



# **Histories of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, 1866-1983**

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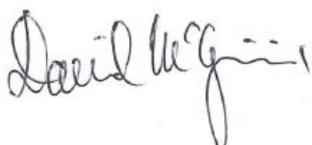
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## Statement of Authorship and Originality

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, 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 other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and the list of references of the thesis. No editorial assistance has been received in the production of the thesis without due acknowledgement. Except where duly referred to, the thesis does not include material with copyright provisions or requiring copyright approvals.

This thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, charts, bibliographies and footnotes.

Signed



11 November, 2019

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My family – Katie Donnelly, Charlie and Josephine, mum and dad, Andy and Matt – thank you always and forever for your unwavering support and love. Katie in particular, thank you. You know that I could not have done this without you and I am so grateful.

### A note on the use of names in this thesis

Countless children and their families populate this thesis, as might be expected in a history about children's institutions. It is not viable to obtain permission to use information about all of them, nor is it favourable to omit children and families in the absence of permission. No personal files of children in Care have been accessed or used for this research project. All primary research has been conducted using other administrative texts such as institutional Admissions Books, Superintendent Reports, Board Meeting Notes, and correspondence between bureaucracies; or publicly available narrative texts such as oral histories, memoirs, testimony to inquiries, and newspaper articles.

For children and their families from over 100 years ago – that is, up to and including 1919 – I have included their real names, regardless of where their information has come from. It is important that the real names and stories of the children in the institution's formative years are recognised as its founders.

For children and their families since 1919 who have themselves left publicly available records and included their own names, almost always as adults looking back on their experiences – including Oral Histories, memoirs, testimony to public inquiries, books, and by being interviewed or contributing themselves to newspaper articles - I have included their original names. Most of these sources are available freely online, or in published books.

For children and their families whose information I have discovered in collections not easily available to the public, such as the Cafs collections, including Admissions Books, Superintendent Reports and Board Minutes, I have used pseudonyms. In some cases even children whose information is from the public sources, I have also used pseudonyms where it is apparent that the person is not writing about themselves, but is actually being written about, or they have written without an apparent intention to do so publicly, such as in letters.

Names that appear in italics are pseudonyms.

## **Histories of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, 1866-1983**

### **Abstract**

This thesis outlines the development of three children's residential institutions on the site of 200 Victoria Street, Ballarat East: the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum (1866-1909), the Ballarat Orphanage (1909-1968), and the Ballarat Children's Home (1968-1983). These institutions are the historical precursors to the contemporary community service organisation now known as Child and Family Services Ballarat, or simply Cafs.

The thesis focuses particularly on the shifting cultures of these institutions, to identify waves of change, surging and receding to form long patterns of alternating reform and repose. Established ways of operating overlapped with new and developing ideas, to create a dynamic environment constantly negotiating its relationships with government, communities and of course the families and children who came to rely on them. As a result, when transformative change occurred, it was difficult for leaders and policy-makers to recognise it as such at the time, as it was often experienced more as crisis and response. This provides a useful set of historical examples for current leadership and practitioners to learn from.

Most critically, however, it locates the thousands of children who were institutionalised - eating, sleeping, playing, learning and working – as central to the narrative formation of identity for the historic institutions themselves, the contemporary organisation they have become, and the communities of Ballarat and beyond. Children were sent to these institutions from all over Victoria and Australia and made their homes in many different places when they left. Nevertheless, the stories and lives of the children from these institutions and the adults they have become are a key part of contemporary collective identity. The institutions are remembered with complex and contradictory mixtures of regret, loss, trauma and fondness, reflecting the mixed legacies that these institutions have left in contemporary Ballarat and beyond.

## Introduction

This thesis is a history of the community sector organisation now known as Cafs, in Ballarat, Australia, focussing in particular on the period between 1866 and 1983, when it operated under various names as a consolidated residential institution for children in a single campus at 200 Victoria St Ballarat East. In 1866 the first children came to what was then called the “Ballarat District Orphan Asylum”. In 1909 the institution’s name changed to the “Ballarat Orphanage”, and in 1968 it became the “Ballarat Children's Home”, until 1983. From then on it was no longer a consolidated residential institution, but a multi-site, multi-program, community-based social services agency, known variously as “Ballarat Children's Home and Family Services”, “Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services”, “Child and Family Services (CAFS)”, and most recently, since 2018, simply as “Cafs”.

## Structure

This history is divided into two sections. Section 1 covers the historical period from when the institution first accepted children in 1866, to when it ended consolidated residential accommodation in a single campus in 1983. This period can be split into three distinct eras:

- Chapters 1 and 2 explore the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum era from 1866 to 1909, characterised by the establishment and consolidation of community-controlled authority over the lives and living conditions of children deemed to be from “good” families in Ballarat and surrounding areas
- Chapter 3 explores the Ballarat Orphanage era, from 1909 to 1968, characterised by the institution's entrenchment into a broader State network of localised residential service delivery, whereby children who had been classified as State wards from across Victoria were sent to the Ballarat Orphanage by the State
- Chapter 4 explores the Ballarat Children's Home era, from 1968 to 1983, characterised by a shift towards de-institutionalisation, as children's welfare services in Victoria and beyond transformed significantly away from consolidated residential Care.

Section 2 covers themes that cut across the various institutional eras.

- Chapter 5 explores experiences of Aboriginal Australians in the three institutions, tracing the ways in which the institutions responded to and worked with the prevailing policies of the time
- Chapter 6 identifies aspects of institutional culture that had inhibited the organisation’s ability to change. In particular it looks at experiences of Farming and Schooling onsite at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home, and their demise in the 1970s that opened the way for more comprehensive change to come in the 1980s.

- Chapter 7 explores the legacies of institutionalisation, both in the organisation now known as Cafs, and more broadly in Ballarat and other communities. It sketches the ways in which the organisation has developed since becoming a multi-service Community Sector Organisation, and the ways in which it has reckoned with some of the difficult historical legacies of children's institutionalisation in the twenty-first century.

## Research Questions

In particular, the thesis focuses on institutional cultures, to understand and inform the ways in which these cultures affect service delivery, and the ways in which cultures can encourage or inhibit change and progress within a community sector organisation. As such, it has two main research questions:

- In what ways have institutional cultures – including relationships between the institutions, government, communities and children and families – shaped the development and implementation of social services, change and reform for children and families at the Ballarat Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home?
- In what ways can contemporary social service agencies better understand and harness their historical legacies to inform effective change and reform?

## The development and implementation of social services, change and reform

The modern organisation - Cafs - does not much resemble the organisations that came before it. Like others, the institution has modernised substantially over generations, with major shifts in service models influenced by emerging ideas and practices around children's Care from around the world. Where Cafs in the 2010s is known to deliver more than forty programs, funded, administered and accounted for in different ways, for most of its previous history between 1866 and 1983 its predecessor institutions could be described as a single service – the direct accommodation of children – managed and accounted for under a single structure. The significant changes in the institution that culminated in the 1980s occurred against a backdrop of broader social service reform, significant demographic change amongst State wards in Victoria, local and sector-wide financial crisis, and shifting relationships with community and government. Most significantly of all, it occurred alongside the human tragedy of abuse that was occurring within the walls of the institution.

Even so, there was no decisive moment of change in the institution. Rather there were important and symbolic moments of progress, occurring simultaneously with the ongoing inertia and resistance to change, and crisis-driven “making-do”. The transformation from children's accommodation provider to multiple service deliverer came gradually, and in many forms, both responding to and anticipating broader reforms in children's welfare from around the world.

What this gradual process of change shows is that the history of this institution is not one of relentless and progressive modernisation. Historical, cultural and structural constraints have meant that the new has always sat alongside the old, in a constant interplay. Moreover it highlights the ways in which the institution has not always been the architect of its own reform. Instead, like other organisations, it has been buffeted and pushed by others, existing within a network of providers ambiguously administered by the State and ambivalently owned by local communities.

The current history project fills a gap in the literature on Cafs and its predecessor organisations by focussing on the stories of people who have lived and worked in these institutions, and the places within which they lived, both inside and outside institutional boundaries. A number of previous short works on the history of Ballarat Orphanage and the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum have been undertaken. “Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee”, by an unknown author in 1915,<sup>1</sup> and “A Century of Childcare”, by Ethel Morris in 1965,<sup>2</sup> were written to celebrate the Orphanage's fiftieth and one hundredth anniversaries respectively. Both these short histories focussed primarily on the story of the institution and its leaders, and mainly used published Annual Reports as source material. Reference to the children who lived at the Orphanage has been largely omitted from these accounts. For instance, in Morris's account, while more than 240 adults are mentioned, only ten children are included, and their daily lives are almost entirely ignored.<sup>3</sup> There have been no histories undertaken of the Ballarat Children's Home era from 1968 to 1983.

## The Total Institution

The institutions – Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage, and Ballarat Children's Home – can be characterised as what Erving Goffman has described as “total institutions”. “A total institution”, writes Goffman, “is a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.”<sup>4</sup> The intention of this project is not to demonstrate whether, or to what extent, these institutions were total institutions. Goffman himself recognised that there really is no such thing as a completely closed institution, and that institutions themselves can be characterised along a spectrum of relative “openness”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Ballarat Orphanage Souvenir,” ed. Ballarat Orphanage (Ballarat: Ballarat Orphanage, 1915).

<sup>2</sup> Ethel Morris, *A Century of Childcare: The Story of Ballarat Orphanage 1865-1965* (Ballarat: Ballarat Orphanage, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> See Jacqueline Wilson and Frank Golding, “Caring About the Past? Or Past Caring?,” in *Apologies and the Legacy of Institutional Child Abuse: International Perspectives*, ed. Johanna Sköld and Shurlee Swain (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), xiii.

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Jones and AJ Fowles, *Ideas on Institutions: Analysing the Literature on Long-Term Care and Custody*, vol. 1 (Routledge, 1984), 13.

To be clear, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage, and Ballarat Children's Home were total institutions. Children were “enclosed” and “formally administered” in a single location, at 200 Victoria Street, where together they lived, ate, slept, played, worked, and learned. Naturally, however, the Ballarat Children's Home, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat District Orphan Asylum were never *entirely* “cut off from wider society”. People, ideas, goods, services and other exchanges flowed in and out of the institutions throughout their histories. Children came to the institution, they stayed for some time, and then they left. While those children were not to any meaningful extent free to come and go as they pleased, they often did experience some level of autonomy, and moved around the city and elsewhere, either informally on their own, or formally escorted and supervised by institutional representatives. Many of the children of these institutions came to know and be part of the bigger city around them. While the children were institutionalised, visitors came to see them, including family members, community members, government representatives, activists and advocates. Staff came and went, some staying for long periods, others much shorter. Ideas, information and resources were exchanged about how best to care for children, including exchanges between governments and the institution's management, and between similar institutions both local and beyond. Local communities in Ballarat have contributed time, money, donations, publicity, and goodwill to these institutions over generations. In short, the institutions were sites of exchange as well as constraint.

This project locates a shifting – but not necessarily progressing – model of total institutionalisation in Ballarat from the 1860s until around 1983, when the Ballarat Children's Home's consolidated campus at Victoria Street, Ballarat East, ceased to be a place of accommodation, and the organisation became primarily engaged in service delivery to children and families outside of institutional settings. This history does so by tracing the patterns and relationships of both constraint and exchange throughout the main historical eras of the institution.

With intense public scrutiny on the legacies of Care institutions in Australia and across the world, many people who have grown up in Care are experiencing a resurgence in their ability to speak and be heard. In this environment, however, there is a risk that the experience of Care in our communities can be further stigmatised, as stories of abuse and neglect come to dominate public and self-perceptions of Care. The experiences of people who grew up in Care are integral to the fabric of the city and places within it and around it. Theirs is not just a story of confinement to an institution, but also of exchange and mutual identity formation, city-building, and migration – albeit in ways significantly curtailed and regulated by total institutionalisation.

## Narrative Identity Formation

Historical sociologist Margaret Somers has written about “narrative identity” as a way of conceptualising the role of narrative in history. “It is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities.”<sup>6</sup> These narratives, moreover, exist within a complex intersection between the personal and social.

