Station offices as a young boy in 1914 in the company of his mother, Ethel Galvin, who was one of the early female inspectors, and then shared several stories about the difficulties of her work. Because of this background, Galvin argued, he had gained an understanding of the child welfare sector, and had been acquainted with many of the men who had headed the department in the past.<sup>812</sup> Galvin then went back further to 1887. After quoting part of a speech Deakin had made in presenting the 1887 Acts to parliament, he went on to assure members that 'very substantially the provisions of the 1887 Neglected Children's Act are still in the present Children's Welfare Act.'<sup>813</sup> Acknowledging that the bill did not preserve the section which related to the work of voluntary providers, he explained that these clauses were not needed as they were no longer used.<sup>814</sup>

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<sup>810</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 104.

<sup>811</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 104.

<sup>812</sup> VPD, (1954), 760-61.

<sup>813</sup> VPD, (1954), 775.

<sup>814</sup> VPD, (1954), 760.

When the new bill was brought before parliament it was a conservative document which changed little in regards to the quality and methods of child welfare in the state. The process surrounding the development of the act and its contents suggest that the government wanted business as usual. Galvin outlined the nine reasons for implementing the new bill. The first four were largely procedural, modernising the language, removing the 'dead wood' from the 1887 and 1890 Acts, much of which related to the use of industrial schools, and consolidating existing legislation by including some provisions from the Maintenance Act and the Hospital and Charities Act. Other changes differentiated children (under 14) from older children who were now to be termed 'young persons', and a change in terminology replacing the word 'neglected' with the phrase 'in need of care and protection'.

Another section of the bill enabled the department to continue to authorise voluntary honorary workers to inspect children's homes. Colonel William Leggett, an MP and former Chief Secretary, argued that these individuals should be trained in modern child care practices. However Galvin responded that training was impossible because these voluntary workers would be from all over the state, adding that he envisaged these roles being undertaken by 'good motherly women who have their own children [who] are preferred to trained experts'.<sup>815</sup> Although this system never eventuated it showed how much the government still clung to the nineteenth-century ideals of female philanthropy.

Galvin's fifth justification was new—establishing an Advisory Council to work with the department to bring about further change. Some regulation was also included in the new act with the introduction of procedures by which the Chief Secretary would be required 'to approve of existing and future homes ... and for the establishment of minimum standards of care and maintenance of the inmates thereof'.<sup>816</sup> The bill ensured

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<sup>815</sup> *VPD*, (1954), 1925-26.

<sup>816</sup> *VPD*, (1954), 754. The debate took place in the 22 September 1954.



the role of the Chief Secretary would be critical to any improvements which would be made to the overall child welfare system in the state.

While private providers would have been pleased to see the inclusion of an Advisory Council in the legislation, its role was not, as had been suggested in the earlier *Herald* articles, to be a board which could hold institutions to account, but rather to advise the Chief Secretary who would make the necessary changes as he saw fit. The bill failed to provide the council with any authority to standardise the quality of care throughout the sector. For such a decentralised state this inevitably meant that private organisations could continue to manage their homes with little state intervention. This was to prove a costly omission, making it difficult for standards to be raised uniformly across the sector.

The bill was also not explicit on how standards would and could be applied and how they would be enforced in the longer term. With no formal definitions of what the 'minimum standards of care and maintenance' would be, change was still an aspirational concept. Again the bill left the Chief Secretary alone responsible for defining and implementing such standards. The centralisation of the decision-making process assumed that the Chief Secretary would have the commitment to overhaul this decentralised, loosely regulated sector. This feature of the new act was soon to reveal its inherent weakness. The Chief Secretary had neither the inclination nor the political will to give much attention to the advice of a voluntary council.

The state's immediate actions after the declaration of the act reinforced the conclusion that the government was only prepared to provide a limited type of leadership in the field. The decisions made by successive governments were piecemeal changes and they remained largely committed to simply fixing issues within the existing systems. They were not prepared to unilaterally improve the sector as a whole. For example, the act contained a provision which permitted the state to again become a provider of residential

care for its wards.<sup>817</sup> The government acted quickly, opening several new institutions designed simply to fill gaps in the services provided by the non-government sector. Its secondary aim was to relieve the pressure on the Depot.<sup>818</sup>

Despite being reluctant to modernise its services, the department made some concessions to the concerns of reformers. Its own new institutions were smaller examples of the congregate care model. Winlaton was purpose built in 1956 to house 'teenage girls who require rehabilitation and training', and later that year the department purchased Sutton Grange at Mornington which accommodated only 25 children.<sup>819</sup> These facilities, however, were designed to augment rather than replace existing voluntary provision with the recently appointed Secretary of the Children's Welfare Department, John Vincent Nelson, making it clear that while:

it will be necessary to have additional government establishments to accommodate the additional numbers of children and young people coming into care ... there should be no duplication of any existing or projected facilities of the voluntary childcare organisations.<sup>820</sup>

By the late 1950s there were still insufficient numbers of foster families willing to take on children. However, rather than respond by trialling new methods, the now conservative Liberal Country Party government remained committed to its old systems, continuing to promote foster care over institutionalisation, despite the impracticality of this approach. Its one innovation, the opening of several family group cottages, was designed primarily to facilitate the movement of more children into foster care. By 1957 the department was pleased to report that 675 children were in foster care, an increase

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<sup>817</sup> Anne Markiewicz, "Panacea or Scapegoat: The Social Work Profession and Its History and Background in Relation to the State Welfare Department in Victoria," *Australian Journal of Social Work* 49, no. 3 (1996): 26.

<sup>818</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1956*, (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1957) 6.

<sup>819</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1956*, 11.

<sup>820</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1957*, (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1958) 8.

from 638 in the previous year.<sup>821</sup> But this represented only one fifth of all wards, leaving large numbers who needed alternative forms of care.<sup>822</sup>

To meet this need the Children's Welfare Department piloted the first two suburban family group homes in Victoria in 1957, building on the success of their first small flats on site at Royal Park. In 1958 a further eight homes were opened in northern suburbs of Melbourne, an area which had not proved attractive to non-government providers, even though it was much closer to where many of the children had originally lived.<sup>823</sup> These houses were designed and built specifically for this purpose as part of new government housing estates. The new cottages were intended to house larger sibling groups who were often unable to be sent into foster care together, and children described as not yet ready for placement in a family home.<sup>824</sup> Again these programs were designed to augment the existing system.

Despite this attempt to provide new services to increase the numbers of children the government could cater for in its own institutions, overcrowding remained an issue well into the 1970s.<sup>825</sup> In the department's Annual Report for 1965, Whatmore attributed the continuing overcrowding to a growth in need because of 'the dramatic rise in Victoria's population'.<sup>826</sup> The reality was that even as late as 1970 the department developed only a small range of new services and continued to rely on private organisations to meet the demand for places.<sup>827</sup> The government's own group homes only accommodated about 100 wards, approximately 600 children were in foster care, leaving about 2,400 in homes approved under the government system, many of which were still

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<sup>821</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1956*, 11.

<sup>822</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1957*, 8.

<sup>823</sup> Markiewicz, "The Child Welfare System: Changing Concepts and Perspectives 1945 - 1995," *Children Australia* 21, no. 3 (1996): 35.

<sup>824</sup> Markiewicz, "The Child Welfare System: Changing Concepts and Perspectives 1945 - 1995," 70.

<sup>825</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1957*, 14.

<sup>826</sup> *Social Welfare Department: Annual Report Year Ended June 30 1964* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1965) 5.

<sup>827</sup> *Social Welfare Department: Annual Report Year Ended June 30 1970* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1970) 19.

privately run congregate care homes.<sup>828</sup> With the government's continued reliance on its existing programs and its propensity to resist sector wide change, the task of modernising child welfare services appeared to have rested from the outset of 1955 with the new council headed by Pittard as he had hoped.

### **The Victorian Children's Welfare Advisory Council**

For Pittard, the passage of the new act in 1954 was the first step in his plan. With the help of his supporters in the non-government sector he had successfully lobbied for the institution of an advisory council to advise the government on how to change the sector. He had resigned his position as Secretary of the Children's Welfare Department on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, 1953, and, after a break of some months waiting for the passage of the bill, he was appointed inaugural chairman of the new Child Welfare Advisory Council.<sup>829</sup> The council's role was to advise the Chief Secretary about how to implement change across the system and to provide the set of standards that the act had only briefly referred to. The Chief Secretary in turn was to take this advice and act on it. Ideally the council would function as a conduit through which improvements in more progressive parts of the sector could be spread throughout the whole child welfare system.

Section ten of the act which described both the function and arrangement of the new council covered just over a page of the forty page bill, much of which described the makeup of the council. It explicitly gave VCOSS and the CWAV the authority to provide a list of four suitable candidates each, while the Minister had the final authority to approve two from each for selection. He also had the authority to replace anyone he found unsuitable. No one could be on the council for more than three years. While the non-government sector had a new role under the legislation its presence was to be managed

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<sup>828</sup> *Social Welfare Department: Annual Report Year Ended June 30 1970*, 70.

<sup>829</sup> "The Perfect Public Servant," *The Argus*, 14 November 1953, 3.

centrally by the Chief Secretary and none of the non-government leaders would have a seat at the table to lobby the government for long.

The act was even less specific about the on-going responsibility and authority of the council. It gave a very general outline of the new council's twofold brief. Firstly it was to 'advise the Minister on any alterations to practice and procedure considered desirable'.<sup>830</sup> The scope of this responsibility was mammoth in a sector which had hardly changed since the end of the nineteenth century. The act did not give any sense of what its priorities might be either, leaving that responsibility to the new members of the council. The second task listed under the act was even more vague requiring the council to 'report on any matter' related to its own role.<sup>831</sup> Given the minimal requirements for its role contained within the bill, it was evident that the agenda for any change was to be set by the early priorities of the new council itself.

By 1955, when the council first met, the Cain Labor government had lost an election and another Chief Secretary, Liberal Arthur Rylah, was in place. He had little experience of the child welfare sector and its concerns, so was open to information from influential reformers within the sector. The act had formalised the longstanding collaboration between government and non-government providers. If standards were to be raised in the sector then it was clear that these too would be the result of continued cooperation but, most importantly, the reformers needed the cooperation of the new Chief Secretary.

While some of the campaigners made their way onto the council, it also contained some representatives who still valued a more traditional, often philanthropic, approach to child welfare, perhaps as a result of choices made by Rylah himself. The female representatives were women who had gained experience in the field through their

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<sup>830</sup> *Children's Welfare Act*. Victoria, 1954, 150.