[A]ll of us come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making*.<sup>7</sup>

For many individuals who grew up in Care, including many who grew up in Cafs' predecessor institutions, those identity-forming narratives have been pushed and pulled in different ways depending on a complex set of factors, key among them being the availability or not of key documents and materials about their lives. The 2004 *Forgotten Australians* Senate Inquiry Report articulated the “major impact” that growing up in Care had on “an individual's sense of self and identity”.<sup>8</sup> Leonie Sheedy has described the “genealogical bewilderment”<sup>9</sup> that comes from not being able to accurately identify, recall and access information about fundamental family details. Suellen Murray et al. identify these perspectives as a “narrative of lost origins”, that “undermines a sense of self” for many who grew up in the Care system.<sup>10</sup> John Murphy has pointed towards the “necessity of narrative for understanding the self”,<sup>11</sup> in the context of his own experiences in the Victorian Care system as a child, and his research with former children's institution residents. This “necessity” for individuals who have spent all or some of their childhood in Care – the telling and re-telling of stories and narratives about their own past to help overcome the loss of identity that removal from family has involved – has been a particularly important and difficult task for those individuals.

The author of this history has had no intention of increasing that burden by asking former residents of Ballarat Children's Home or Ballarat Orphanage to add more of their own narratives to specifically inform the completion of this project. Rather, I have devoted my efforts towards finding, reading and respecting those narratives that have already been committed to the public domain, so

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret Somers, *The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach*, vol. 23, *Renewal and Critique in Social Theory* (Dordrecht 1994), 606.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.. Emphasis in original.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*, ed. Stephen Patrick Hutchins and Jan McLucas (Canberra: Community Affairs References Committee, 2004), 253., cited in Suellen Murray et al., *After the Orphanage: Life Beyond the Children's Home* (Sydney: NewSouth Books, 2009), 51.

<sup>9</sup> Leonie Sheedy quoted in Joanna Penglase, *Orphans of the Living : Growing up in Care in Twentieth-Century Australia* (Perth: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2005)., cited in Murray et al., *After the Orphanage: Life Beyond the Children's Home*, 51.

<sup>10</sup> *After the Orphanage: Life Beyond the Children's Home*, 51-2.

<sup>11</sup> John Murphy, "Memory, Identity and Public Narrative," *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010): 301.

that consolidated they may help to inform the development of new collective narratives for Cafs. These include diverse artifacts such as Oral Histories,<sup>12</sup> testimonies and submissions to public inquiries and Commissions in Victoria and Australia,<sup>13</sup> newspaper articles, and memoirs.

While the burden of remembering, recovering and forming identities often falls on the individuals who themselves grew up in Care, the organisation itself has also taken responsibility to address collective memory and identity formation. David Leichter expands on Paul Ricoeur's philosophies about collective memory and identity, in ways useful to this analysis.

While memory properly understood belongs ... to individuals, his or her memory exists ... as a dialogue with others to make sense of a shared past.... [C]ollective memory ought to be understood in terms of the way that memory enacts and reenacts networks of relations among individuals and the communities to which they belong, rather than in terms of a model that reifies individuals or groups.<sup>14</sup>

That is to say, collective memory involves ongoing negotiation and dialogue between different perspectives, rather than a preferencing of any particular perspective over another. In that case, while the artifacts gathered directly by and from ex-residents of the Ballarat Children's Home and Ballarat Orphanage are critically important to informing new collective identities for Cafs and its communities through this history, they exist alongside and equally with other sources and perspectives, including institutional artifacts like Annual Reports, Committee and Sub-Committee Meeting Notes and Reports, Superintendent's Reports, Admission Books, and Financial Reports. These have been read by the researcher alongside testimonies and Oral Histories as discursive texts to be interpreted as markers of institutional culture, not used as "evidence" to verify or dispute one account over another.

Any history of these institutions being written today simply cannot neglect to address historical justice, knowing what we do now about the traumatic experiences many children have had in Care institutions. The act of writing this history provides a platform for people of these institutions to reconcile with a past that has been experienced in many ways as painful, and damaging. However, this is not to disavow or ignore the positive and comforting experiences that many people have had of these institutions, and this history also provides a platform for them.

This thesis is written at a moment of heightened attention on the histories of children's institutions, broadly across Australia and globally, but also locally within the contemporary

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<sup>12</sup> Including National Library, "Stolen Generations Oral History Project"; National Library "Forgotten Australians Oral History Project"; Cafs "Digital Stories"; Reverb Films, "Stolen Generations Testimony"; and collated through Vicki Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past* (Ballarat: Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Including Family and Community Development Committee, "Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations," (Melbourne: Victorian Parliament, 2013). Australian Senate Committee, *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*. Commonwealth of Australia, *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> David J Leichter, "Collective Identity and Collective Memory in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur," *Études Ricoeuriennes / Ricoeur Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 115.

organisation that is the subject of this historical study – Cafs. A prevailing mood and policy environment created in the conduct and aftermath of the Australian Government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, concluded in 2017, has intensified public scrutiny and awareness of historical experiences in children's institutions.

The 2017 Royal Commission was the culmination of three other major national enquiries into the experiences of children in Care over the past twenty years, being preceded by *Bringing them Home* (1997), relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children;<sup>15</sup> the *Lost Innocents* Report (2001), concerning children forced to migrate to Australia;<sup>16</sup> and the *Forgotten Australians* Report (2004), relating to children in Institutional or Out-Of-Home Care.<sup>17</sup> The Victorian Parliament has also produced the *Betrayal of Trust* Report in 2014 following its inquiry into the handling of abuse in children's institutions.<sup>18</sup> These inquiries and the testimonies that have informed them have contributed significantly to shifting the presence, visibility and acceptance of the stories of those who grew up in Care as a troubling but critical part of contemporary and historical collective identities.

As Shurlee Swain, Leonie Sheedy and Cate O'Neill point out, many of the testimonies in these official reports accuse existing histories of presenting “a far too rosy view of the past”, including “in-house” institutional histories, commissioned histories, academic studies, and survivor narratives. They contend that “historians need to find a new way of researching and writing in order to be able to better document the history of out of home 'care'”.<sup>19</sup> It is in this context, and with this urgent requirement to find new ways of writing institutional histories, that this account of Cafs' predecessor institutions is being written.

Simultaneously, Cafs has embarked on significant investments in the interpretation and presentation of its history, with the establishment of a “Legacy and Research Centre” in 2016, including a curated exhibition space that communicates a public story of the institutions. At the time of writing the historical site of the institutions – the “campus” at 200 Victoria St, Ballarat East – is under redevelopment, and will soon be the site of a supermarket, commercial Child Care Centre, and new residential properties.<sup>20</sup> This impending urban development has focussed the attention of

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<sup>15</sup> *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*.

<sup>16</sup> Community Affairs References Committee, "Lost Innocents : Righting the Record : Report on Child Migration," ed. Rosemary Crowley (Canberra: Senate Community Affairs References Committee, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*.

<sup>18</sup> "Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations."

<sup>19</sup> Shurlee Swain, Leonie Sheedy, and Cate O'Neill, "Responding to "Forgotten Australians": Historians and the Legacy of out-of-Home 'Care'," *Journal of Australian Studies* 36, no. 1 (2012): 19.

<sup>20</sup> TGM Engineering, Surveying, Planning; Cressaid Logic, "Former Ballarat Orphanage, 200 Victoria St, Ballarat, Heritage and Site Interpretation Plan" (Ballarat, July 2017). The location of the former Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home has been a contested site for many years, since at least 2010 when the site was sold to a consortium of developers. Attempts at preserving physical elements have been partially successful, with the former School Building, Toddler's Block, the wall on the western boundary, and some elm and magnolia trees retained after the Heritage Council of Victoria assessed the site as being of "Local Significance". See Heritage Council Victoria Registrations Committee,

municipal authorities, Cafs, private developers and ex-institutional residents to devise narratives and representations of institutional lives that will form lasting legacies, not just for the institution, but for themselves and the city. To adapt a concept used by Penelope Edmonds, who writes about efforts at Aboriginal Reconciliation in Australia, this history is in part a “performance of reconciliation”, with the troubling pasts of Cafs and its predecessor organisations. “Reconciliation in the present”, she writes, “is haunted by the echoes of ... the past” As with so many other attempts to reconcile, this is an “unruly performance ... that emerge[s] from the overlapping spaces of horror and heart and hope”.<sup>21</sup>

This history, then, is an exercise in narrative construction about the past, that can inform identity formation in useful and productive ways. In particular, it can shape and direct the collective self-identity of Cafs in order to better inform child-centred future strategy and planning.

### Ethnographic History and institutional cultures

This is an ethnographic history, adapting the notion of “Thick Description” developed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz,<sup>22</sup> to explore and develop the cultures that have shaped change in the institutions being studied. Geertz himself borrowed the concept of “Thick Description” from British philosopher Gilbert Ryle. “If we limit our description to what “actually happened”, writes Ryle, we miss the deeper, more interesting and useful meanings of those actions”.<sup>23</sup> Ethnographic history is alert to the interpretation of symbolic values, rather than just a literal recreation of events. The method is exemplified by Australian historians Greg Denning, Inga Clendinnen, Rhys Isaac, and Donna Merwick.<sup>24</sup>

Paul Willis and Mats Trondman describe ethnography as “a family of methods”, resulting in contextualised descriptive analysis that identifies the cultural underpinnings of knowledge.<sup>25</sup> Ethnographic history, then, is an attempt to describe culture and its expressions, through detailed description and “immersion” in the behaviours and activities of different times. Robert Darnton expands the notion of ethnographic history. “Ethnographers”, he writes, “... find that symbols convey multiple meanings and that meaning is construed in different ways by different people”.<sup>26</sup> Recognising

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“Former Ballarat Orphanage, 200 Victoria Street, Ballarat East, Decision of the Heritage Council” (Melbourne, 18 November 2011). At the time of writing, an updated Interpretation Plan is being developed by City of Ballarat that is focussed on the ideas and preferences of a Working Group of former residents of the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, as well as research collected through the writing of this thesis. This will inform future development at 200 Victoria St, Ballarat East, which is anticipated to commence in 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Penelope Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation Frontier Violence, Affective Performances, and Imaginative Refoundings* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 186.

<sup>22</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert Ryle, “The Thinking of Thoughts: What Is ‘Le Penseur’ Doing?,” *University of Saskatchewan University Lectures*, no. 18 (1968).

<sup>24</sup> Graeme Davison et al., “Ethnographic History,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Paul Willis and Mats Trondman, “Manifesto for Ethnography,” *Cultural Studies <-> Critical Methodologies* 2, no. 3 (2002): 394.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Darnton, “The Symbolic Element in History,” *The Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 1 (1986): 219.

symbols and what they mean within particular contexts is “crucial to understanding communication and interpreting culture”.<sup>27</sup> So thick description in history involves not only describing what has happened historically, but also interpreting what these actions mean within and for the cultures they are part of. Description of behaviour “must be attended to”, and in some detail, writes Geertz, because “it is through the flow of behaviour that cultural form finds articulation”.<sup>28</sup>

This is particularly relevant in the institutional culture of Cafs and its predecessor organisations, where the same objects, events and places are being used and encountered in different ways, from different perspectives. The people of these institutions over time embody varied “frames of interpretation”, to use Geertz's term,<sup>29</sup> through which this history will encounter the narrative story of Cafs. Indeed, it has established a basis for approaching not just a single narrative about Cafs and its history, but the varied and contradictory stories that help illustrate the broader cultures within which they sit. Even though institutional residents inhabited the same places as those around them – staff for instance, or Ballarat citizens and families – the ways in which they interpreted and experienced those environments differed greatly. This project will thus involve “thick” description of the actions and behaviours of those who have been part of these institutions and the places within which they lived, with attention to analysis of the deeper contexts behind those actions and behaviours.

### Voice, Agency and Empathic Inference

Following the lead of Kristine Moruzi et al., this history is motivated by a belief in the importance of seeking children's voices from the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, while appreciating the challenges of doing so.<sup>30</sup> Nell Musgrove draws upon a wide range of authors in diverse disciplines to identify a “tradition in Australian history of using welfare as a lens for focussing on social history”, providing “a vehicle for tracing the voices and experiences of the people who would otherwise disappear from the historical narrative”.<sup>31</sup> Carla Pascoe, too, argues for an inter-disciplinary approach to the history of childhood and children, using folklore, material culture, geography, and oral history. She points out that histories of children were rare in Australia until the 1980s, and those that have been written since are still hampered by two problems: a tendency to romanticise children and childhood; and a lack of sources authored by children themselves. “[T]he challenge for historians”, writes Pascoe, “is to move beyond the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>28</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>30</sup> Kristine Moruzi, Nell Musgrove, and Carla Pascoe Leahy, eds., *Children's Voices from the Past: New Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 11.

<sup>31</sup> Nell Musgrove, “The Role and Importance of History,” in *Apologies and the Legacy of Institutional Child Abuse: International Perspectives*, ed. Johanna Sköld and Shurlee Swain (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 148.

assumption that we know what it felt like to grow up in different eras, and to self-reflexively historicise changing experiences of childhood.”<sup>32</sup>

Historical knowledge is shaped by cultural values and beliefs, which, as Jacqueline Wilson points out, demonstrates the importance of understanding perspectives of people who have lived and worked within the institutional cultures that are being described and interpreted.<sup>33</sup> Christina Twomey has also foregrounded the experiences and agency of people within the systems under historical analysis, exploring “welfare as an interactive, negotiated process”.<sup>34</sup> So, too, Musgrove identifies the “active resistance to authority” of young people within the systems that were intended to control them, whereby those young people are able to simultaneously be understood as “the subjects of discipline and control [and] ... as having limited agency ... that was heavily informed and constrained by the dominant mores and anxieties of their society”.<sup>35</sup>

One of the persistent challenges for historians of childhood, however, is the lack of sources directly produced by children. In this project, for instance, only a handful of texts have been found that were written directly by children at the time of their institutionalisation. Two such quotes are highlighted here, by way of demonstrating some of the inherent challenges in trying to re-create the original voices of young people in institutions such as these.

The first, paraphrased from the famous original quote,<sup>36</sup> is taken from the Ballarat Children’s Home Residents’ Newsletter, “Look Around”, in 1975.

I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, But, I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.<sup>37</sup>

The second quote is a snippet of text written in 1931, accidentally discovered by the researcher in a handwritten note at the back of a Stock Book for the Ballarat Orphanage School, renamed by the teacher as “The Book of Promises” 1931:

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<sup>32</sup> Carla Pascoe, “The History of Children in Australia: An Interdisciplinary Historiography,” *History Compass* 8, no. 10 (2010): 1142.

<sup>33</sup> Jacqueline Z. Wilson, “Representing Pentridge: The Loss of Narrative Diversity in the Populist Interpretation of a Former Total Institution,” *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 125 (2005).

<sup>34</sup> Christina Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute: Motherhood, Wife Desertion and Colonial Welfare*, (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2002), xxi.

<sup>35</sup> Musgrove, “The Role and Importance of History.”

<sup>36</sup> This is a famous quote usually attributed to children’s author and illustrator Robert McCloskey, and sometimes to the US President, Richard Nixon. See [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/14635.Robert\\_McCloskey](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/14635.Robert_McCloskey). Accessed 5 December 2018. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/759999-i-know-you-believe-you-understand-what-you-think-i>. Accessed 5 December 2018. However, inexplicably, the Ballarat Children’s Home residents who produced the publication “Look Around” in 1975 attributed the quote to “Florence Nightingale”, possibly as some kind of in-joke.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted from Ballarat Children’s Home, “Look Around - Annual Residents’ Newsletter” (Ballarat: Ballarat Children’s Home, 1975), 2. Cafs Collection.

“I, *James Toohey*, promise to talk only when necessary, and then only quietly.”<sup>38</sup>

It is tempting to seek and validate the “true” and “authentic” accounts of children living at the institution as the only real representations of institutional life, and that it is expressions of children's agency in the face of systematic barriers that should be recovered and presented. This is a worthy pursuit, and the highlighting of agency is a welcome antidote to the perpetration of power that has characterised generations of institutional histories. What the snippets of text quoted above remind us, however, is that we can only ever get *nearer* to the stories and voices of those who lived in these institutions, but never quite get there ourselves. They remind the researcher and reader about how difficult – impossible – it is to recreate and accurately represent the institutional past, especially from the perspectives of the children and young people most affected.

Mona Gleason has challenged historians of childhood to re-frame this notion of agency.

Given the challenges associated with locating sources for the history of children and youth ... [and] since sources are often only partially (or not at all) revealing of children's perspectives on the past, historians have to imagine what any given experience might have meant and been like from the perspective of the young.<sup>39</sup>

Gleason suggests the strategy of “empathic inference”, by which “historians deeply engage their ability to imagine and interpret the world as if from the point of view of the least powerful”. If historians do this, despite the lack of abundant first-hand sources, “interpretive vistas open up rather than foreclose.”<sup>40</sup> As Dening points out, “having a[n] ... ambition to describe “what actually happened” becomes difficult when the same event is possessed in culturally different ways”.<sup>41</sup> This project acknowledges also that the sources left behind to history – the “texted Past” as Dening describes it<sup>42</sup> – can offer only a glimpse of the lives from which they came. Texts and artifacts from the past are treated as starting points, from which meaning is inferred, rather than proven.

The alternative to empathic inference – “a narrow goal of proving children's agency ... through a focus on their “voice”<sup>43</sup> – can have the perverse effect of excluding whole groups of children from attention. “What about those children”, asks Gleason, “who do not appear to exercise agency or whose voices we cannot hear not matter how hard we listen – do their histories not “count” in the same way?”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Handwritten note in the “Stock Book”, for Public School No. 1256, Ballarat Orphanage School, PROV VPRS 9899-P0001-2, p.200. Another identical sentence was also written by Ian's classmate, Norman Petrie, in what had been re-purposed by their teacher as “The Book of Promises”.

<sup>39</sup> Mona Gleason, “Avoiding the Agency Trap: Caveats for Historians of Children, Youth, and Education,” *History of Education* 45, no. 4 (2016): 458.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Greg Dening, *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 24.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Gleason, “Avoiding the Agency Trap: Caveats for Historians of Children, Youth, and Education,” 457.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

The aim of this project is to pay attention to, and listen to the “quiet” voices of children like *James Toohey* quoted above. While this history respects and amplifies those voices by re-locating them to the centre of narratives of this institution, on an equal footing with official documentary sources, it also takes up Gleason's invitation to “infer” what happened at this institution and why, rather than “show” or “prove” what happened, and how we know it. As Wilson points out, if we limit our interpretation to only that which can be empirically proven or shown, then we limit ourselves to a handful of perspectives, and usually those of the powerful.<sup>45</sup>

This is not to suggest that this history neglects or ignores the primary tool of the historian – evidence. Rather it has gathered, analysed and consolidated for the first time the various, diverse and often contradictory existing sources and artifacts from the 150-plus-year history of a constantly evolving institution. Oral histories that have been conducted by others, testimony to inquiries, reviews and commissions, newspaper articles, Colonial Reports, handwritten notes in margins, correspondence between Departmental and institutional officers, websites that give an outlet to the often painful memories of institutional survivors, Annual Reports, admission books, and on and on. All these sources are equally valid and important in understanding the cultures and legacies of this institution and the sector it is part of.

Central to the institutional cultures over the life and history of Cafs and similar institutions is power imbalance – between institutional staff and residents, between social workers and “clients”. The job of the historian in this case – following Denning, Wilson and Gleason – is to describe and interpret experiences from across those imbalances, lest the history become a reiteration of power over those who could not record their texted Pasts. This history is not about recreating a definitive and provable past of the institution. “[H]istorians, like witnesses”, writes Rosanne Kennedy, “are “meaning makers”, not detectives or judges who “find fact”.”<sup>46</sup> As such, the sources and resources available will not be used to recreate an outline of “what really happened” in the institutions, and will not be treated as “evidence”, but rather as texts to be interpreted from various perspectives. It moves, following Julia Clarke's suggestion, away from an illusory “authenticity”, and towards an inclusive “integrity”, “a readiness to present and acknowledge the various strands of a narrative from multiple sides of an Us-Them divide, and the fuzzy no-man's land in between that confirms the fiction of the divide.”<sup>47</sup> Empathy and imagination, rather than rigour and detachment, are the key skills required in a history such as this.

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<sup>45</sup> Wilson, "Representing Pentridge: The Loss of Narrative Diversity in the Populist Interpretation of a Former Total Institution."

<sup>46</sup> Rosanne Kennedy, "Stolen Generations Testimony: Trauma, Historiography, and the Question of 'Truth'," *Aboriginal History* 25 (2001): 121.

<sup>47</sup> Julia Clark, "Talking with Empty Rooms," *Historic Environment* 16, no. 3 (2002): 34., cited in Wilson, "Representing Pentridge: The Loss of Narrative Diversity in the Populist Interpretation of a Former Total Institution," 124.

For instance, in writing this history the researcher has *not* accessed any individual files relating to the lives of children while in any of the institutions' Care. It is an axiom of this study that these artifacts are the sole property of those individuals and their families.<sup>48</sup> The researcher does not wish to contribute further to the "injustice", as Musgrove puts it, "of researchers being permitted access to records when the people directly concerned with those very files were often provided [only] censored versions, or denied access altogether."<sup>49</sup> If individuals cannot easily access their own personal files, then it is not the historian's right to access them. Moreover, these records, as Wilson and Frank Golding point out, can be experienced, both historically and in contemporary reading, as perverse "mementos" of the coercive scrutiny of Care institutions."<sup>50</sup> Even when these documents and institutional records do exist or are available, Wilson and Golding have emphasised the double-edged value they contain for individuals. They can address fundamental yet elusive questions of personal and family identity. "Care-leavers often have many questions about their childhoods. Why were they put into "care"?", for instance. "Why were they passed from one Home to another? What became of their brothers and sisters when they were split up?"<sup>51</sup> Such records are, in other words, more than "discursive events", and are best located in the hands of those best equipped to understand and make sense of them – individuals and their families.

The researcher *has*, however, accessed many documents in the Cafs collection that contain information about children, including Superintendent's Reports and Admission Books dating back to the foundations of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum in 1866. Many more documents and artifacts exist in Cafs' collection and elsewhere that have not been used directly accessed by the researcher for this project, in recognition of their private nature. Once these vast deposits of further materials and others have been made available to those whom they effect most directly – ex-residents and their families – those communities will be better positioned to help direct and target research in this critically important and growing field of inquiry.

This study helps expand the potential for further use of Cafs' and other collections to inform more detailed and targeted research into children's services across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It helps establish a foundation for further research into more specific aspects of children's Care in Ballarat, Victoria and Australia, shifting the basis for institutional history from organisational imperatives, and further into child-focussed and -informed narratives. It helps demonstrate the ambiguous nature of institutionalisation, whereby feelings of fondness and happy memories sit

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<sup>48</sup> Jacqueline Wilson and Frank Golding, "Latent Scrutiny: Personal Archives as Perpetual Mementoes of the Official Gaze," *Arch Sci* 16 (2016).

<sup>49</sup> Musgrove, "The Role and Importance of History," 149.

<sup>50</sup> Wilson and Golding, "Latent Scrutiny: Personal Archives as Perpetual Mementoes of the Official Gaze."

<sup>51</sup> "Lost and Found: Counter-Narratives of Dis/Located Children," in *Children's Voices from the Past*, ed. Kristine Moruzi, Nell Musgrove, and Carla Pascoe Leahy (London: Palgrave, 2019).

alongside trauma, loss and anxiety. There was mistreatment and tenderness, concern and indifference, discipline and a form of freedom, experienced simultaneously and differently by individuals. These emotions and experiences were fed by the constantly shifting policy and strategic environments -- locally, regionally, statewide and nationally -- that has characterised children's institutionalisation globally.