<sup>831</sup> *Children's Welfare Act*. Victoria, 1954, 150.

voluntary work rather than their professional qualifications. Most were representatives of the women's organisations that had been involved, to a lesser extent, in lobbying for child welfare reform. Lady Mary Herring represented the Medical Women's Association, Mrs V. Jane, Mrs Whitney-King and Mrs Galvin (the wife of the former Chief Secretary) represented the Country Women's Association and the National Council of Women. The committee also included Dr Barbara Meredith, Director of Maternal and Infant Welfare, and Mr Basil Rush who represented the Children's Welfare Department.<sup>832</sup> Lady Jacobena Angliss, a well-known philanthropist, had been the Sutherland Homes President from 1939,<sup>833</sup> and from that position rose to be the Vice President of the CWAV in 1940,<sup>834</sup> and President from May 1943.<sup>835</sup> The CWAV nominated her for membership of the new council.<sup>836</sup>

Pittard also had the support of several of the influential reformers who had been appointed to the first council. It was not a coincidence that all the reformers were male. Mathieson represented the CWAV.<sup>837</sup> VCOSS was represented by Edgar Derrick and Reverend Eric Perkins. Derrick, a foundation member of VCOSS, had begun his work with children in the scouting movement, and had been superintendent of the Tally Ho Boys Home since 1930. He was considered an innovator in the sector at the time believing that 'a bad boy was made, not born', and managed the institution through a system of rewards for good behaviour rather than relying on corporal punishment.<sup>838</sup> Perkins was briefly the director of the Catholic Social Services Bureau (CSSB) in 1949, before completing a social

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<sup>832</sup> "They'll Help the Children," *The Argus*, 1 September 1955, 3.

<sup>833</sup> "For Sutherland Homes," *The Age*, 6 October 1939, 3; Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 132-34. Hilton does not give a date for when Angliss became President but Ethel Swinburne was President in the middle of the 1930s.

<sup>834</sup> "Co-Operation Needed in Social Work," *The Argus*, 24 April 1940, 8.

<sup>835</sup> "Life of Melbourne," *The Argus*, 1 May 1943, 10.

<sup>836</sup> "Women Honoured for Community Service," *The Argus*, 9 June 1949, 8.

<sup>837</sup> For details on Lady Jacobena's life see Anne Heywood, "Angliss, Jacobena Victoria Alice (1896 - 1980)," <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0007b.htm>, accessed 13 July 2014. For biographical details about Keith Mathieson see Howe and Swain, *All God's Children: A Centenary History of the Methodist Homes for Children and the Orana Peace Memorial Homes*, 46, 86-87.

<sup>838</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Derrick, Edgar Marsh (1905-1976)," <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/derrick-edgar-marsh-9956>, accessed 13 May 2016.

work degree. He was later influential in the CSSB in Melbourne where he worked well into his senior years.<sup>839</sup> Perkins was the only trained social worker on the first council.<sup>840</sup>

Despite a lack of support from the minister, who failed to attend many of the group's meetings, the council remained determined to advocate for change developing an extensive list of priorities. An important step in the progress towards change occurred when the council received government support to establish a pilot training program for child care staff, to be preceded by 'a survey of the need for courses in training for staff employed in children's institutions'.<sup>841</sup> David Merritt was appointed to undertake the survey, under the supervision of a subcommittee composed of council members but also other interested parties. These included Meredith, Pittard, Mathieson, and Whitney-King from the council, while Teresa Wardell, Dr Fritz Duras, director of physical education at University of Melbourne and Player were co-opted.<sup>842</sup> The inclusion of Wardell and Player was noteworthy as it gave professional female social workers a voice in the reform process. Social workers were now had a voice in developing a strategy for implementing change across the entire child welfare sector.

The council hoped Merritt's research would provide evidence to support a much broader range of recommendations, similar to those in the Curtis Report. They were anxious to develop standards for the child welfare sector and used the need for staff training as an opportunity to lobby for much more. As a result, Merritt's report exceeded its initial brief and provided the first overall assessment of the decentralised sector, examining 71 institutions that looked after dependent children in 1956/1957. Merritt

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<sup>839</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," see pages 217, 78, 407 for references to Perkins. Gleeson does not mention a date for Perkins retirement but notes he was involved in the CSSB well into the 1980s.

<sup>840</sup> Gleeson, "The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare," 218.

<sup>841</sup> Ethleen King, *The Story of the Children's Welfare Advisory Council* (Melbourne: Family Welfare Advisory Council, 1978), 13.

<sup>842</sup> King, *The Story of the Children's Welfare Advisory Council*, 13-15.

used the Curtis Report as the basis for his analysis, quoting directly from it in his final chapter on recommendations.

The report did focus on the quality of staffing in the various institutions and recommended a new training course be implemented. Rylah supported recommendation but left it to the non-government sector to implement. Since the early 1950s VCOSS had co-operated with a range of institutions to provide the first training program for residential care workers.<sup>843</sup> By 1956, '73 staff from 20 institutions were attending the course' and by 1957 over 90 staff were 'enrolled in the course'.<sup>844</sup> It took several more years for the government to implement a training regimen for staff in the sector.

The report was useful to the council in a number of other ways. It provided the ammunition required to persuade the government of the urgent need to develop a much more comprehensive and wide-reaching set of standards for child care in both government and non-government institutions. Merritt argued these included 'the type and size of buildings, quality of staff, ratio of staff to children, and proper provision of the emotional and social needs of children as well as their physical needs'.<sup>845</sup>

Following the passage of the 1954 Act, the department began to actively recruit social workers but initially their influence was extremely limited.<sup>846</sup> The role of the eight social workers employed by the department in 1957 was to locate and support foster homes, and to support children in care and their families, rather than being in positions where they could use their professional expertise to critique existing procedures and make major changes to the care and treatment of wards.<sup>847</sup> Managerial roles continued to be filled by career public servants, who often had no previous child welfare experience.

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<sup>843</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 100.

<sup>844</sup> David Merritt, *Child Care Staffs in Institutions: Report on Survey Undertaken for the Children's Welfare Advisory Council to Determine the Need for Courses of Training* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1957), 70.

<sup>845</sup> King, *The Story of the Children's Welfare Advisory Council*, 14.

<sup>846</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1957*, 17.

<sup>847</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Report of the Director for the Year 1957*, 17.



This situation was to change, however, following the passage of the *Social Welfare Act 1960*. The act itself was organisational in nature integrating child, youth and prison services under one administration, without altering the operational aspects of the 1954 act. The new department had divisions covering Youth Welfare, Prisons, Probation and Parole, Research, Training and Family Welfare, which included all child welfare operations. The act finally provided social workers with the opportunity to rise to management positions with a senior social worker placed in charge of the Probation and Parole Division and social workers gained management positions in the new Research and Statistics and the Training Divisions.<sup>848</sup> Importantly many of the new casework positions created within these departments were being filled by social workers.<sup>849</sup>

In 1961, Tierney took up a new position as a Senior Research Fellow in the Research and Statistics Division, bringing to the role previous family-focused research projects conducted at CWS and for the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Tierney showed that children placed in care were often separated permanently from their families, and called for a re-examination of how families in need could be assisted as a unit rather than being forced apart.<sup>850</sup> After the completion of this report Tierney left the department to take up a full-time position at the university but continued to provide an important bridge between the work of the department and the developing profession.<sup>851</sup>

Through sharing his interest in child welfare research with his students he was influential in attracting more of them to careers in a sector that was exploring ways of integrating this emerging profession into its institutional processes.<sup>852</sup> He was also an important mentor to many of the leaders in the sector who completed their social work

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<sup>848</sup> Alison Mathew's husband was given this role. *Social Welfare Department: Annual Report Year Ended June 30 1961* (Melbourne: A. C. Brooks, Government Printer, 1962), 3.

<sup>849</sup> For example see a list of social work positions advertised on 12 April 1961. *Victorian Government Gazette 1961*, 1157.

<sup>850</sup> Leonard Tierney, *Children Who Need Help: A Study of Child Welfare Policy and Administration in Victoria* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 106-07.

<sup>851</sup> Ozanne and James, "Obituary, Leonard John Tierney, Dr OAM," 54.

<sup>852</sup> Ozanne and James, "Obituary, Leonard John Tierney, Dr OAM," 54.

training when Tierney headed the Social Studies Department. His informal relationships were as influential as his formal role. His research provided a clear agenda for social workers and others in the sector seeking to bring about change. Children's emotional, psychological as well as physical needs were viewed as being met within the context of a healthy family setting. Preventative services to be led by social workers were now being mooted. This shift was reflected in the increasing employment of social workers in the non-government sector from the early 1960s. Colliver himself who was both trained and then mentored by Tierney became one of the conduits through which social workers gained access to private providers.

While many of the early reformers, such as Greig Smith, did not have formal social work training, they certainly advocated for the need for this type of training in order to professionalise the child welfare field. The youth, gender and inexperience of the first social workers employed in the field saw them confined initially to casework rather than managerial roles. For example, under the leadership of their new Superintendent, Janicke, the Melbourne Orphanage employed another social worker in 1961. Described as a 'Field Officer', she was to 'assess holiday hosts, [improve] aftercare with young people who went to employment and [examine] applications for voluntary admission'.<sup>853</sup> When the Mission of St James and St John appointed its first social worker in 1962 it hoped that she would introduce 'a more professional approach to child care'.<sup>854</sup>

By 1961 Colliver had completed his social work studies and was also being feted by the department and seeking to influence its services. In July, 1961 he was asked to join the Family Welfare Advisory Council (FWAC),<sup>855</sup> which was given a change of name from the CWAC as a result of the 1960 act.<sup>856</sup> The majority of the committee members, such as

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<sup>853</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 122.

<sup>854</sup> Monk and O'Donahue, *Billy Lids and Home Kids*, 33.

<sup>855</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, July 1961.

<sup>856</sup> *Social Welfare Act*. Victoria, 1960, 205.

Perkins, Molloy, Mathieson, King, Galvin, Herring and Angliss were transferred to the new council but there were new contributors as well. These included Dr Alice Wilmot, who was the Assistant Director of Maternal, Infant and Pre-School Welfare at the Department of Health in Victoria from 1950 to 1960,<sup>857</sup> and Dame Marie Freda Breen O.B.E. who was actively involved in the National Council of Women.<sup>858</sup> Apart from Colliver, however, no new social workers were added to the council.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 1962, the reconstituted council produced a report entitled 'Standards in Child Care' based upon the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child.<sup>859</sup> Its priorities were essentially those outlined in the Curtis Report. The first priority should be support to keep families together, 'to promote family life; to prevent its disruption and to mitigate the effects of such breakdowns as do occur'.<sup>860</sup> Children should only be permanently removed from their natural parents 'where circumstances make home life ... improbable' and in such instances adoption was the preferred outcome. For the first time preventive services featured centrally in a recommendation created by social workers from the council.