## Chapter One: the establishment of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum

This chapter introduces the institution now known as Cafs Ballarat, in its earliest formation as the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum. It is focussed on how the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum operated, with an emphasis on the development of children's welfare policy in the lead-up to the establishment of the Orphan Asylum in 1866, the broader network of children's institutions that existed alongside the Orphan Asylum in the nineteenth century, and the relationships with government and community that were influential in establishing the ways in which the residential institution would operate in the twentieth century. The following chapter, Chapter Two, will focus on the experiences of those who lived at the institution, and the ways in which the developing policies and operations of the institution changed and responded through interaction with children and families.

The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum as an entity was established in 1865 in response to the Victorian Colonial Government's first tentative steps into children's welfare policy with the establishment of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act* 1864. Where the government took responsibility for children deemed to be "criminal" or "neglected", community-based charities took up responsibility for other children – those considered somehow to be of "better" character. Control over deciding who was and was not of good character lay with the Committee of Management of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, an all-male, mainly middle-class group of traders, inn-keepers, and goldfields aristocrats.

Over the course of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries these men were determined that this dual-track system of child classification be maintained, with them at the head. While many of the children who did spend time at the Orphan Asylum received care and experience that was to their ultimate benefit, without experience or working knowledge of child-caring, these men often made decisions that did not necessarily benefit the children in their care or their families.

### Before the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum – the development of a children's Care system in Victoria up to 1864

Aboriginal communities had been observed providing shared care for orphaned children in the western Victorian region since the earliest era of colonisation.<sup>1</sup> From the 1830s the vast regions around what is now Ballarat had been settled by pastoralists, attracted by Major Thomas Mitchell's declaration of western Victoria as "Australia felix" – "fortunate Australia". Aboriginal populations,

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<sup>1</sup> The Colonial Aboriginal Protector for the region, William Thomas, had made note of the practice in reports. Cited in Tony Barta, "They Appear Actually to Vanish from the Face of the Earth." *Aborigines and the European Project in Australia Felix*, *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 4 (2008): 531.

however, had already been decimated across western Victoria. “Most striking”, writes Tony Barta in his analysis of the rapid destruction of Aboriginal communities in western Victoria during this period, “is the absence of children ... At the end of 1853 there was only one [Aboriginal] community [in western Victoria] which appeared to have any chance of survival.”<sup>2</sup>

The earliest Home for children in the Ballarat region was established just before the gold rush, in 1848. Presbyterian Minister Thomas Hastie set up a bush boarding school in Buninyong, about thirteen kilometres south of where the town of Ballarat would soon be established, for the children of farmers. Of the more than fifty children enrolled, about twelve were orphans or deserted children.<sup>3</sup>

As Shurlee Swain has pointed out, the earliest provisions for vulnerable children in Australia were motivated by a desire to avoid replicating the English Poor Law, with colonial governments reluctant to take direct responsibility for children’s guardianship in cases where family care had broken down. Instead, voluntary charity systems developed, and apart from providing grants to help with establishment and maintenance, government direction was minimal.<sup>4</sup> These organisations were known variously as “charities”, “welfare agencies” and/ or “community sector organisations”. The nineteenth century gave rise to a complex web of both secular and religious institutions that would underpin Victorian welfare services and practices, and the concomitant institutional care of marginalised and vulnerable children until modern times.

### Social policy in early colonial Victoria

Colonial Victoria in its earliest years did not have a centralised social policy or plan for children's welfare or social services.<sup>5</sup> The Victorian population explosion following the gold rush of 1851 was compounded by an inexperienced government – Victoria had achieved separation from New South Wales just two weeks before gold was first discovered – that was beset by instability. Add to this the armed agitation at Eureka in Ballarat in 1854 and major colonial governance reforms in 1855, and there was little time, energy or political will to address the charity sector systematically.<sup>6</sup>

In 1846, nearly twenty years before the introduction of the 1864 Act, and exactly twenty years before the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum would accept its first children, Melbourne publisher and provocateur John Pascoe Fawkner laid out the challenge facing the new colonial society quite simply. “In a strange land most persons are strangers to each other ... Wherever large assemblies of people

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Anne Beggs-Sunter, “Little Scotland; Presbyterian Enlightenment and Improvement in Buninyong,” (2015), cited in Frank Golding, “Want and Woe: Troublesome Children in Ballarat's Difficult History,” (2017), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Shurlee Swain, *History of Child Protection Legislation* (Sydney: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2014), 5.

<sup>5</sup> R. A. Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty: The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992), 20.

<sup>6</sup> Sheila Bignell, “Orphans and Destitute Children in Victoria up to 1864,” *Victorian Historical Magazine* 44, no. 171 & 172 (1973): 11.

settle, there will be orphans.”<sup>7</sup> The local and family-based social structures that had sustained many of the informal social welfare networks, parallel to official policy responses, in Britain and Europe were often absent in newer Australian settler societies.<sup>8</sup> As Fawcner had highlighted, new migrants were strangers to each other, without the roots and connections that accrue over time and generations.

Having pointed out that orphans were an inevitability of colonial life, Fawcner then set out to outline whose responsibility it was to look after such children. In his own publication, the *Port Phillip Patriot*, he asked rhetorically: “Is not the Government instituted for this very purpose – to provide for the fatherless or motherless?”<sup>9</sup> He was just as clear about why it was the government's responsibility: “Would it not assist”, he asked, “to make these [orphaned] infants, in time, into useful and good members of society?”<sup>10</sup> Fawcner was imploring its elected representatives to stand up for the District's interests, against the distant colonial government in Sydney. While the New South Wales Colonial Government in Sydney had previously run orphanages and similar institutions for many years, their commitment to replicating this model in the “rogue settlement” around Melbourne appeared half-hearted.<sup>11</sup>

A site in Emerald Hill (now known as South Melbourne) had been identified by the NSW Government for an Orphan Asylum in 1850, but in the chaos of Victoria's separation from NSW and the new gold rush, nothing more transpired for several years.<sup>12</sup> An agreement was reached with the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, established in 1850, by which the government paid the Asylum to accept children until an orphanage was built.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, from 1845 the St James Visiting Society, and St James Dorcas Society, had been dispensing limited “outdoor relief” (that is, charity activities conducted in the community rather than in an institution) and had established a small hostel for homeless men.<sup>14</sup> By 1854 it had developed into the Melbourne Orphan Asylum, a small, privately managed institution that was under pressure to expand, such was the demand on its services. It moved from site to site – a small cottage in Emerald Hill, to Bourke St then La Trobe St in the Melbourne CBD. Eventually it requested that the government grant it the more substantial premises that had been put aside for the government orphanage in Emerald Hill, where it would be able to accommodate up to 100 children. The colonial government jumped at the chance for a private organisation to extricate it from a difficult situation, and the first supported private orphanage in Victoria was opened. Here we can identify the earliest signs of what

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Nell Musgrove, *The Scars Remain : A Long History of Forgotten Australians and Children's Institutions* (2013), 5.

<sup>9</sup> John Pascoe Fawcner, *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*, 5 May 1846

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Richard Kennedy, ed. *Australian Welfare History: Critical Essays* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1982).

<sup>12</sup> Bignell, “Orphans and Destitute Children in Victoria up to 1864,” 13.

<sup>13</sup> Col. Sec. to Sec. Benevolent Asylum, 16 August 1853. V.A. 53/3475. Appropriation Act for 1854, 31 January, 1854. Cited in *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

would become a Victorian pattern, whereby already established community-based organisations would take responsibility for the implementation of social policy priorities, supplemented by State funding.

From here a range of similar organisations were established: In 1854 and 1855 the Immigrants' Aid Society Home, St Vincent de Paul Orphanages in Emerald Hill and Prahran, a Protestant Orphanage, and St Augustine's, a Catholic Orphanage in Geelong. Local needs were identified, local committees of management formed, and local funds raised to establish an institution or facility – often religious, but sometimes not. This model favoured local entrepreneurship over centralised control, and a loose network of independent local charities emerged, recognisable by a range of different pursuits and organisations – from hospitals to benevolent societies, and indeed orphanages, managed locally but partly funded by the Colonial government.<sup>15</sup> This pattern was especially strong in Victoria.<sup>16</sup>

Government played a proactive role in providing confidence, if not guarantees, for local communities to take responsibility for supporting children. Localised institutions across Victoria were supported by government through enabling legislation, land grants, and most directly through ad-hoc cash grants. By the 1860s, however, the government found itself bearing the bulk of the financial burden of caring for children,<sup>17</sup> while also performing a hybrid role in the early years of the Victorian colony. The Colonial government was neither policy leader nor service provider, but something of each. It supported, encouraged and enabled the formation of new welfare models, but was ultimately beset by confusion and overwhelmed by circumstance. A series of ad-hoc solutions – supporting the spontaneous efforts of locally-based groups and leaders – provided a somewhat confusing foundation for an improvised social service system.

Even without a coherent central program, Victorians still had a strong sense of what social support should be, or more specifically, what it should *not* be. The Victorian state never legislated to establish a “Poor Law”, seeking to avoid the system that had been established in Britain.<sup>18</sup> The English Poor Laws had been around in various forms for centuries. For colonists they evoked notorious images of the Old Country. The dread-inducing “work house” and “poor house” of the Poor Law systems were intended to bring shame and revulsion upon those who fell into them. As Sir George Nicholls, the British Poor Law Commissioner, said in 1832: “I wish to see the Poor House looked to with dread by our labouring classes, and the reproach for being an inmate extend downwards from father to son.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Nell Musgrove and Deidre Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 26-7.

<sup>17</sup> Bignell, "Orphans and Destitute Children in Victoria up to 1864," 11.

<sup>18</sup> Kennedy, *Australian Welfare History: Critical Essays*, 51.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 60.

The laws defined categories of people who were legally eligible for relief, and provided funds through direct taxation and the formation of centralised governance and a professional bureaucracy.<sup>20</sup>

Some elements resembling the Poor Law system had been established in NSW, but were quickly abandoned.<sup>21</sup> Instead, most of the first colonial welfare institutions in and around Sydney were established by the military state, financed by the Empire, and often managed by the wives and families of governors and officers – for instance, the Female Orphan School (1802), the Female Factory (1810), General Hospital and Lunatic Asylum (1811), Native Institution (1813), and Male Orphan School (1818).<sup>22</sup> It was a source of considerable pride in Victoria that the Poor Laws did not gain hold in the new colony.<sup>23</sup> However, the ambivalent attitude towards poverty and welfare that could be seen in Britain through the ongoing enactment of the Poor Laws – that welfare institutions should act as a disincentive to perceived vice, but should also provide shelter, sustenance and support to those in unfortunate circumstances<sup>24</sup> – is one that persisted into Australian societies, as exemplified in the establishment of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum.

### Families and desertion on the Goldfields of Victoria

Desertion of families by fathers was a worrying phenomenon in colonial Victoria, noticeable even before the gold rush accelerated it considerably.<sup>25</sup> There were a great many children without homes.<sup>26</sup> Not only did some children commit crimes themselves, but Victorians feared that they would influence others, creating a generation of criminals and threaten the moral social order. As well as those on the streets and in the slums of Melbourne – which were, according to some reports, “as bad in every vicious element” as the slums of London<sup>27</sup> – were children who were growing up in the colony's gaols. It was not only those who had committed crimes themselves who were in the gaols, but also the children of convicted women.<sup>28</sup> Other children were in Benevolent Asylums,<sup>29</sup> which provided emergency relief to the most needy and destitute in the colony, generally established through community contributions with assistance from government.

Most immediately, the need for action could be seen on the streets of Victoria's cities, including Ballarat. “Want and woe, vice and crime, are fearfully prominent in our community”, wrote

<sup>20</sup> Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty : The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria*, 20.

<sup>21</sup> MJ Liddell, "Child Welfare and Care in Australia: Understanding the Past to Influence the Future," in *Responding to Children: Child Welfare Practice*, ed. R Carew CR Goddard (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1993).

<sup>22</sup> Anne O'Brien, *Poverty's Prison: The Poor in New South Wales 1880-1918* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1988), 153.

<sup>23</sup> Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty : The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria*, 20., Kennedy, *Australian Welfare History: Critical Essays*, 61.

<sup>24</sup> Ursula Ruth Quixano Henriques, *Before the Welfare State : Social Administration in Early Industrial Britain* (London: Longman, 1979), 50-51.

<sup>25</sup> Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute: Motherhood, Wife Desertion and Colonial Welfare*, xii.

<sup>26</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain : A Long History of Forgotten Australians and Children's Institutions*, 167., footnote 38.

<sup>27</sup> *Age*, 13 November, 1857. Cited in *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Bignell, "Orphans and Destitute Children in Victoria up to 1864."

the *Ballarat Star* in 1856. "In many a desolate tent ... lies the subject of conjugal or parental desertion; or the unhappy victim of 'sickness until death' ... hungry nakedness ... the most abject destitution."<sup>30</sup> The campaign for an institution directed at accommodating children in particular had been taken up by the *Ballarat Star*. In 1859, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was established for the relief of people in distress,<sup>31</sup> although it did not have dedicated facilities or the capacity to accommodate children. The *Star* implored local leaders to also think about the "yet uncriminal orphans",<sup>32</sup> and "initiate a project for the establishment of an institution which shall combine in its organisation the features of an orphan and destitute asylum",<sup>33</sup> in order to prevent those children who, it claimed, were "hastening with a fatal facility into an appalling precocity in vice and crime."<sup>34</sup>

In the six years leading up to the establishment of the dedicated Orphan Asylum in Ballarat – from 1860 to 1866 – records for the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum indicate that at least 85 children aged from infancy to fifteen years were admitted to stay there, including some – at least thirteen – who were admitted multiple times. At least 30 per cent came to the Benevolent Asylum with a parent – almost always their mother.<sup>35</sup> At least 25 per cent were recorded as "Destitute", including brothers Oliver and John Greaves, in February 1866, who two years later moved to the new Orphan Asylum as four- and six-year-olds respectively.<sup>36</sup> The numbers of children at the Benevolent Asylum grew and a Common School was established, which by 1863 had at least sixty children attending.<sup>37</sup>

### Towards a Victorian Policy – the formation of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*

Parliamentary debates in the early Victorian Colonial period revealed opposition to the idea of the government directly funding destitute children, in case it encouraged and enabled dependence. "[T]he greater the amount of provision for such cases, the greater the demand would be created."<sup>38</sup> Through the mid-1850s, the successive governments of political rivals William Haines and John

<sup>30</sup> *Star* (Ballarat, 28 August 1856), 2. Cited in Golding, "Want and Woe: Troublesome Children in Ballarat's Difficult History," 1.

<sup>31</sup> See Helen Kinloch, "Ballarat and Its Benevolent Asylum: A Nineteenth-Century Model of Christian Duty, Civic Progress and Social Reform" (University of Ballarat, 2004), 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 12 December 1859, 2. Cited in Golding, "Want and Woe: Troublesome Children in Ballarat's Difficult History," 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 22 October, 1859, 2. Cited in *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 5 December, 1859, 2. Cited in *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Based on researcher analysis of Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Register of Inmates, available through the Ballarat Historical Society, Consolidated Registers 1860-1925. <http://www.ballarathistoricalsociety.com/index.php/the-collection/bbsr> Accessed 9 August 2019.

<sup>36</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 15 September, 1868, 4. In 1875 a request was made of the Committee of Management by a man named Stephen Woods, "asking for a boy named John Greaves." However the "request was not granted, as it was proposed to take the boy to the Wimmera." *Ballarat Courier*, 14 April, 1875, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Inspector's report, 1863. PROV, VPRS 904-1,. Cited in Dorothy Wickham, "Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge, a Case Study in Moral Authority" (Australian Catholic University, 2003), 54.

<sup>38</sup> *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, 1856-7, Vol. 1, 895. Cited in Musgrove, *The Scars Remain : A Long History of Forgotten Australians and Children's Institutions*.

O'Shannassy were unable to overcome the impasse over whether child welfare institutions should be privately or publicly managed. O'Shannassy favoured private management, influenced by his status as a prominent Catholic advocate and organiser, whereas Haines and EPS Sturt, the Melbourne magistrate who led much of the thinking on this matter in Haines's administration, favoured government taking direct control of at least some parts of the child welfare system.<sup>39</sup>

Eventually, in 1862, the Colonial government recognised that it not only had no direct control over child welfare policy and practice, but was also funding up to three-quarters of the financial burden of child welfare.<sup>40</sup> A Royal Commission was established into Victorian charity organisations. Chaired by Sturt, the Royal Commission recommended that it was the colonial government's responsibility to support and educate children. In 1864, the new government introduced the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act*. By the time the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was established in 1866, the Victorian colonial government passed its first set of legislation to take limited control of children's residential institutions, and in so doing presented its first formal policy response to child welfare. Though this was a full thirteen years after Victoria had separated from NSW, it was still earlier than most other colonies, especially the newer colonies of Western Australia, Queensland, and South Australia.<sup>41</sup>

This legislation enabled the opening of government-run Industrial Schools for "neglected" children, and reformatory schools for "criminal" children. The state was to intervene only in cases where the child was perceived to be in danger, and every effort was made to discourage parents from wanting to place their children with the state.<sup>42</sup> Despite this limited range and scope, the 1864 Act represents the moment at which the Victorian government first started providing social welfare relief.<sup>43</sup>

These government institutions ran alongside the privately run charity institutions that had been established in local communities, as outlined above. Here we can see that parallel systems were in operation: a government-run program to deal with perceived "undeserving poor" – those who were "neglected" and/or "criminal" – and a range of locally-based programs that dealt with the "deserving" poor, that is, those perceived to be more innocent in the eyes of society, and who, through no fault of their own or their families, had fallen upon difficult circumstances.

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<sup>39</sup> Bignell, "Orphans and Destitute Children in Victoria up to 1864."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>41</sup> Musgrove, *The Scars Remain : A Long History of Forgotten Australians and Children's Institutions*, 25-26.

<sup>42</sup> Leonard Tierney, *Children Who Need Help : A Study of Child Welfare Policy and Administration in Victoria* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 21.

<sup>43</sup> Musgrove and Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?*, 9.

## Establishing the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum – Response and Responsibility: 1865 onwards

It was not until after this period, with the Royal Commission on Municipalities and Charitable Institutions in 1862 into the operation of charities in Victoria,<sup>44</sup> coupled with the passing of the 1864 legislation to establish government-run child welfare institutions, that the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was built. That is, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was established in response to Colonial policy that established the state's role and responsibility to "neglected" and "criminal" children, and the local charitable sector's responsibility to other children in its own communities. This section outlines the ways in which the new institution operated, including some of the characteristics of it as it found its feet in a new and developing strategic environment for children's welfare.

### The Committee of Management, Governors, and Subscriptions

In February 1865 the first meeting of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum committee was held. It would be a year and a half before the institution's founding children would enter the new facility.<sup>45</sup> From its foundation the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was driven by a clearly articulated strategic principle. As inaugural Board President Henry Watson wrote in the 1866 Annual Report, the Orphan Asylum was "to preserve its peculiar fitness as a home for Orphans of honorable parents in contradistinction to those Institutions established for the reception of the criminal and abandoned."<sup>46</sup> The institutions that Watson referred to were the network of Industrial and Reformatory schools that were being established by the Colonial government following the adoption of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act*<sup>47</sup> in 1864. This network in Ballarat is described in more detail later.

From its earliest days the Orphan Asylum was predominantly managed and controlled by local merchants, tradespeople and business-owners.<sup>48</sup> They reflected and shaped a mercantile spirit, cultivating a deep sense of independence and self-sufficiency.

There were four overwhelming demographic and social characteristics represented on that first committee. They were comprised mostly of Freemasons,<sup>49</sup> almost all owned businesses,

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<sup>44</sup> *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Municipalities and the Charitable Institutions in Victoria* (VPARL 1862-63 No.52, 1862-63).

<sup>45</sup> The names of those on the first committee were President W.R. Watson, vice-presidents Emanuel Steinfeld and H.H. Peake, and committee members W. Scott, W. Dunn, James Walker, J. Craddock, W.M. Brown, Jas Hall, T.J. Mitchell, R. Kent, H. Cuthbert, J. Eddy, R. Jones, Gilbert Duncan, F.C. Parry, Jas Goujon, W. Jack, E. Larkin, and Wm Webster as Secretary and Collector. William Bramwell Withers, *The History of Ballarat: From the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, Facsim. of the 1887, 2d ed. printed by F.W. Niven, Ballarat ed. (Carlton, Vic.: Queensberry Hill Press, 1980), 262.

<sup>46</sup> Committee of Management Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Second Annual Report* (Ballarat: Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1866). Cafs Collection.

<sup>47</sup> "Neglected and Criminal Children's Act," ed. Victorian Parliament (1864).

<sup>48</sup> Lynne A Gook, "The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1865-1882" (Ballarat Institute of Advanced Education, 1975), 38.

<sup>49</sup> Dorothy Wickham, *Freemasons on the Goldfields: Ballarat and District 1853-2013* (Ballarat: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2013), 50.

especially pubs,<sup>50</sup> most of them were Protestant,<sup>51</sup> and all of them were male. These broad characteristics were to remain for many years to come,<sup>52</sup> as the institution maintained its independent, middle-class Protestant persona.

It is this breed of independent, literate and upstanding workingman that Weston Bate and Geoffrey Serle have identified as the archetypal migrant to Victoria in the early gold rush. They were mostly lower-middle class British immigrants who took the opportunity presented in the new city and colony to further their social status by actively participating in the burgeoning civic life of the city. These “upstanding artisans”<sup>53</sup> of the “gold generation”,<sup>54</sup> as Serle has characterised them, had very high literacy rates,<sup>55</sup> and had mostly migrated independently, funding their own journey.<sup>56</sup> There was a “huge migration during the 1850s”, continued Bate, “of young, entrepreneurial, skilled and educated men, who were the natural builders of cities.”<sup>57</sup> A cooperative mercantile spirit developed on the Victorian goldfields, especially in Ballarat, so that “a united group of small capitalists who forged social bonds that made Ballarat unusually community minded for over a century.”<sup>58</sup> These are the sorts of men who found their way into the Committee of Management of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum.

As Shurlee Swain observes, “charity has long been recognised as an exercise in power as well as benevolence”.<sup>59</sup> Freemasons were prominent not just in the establishment of the Orphan Asylum, but also in the establishment and management of other pillars of the local charitable sector, including the Ballarat Miners' Hospital in 1855,<sup>60</sup> and the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Society in 1857.<sup>61</sup> Freemason women – the wives of Freemasons – also led the establishment of the Ballarat Female Refuge in 1867.<sup>62</sup> This network helped legitimise and demonstrate Freemason claims to local

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<sup>50</sup> Gook, “The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1865-1882.” See also Withers, *The History of Ballarat: From the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, 262., “[The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum] was established in 1865, the licensed victuallers of Ballarat ... having been foremost in its promotion.”

<sup>51</sup> One notable exception was inaugural Ballarat District Orphan Asylum Vice President and future Mayor of Ballarat East, Emmanuel Steinfeld, who was a prominent member of Ballarat’s Jewish community.

<sup>52</sup> See Gook, “The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1865-1882.”, who has conducted an in-depth analysis of Ballarat & District Orphan Asylum Committee members between 1865 and 1882. The first Committee in 1865 contained four publicans and ten other independent tradespeople, including a Cabinet Maker, a Baker/Grocer, Solicitor, Blacksmith Tailor, Butcher, Boot manufacturer,

<sup>53</sup> Geoffrey Serle, *The Rush to Be Rich : A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1883-1889*, Paperback ed.. ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1974).

<sup>54</sup> “The Gold Generation,” *Victorian Historical Magazine* 41, no. 1 (1970): 266.