Despite the early aspirations held by the CWAC, it had only achieved small changes in the sector. The FWAC was determined to be more effective in bringing about change. Its members realised that the decentralised system was still very lightly regulated and could be resistant to adopting new methods. Leading by example, they used their own institutions to provide what they considered to be quality models of care and using vehicles such as the press, and their roles on the FWAC and in other advocacy groups to

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<sup>857</sup> Ailie Smith, "Alice Elizabeth (Betty) Wilmot," in *Encyclopedia of Australian Science*, (2013), <http://www.eoas.info/biogs/P004430b.htm>, accessed 23 January 2018.

<sup>858</sup> Judith Smart, "Dame Marie Freda Breen (1902-1993)", <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biographies/search/?scope=all&query=Dame+Marie+Freda+Breen&x=38&y=19&rs>, accessed 23 January 2018.

<sup>859</sup> Family Welfare Advisory Council, *Standards in Child Care: Preliminary Statement from the Family Welfare Advisory Council*. (Melbourne: Melbourne - The Council, 1962).

<sup>860</sup> FWAC, *Standards in Child Care: Preliminary Statement from the Family Welfare Advisory Council*. 1.

further the cause.<sup>861</sup> The favoured choice for the best model of care was the family group model.

### Designing and Redesigning Kildonan's new model of care



Figure 7: The pilot family group home used in 1958.<sup>862</sup>

Kildonan positioned itself firmly amongst the leaders of change and Colliver was seeking to ensure that the organisation provided the sector with a new model based upon his social work training. Determined that the change process would be based upon evidence he drew upon the extensive research and planning undertaken by Player and the Executive Committee. So when setting out his final plans for change Colliver was able to claim that 'this new method of family group care was not entered into quickly or unadvisedly'.<sup>863</sup>

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<sup>861</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, every year Colliver or one of his welfare colleagues was interviewed for 'Children's week' by a television reporter. They used this to raise the profile of the homes; Cox, *Tally Ho Boys Village Associate Professor Ian Cox Superintendent 1957 - 1962*. Ian Cox also mentions this in his memoirs stating that a group of Superintendents developed the concept.

<sup>862</sup> KA, Image taken from slide collection located in the Kildonan archive.

<sup>863</sup> KA, Alfred Colliver, *Factors Relating to Family Group Care*, (1961), 1.

Colliver was calling for Kildonan to move to a new understanding of the purpose of out-of-home care. Framing this change around the quality of care children were to receive and by appealing to the importance of the family unit, he began by confirming some of the problems inherent in congregate care:

It has been found that children living together in congregate institutions can often be retarded in emotional development and unfitted for their role later in the community as mature adults. The remote and impersonal handling, the constant change of staff, the segregation of children according to their sex, thus splitting family groups and the stratification of them into different cottages according to their age has led to a fragmentation of families and a failure on the part of children to affect a strong and affectional relationship with an adult.<sup>864</sup>

By changing the nature of the services Kildonan offered, he hoped to improve the outcomes for children in its care.

Colliver was not alone in being convinced that these smaller units provided much better care for children. Other male leaders in the voluntary organisations also campaigned to see the method introduced in the sector. The homes that had capital were able to make these changes with relative ease. The resources available to the Melbourne Orphanage enabled Janicke to pilot some family group homes from 1957 but he did face resistance from the voluntary committees which oversaw his work. His initial plans to develop family flats on their existing site were abandoned in favour of selling the property and using the money to scatter cottages throughout the suburbs.<sup>865</sup> Each home cost £40,000 to build and Janicke expressed the hope that the children would remain with the same cottage parents until they had left care.<sup>866</sup> Although he started this process in 1958

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<sup>864</sup> KA, Colliver, *Factors Relating to Family Group Care*, (1961), 1.

<sup>865</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 111.

<sup>866</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 111-22.

it was not until 1963 that the move had been completed.<sup>867</sup> While this program was viewed as best practice by many in the sector at the time, it was far too costly for other less well-endowed organisations to follow.

Less well-resourced organisations chose to make compromises to ensure that new systems were implemented. The Reverend Neale Molloy, Warden of St John's Boys Home in Canterbury, travelled overseas to investigate competing models before working with his committee to bring about change. With £100,000 in hand, he divided the existing buildings into smaller self-contained units, while opening stand-alone cottages in adjoining houses.<sup>868</sup> In 1957, Sister Agatha Rogers, the incoming Superintendent of St Vincent De Paul's Girls' Orphanage, took the more dramatic step of moving a Catholic institution, staffed by Religious, away from the congregate care model. Coming from a background in teaching she became actively involved in cross-sector organisations through which she was exposed to new ideas about appropriate care. Over a six year period Rogers oversaw the relocation of all the girls from the orphanage into family group homes, beginning with a pilot in 1959, before adding seven more homes, with the Social Welfare Department paying half the cost.<sup>869</sup>

Like his fellow reformers, Colliver began with a pilot cottage neighbouring the existing property in Elgar Road.<sup>870</sup> Officially opened by Chief Secretary Rylah on Saturday, 18 October, 1958, the cottage accommodated eight children of varying ages and both genders under the care of newly employed cottage parents. The cottage mother was expected to look after the children seven days a week, much like a biological mother would, while her husband maintained his full time employment, but the children were still sent on holiday placements during school holidays.<sup>871</sup> The success of the pilot was

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<sup>867</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 123.

<sup>868</sup> "Plan to House Brothers and Sisters at St John's Home," *The Age*, 9 December 1958. 7

<sup>869</sup> Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 245.

<sup>870</sup> KA, *Quindalup*, (December 1960), 1.

<sup>871</sup> KA, *Quindalup*, (December 1960), 1.

used as evidence to support a larger planning report issued in 1959 which highlighted that the behaviour of children showing marked signs of improvement.<sup>872</sup> This pilot provided the necessary evidence for the success of the family group unit. As a result Colliver convinced Kildonan's Executive Committee to move to the next phase of their plan.

Having shown the benefits of the new system, Colliver now argued that he had 'plans to care for all [the] children in family groups'.<sup>873</sup> In a newsletter justifying these changes he stated, 'There can be little doubt about the improvement in the children. Affectionate needs are more easily and surely met, resulting in a more emotionally secure child.'<sup>874</sup> A second group home was established off-site in Blackburn in 1959. A description of its first year was effusive in its praise.

It [was] a 19-square, brick veneer, built on a double block and situated in a quiet back street away from traffic. Tall gum trees, a well laid garden and plenty of playing space, [made] this place a very attractive home for children ... In this more natural environment, we hope that the children will more readily adjust to the community and be thus fitted for more mature adult participation in our society.<sup>875</sup>

The model was ultimately about relationships, but Kildonan's leadership still appealed to the importance of the physical surroundings for the children, this time, however, in a suburban setting like most regular families and not to flats within a congregate care home. Although costs appeared to be preventing the full development of this method, Colliver insisted that these were the ideal environments in which to care for children unable to remain with their own families.

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<sup>872</sup> KA, Price, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan*, (1959), 2.

<sup>873</sup> KA, *Quindalup*, (December 1960), 1.

<sup>874</sup> KA, *Quindalup*, (December 1960), 1.

<sup>875</sup> KA, *Quindalup*, (December 1960), 1.

In November, 1959, Colliver worked with the Planning Committee to produce a report outlining their intended plans. In the opening sentence it was clear that a change in the emphasis was being proposed. The Executive Committee was encouraged by their President, Reverend John Price to 'see life in an institution through the eyes of the children living there'. The aim of the changes was 'to meet what is the real need of each child', hence the home 'want[ed] to place [children] in the best spiritual and psychological place that we c[ould]'.<sup>876</sup> The report outlined four priorities for Kildonan's future:

1. Extension of the family group care for children
2. The provision of some temporary care for children
3. Development of the foster placement program for children voluntarily placed
4. The day care of children from homes where desertion has taken place.<sup>877</sup>

This report articulated Colliver's aspirations.

Despite their enthusiasm for this method Colliver and his Planning Committee were acutely aware that Kildonan lacked the necessary resources to fully implement a suburban-based group home method so they planned instead to change the existing buildings into smaller units.<sup>878</sup> An architect had drawn up plans to divide the boys and girls dormitories into flats and a provisional quote had been provided by the Home's builder. The changes would cost £4,000 and in addition new kitchen equipment for each of the four units was estimated at a further £1,000 per unit making the total cost for each of the four new family units £2,500. Compared with the cost of providing a home for ten

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<sup>876</sup> KA, Price's contribution to the development of Kildonan's family group homes is recorded in Robinson, *Kildonan One Hundred Years of Caring*, 52; the quote was taken from a report written by Price, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan*.

<sup>877</sup> KA, Price, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan*, 2.

<sup>878</sup> Although the Melbourne Orphanage eventually moved to the scattered family group method it did first plan to redesign its existing site in Brighton in Melbourne's south. See Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 111; One of the last Protestant organisations to change its methods was the Victorian Children's Aid Society. It renovated a home to create family style flats. See Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 149-50.



people this cost was considered reasonable. The Kindergarten cottage was also to be developed into two further units for temporary care.

However, an unexpected request from the government brought a sudden change to these plans. In October 1960, Alexander Whatmore, the Director General of the Social Welfare Department approached Colliver 'with the proposal to purchase [Kildonan's] property at No. 70 Elgar Road Burwood'<sup>879</sup> to use the facility as its new receiving home, replacing Turana which was to be used as a youth detention centre.<sup>880</sup> Colliver successfully convinced the Presbytery leadership that this move was a positive one. Kildonan's Executive Committee deliberated over the plan for two months, preparing a response which included seeking several valuations and renegotiating aspects of the contract. A special Assembly of the Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church met on the 21<sup>st</sup> December and, voted unanimously to sell to the government.<sup>881</sup> The opportunity to sell now meant Colliver could argue that all children could be accommodated in the community and use local facilities. Rather than having to settle for second best, he could position Kildonan alongside the Melbourne Orphanage as a leader in the field by distributing its children to mixed family group homes in local suburban environments.

Colliver now had a different set of priorities. He would be able to innovate at Kildonan to provide what he and his peers considered to be best practice methods of care. Practically, this was not going to be an easy transition. Most pressing was the need to buy several suburban homes, but he also made a decision to reduce the number of children they could care for to match the number of new homes they could afford to operate. With six months to completely vacate the site, Colliver reported that 'three family group homes had to be operating by the beginning of the school year in early February' and four more

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<sup>879</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>880</sup> *Children's Welfare Department: Annual Report for the Year 1960* (Melbourne: A. C. Brooks, Government Printer, 1961), 12.