<sup>55</sup> Serle identified the Victorian gold migrants as having one the highest rates of literacy in the world, more than double that in the United Kingdom. *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Weston Bate, “Why Is Victoria Different?,” *Victorian Historical Journal* 81, no. 1 (2010): 7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Lucky City : The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901* (Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1978).

<sup>59</sup> Shurlee Swain, “Besmirching Our Reputation: Sectarianism and Charity in Geelong,” *Victorian Historical Journal* 63, no. 239 (1992): 51.

<sup>60</sup> The Ballarat Miners' Hospital would later become what is now the Ballarat Base Hospital and Ballarat Health Services. Wickham, *Freemasons on the Goldfields: Ballarat and District 1853-2013*, 49.

<sup>61</sup> The Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Society would later become the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum. *Ibid.*, 49-50.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 50. See also “Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge, a Case Study in Moral Authority.”

leadership.<sup>63</sup> The Orphan Asylum's management was fiercely independent, and as already highlighted, very clear about the “type” of children the organisation intended to help – “innocent little ones orphaned through illness or disaster ... children of honourable parents who were unable to care for them”.<sup>64</sup>

At its foundation the Committee of Management sat at the top of a hierarchy of community contributors, so that the local community was built firmly into the institution's governance. It is a model that persists into the present day at Cafs, albeit in a very different manner. The Committee of Management had sixteen members, and met monthly. Key among its tasks was to “Conduct the General Business”, including the responsibility to “admit and discharge children”.<sup>65</sup> Within the Committee of Management was the House Committee, a smaller and more focussed group of five members who met fortnightly to provide a more detailed level of attention to the running of the Asylum. Their duty was to “Superintend the internal arrangements of the Asylum”, including “attend[ing] to all matters relating to the health and comfort of the children”.<sup>66</sup>

### Staffing

The exact configurations of staffing would change over time, but throughout the Orphan Asylum era would maintain the same basic structure. The Superintendent, appointed by the Committee of Management, was the Orphan Asylum's leader, with responsibility for implementing the Committee's agenda. The Matron was responsible for running the Asylum's day-to-day operations, sometimes with the assistance of a “sub-Matron”. Mr and Mrs Findlay, “well-known as public teachers” were appointed as the first Superintendent and Matron in 1866.<sup>67</sup>

The key figures of the Matron and Superintendent mirrored prevailing ideals of middle-class family life, with clear roles informed by gender and class. While women were responsible behind the scenes with domestic duties, men provided the active public face and leadership for the institution.<sup>68</sup> Each role was dependent on the other, and the Orphan Asylum specified that these key roles would be filled by a married couple.<sup>69</sup>

Mr William Webster was appointed as the first “Collector”,<sup>70</sup> a form of fundraiser and community liaison officer. This role was sometimes combined with that of Secretary, who was the

<sup>63</sup> *Freemasons on the Goldfields: Ballarat and District 1853-2013*, 49.

<sup>64</sup> As described by Ethel Morris in her centenary history of the institution, in 1965. Morris, *A Century of Childcare: The Story of Ballarat Orphanage 1865-1965*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> “Rule 10” of the Orphan Asylum's Constitution. Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Second Annual Report* (Ballarat: Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1866). Cafs Collection.

<sup>66</sup> “Rule 12” of the Orphan Asylum's Constitution. Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Patricia Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation* (Ringwood, Vic: McPhee Gribble, 1994).

<sup>69</sup> See Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 24 October 1883, “Special Committee meeting notes”, Cafs Collection. “Recommended: ... That a man and a wife be appointed to the offices of Superintendent and Matron.” Their salary was to be shared, as a single package, and they were given premises to live at on site.

<sup>70</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Second Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1866), 11. Cafs Collection.

main link between the Committee of Management and the Orphan Asylum's operation. The institution's considerable farming operations, established in 1871 and described in more detail in Chapters Six and Seven, were led by a farm manager and other farming staff, though much of the farming labour was carried out by the children themselves. Eventually a team of gardeners would maintain an immaculate display garden on the Orphan Asylum's grounds, which would win many prizes and awards over the years. A range of other staff sometimes described as "servants",<sup>71</sup> including a cook, a housemaid, a laundress, a seamstress, and a "man servant", performed "nearly all the work in the institution ... with" – considerably – "the assistance of the children".<sup>72</sup> There was a "drapery room" that contained "a stock of different kinds of clothing – Geelong tweeds, dresses for the girls, skirts, and jackets for winter, with boots, caps &c., for the boys", that was maintained by a single staff member.<sup>73</sup>

### Revenue and Resources

The Committee of Management was very clear, in keeping with the pattern already established in Victorian social welfare described above, that the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum would be financed by the community, with government to fill funding gaps rather than direct operations. The first Rule in the first Asylum Constitution specified that "the Asylum shall be supported by donations and subscriptions, together with such aid as may be obtained from Her Majesty's Government."<sup>74</sup>

In its first calendar year of operation, 1866, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum raised a total of more than £2,011 from community contributions, plus an additional £200 from the Local Councils of Ballarat and Ballarat East. There were three main ways in which community financial support was obtained.

Firstly, fundraising events and appeals were a high-profile and important means of raising money and awareness. Indeed, the Orphan Asylum's first action was to hold a series of large fundraising events, including a "Great Christmas Festival" on Boxing Day 1865, at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, bringing a "net profit of £777 3s 3d",<sup>75</sup> a large amount by the standard of the day. One newspaper report – albeit written sixteen years later in 1881 – estimated a crowd of "no less than

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<sup>71</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 17 February 1875, 3

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> "Rule 1" of the Orphan Asylum's Constitution. Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Op.Cit. (1866). Cafs Collection.

<sup>75</sup> The "Grand United Demonstration" and "Fete Champetre of the different Orders, Societies and Public Bodies of Ballarat", was advertised as a "Revival of Old English Country Fair" with modern and traditional entertainments, including "Punch and Judy", "Climbing the Greasy Pole", along with "Balloon Ascent" and a "Grand Display of Fireworks". Admission was 1/- with "the whole of the profits accruing therefrom ... devoted towards the establishment of A BALLARAT DISTRICT ORPHAN ASYLUM". Cited in Ballarat Orphanage, *Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee 1865-1915* (Ballarat, Ballarat Orphanage, 1915), 7. Cafs Collection.

30,000 persons” at the Botanic Gardens.<sup>76</sup> Dozens of events throughout 1866 not only raised significant amounts of money, but also built awareness and goodwill within the Ballarat community.<sup>77</sup>

Secondly, many businesses and other organisations made donations on behalf of their employees or members, often through fundraising efforts or through a direct contribution by the organisation itself. These were named in the lists of donations made in Annual Reports, ranging from small individual shops to major institutions such as the Gas Company and the National Bank,<sup>78</sup> indicating a broad range of support for the institution across the city and beyond.

As a gold rush city, the dominant industry in town during the institution's foundation years was mining. Mining companies themselves were known to contribute directly to the welfare of individual bereaved families, though not necessarily in a systematic way.<sup>79</sup> Certainly the Orphan Asylum saw itself as fulfilling some kind of safety net role for the mining industry, and sought financial support from the industry in order to do so. However, mining representatives were virtually absent from the Orphan Asylum's governance, with only Committee member H.H. Peake having a mining background.<sup>80</sup>

Early Presidents of the Orphan Asylum did not hold back in their condemnation of the perceived stinginess of mining companies.<sup>81</sup> In 1867, the first President, Henry Watson, expressed his disappointment that “[o]ur mining companies do not yet seem alive to the benefits of this institution, devised more especially for relieving the widows of those who have lost their lives suddenly by accident.”<sup>82</sup> A few years later, in 1873, another of the Asylum's Presidents

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<sup>76</sup> *Ballarat Courier*, 19 January, 1881, 2. This article contains a very broad overview of the institution's history, with a number of inaccurate details. For instance, it indicates that the Botanic Gardens Fundraiser happened in 1864, when it was in fact in 1865. It also names the first children to enter the institution – Robert and Henry Phillips, discussed below in Chapter Two – but inaccurately indicates that they arrived in 1865, when they actually arrived in October 1866. See Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, Vol.1”, Entries 1 and 2, 1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>77</sup> A “Grand Ball” and a “Fancy Ball” raised over £200 between them. The “Opening Fete” raised £90 17s 9d. A “Demonstration Committee” brought in £175 13s, with upwards of a further £132 raised through other demonstrations in Learmonth, Happy Valley and Linton. “Mr Turner's Concert” brought in £21 15s, the “Dow Children Concert” raised £20; a “Circus Benefit” organised by Wilson and Co raised £16; “Wilson, Cooke and Zoyara's Circus” raised £3 6s 8d; a lecture organised by Mr W.H. Barnard raised £5 9s 6d; and a “Dog Show” organised by Mr Windle raised £5.

<sup>78</sup> For instance, the “Workmen at the Water Commission”, the “Workmen at the Asylum” (presumably those who were building the Orphan Asylum itself), “Learmonth's Workmen” and the “Workmen at Saw Mill” each made collective contributions. “R & S Gibbs” donated £55. “J. Fry and Co” donated £40; “Patterson, Ray, Palmer and Co” contributed £10 10s. The “Typographical Association” donated £2 2s. “Sargood, King and Sargood” – a prominent Draper and Softgoods retailer based in Melbourne – donated £10 10s, as did “Stevenson and Son”. The “Gas Company” donated £5 5s; and the “National Bank of Australasia” contributed £50.

<sup>79</sup> In 1870 for instance, “the Golden Stream Company ... at a recent board meeting, voted the very handsome sum of £20 to the widow and orphans of the late Mr Armstrong, of Linton, who had been working in the company's mine up till within a few days of his death.” The mine's workers themselves also raised more than £32 for their deceased colleague. See *Ballarat Star*, 30 January, 1870, 2.

<sup>80</sup> Gook, “The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1865-1882,” 38.

<sup>81</sup> While there were contributions from Mining Companies – in 1866 the “Buninyong”, “Band of Hope”, “Grand Road”, “Great Gulf” “Red Jacket”, “St George”, “Imperial”, “Enterprise” and other Gold or Quartz Mining Companies all contributed to the Orphan Asylum, there appears to have been some antipathy between the Orphan Asylum and mining communities. Between these companies a total of just over £93 was raised, the largest contribution being £20 each by Band of Hope and St George.

<sup>82</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 21 August, 1867, 2

“beg[ged] respectfully to bring under the notice of those interested in mining pursuits the small amount of support which the Asylum has received from this section of the community, which is more largely interested than any others in its welfare, the orphans of deceased miners participating to a greater extent in the benefits of the Institution than those of any other class”.<sup>83</sup>

So too in 1878, President Robert Wreford declared, “it is to be deplored that some of the old mining companies are no longer able to contribute ... [and] there are some very successful new [mining] companies which have not as yet given the least assistance.”<sup>84</sup> Given the inherent physical danger faced by everyday miners, the Orphan Asylum felt that their families were more likely than other parts of the community to make use of the institution's services. “Every miner who has a due regard for the future welfare of his children should consider it his duty to give as much towards the support of this Asylum as his means will allow,” the President continued. Should such miners meet with their ultimate fate, “such as unfortunately happened to many engaged in perilous callings, he has the consolation of knowing that the doors of the Asylum are open to receive his helpless orphans”.<sup>85</sup> Ballarat's other charitable institutions had also had their problems with indifference from mining companies. “With a few exceptions”, wrote the Benevolent Asylum Committee in 1860, “mining companies have not rendered that support to the Asylum which was to be expected from their numerical influence, and the fact that some of the most distressing and expensive cases ... are those of widows and orphans of miners.”<sup>86</sup>

Thirdly, and by far the most common way in which community members contributed to the Orphan Asylum, was through individual subscriptions, either one-off or ongoing. Each of the Orphan Asylum's Annual Reports includes a long list of names and the financial contributions they have made. This was not an uncommon practice for the time, providing citizens with public proof of their own generosity. An examination of entries for 1866, for instance, reveals that approximately £869 was raised through 293 individual subscriptions, an average of about £3 per contribution. More than half of the total value of those contributions came from just twenty-two people.<sup>87</sup> Thirty-two per cent of all individual contributions – 95 people – were of exactly £1 1s. This was the subscription threshold for becoming a “Governor” of the institution for that year, which gave the subscriber rights to “recommend” individual children to enter the Care of the Orphan Asylum.