<sup>881</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

needed before June.<sup>882</sup> There were several important requirements of homes to be purchased. They were to be of 'brick construction and not more than ten years old' and had to be larger than an average home requiring 'a sufficient number of bedrooms ... to accommodate the number of children and staff'.<sup>883</sup> They also had to be located in the eastern suburbs, 'reasonably close to the Admission Centre' which was yet to be purchased but planned for Box Hill,<sup>884</sup> 'close to a parish (Presbyterian) church, (though not more than one home in each parish area) to a primary school and to public transport' and preferably in a quiet street. While there were practical reasons for a quiet street to be chosen to keep the children safe from traffic it also highlighted Colliver's philosophy that the homes should mimic those belonging to nuclear families.

The cottages were 'purchased and equipped at an average price of £13,500 and it should be pointed out that two other homes that had the time and opportunity to build their family group units paid considerably more'.<sup>885</sup> While Colliver wanted the children in the suburban environment, the homes needed for the new system needed to be larger than usual and fitted out for their purpose which again added to the cost. Colliver still managed to buy the homes at a reduced rate compared to other institutions which had outlaid much more. All seven houses eventually purchased were within about a twenty kilometre radius, located in North Balwyn, Box Hill, Blackburn, Blackburn South, Wattle Park, Syndal and Gardiner.

Purchasing seven homes with these requirements within six months was to prove a difficult process but one which Colliver was able to achieve. It was not a good time to be seeking to buy larger homes as 'credit restrictions stopped some people from putting larger houses on the market because of steady prices'.<sup>886</sup> Real estate agents called upon

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<sup>882</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (March 1961), 2.

<sup>883</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (March 1961), 2.

<sup>884</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (March 1961), 2.

<sup>885</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (March 1961), 2.

<sup>886</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (August 1961), 2.

to find such properties said that the home was seeking too many requirements for their price range. The Superintendent went through numerous homes. Not all large homes proved suitable creating the need for renovations or extensions in some cases. However, Colliver argued that by purchasing existing housing stock Kildonan saved itself a great deal of money. The cost of this new system would be noted by both the government and non-government detractors who would argue that it made this system prohibitive.<sup>887</sup>

While the family group homes were a key feature of Kildonan's plan they were only one part of the planned reorganisation of services. In March a temporary admission centre opened in Victoria Road Hawthorn although it was hoped to build later on. The temporary centre could house 16 children and four staff and cost £18,500 to purchase.<sup>888</sup> The home was for multiple uses, including for administration, temporary care, like a receiving home, and for the third part of the plan, a new day care program. These programs, however, took longer to develop with the focus on the move to family group homes taking priority in 1960 and 1961.

One of the most important features of the new system was the reliance on the central role of cottage mother, and to a lesser extent the cottage father. New staff needed to be recruited and Colliver had to choose several couples based upon a single interview.<sup>889</sup> Changes to the type of care inevitably led to major changes in staffing which needed to be efficiently and diplomatically managed. As a residential care provider Kildonan had mainly employed single female staff. Now it had to search for couples to become cottage parents. The wife was to be paid £13.5.0 per week for her mothering role while they both received free board. Seven couples were employed in the first six months

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<sup>887</sup> Although the Hospital and Charities Board had previously funded building works Hilton noted that it pressured Sutherland Homes to move without providing any funds. This made such a change restrictive. Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 148. From 1966 in his monthly Manager's Report Colliver continually noted that the government was not willing to provide more funding for the homes that had moved to the new system but also now refused to assist those who had not, KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes* (Kildonan Homes for Children, 1965-1972).

<sup>888</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 16 March 1961.

<sup>889</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*.

of 1961 while eight existing staff lost their positions. Several of the newly-appointed married couples were recent arrivals from England, and while some had experience working with children, none had worked in a family group home setting.<sup>890</sup> Colliver then had to ensure that the cottage parents would adhere to new guidelines about the manner in which care for the children at Kildonan was to be provided.<sup>891</sup>

The family group homes required a complete overhaul of all the procedures and policies. The central importance of the continued commitment of the cottage mother was visible in the procedural priorities Colliver developed. Much of the emphasis in the initial plans revealed that practical support was to be provided to the cottage mother as she had the greatest responsibility in ensuring the welfare of the children. These were clearly set out in the initial plan.<sup>892</sup> The heavy laundry was to be done by the central linen service of the Melbourne Hospital. Assistance with household chores was to be provided for four and half days a week. All purchasing was to be done centrally. An occasional baby sitter could be requested and Matron was 'available at all times for consultation with regard to difficulties arising with children and in contact with outside organisations and people'.<sup>893</sup>

Colliver's new system required him to innovate across the entire organisation changing staff requirements and policy settings. While the cottage parents chosen had some training in working with children Colliver wished to ensure that they understood the importance of their roles. It was also vital that cottage mothers were given time to meet each other and to develop a uniform approach to care. As there was no course designed to train cottage parents in their important new roles, Kildonan introduced monthly training involving a mix of films and visiting speakers with opportunity for discussions and questions.

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<sup>890</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 'Manager's Report' 2 February 1961 and 7 December 1961.

<sup>891</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (August 1961), 2.

<sup>892</sup> KA, Colliver, *Factors Relating to Family Group Care* (1961), 2.

<sup>893</sup> KA, Colliver, *Factors Relating to Family Group Care* (1961), 1-2.

Colliver did not just have to train new staff but also redesign the positions of those already employed to take up these emerging roles. The Matron's role, for example, which had been so central to the successful operations of the residential group home, was the most dramatically changed. Joyce Aitchison had previously obtained her diploma in institutional management but was now required to adapt to a very new role. Once a home had been purchased it was she who undertook to equip and furnish it. After the process was complete she began a new role as 'Supervisor of Homes'. Provided with a new car she went 'from home to home in order to control the affairs of each cottage'.<sup>894</sup> Her new role placed her at a greater distance from the day-to-day decision making and lives of the children. It became more administrative; checking orders, ensuring home diaries made their way to the Home Committee for review, and reporting back on the general conduct in the home. She continued to advise on decisions made regarding the future of any child, though this task she would not do alone.

Colliver's role had changed dramatically too with the move to family group homes. He was freed to pursue a more public role as the manager and promoter of his work. He was able to advocate for changes in the system based upon his ongoing innovation at Kildonan. However, he was removed from daily contact with the children in the organisation's care. The coincidence of the retirement of the previous manager of the Presbyterian Babies Home and the changes at Kildonan allowed for 'the rationalisation of administration of both Homes and a simplification of admission of children, particularly in cases of families of children where some are under or over three years' with Colliver undertaking both roles from the middle of 1961, relocating to Canterbury until a new permanent combined Administration and Admission Centre could be built.<sup>895</sup>

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<sup>894</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (August 1961), 3.

<sup>895</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 3.

It was in the course of these changes that Colliver invited Mathew to re-join the staff as Kildonan's Senior Social Worker. Again he was seeking to professionalise the management of child welfare as part of his pursuit of best practice methods. Mathew's role was unique in the sector at the time and gave her a degree of responsibility which no other social worker had been given in a non-government organisation. One of her first tasks was to counsel and support the children as they moved into the new group homes.<sup>896</sup> Colliver in his later report was to state that she was 'available at all times with her advice and assistance'.<sup>897</sup>

Mathew was able to provide assistance to Colliver in this crucial period as the organisation made this transition. Along with Colliver and Matron she participated in case conferences for all children in their care.<sup>898</sup> She was also charged with developing the foster care program which had been envisaged in Kildonan's longer term plan, the first such scheme to be provided by a non-government organisation. She took six weeks to draft the proposal drawing on 'her own experience here in Australia, from her own personal contact with this work in Canada and America and from her intensive reading of available literature'.<sup>899</sup> To ensure that the scheme was compliant with the 1956 legislation, Mathew and Colliver consulted with Whatmore, Director General of the Social Welfare Department, and Albert Booth, the Director of the Family Services.

The foster care program was not able to provide for the larger number of children envisaged in the initial plan.<sup>900</sup> The quality of the new program inhibited its initial growth. This was in part due to Mathew's requirement that families were chosen based on her social work methods and then managed accordingly. She oversaw this project herself, visited the homes of those wishing to foster and making recommendations about which

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<sup>896</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 3.

<sup>897</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 3.

<sup>898</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 'Manager's Report', 2 February 1961; *Quindalup* (March 1961).

<sup>899</sup> KA, *Kildonan Executive Committee Minutes*, 'Superintendent's Report', May 1961.

<sup>900</sup> KA, Price, *Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan* (1959), 2.

children would be suitable for placement within these families. Her progress was very slow, however.

By the middle of 1961 Colliver was convinced by Mathew to employ more social workers to take over some of her other responsibilities so she could focus more fully on the new foster care program.<sup>901</sup> Struggling to find suitable qualified social workers Kildonan used Mathew's experience to provide placement opportunities for University students. In March 1961 Carol Nash, who had worked at Kildonan in the kindergarten section before studying social work, and another graduate student were given placements and tasked with assisting with the foster care program, intake of children, and screening Kildonan's holiday hosts.<sup>902</sup> As a result of these placements the two newly graduated social work students were appointed to ongoing positions at Kildonan. The foster care program expanded to include babies from the babies' home. There were to be more social work student placements by the end of 1962.<sup>903</sup>

The final part of Kildonan's plan for change proved even harder to implement successfully. In 1963 Colliver introduced a day care program designed to deal with school aged children who would need to be cared for both before and after school.<sup>904</sup> The aim of the project was to stop children needlessly being brought into care simply because a single mother was working and could not care for them during the day. The admission centre was the proposed site of this new program, which Colliver projected would cost about £1,000 each year, an amount that would be offset by the reduction in the costs of providing residential care. Mathew developed a day care program but with limited success.<sup>905</sup> The program took few children, perhaps because the site in Hawthorn, an

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<sup>901</sup> KA, Price, Report of Planning Committee of Future of Kildonan (1959), 2.

<sup>902</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, these two students were mentioned several times in the minutes from March 1961 onwards.

<sup>903</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 6 December 1962.

<sup>904</sup> KA, *Kildonan Executive Committee Minutes*, 'The report: Proposal for Day Care of Children at Present in Institutional Care' (3 December 1963).

<sup>905</sup> KA, *Kildonan Executive Committee Minutes*, 'The report: Proposal for Day Care of Children at Present in Institutional Care' (3 December 1963).

upper middle class area, may not have been accessible to the parents most in need of this service.<sup>906</sup>

As there were some difficulties in adopting the entire initial plan Mathew presented an alternative. Once the transition to family group homes had been completed at the end of 1961, she began a family counselling service with access to emergency support. She had held strong views about the need to keep families together since her time in Sydney during the Second World War. The main aim of the counselling service was to support families so their children remained out of care. This represented the first step by Kildonan towards preventive services. There were reports of her first cases in the minutes; providing weekly family assistance payments to a father and his two daughters for six months and counselling and financial assistance to two mothers 'in their own home'.<sup>907</sup> The preventive service allowed Mathew to assess families seeking to place their children in care and offer alternative assistance where possible.