<sup>83</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Tenth Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1874). Cafs Collection.

<sup>84</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 18 January, 1878, 4

<sup>85</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Op.Cit. (1874). Similar statements were made in other early Annual Reports.

<sup>86</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 14 Jan 1860, 2

<sup>87</sup> That is, 51 per cent of the money contributed by individuals came from just eight per cent of contributors. This includes some very large donations from some of Ballarat's most prominent civic contributors, including £100 from Thomas Learmonth, £66 from L.S. Christie, £60 from Henry Caselli (who also designed and built the original Orphan Asylum building), and £50 from John Winter. Analysis of Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Second Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1866), 5-8. Cafs Collection

In this context, perhaps the mining companies' antipathy described above was understandable. In her study of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum in 1975, Lynne Gook points out how the Annual Report of 1872 emphasised how the Orphan Asylum "merits the approbation of its best supporters",<sup>88</sup> namely, those who contributed most generously to the Asylum, mostly from the fledgling city's upper classes. These were the most likely to subsequently employ the Asylum's children, as apprentices, farmers or domestic servants.<sup>89</sup> With a ready supply of working class labourers already in Ballarat as families came to settle in Ballarat,<sup>90</sup> mining companies did not have the same imperative to invest in a "respectable" long-term workforce as the emerging upper classes of Ballarat did.

### Constructing the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum

Grants from the Colonial Government were routinely obtained by the Committee of Management, to assist with ongoing "maintenance" of the institution, and for particular capital projects. Naturally, the first major capital need was the erection of the Orphan Asylum building. In its first year, 1866, the Ballarat Orphan Asylum received £2,600 in capital government grants from the Colonial Government, more than the amount raised locally by community contributions.<sup>91</sup> The Committee proceeded with the erection of the centre portion of the building "at an estimated cost of £1925, which together with the cost of maintenance, will involve the Institution in a further considerable debt."<sup>92</sup> The Building was designed and built by a prominent local architect, Henry Caselli, who was also a significant donor to the Orphan Asylum.

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<sup>88</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Eighth Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1872).

<sup>89</sup> Gook, "The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1865-1882," 43.

<sup>90</sup> Bate, *Lucky City : The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901*, 117.

<sup>91</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Second Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1866), 11. Cafs Collection.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

**Picture 1: Ballarat District Orphan Asylum. April 1866**



At the Committee of Management's first meeting at the new Orphan Asylum building itself in August 1867, inaugural President Henry Watson addressed his fellow Ballarat gentlemen: "I cannot let the opportunity pass without congratulating you, the architect, the clerk of works, and the building committee".<sup>93</sup> Watson however was somewhat defensive regarding the building works, and public perceptions that it was maybe too large. "Perhaps the general public may be apt to blame us for having erected so much of the building at once before the necessity arose for so much accommodation."<sup>94</sup> At this point there were thirty children in residence, soon to be thirty-seven. He defended the decision on the basis that they were building and designing for a large number of inmates, with confidence that the need would be fulfilled. No doubt, given his defensiveness, the new Committee was experiencing some backlash

Even so, at this point there were still many parts of the Orphan Asylum unfinished. "It is ... very important that an infirmary detached from the main building should be erected as soon as possible", wrote Watson. There were no "permanent quarters" for officers. Tenders for fencing the entire premises had been accepted, and the whole of the front section has been dug and prepared for

<sup>93</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 21 August 1867, 2

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

planting. A few plants had been donated by the Benevolent Asylum, and a man called Dr Mueller, but not nearly enough.<sup>95</sup> As can be seen, the Orphan Asylum building was a work in progress.

The building itself was intended to be impressive. This artists' impression (see picture 2) was produced by architect Henry Caselli's studio in 1866, envisioning a grand civic scale and landscaped gardens that would attract the kind of promenading families imagined in the foreground of the picture.<sup>96</sup>

While this vision was never quite realised, the Building and Grounds did eventually form a distinctive and impressive urban landscape in Victoria Street. In 1875 the *Ballarat Star* wrote a feature article on the Orphan Asylum. "The Asylum itself, with its lofty and elegant front towards the public road, presents a splendid shrubbery at the entrance, harmonised effectively with the architectural beauty of the building."<sup>97</sup> The scale of the building certainly made an impression on the many children and young people who came through its doors, although not always in a positive way.<sup>98</sup> The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum building replicated and amplified a vision of British Victorian grandeur and domesticity .<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Included in A. C. Cooke et al., "The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum. [Picture]," (Melbourne: Melbourne : Ebenezer and David Syme, 1918). Available at State Library of Victoria, Digital Collections, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/239742>. Accessed 9 August 2019.

<sup>97</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 17 February, 1875, 3.

<sup>98</sup> Some ex-residents from the mid-twentieth century, before the original building was demolished in 1965, have recalled how imposing and intimidating the building itself was. See for instance Phyllis Cremona, 2012, Submission, Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations, Family and Community Development Committee, Parliament of Victoria, 2

<sup>99</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850* (Routledge, 2018).

**Picture 2: An artists' impression of the proposed Ballarat District Orphan Asylum**



### Relationship with community

With reliance on public subscription and donations came an accountability to a vast range of people. Many Ballarat people were involved with raising funds for the Orphan Asylum. As stakeholders in the institution, they demanded to be informed about its operations. Take, for instance, this correspondent to the *Ballarat Star*, in January 1865 – well before the institution had even accepted its first residents. Pointing out the flurry of fundraising activity that had occurred in support of the proposed Orphan Asylum over the Christmas and New Year period, the correspondent, identified only as “Prometheus”, expressed his frustration that “up to the present moment no knowledge exists in my mind of where the money is.”<sup>100</sup> Prometheus went on: “Surely the public who subscribed so liberally upon these and other occasions ought to be informed of where or in whose hands the money is.”<sup>101</sup>

Another correspondent, who identified himself only as “Subscriber”, wrote in 1867 to the *Ballarat Star*. He was concerned that during the upcoming visit of Prince Alfred the “little inmates” of the Orphan Asylum might be “debarred from the glories of procession, illumination &c”<sup>102</sup> of the Royal

<sup>100</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 19 January 1865, 2.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 9 December 1867, 3

tour, because it appeared that the Committee had not made the appropriate arrangements, or at least, he and his fellow subscribers had not been informed of any plans for the children.

“That the committee, headed by their indefatigable president, have made or are making suitable arrangements no-one for a moment doubts, but the quiet and unobtrusive manner in which the affairs of the asylum have been managed of late leave the public very much in the dark as to what those arrangements are, and people are naturally anxious that as little as possible should be left to the last moment.”<sup>103</sup>

The same letter-writer also claimed that “[t]here are probably no children in the district so well cared for and lodged” as the children of the Orphan Asylum, and that their accommodation was best described as “palatial”.<sup>104</sup> This indicated perhaps not only the high level of regard that the Orphan Asylum enjoyed in the community, but also a level of disconnection from the actual operation and experience of the institution that its subscribers experienced, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two.

It was common for the Orphan Asylum to be described publicly in grand and generous terms, as “Subscriber” had done. In May 1873 the institution was visited by the new Victorian Governor George Bowen and his wife, Lady Bowen. “The dormitories, schoolroom, kitchen, dining-hall, bath-rooms, and in fact the whole place was visited” by the Viceregal couple. “[A]ll were pleased to find everything so clean, comfortable, and in such apple-pie order”.<sup>105</sup> The Orphan Asylum President and the Governor himself proceeded to address the children about the ways in which they should “show their gratitude to the Government and kind friends who cared for them”, and trusted that they “would all grow up [to] become good men and women ... good and industrious, and in that way show their appreciation of what had been done for them by the Government and the subscribers to the institution.”<sup>106</sup>

Other subscribers and potential donors went to great efforts to determine whether their philanthropic money was well used. In 1877 Dr Thornton wrote to the Ballarat *Courier*, providing his unsolicited opinion on the Orphan Asylum's operations. He would not consider providing money to the Asylum “until [he] had considered the matter further”, after “paying a visit to the Asylum”.<sup>107</sup> When he did eventually make it to the Asylum not everything met with Dr Thornton's approval. As well as feeling somewhat misled by public reports of the Asylum's facilities: “I could not recognise in the quadrangle the ‘equable and pleasant surface’ named on page 19 of the report”. Thornton was also concerned that “[t]he rooms seem ... bare and gloomy, and unhomelike.” “Children”, he believed,

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 9 December 1867, 3

<sup>105</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 29 May 1873, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> *Ballarat Courier*, 26 June 1877, 4

“need all the cheerfulness thrown into the condition of their life that the case admits of.” Pictures and inspiring mottoes on the walls of other institutions provided examples of the “educating power”<sup>108</sup> of brightening up an institution. Thornton suggested that he would like to make a “Special subscription towards improvements of this kind”.<sup>109</sup> Although no record exists of whether Dr Thornton's subscription was in fact used for this purpose, here is an example of a community member publicly displaying and enacting his perceived part-ownership of the institution and its operations.

Another aspect of the Orphan Asylum that failed to impress (the not-too-easily-impressed) Dr Thornton related to the children themselves. In his estimation, the children lacked manners. Not for the only time in his letter, he invoked English Asylums by way of unfavourable comparison: “You will know how little probability there would be [in an English Orphan Asylum] of a lady or gentleman visitor being received by the inmates, as I was, with a motionless stare, coupled with a cry, 'Here's that man a-coming!'”<sup>110</sup> It was not the children he blamed for this slight on his status.

“They [the children] had evidently not been accustomed to gestures of courtesy or respectfulness towards strangers. I cannot but regard the inculcation of politeness and respectful manners amongst the children of our colony as a matter of deep moment, to which sufficient attention seems hardly to be given. A grand opportunity is offered for it at the asylum”.<sup>111</sup>

Some things he was more pleased with, having been “received with the very greatest politeness by Mr and Mrs Sadlier [Superintendent and Matron], although our visit was unexpected.”<sup>112</sup> Thornton continues: “I was very favourably impressed with the capacity and fitness of the superintendent and matron, as far as I could form a judgment from a first interview”.<sup>113</sup> Were there to be more interviews? That, it seems, was up to Dr Thornton to decide. We can see here an example of how the community-led nature of the institution could lead to unexpected distractions and challenges for its leaders. The public nature of Dr Thornton's rebuke and praise of the Asylum seems designed as much to signal his own credentials of erudition, experience, and leadership within the fledgling city and Colony.

The Committee, concerned as they were with the protection of their reputation and community standing, sought to assert a level of control over who could raise funds on behalf of their institution and how. Very early on, in 1867, President Henry Watson issued a rebuke:

“I must ... allude to the practice of parties giving benefits without the sanction of this committee, as tending to injure the institution. I may mention as an instance

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

Mr Allan's concert, given last week, where patronage was solicited from public bodies without the sanction of this committee, to the great detriment of the institution, as the committee were thus made parties to an entertainment containing objectionable passages."<sup>114</sup>

Quite why Mr Allan's performances were so objectionable must be left to the imagination.

### Public Relations and dispelling community fears

A lengthy, fulsome article about the Orphan Asylum was published in 1875,<sup>115</sup> less than a month after the death of one of the Orphan Asylum's residents, five-year old Charles Hutchison. An outbreak of measles at the Orphan Asylum would have been causing a level of fear and anxiety amongst the broader population. It is not hard to imagine the anxious Orphan Asylum management hierarchy inviting a local reporter to inspect the institution and discuss the recent tragedy, while ensuring that everything is in order and all are on best behaviour. This article appears to be an early example of institutional public relations, aimed at restoring the public's trust in the institution, and addressing their fears of contagion from the isolated Asylum during an infectious disease outbreak.