Reporting on the final outcome of the move from the old institutional site to family group homes in the 1961 Annual Report Colliver chose to focus on the preeminent place of the family unit as the ideal environment in which to raise children. On the first page of the report Colliver produced four statements with brief explanations regarding the central role of the family. These were equivalent to the priorities outlined in the Curtis review, without adoption being included as an option. The first statement was that 'Children belong in Families', with Colliver commenting that

nobody had seriously thought they belonged anywhere else but in the past we have not believed it so earnestly that we have striven with every energy to keep children

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<sup>906</sup> KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes*, The Senior Social Worker's Report from August 1968 states that two children were in day care at the Admission Centre.

<sup>907</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 20 July 1961.



in their own homes or to place them in a substitute family when the natural family is broken.<sup>908</sup>

The second statement was that 'Children Belong in Their Own Families', with Colliver acknowledging that traditionally '[w]hen family trouble strikes some parents, the first reaction is to place the children in an institution'.<sup>909</sup> He noted that under Mathew 'Kildonan had embarked in a limited way' in 'skilled family counselling' which he believed could 'take hold of hidden strengths and keep the family together'.<sup>910</sup> His third statement that 'Children Belong in Voluntary Foster Families' acknowledged the need for more experienced social workers. While Kildonan had planned to have 30 to 40 children in foster placements, Colliver conceded that '[p]lacing children in voluntary foster homes [was] one of the most difficult tasks in child care'<sup>911</sup> hinting that Kildonan had already had to compromise its service standards because of a lack of experienced social workers and resources. Finally Colliver focused on the current method stating that 'Children Belong in Family Group Homes'.<sup>912</sup> Like the Curtis review, Colliver accepted that 'for various reasons, [children] need long term institutional care' but argued 'that care should simulate as much as possible the normal family group found in the community'.<sup>913</sup>

Kildonan successfully transitioned its services to the scattered family group home method within the specified time frame. Colliver's changes were widely cited as a model that others in the sector should follow. Children's Week, which was developed by Colliver and his colleagues, was used by leaders in the sector to promote the public profile of the new group home system in the hope of gathering further funds.<sup>914</sup> Leaders like Tally Ho's Ian Cox received many invitations to be interviewed for commercial radio and television

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<sup>908</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>909</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>910</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>911</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>912</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>913</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report* (1961), 1.

<sup>914</sup> KA, Cox, *Tally Ho Boys Village Associate Professor Ian Cox Superintendent 1957 - 1962*. In this interview Cox describes how he, Janicke and Colliver developed the concept of Children's Week to highlight the work of the children's homes.

stations. Many of the children's organisations, including the group homes, also opened for visitors during the week. At other times during the year the organisations in the vanguard of change received visitors from interstate and overseas keen to observe and discuss the new models in action.<sup>915</sup> Both Colliver and Mathew were at the centre of these changes together they contributed to the push by reformers in the state keen for other providers, including the government, to learn from the innovation which had taken place.<sup>916</sup>

### Assessing Kildonan's new programs



Figure 8: Kildonan's suburban family group home in Glen Iris<sup>917</sup>

Despite the philosophical enthusiasm for implementing family group homes, the problems with the new model were quick to surface. The most obvious was the initial and ongoing cost of the scattered suburban family group homes. These financial constraints slowed the pace of change in the sector and led to a three tiered system, with some

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<sup>915</sup> Interstate and overseas visitors were a feature of the Victorian child welfare system. Orana the Methodist home also received visitors as noted by Howe and Swain *All God's Children*, 138.

<sup>916</sup> Sometimes articles appeared in the papers. For example see "They're Mum and Dad to 8," *The Herald*, 31 July 1961, 7.

<sup>917</sup> KA, Image taken from a slide collection located in the Kildonan archives.

voluntary organisations fully adopting the family group method, some still using congregate care and the government itself which had a mix of both systems.

One new challenge was the pressure placed on traditional sources of funding. As the innovators in the sector professionalised and gained a new level of expertise, they lost valuable volunteer and other financial support which in previous years had helped keep running costs down. Kildonan began to be plagued by financial issues almost as soon as it moved from the congregate home model. Colliver suggested that financial supporters did not understand the nature of the change.<sup>918</sup> Where, in the past, food had been donated regularly, clothing was sent for the children and outings and treats had also been provided, with staff offering care in diverse locations the organisation was less visible to its supporters, even though the family group homes held regular open days. Decreased visibility led to decreased support.

One of the most obvious issues of cost was moving from large buildings and purchasing smaller residential homes. Even redeveloping their own sites to be used as family units, however, was beyond the finances of smaller institutions. For several decades child welfare organisations had looked to the Hospital and Charities Commission to provide funding for building improvements. In 1962, the FWAC, of which Colliver was still a member, asked the Commission to stop funding changes to existing congregate care style buildings as a pseudo attempt to modernise.<sup>919</sup> The Victorian Children's Aid Society, was one of many organisations forced to embrace change as a result of this policy. It reluctantly moved its services to a new site and redeveloped it into a series of units after this intervention in the 1970s.<sup>920</sup> Funding was one of the few methods the government could use to force those who continued to run congregate care homes to move closer to

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<sup>918</sup> KA, *Quindalup* (August 1961), 3.

<sup>919</sup> Family Welfare Advisory Council, *Standards in Child Care: Preliminary Statement from the Family Welfare Advisory Council*.

<sup>920</sup> See Hilton, *Selina's Legacy*, 148-51.

the best practice model of care. The costs, however, remained an obstacle for many privately managed organisations. They looked to the government for more financial support to change their methods and often the government failed to support this request which further slowed the pace of change.

Professionalisation and the regulation of working hours and conditions placed pressure on the organisation's finances. There were also further increases in the salaries of staff in this era with even the wealthiest organisation, the Melbourne Orphanage, experiencing difficulties towards the end of the 1960s.<sup>921</sup> Nor did the preventive program substantially reduce costs.<sup>922</sup> Although most of the children they were now taking were state wards, the government payments did not keep pace with increasing costs. Professionalising the services and the management by placing social workers in management over the group homes added substantially to ongoing costs. By the middle of the 1960s Colliver tried to deal with this financial strain by suggesting that the Presbyterian social work services amalgamate with the Methodist ones but the change never came about.<sup>923</sup>

Colliver had his own biases which would also take a toll on the finances of Kildonan. He was to remain thoroughly convinced of the centrality of social work to child welfare despite social workers being costly to employ, especially if they were expected to perform tasks which could have been more efficiently undertaken by less expensive administrative staff. When Jaggs made her first visit to Kildonan as a Departmental Inspector in 1967, she reported that Mathew had told her that 'the current administration arrangements are ... lacking in senior administrative officers and assistants to key

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<sup>921</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 131.

<sup>922</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 133.

<sup>923</sup> KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes*, the situation was first raised by Colliver in his manager's report in June 1965. It never eventuated.

personnel, which throws unnecessary administration onto social workers'.<sup>924</sup> However, there is no record of Colliver taking any action in response.

He remained committed to employing social workers to manage all children and staff despite there being a lack of experienced social workers able to take up more expensive management roles. They were difficult to find and even more difficult to replace well into the 1970s. When Mathew first attempted to retire in 1965, Colliver struggled to find a replacement, appointing a less experienced social worker and asking Mathew to remain on staff as her mentor.<sup>925</sup> Eventually after little success in finding a replacement she was encouraged to return as the Presbyterian Social Services Senior Social Worker in 1966, a role she continued to perform until 1970.

Colliver was appointed Director of the Presbyterian Social Service Department in 1966. By 1968 the Presbyterian Social Service Department (PSSD) had three Divisions: aged care, rehabilitation and probation, which included Kilmany Park Boys Home in Gippsland, and family and child welfare. Mathew was in charge of the family and child welfare division, supervising ten social workers, five of whom worked part-time overseeing Kildonan's family group homes, the Babies Home, foster care, adoption, and general family counselling.<sup>926</sup> Here again, Colliver built a management structure that featured only social workers. By 1970 the system had a high level of professionals supporting it but the advancement of social work management came at a cost to the PSSD which could not generate the extra funds required to continue its service structure and greatly reduced its ability to provide services.

The group home system's success relied substantially on the long-term commitment of the cottage parents which from the outset was not able to be

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<sup>924</sup> DHHSA, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01. *Kildonan Report 1967*. Jaggs was the government inspector who visited Kildonan and wrote her report in 1967. She made her comment in response to an interview with Mathew.

<sup>925</sup> KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes*, 'Report of the Welfare Committee,' 17 March 1966.

<sup>926</sup> KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes*, Presbyterian Social Services Allocation of Social Workers, April 1968.

maintained.<sup>927</sup> The Melbourne Orphanage under the leadership of Janicke expected its cottage parents to remain in place until all the children in their care had finished school and become independent.<sup>928</sup> Kildonan struggled to employ cottage parents for longer than a few years.<sup>929</sup> Colliver and his peers had underestimated the toll the responsibility of being cottage parents took on its staff. There was not another readily available solution to this problem either, because the success of the family group model revolved exclusively around the role of the cottage parents, the mother most particularly.

The cottage parent's children also became an issue.<sup>930</sup> Minutes from meetings of house parents reveal a series of concerns. They struggled to reconcile their responsibilities to their own children with the more complex needs of the other children in their care. While many believed that younger children could have been easily absorbed into the 'family', the average age of intake was eight to ten, often the same age of the cottage parents own children. Many of the house parents felt they were 'walking on a tightrope'. If children did not go to holiday hosts on outing weekends their own children missed out on quality time. There was also the issue of whether their children should have their own room or to share with the other children.<sup>931</sup>

There was an inherent naivety in the reformers' belief that they could artificially replicate a healthy and functioning nuclear family unit. Almost from the group home method's inception there were concerns raised about the quality of relationships that developed. At the Melbourne Orphanage, Jaggs observes:

The apparent fit between cottages and post-war theories of child development had encouraged organisations to underestimate the inherent difficulty, for staff and children alike, of living the myth of 'normal' family life under essentially artificial

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<sup>927</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, For example see 24 August 1961.

<sup>928</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 111-22.

<sup>929</sup> KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes*, For example see the Manager's report for June 1965.

<sup>930</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 19 September 1935.

<sup>931</sup> UC, These papers are held in the Victorian Uniting Church Archives.

conditions ... Cottage life required children to negotiate complex relationships which involved natural parents, cottage parents, their own brothers and sisters, other residential children and cottage parent's children, without advice or support.<sup>932</sup>

It is not surprising that many relational issues raised their heads when all the children were placed into these new, unfamiliar locations but the importance of fostering these relationships could not be underestimated if good outcomes from the care were to be achieved.

Colliver and his colleagues did not appear to comprehend that small institutions, even family groups, still managed children in an artificial environment and were unlikely to live up to the standards hoped for. Colliver was still committed to the view that he could create a 'family home'. However, as Care Leaver, Joanna Penglase, has argued 'a smaller setting does not necessarily guarantee a different institutional culture, from that which prevailed in large homes, if the staff attitudes to children are the same'.<sup>933</sup> Children could still receive a lack of attention, or even negative attention from cottage parents. Cottage parents could be strict and disciplined, replicating rigid institutional regimes.<sup>934</sup>

The Kildonan children did not settle into their new homes as easily as had been anticipated. There was a total lack of acknowledgment that providing a family-like environment, such as situating homes in suburbia, did not necessarily lead to the development of a well-functioning surrogate family unit. There seemed to be an underestimation of the impact such an enormous transformation would have on the children who had to adjust to totally different surroundings and negotiate new relationships with cottage parents. Family group homes, Colliver argued, provided

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<sup>932</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 133.

<sup>933</sup> Penglase, *Orphans of the Living*, 176.

<sup>934</sup> Jaggs, *Asylum to Action*, 131.

children with greater levels of adult attention than congregate care.<sup>935</sup> If these relationships did not work, however, the outcome for the children was more difficult. Not surprisingly, there were problems with children and cottage parents not getting along and issues about new boundaries to be dealt with. Even eighteen months after the move to group homes children were still being shifted between houses in an attempt to address these issues.<sup>936</sup>

No child who was in care at Kildonan in the family group home era has written a submission or biographical piece which could give an insight into their experiences. Children from other homes who experienced such change, however, have placed their reflections on the public record. Two submissions received by the 2004 Senate Inquiry indicate some of the issues which arose in the new family group system. One spoke about the cruelty of the cottage parents at the group home in which he was placed.<sup>937</sup> The second pointed to problems which arose in a mixed family group home that housed adolescents where the girls, used to living in segregated dormitories, complained that the boys took advantage of the absence of locks on toilet, bathroom and bedroom doors to invade their privacy.<sup>938</sup>

Kate Shayler's autobiography discusses the challenges she faced during her transition to a cottage unit within the Presbyterian managed congregate home, Burnside, in New South Wales.<sup>939</sup> Her anxiety arose when the staff member whom she dealt with day-to-day suddenly announced she was going to a meeting of the matrons where they were going to discuss 'making changes'.<sup>940</sup> Shayler, who was a young adolescent at the time, remembered thinking:

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<sup>935</sup> KA, *Kildonan Children's Home Annual Report*, (1961), 4.

<sup>936</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, For example see 24 August 1961 for a discussion of issues around changing children's placements.

<sup>937</sup> 'Submission 385 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care'.

<sup>938</sup> 'Submission 449 Received by the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care'.

<sup>939</sup> Shayler, *The Long Way Home*, 149-52.

<sup>940</sup> Shayler, *The Long Way Home*, 149.



Make it better? How? What are they changing it for? I don't like changes. What if the experts say everything is wrong? What if they make us change everything and we don't know how to do it?<sup>941</sup>

Her confusion was made worse when the staff member reported that the management of the home wanted the small group to seem more like a family. There was a discussion about her title, as the girls had previously had to call her 'Miss Perryman' in a formal manner. Now suddenly they were asked to change the entire nature of their relationship and were asked her to call her 'Aunt' and use her Christian name.<sup>942</sup> While the staff member involved tried to be more understanding and patient with the girls, they expressed notable resistance. After some thought Shayler decided to call her 'Mum Perry'.<sup>943</sup>

The practical changes that had to be made to their cottage took several months to complete and when the girls returned from their summer holiday they were disappointed with what they found. They were still housed in a dormitory, rather than having their own bedroom as the official history would later claim.<sup>944</sup> The only change to their cottage was that a partition was put up in what had been a communal bathroom. When a staff member argued this was for privacy Shayler asked 'Why do I need privacy all of a sudden?'.<sup>945</sup> Having been in care since early childhood she was used to institutional life and did not understand the reason for these changes. Shayler never suggested that the changes made to the home she was in transformed it into a family unit which Colliver and his peers advocated. To her, they were just confusing.

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<sup>941</sup> Shayler, *The Long Way Home*, 150-51.

<sup>942</sup> Shayler, *The Long Way Home*, 150.

<sup>943</sup> Shayler, *The Long Way Home*, 150.

<sup>944</sup> Keen, *Burnside*, 104-07. Keen comments 'The dormitories were transformed into small rooms to take one to five children, and each home was remodelled to take smaller numbers.' According to Shayler these smaller rooms were still dormitories.

<sup>945</sup> Shayler, *The Long Way Home*, 161.

While Colliver was in charge of these changes, Mathew had responsibility for guiding the Kildonan children through this extraordinary upheaval, but her reports to the Home Committee make no mention of their responses. Nor is there any evidence that the children were given any opportunity to discuss what was happening to them. Clearly the move from the Elgar Road site for children, many of whom would have been in congregate care for several years, would have been difficult and involved some degree of loss, whatever the benefits of the family group method appeared to be. The most significant was the loss of relationships formed with staff with whom they no longer had daily contact.<sup>946</sup> The only hint of this disruption is in the Home Committee minutes from April 1961 where widespread illness amongst the children was ascribed to the move. The solution proposed was to give them all a dose of Penta-vite, a liquid vitamin supplement, to improve their wellbeing.<sup>947</sup>

Despite Colliver setting up some training regimes early in the implementation of the plan by the middle of the 1960s these were not being fully implemented. At this time the system was in serious financial difficulties with no contingency plan to reduce Kildonan's running costs.<sup>948</sup> Colliver and his supporters had simply assumed the new system would be a success despite it becoming very clear that the cottage system would be very expensive to maintain. After much discussion in 1966 the decision was taken to sell the cottage home located at Syndal.<sup>949</sup> While the number of children in the home was reduced, unfortunately for Kildonan, two wards of state remained after the final set of cottage parents had left.<sup>950</sup> A young couple with broad connections to the Presbyterian

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<sup>946</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, 6 July 1961. A get-together was held for the eight staff who were made redundant as a result of the changes.

<sup>947</sup> KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, Minutes from the 24 of April 1961.

<sup>948</sup> KA, The financial situation is discussed frequently by the Superintendent in 1965 and 1966. See *Kildonan Executive Committee Minutes*.

<sup>949</sup> KA, *Kildonan Administrative Committee Minutes*, This decision was first raised at the end of 1965 and steps were taken to begin this process in 1966.

<sup>950</sup> KA, Lloyd Stanley Owen, *Experience of Being a Kildonan Cottage Parent*, interview by Sharron Lane, 17 January, 2017.

Church were asked to step in temporarily. They were to receive free board and were paid to essentially foster these two teenage girls left at the home.

This new couple with a young baby were given the task of caring for two teenage girls with very different backgrounds and complex needs.<sup>951</sup> They received no training before they commenced this emergency role and none after they were given responsibility for their foster children. They were not treated like other members of staff, although they did receive the help with cleaning and laundry services. The main support they received was from a male social worker who made himself available 24 hours a. They had to call on the social worker numerous times. While this was to be only a temporary measure the couple remained at Syndal for two years without ever being inducted as Kildonan's other cottage parents had been.

The government's on-going and urgent need for more places slowed the pace of change, despite the evidence of problems in the family group home system. The new inflexibilities in the new system reduced the number of beds available for state wards. While the department continued to advocate for family-like care, its desperate need for places meant that it continued to rely on congregate care institutions that had resisted calls for change.<sup>952</sup>

The group home method was clearly not designed for emergency accommodation either, nor, it seems, was it able to be able to place large sibling groups as generally only one place at a time would become available. While organisations like Kildonan did make some provision for short term care, by the middle of the 1960s, the government was not able to find enough places. The 1965 report noted that:

a children's home is probably the best placement, particularly if they are in family groups and later return to their parents is likely. However, comparatively little

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<sup>951</sup> KA, Owen, *Experience of Being a Kildonan Cottage Parent*.

<sup>952</sup> Barnard and Twigg, *Holding on to Hope*, 240.

accommodation is readily available in children's homes for large families or even families of three or four children. It is not uncommon for a family of, say, six children to be split up and spread over three homes.<sup>953</sup>

The government had legitimate reasons for requiring more places in congregate care homes when the family group home model provided no temporary placements. This was yet another reason why by the middle of the 1960s the government was reluctant to support other private providers to move to the new methods of care. Change had come at a cost and the innovation which had begun at the beginning of the 1960s was facing substantial systemic obstacles. The ensuing tensions within the system continued well into the 1970s.

The conflicting aims of modernising the child welfare system and the now obvious financial burdens this placed on private providers, and the decrease in available placements that ensued, led to a comprehensive government review, the findings of which were delivered in the Norgard Report in 1976.<sup>954</sup> It was not surprising that the first issue on the review's agenda was to assess the need for 'facilities necessary for the care of wards of the Social Welfare Department and other children requiring full-time care apart from their families'.<sup>955</sup> Again the government was wrestling with the need for more places at a time when private organisations were providing less.

While the government had such practical considerations it needed to address the committee was given a much wider brief to examine the entire child welfare system and how it was managed. The issues examined included the provision of preventive services, a questioning of the need for children to be made wards of the state, and for the first time

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<sup>953</sup> *Social Welfare Department: Annual Report Year Ended June 30 1965* (Melbourne: A. C. Brooks, Government Printer, 1966), 11.

<sup>954</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria* (Melbourne: C. H. Rixon, Government Printer, 1976).

<sup>955</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, 3.

a serious attempt at 'ensuring the maintenance of standards' for private providers.<sup>956</sup> Finally the committee was asked to provide guidance as to how this new agenda could be funded. In a process similar to the Curtis Report, the committee met 50 times and took evidence from more than 300 people.<sup>957</sup> It received 80 submissions and visited homes both within Victoria and interstate and commissioned two research projects, one surveying the private organisations the other examining the current legislation with the aim of making recommendations for improvement.

The recommendations from the review changed the focus of child welfare from care of the child to encompass Bowlby's vision of the child within a family. The first recommendation stated that:

a comprehensive family welfare program be developed and progressively implemented throughout the State, marshalling all resources of statutory, voluntary and local government agencies to provide a full range of family developmental services.<sup>958</sup>

This was to become the focus as child welfare was increasingly viewed as part of a new emphasis on family welfare. As a result the committee emphasized the need for preventive services, softened its approach to the more punitive responses that were endemic within the child welfare system, such as the state ward program, and sought to provide leadership in creating momentum for change.

The existing relationship between the government and private providers was also criticised with the report stating that.

Lack of clear guidelines, together with ill-defined relationships between the Social Welfare Department and voluntary organisations, have been a major factor

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<sup>956</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, 3.

<sup>957</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, 5-6.

<sup>958</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, 123.

hampering orderly development in child and family welfare over the whole State.<sup>959</sup>

Addressing the decentralised nature of the system, the report recommended that licensing of agencies be 'fixed-term' and reviewed, and that any new programs run by private agencies should operate under new contractual arrangements which would provide a uniform approach.<sup>960</sup> All of these changes were accepted although they took several years to be implemented.

## **Conclusion**

The leaders of the non-government sector underestimated how difficult it would be to raise standards of care across a decentralised system. The advocates of change had not foreseen many of the consequences of their move the family group method. Smaller units accommodated fewer children at greater cost, and while the department needed more places it was unwilling to cover the extra costs, slowing the pace of change.<sup>961</sup> As the sector expanded the possibility for personal relationships declined. Rather than being a partner in the change process, Colliver now largely corresponded with the department over budgetary issues.<sup>962</sup> While Victoria's decentralised model of welfare provision allowed individual innovators to be at the forefront of reform little consideration was given to the difficulties that reform had brought.

The new group homes were complex systems which relied on children getting along with cottage parents and the other children in the home and on the cottage parents' long term commitment to the home and their care. They also relied on good relationships between cottage parents and the social workers to whom they were answerable. They

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<sup>959</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, 126.

<sup>960</sup> *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, 127.

<sup>961</sup> DHHS, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01. Requests were being made for more places from the voluntary sector for the government wards by 1965.

<sup>962</sup> DHHS, Kildonan Home Archival File, Vh\_0016\_01. By 1967 much of Mr Colliver's official correspondence with the department consisted of requests for money for school uniforms for the government wards who were housed at Kildonan.

were also costly. Even by 1970 many private organisations contemplating, or being compelled to contemplate change wondered how to manage the now very apparent financial and physical costs of the family group system leaving too many children in congregate care systems which now seemed even more inadequate. While the greater emphasis on preventive care may have provided alternatives for the lucky few who would otherwise have come into care, most children still faced an uncertain future in an under resourced and outdated child welfare system. The release of the Norgard Report in 1976 addressed many of these issues and created a new emphasis which led to the development of a suite of preventive services aimed at keeping families together.

Kildonan continued to maintain the system of care that Colliver and Mathew had set up well into the 1970s.<sup>963</sup> Change came in 1978 when, after consultation with the government, a new pilot family group home was opened in the inner city suburb of Richmond. Introducing the pilot the Annual Report noted that many of the children who required out-of-home placements were from the new public housing blocks in these inner city suburbs. It argued that moving them out of their environment, their schools and away from family and friends and placing them in the eastern suburbs where 'living standards and School and community expectations' were different was detrimental creating an unnecessary layer of adjustment.<sup>964</sup> Following the success of this pilot, Kildonan moved its entire operation to the inner city region by the middle of the 1980s.<sup>965</sup>

A second change in 1978 was the opening of a teenage unit, designed to create an environment where adolescents could interact with their peers rather than continuing to be cared for in mixed age group homes. As Bruce Osborn, Director of Kildonan Family Group Homes explained:

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<sup>963</sup> KA, *Kildonan Homes for Children, 1978, 98th Annual Report*, 1.

<sup>964</sup> KA, *Kildonan Homes for Children, 1978, 98th Annual Report*, 1.

<sup>965</sup> KA, *Kildonan Homes for Children, 1983, 102nd Annual Report*, 2.

This unit aims to care of adolescents during their last year or two of schooling, to assist them in finding a place in the workforce and then to move into independent living. Emphasis is placed on the development of a personal sense of responsibility and the young people are encouraged to make their own decisions regarding spare-time activities, future employment and living accommodation.<sup>966</sup>

The unit proved difficult for staff to manage with the initial three staff all leaving within the first fifteen months but Kildonan remained committed to this type of care innovation.

Despite Player's early attempts at developing a preventive program which focused on the family unit it was not until the early 1990s that Kildonan was able to advance this philosophy in a systematic way. In August 1992 Kildonan was one of several community sector organisations selected to pilot a new government funded child protection program called *Families First*.<sup>967</sup> The same year Kildonan and Whittlesea Family Services devised an amalgamation plan which was implemented smoothly in 1993. Through this amalgamation Kildonan was able to add a new suite of family and youth programs to its residential child care services.

However, by 1997 Kildonan was having serious issues with its residential care program. The Director's report for the year lamented:

The provision of out-of-home-care through our Residential Services continues to confront the significant problems of a marginalised service system with few options available to young people with significant needs. We can only hope that the Department of Human Services will listen to all services providing Residential Care and respond to the call of the non-government sector for review and program development before it is too late.<sup>968</sup>

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<sup>966</sup> KA, *Kildonan Homes for Children, 1978, 98th Annual Report*, 1.

<sup>967</sup> KA, *Kildonan Child and Family Services, 1992/1993, 112th Annual Report*, 5-6.

<sup>968</sup> KA, *Kildonan Child and Family Services, 1997/1998, 117th Annual Report*, 6.



The government was not listening to the sector as it had in the past.

In 1999 the board of Kildonan responded by deciding to close its residential services in response to the lack of government support for the extra costs the increasingly complex needs of children referred for care required.<sup>969</sup> After 120 years of providing out-of-home care, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2001 Kildonan handed back its remaining homes to the Department of Human Services, choosing to focus instead on providing services that supported parents keeping their families together.<sup>970</sup>

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<sup>969</sup> KA, *Kildonan Child and Family Services, 1999/2000, 119th Annual Report*, 4.

<sup>970</sup> KA, *Kildonan Child and Family Services, 2001/2002, 122nd Annual Report*, 6.

## Conclusion

The central aim of this study has been to examine the contributions of individuals to the development of the organisation which until June 2017 was known as Kildonan UnitingCare. As part of this process the thesis sought to locate these contributions within their broader local, national, social and political contexts. It has presented evidence of the Victorian government's reluctance to regulate the state wide system and its continued reliance on voluntary institutions to provide care, not only for children in voluntary placements in non-government homes, but increasingly for its own wards. This interdependence created the context for a collaboration which underwrote the development of child welfare policy and practice well into the twentieth century.

Politicians' unwillingness to take full responsibility for child welfare services left their mark with a continuing lack of progress on numerous child welfare questions. This is most obvious in the decisions by successive governments to leave child welfare in the large, busy and extremely diverse portfolio of the Chief Secretary. This was neglect by omission of various governments over numerous decades. Even when a Chief Secretary took some interest in child welfare, such as when new legislation was being mooted, not one of them viewed the Department as important enough to be given a much higher profile such as the care of a dedicated Minister until 1970. This represents a major failure on the part of government to prioritise the welfare of children in both private and government placements. The numerous inquiries into the treatment and care received by both state wards and those in voluntary care are a testament to this policy failure.

Even when the various Chief Secretaries showed some interest in the field of child welfare they relied heavily on the advice of advocates already working in the field, both within the state, interstate and even overseas. Of the Chief Secretaries only Galvin, who

made much of his childhood experience of seeing his mother working as an Inspector, had any experience of child welfare. Only Deakin made a serious attempt to devise a new model for Victorian conditions. History shows that as a result of the Chief Secretaries' lack of professional knowledge most legislation simply implemented pre-existing models of care rather than seeking to change the entire system of child welfare.

As a result of this political neglect, throughout the entire period studied in this research, the sector was lightly regulated. This was despite thousands of children being cared for by both government and private providers. For more than a century there was a general lack of guidance given to private institutions about how to manage the complex needs of children often traumatised by their early experiences. It was left to the private providers to ostensibly manage their own quality of care and each time the issue was raised with various governments politicians from all parties were found wanting.

Economic imperatives were never far from the minds of politicians when they pondered how to deal with children in need. While changes in method were often justified in welfare terms, when finally presented to the public many of the political debates around legislative changes make it clear that politicians did not wish to spend a great deal of time or money on caring for destitute children. This theme also pervaded their ongoing support for private citizens providing services wherever and whenever possible. In the earliest years of the colony this may well have been a necessary budgetary measure, but even after the gold rush in the 1850s provided the colony with more funds, this lack of willingness to spend money on children's services became a mantra rather than an inclination. As a result private enterprises were able to thrive in an environment that encouraged their endeavours.

Part of the reason for this failure was that Victorian governments had a naïve belief in the superior quality of services provided by private citizens. The earliest system

provided a role for voluntary visitors to children's institutions. The boarding out system relied on the management of local ladies committees that oversaw the choice of suitable families and maintained regular visits when children were placed. In many ways this early belief in private philanthropy never faded. Even in the middle of the twentieth century private homes were still favoured by the government for foster placements. The government also continually relied on the general public for support for their own child welfare programs.

The decentralised nature of the system which developed in Victoria made it extremely difficult to change. It was not until 1976 with the recommendations of the Norgard Report that this issue was seriously addressed. The private providers which still to this day provide many of the state's welfare programs struggle with the legacy of their history. They are now much more dependent on government contracts for the vast majority of their programs but are still underfunded and disadvantaged by the imbalance of power in this arrangement. Residential care is still provided by private institutions in what has become known as the community sector. When politically opportune the government can still spread the blame for any failings in the system as a result of this entrenched interdependence. Victoria is still a decentralised child welfare state but individuals now have less ability to influence decision-making.

Historically the sector relied on cooperation but this was forced upon it by a lack of government intervention and the inevitable structure of the sector they inherited. This thesis has identified the necessary role that key individuals played in fostering the relationships with politicians that made historical change possible in a decentralised state. In a more subtle way it has also shown how in a decentralised state, power, or authority, is dispersed. Until the 1990s in Victoria this provided the opportunity for individual leaders to make a contribution to transforming the sector. Sutherland was able

to construct a career as a licensed child rescue over the 28 years prior to her death in 1909. She was always confident in her ability to manage and distinguish between the various types of families and needs she encountered.

Relationships, it seems, were also an important factor in the success of such individuals. For Sutherland her relationship with Armour and the emotional and financial support she gained from it, were vital to her ongoing career. Her relationship with men, both positive, in Strong and Deakin, and combative with Marshall, also had an impact on her success and failures. For Mathew informal relationships seem to have provided her with the pathway to influence the work of Kildonan in the 1950s. Her continued relationship with Colliver assisted him in his burgeoning career. Colliver used his relationships with those who could teach him, such as Mathieson, Tierney, and his peers, to become influential in his own right. Despite the need for strong leadership in a decentralised state, these leaders also needed support.

Gender relationships also featured within this study. While Sutherland represented a strong woman gaining a place in the public sphere, she still faced limitations, which she sought to address by seeking the support of important male figures. Player, too, it seems was overlooked for the role of Superintendent of Kildonan probably because the Executive Committee, on which she had once volunteered, could only envisage a leader as male. This was despite the fact that she had all the relevant experience needed and had assisted Kildonan's leadership in a voluntary capacity. They chose, instead, an inexperienced but enthusiastic man, Colliver to lead the changes that Player had been instrumental in developing.

The leadership provided by three of Kildonan's key figures in the child welfare sector also shows how the impact of voluntary organisations changed over time. Sutherland took advantage of what was a decentralised child welfare system to actively

pursue a personal career. She used her influence to encourage the government to make legislative change which she envisaged would assist her work rather than seeking change collaboratively or on behalf of others in the field. Colliver and Mathew, however, were not only interested in improving Kildonan's methods. Both sought to address broader issues in the sector. They used Kildonan as an example throwing open the organisation to visits, and advocating and networking across the sector, addressing issues such as preventive care, single mothers and the quality of child welfare. In the decentralised Victorian context the private sector became more influential over time.

For leadership to flourish in the sector it also needed the right conditions to be in place. Even in a decentralised state legislation ultimately determined the type of services that would be provided. Although Sutherland was one of the first to operate a voluntary boarding-out system in the colony, her ability to develop the scheme was greatly assisted by support she received from Deakin and Guillaume, most particularly when they legitimated her work through the passage of the *Neglected Children's Act 1887*. The lack of progress made in the state on child welfare reforms between the turn of the century and the middle of the 1950s was a reflection of a lack of national consciousness. This was also reflected in the stagnation found within the operation of Kildonan as an individual provider. It was not until after the government passed the *Children's Welfare Act 1954* that leaders such as Mathew and Colliver continued to lobby the government to remain open to new methods and ideas about child welfare.

This thesis has also found that there was another important social factor which leaders from the non-government institutions used as a vehicle to express their child welfare concerns. The press played an important role in assisting, most particularly Sutherland, to develop not just her career, but importantly, her enduring reputation. Some members of the press were active participants in assisting Sutherland to defend herself

numerous times.<sup>971</sup> Their efforts enabled her to continue to be well regarded, despite evidence to the contrary. Despite this assistance the press did not appear to prioritise the systematic review of child welfare services, leaving the bulk of the reporting to general reporters, rather than investigative specialists like the Vagabond.<sup>972</sup> The media played a much more subtle role in the case of Colliver, as he too, was able to further his reputation as a child welfare expert by using the newer forms of media available to him as well as the traditional print media.<sup>973</sup>

Social work also became a force seeking to change the sector. It was hampered in its earliest attempts by the nature of an unwieldy and decentralised system. Power over children still largely lay in the hands of administrators both within private institutions and inside the government's child welfare department. These power structures, even in the late 1950s, were still dominated by men. Social workers struggled to gain influence in the sector as most experienced social workers were women. As this thesis has shown, there was resistance to the advice from social workers until enough men, like Colliver had trained in the field themselves.

Finally, this thesis has highlighted how difficult it is to change a decentralised system as a whole. While Colliver and his colleagues embarked on an impressive campaign for change, the thesis has identified their continued frustration. Most of the organisations that provided care for children were still lightly regulated after the 1954 legislation. Perhaps more importantly, as Musgrove also acknowledged, the government began to realise that these new forms of care provided less spaces for their wards and that they needed to keep using the older style congregate care homes to take the overflow of

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<sup>971</sup> Lane, "The Argus and Miss Sutherland." 93-103.

<sup>972</sup> The evidence for this is provided in the countless number of articles which have been used within this thesis. Even into the twentieth century there were no welfare or social correspondents listed as reporters.

<sup>973</sup> Alfred Spencer Colliver became a Senior Social Work Lecturer in the early 1970s at Sydney University before becoming the Deputy Head of the Social Service Department in Canberra in 1976. For an example of his views see "A Study of Australian Families," *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 3 October 1973, 7. KA, *Home Committee Minutes*, on the 21 September 1961 Colliver was interviewed by reporter David Scott on Channel 9. In early December he also appeared on Channel 7.

children who were moving into care in larger numbers.<sup>974</sup> As a result, the change that those who adopted these new models of care had hoped would sweep the sector was slow to eventuate.

The case study of Kildonan UnitingCare provides three examples of individuals who contributed not only to Kildonan, but also more broadly to state welfare practices, and in the case of Colliver to later national developments. As the Victorian government approach over decades was to partner with voluntary providers this ensured that those who sought careers managing such organisations could find themselves becoming influential in the state. While much of the sway these people had was of an informal nature, the thesis has attempted, where possible, to provide evidence of the importance of relationships between these innovative leaders. Change came about in the sector as competent individuals were able to develop new methods and change the nature of child welfare as a whole. The long history of the organisation which was until recently known as Kildonan UnitingCare is a testament to this process.

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<sup>974</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain*, 159-61.





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## APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear .....,

### INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: The significance of individual contributions in the history of Kildonan UnitingCare.

NAME OF SUPERVISORS: Professor Shurlee Swain and Dr Nell Musgrove

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Sharron Lane

PROGRAM IN WHICH ENROLLED: Doctoral Candidate, School of Arts

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study of the methods and history of Kildonan UnitingCare with particular reference to the work of Mr Colliver from 1957 to 1967. This project is interested in the contribution given by Mr Colliver to the methods employed in child welfare during this period of history.

It is anticipated that the interviews will take approximately one to one and half hours to complete but please allow two hours. The interviews will be conducted as open-ended interviews with several lead in questions from which it is hoped the participants will be able to contribute their thoughts and memories.

Placing on the historical record an understanding of past child welfare methods can help to inform and broaden current debates regarding child welfare reform and practice. As a result of this study a PhD thesis will be produced. There may also be papers and a social history manuscript developed for Kildonan UnitingCare. It is hoped that this research will be used to give adult care leavers from Kildonan who request their records a greater understanding of the context and methods used while they were in care. You are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason. You will have the choice of whether or not you wish to be identified in publications arising from the project. Every attempt will be made to honour your choice in this matter. However, given the small number of individuals involved at Kildonan Homes for Children during the time being examined for this project it may not be possible for you to remain anonymous. Please consider this when you make the decision to be involved and also when you take time to edit your interview responses.

The audio-tapes produced for this project will be stored securely at the home of the student researcher until the project is completed. These tapes will then be archived at Kildonan for use by future researchers and the organisation.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisors and the Student Researcher:

**Professor Shurlee Swain**

Professor of Humanities

Phone: (03) 9953 3239

Fax: (03) 9495 6118

Organisational Area: Faculty of Education and Arts

Location: Melbourne Campus (St Patrick's)

Main Campus (115 Victoria Parade)-Level 3-3.81

**Dr Nell Musgrove**

Lecturer, History

Phone: (03) 9953 3208

Organisational Area: Faculty of Education and Arts

Location: Melbourne Campus (St Patrick's)

Main Campus (115 Victoria Parade)-Level 3-3.70

**Sharron Lane**

Kildonan UnitingCare

188 McDonalds Road

Epping

Phone: 8401 0150

Please notify the student researcher if you would like to be provided with feedback about the results of the project when the PhD is completed. (This will take several years.)

Please note: This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that the Investigator (or Supervisor and Student Researcher have) has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office. (Delete addresses not required.)

**VIC: Chair, HREC**

C/- Research Services

Australian Catholic University

Melbourne Campus

Locked Bag 4115

FITZROY VIC 3065

Tel: 03 9953 3158

Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Student Researcher.

.....

Principal Investigator

## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

### CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: The significance of individual contributions in the history of Kildonan UnitingCare.

Summary of the project:

*This doctoral thesis will use an historical case study to explore the significance of individual contributions to Kildonan UnitingCare and the child welfare sector in Victoria. It will analyse the social, political, legislative and religious contexts that enabled two key individuals, Miss Selina Sutherland and Mr. A. Spencer Colliver to contribute to child welfare practice, policy and legislative developments within the State and occasionally on a national scale.*

NAME OF SUPERVISORS: Professor Shurlee Swain (ACU) and Dr Nell Musgrove (ACU)

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Sharron Lane

I ..... (the participant) have read (or, where appropriate, have had read to me) and understood the information provided. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this one to two hour interview, which will be audiotaped, realising that I can withdraw my consent at any time (without adverse consequences). I agree that I will be given the opportunity to edit an audio taped copy of my contribution. I am aware that I have the choice to be named in the research or to request the researcher use a pseudonym. I understand that because of the nature of the research and of the sample size I may be identifiable in the research. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way. I understand that my contribution may be published as part of the research project.

Please register how you wish your contribution to be identified for this research project:

☐ I wish **my own name** to be used to identify my contribution.

☐ I wish **a pseudonym** to be used for my contribution.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .....

SIGNATURE .....

DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: .....

DATE:.....

## **APPENDIX C: Questions for Cottage Parent interview**

Questions for Cottage Parent interview

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017

1. What prompted you to become cottage parents?
2. Did you have any preconceived ideas about what the role would entail?
3. What surprised you or was not what you expected when you first began your position?
4. How did you assist the children to adjust to you as cottage parents?
5. Were you given any initial training before you began your role?
6. How were you supported in your position moving forward? I.e. training, time off, administratively etc.?
7. How long were you in charge of a cottage and where was it located?
8. What type of relationships did you have with the children's biological parents?
9. Were relationships with the parents encouraged by Kildonan and did they give you any support or training on how to manage these relationships?
10. Were there changes often to the children in your care or did your cottage group remain relatively stable over the period you worked?
11. What were some of the good outcomes from the system that you can remember?
12. What were some of the weaknesses or barriers to providing the cottage system of care?
13. What was Colliver like to work for?
14. Did you have dealings with Alison Matthew and what was it like to work with her?
15. Did you develop positive supportive relationships with other cottage parents from Kildonan?
16. Would you say that all the cottage parents worked in a similar way to provide a certain type of care? If so can you describe some of the features of this care?
17. Were you aware of what was happening in the broader sector at the time and of how Kildonan's cottage homes were viewed?
18. Did you receive any contact or support from the department regarding the children in your care? If so can you explain how often and what type of interaction you personally had with the department at this time?