It was not just disease that the public were anxious to contain within the Orphan Asylum. Anxieties about children were often framed around their potential for employment, and fears of their being future burdens on the state, and as Musgrove points out, they often reflected the assumptions of middle-class reformers who were entitled and morally bound to intervene in the lives of the poor for the greater good of society.<sup>116</sup> "[B]ut for the shelter offered by the Asylum", wrote the Orphan Asylum President, these children "would be thrown upon the State, and treated as children of the criminal classes".<sup>117</sup>

Even so, assumptions about the perceived or potential "criminality" of Orphan Asylum children were evident in Ballarat. In January 1880, for instance, a correspondent to the *Ballarat Star* described travelling through Ballarat on his way to the nearby village of Lal Lal. As the train stopped "opposite the Orphan Asylum", he recounts, "I observed about half a dozen young scamps, throwing stones at passengers ... as the train was passing." A *Star* reporter on the same train also observed the stone throwers. "[P]assing somewhere near the Orphan Asylum, a female in the train, who had her baby in her arms at the time, was struck on the face or cheek with a stone thrown by a very small boy, and might readily have got her eyesight injured." The *Star* had a ready solution to this misbehaviour. "Surely a little vigorous action on the part of the police would clear all little boys off the route."<sup>118</sup> The story was picked up again the next day. "The larrikins in the neighbourhood of the Orphan Asylum do

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<sup>114</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 21 August 1867, p.2

<sup>115</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 17 February 1875, 3

<sup>116</sup> Musgrove and Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?*, 165.

<sup>117</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Eleventh Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1876)

<sup>118</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 2 January, 1880, 2

not, we learn, confine themselves to throwing stones at the trains, but occasionally take to pelting buggies and the persons in them ... The police would do well to look after these blackguards before a serious accident occurs".<sup>119</sup>

While the *Star* and its correspondents did not necessarily specify that these deeds of what seems to be no more than minor misbehaviour were committed by Orphan Asylum children, they pointedly describe that they were done by children *near* the Orphan Asylum. The reader is led to draw their own conclusion as to who was responsible. The casual invocation of the Police and criminal justice system against children may have been typical of the time, but it does point towards a sense that citizens reading the *Star* may be more comfortable with Orphan Asylum children in confinement rather than out in the streets.

### Children's institutions in Ballarat and surrounds, and the evolving Children's welfare system in Victoria

The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was not the only local institution that addressed the welfare of children and young people. In 1869 the Victorian Government opened the Ballarat Industrial School for Girls, beyond Lake Wendouree, near the Botanical Gardens on what was then the outskirts of the city. By 1872, there were 215 girls at the Ballarat Industrial School.<sup>120</sup> It was the start of a long and varied history of institutionalisation on that site, continuing until the 1990s, when the Lakeside Mental Hospital was closed down.<sup>121</sup> Nazareth House opened in 1888, a Catholic facility housing girls aged six to sixteen, as well as elderly people.<sup>122</sup>

Industrial Schools such as the one at Lake Wendouree were set up under the 1864 *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act* discussed above, intended for the training of children deemed to have been "neglected". The new government-run Industrial and Reformatory Schools were often tumultuous places for children – including four hulk ships berthed off the coast at Hobsons Bay, between Port Melbourne and Williamstown.<sup>123</sup> Though Victoria had managed to avoid the Poor Laws, some unwelcome Old World patterns were repeating in the new colony.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>119</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 3 January, 1880. 2. The Australian usage of the word "larrikin", which has connotations of amusing and tolerable mischief today, in the nineteenth century signified an irredeemably violent, thuggish and undesirable character. See John Rickard, "Lovable Larrikins and Awful Ockers," *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, no. 56 (1998).

<sup>120</sup> Find & Connect, Ballarat Industrial School (1869-1879), <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000317>. Accessed 4 March 2019.

<sup>121</sup> Research Data Australia, "Ballarat (Asylum 1877-1879; 1893-1905; Hospital for the Insane 1905-1934; Mental Hospital 1934-1969; Lakeside Hospital 1969-1996)", <https://researchdata.ands.org.au/ballarat-asylum-1877-1969-1996/491733>. Accessed 4 March 2019

<sup>122</sup> Find & Connect, "Nazareth House, Ballarat (1888-1976)", <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000169> Accessed 6 July 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Four hulk ships were scattered across the bay from 1864 until the last ship was decommissioned in 1883, housing up to 500 or more children at any one time. The Deborah (1864-c.1873), The Sir Harry Smith (1865-1873), The Success (1868-1873), and The Nelson (1868-c.1878). [www.findandconnect.gov.au](http://www.findandconnect.gov.au) Accessed 4 March 2019

<sup>124</sup> Kennedy, *Australian Welfare History: Critical Essays*.

Even though the Ballarat Industrial School was the only institution specifically mentioned by the Royal Commission as having had “a satisfactory realization of the objects for which industrial schools should be founded”,<sup>125</sup> by 1879 the girls' Industrial School was replaced at the Lakeside site by the State Reformatory for Boys,<sup>126</sup> before closing in 1893. It was the last of the Colonial Government's large institutions from the Reformatory and Industrial School era, apart from the central reception centre at Royal Park in Melbourne,<sup>127</sup> which in its various subsequent iterations was to play a major role in the lives of children at Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home for generations to come. The Ballarat Reformatory at Lake Wendouree was replaced by the “Lunatic Asylum”, while the reformatory boys were re-located to a number of private institutions, two run by individuals, and another by the Salvation Army.<sup>128</sup>

Elizabeth Rowe ran a private children's institution in nearby Cape Clear. The “School for the Reclaiming of Fallen Protestant Girls”, or the Brookside Girls Reformatory as it was more commonly known, operated for about twelve years, accommodating 240 girls.<sup>129</sup> All the girls at Brookside were State Wards, and Rowe was paid 10 shillings a week for each of them under the *Victorian Crimes Act*. The girls were trained as domestic servants and placed with families, for which Rowe also received regular payments. Brookside was hailed as a model for the Care of girls, and the model was so successful that smaller branches of the reformatory were opened elsewhere in western Victoria – in Fairhaven, Pitfield and Heywood. However, in 1899 when seven girls escaped and told police that they were ill-treated, worked beyond their capabilities, flogged, tied up and fed bread-and-water diets, the public reaction was scathing. A government inquiry was established, and though the Department defended Brookside and the girls themselves were accused of lying, fewer and fewer girls were sent there and it closed eventually in 1903.<sup>130</sup>

Prevailing entry requirements meant that surviving parents of prospective Orphan Asylum inmates had to produce Marriage Certificates to prove their moral credentials. If they could not, then alternatives would be needed, often putting women and their children in direct danger.

The extremely difficult circumstances of unmarried women who found themselves with children, but without access to the Orphan Asylum, was highlighted in 1906. Catherine Mason, as reported in the *Argus*, was “an unmarried woman ... in a semi-starved and emaciated state”, in Ballarat East. She was charged with the manslaughter of an “infant child”, presumed to be hers. The case

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<sup>125</sup> Find & Connect, Cited in Ballarat Industrial School (1869-1879), <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000317>. Accessed 4 March 2019

<sup>126</sup> Which itself had been relocated from Pentridge Prison in Melbourne, where it had been known as Jika Reformatory.

<sup>127</sup> Department Annual Report, 1893. Cited in Frank Golding, 2017 (unpublished), “Want and Woe: Troublesome children in Ballarat's difficult history”, 7

<sup>128</sup> Cited in Golding, “Want and Woe: Troublesome Children in Ballarat's Difficult History.”

<sup>129</sup> Cited in *Ibid.* 7-8

<sup>130</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*

shows the lengths to which someone in Catherine's precarious position was forced to go, not only in the tragedy of the child's death, but in the way she had to relate to neighbours and friends. "Teresa Morris, married woman", reported the *Argus*, "visited the mother [Catherine] ... and the mother denied having had a baby." On the other hand, "W.H. Rodda, a labourer ... stated that he had been keeping company with Mason, who ... admitted having had a child."<sup>131</sup> There is no suggestion or evidence that Catherine had sought the assistance of the Orphan Asylum, but given what we know, and most likely she would have known, about the Committee's entry requirements, even if she had applied the chances of her child being admitted were minimal. Compounded by social stigma (note the social hierarchy implied by Teresa Morris's status as a "married woman"), poverty and desperation, the lack of options for someone like Catherine and her child led, not entirely surprisingly, to the tragic end described.

Earlier, in 1887 an illegal baby-farming operation was exposed in Ballarat East, just around the corner from the Orphan Asylum.<sup>132</sup> Baby farming was an illegal practice whereby women who were not able to take care of their children, for a variety of reasons, paid other women to look after them. It was an informal practice that was the subject of legislation and policing efforts around the 1870s to 1890s. In this case three babies – their mothers were from Buninyong, Ballarat and Clunes – were in the house raided by police. Two babies had died there in the previous few months. "All are stated" reported the *Star*, "to be illegitimate".<sup>133</sup> The presence of baby farming so close to the Orphan Asylum highlights the different fates that befell children and women who were unable to meet the criteria for entry into the Asylum.

These institutions and practices operated alongside each other in Ballarat for much of the rest of the nineteenth century, each servicing their own respective targeted group of children. There is not much evidence of formal relationships between the Institutions, each seeing themselves as occupying distinct roles in the children's Care ecosystem in Ballarat, though there were occasions when children transferred between the institutions. For instance, in 1881 eleven-year-old Richard Williams left the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and was transferred to the Ballarat Industrial School "for 3 1/2 years", for "Misconduct".<sup>134</sup> Exactly what his misconduct involved is not known.

The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum justified its adherence to an institutional model by emphasising its distinctiveness from the Industrial Schools. In 1876, following a number of mining deaths in Ballarat, the President reiterated that "...it is the more necessary to maintain the Asylum, where respectable children thus suddenly bereaved of their parents, and left destitute, may be

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<sup>131</sup> *Argus*, 25 September, 1906, 9.

<sup>132</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 14 December 1887, 5

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admissions Book Vol.1", No.398, 54 (1881). Cafs Collection.

received and educated, without being compelled to be mixed up with such as chiefly fill our Industrial Schools".<sup>135</sup> A further motivation was indicated by the President, with a particular appeal to Colonial fears for future generations: "While such institutions as our own are found necessary in the old country," the President continued, referring to Britain, "they are especially so in a country like this, where children are left orphans not unfrequently without a single relative within the Colony".<sup>136</sup> He envisaged a role of the independent community organisation as some kind of de facto family for children left alone by the particular demographic and migration patterns of the young Colony. That family, presumably, was to be cast in the committee's own self-designated image of respectability.

### The assertion of local power through the Orphan Asylum Committee

Confident in their own position as leaders within the fledgling urban community of Ballarat, they continued to assert that power locally, as self-appointed moral arbiters. Any person who contributed at least a guinea to the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum – £1 1s – became a Governor of the institution for that year. For a £10 contribution one could become a "Life Governor". A Governor gained particular rights, the most significant of which was the right to "Recommend" that a child be admitted to the Orphan Asylum.

On the application form there was a space called "Form of Recommendation", that needed to be filled out by a Governor. It read as follows:

"I [insert name of Governor] beg to recommend [insert child's name] for admission into the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and hereby declare that, after minute inquiry into all the circumstances regarding the subject of this recommendation, I believe him / her to be a deserving candidate for admission."<sup>137</sup>

This was followed by space for a "Signature of Contributor" and their address. "This Form must be signed by a Governor or Contributor".<sup>138</sup> While most of these applications for support were successful, it was not uncommon for children to be refused admission to the Orphan Asylum. In 1869 "the report in the case of Sarah Marks was unfavourable, and the child was not admitted."<sup>139</sup> In 1885, the Committee received an application for a boy named Arthur Black. "After discussion, this application was withdrawn."<sup>140</sup> The reasons for refusing these applications have not been recorded or kept.

<sup>135</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Op.Cit. (1876).

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Application Forms (1897). Cafs Collection.

<sup>138</sup> "Form of Application for Admission of Children into the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum", 1897. From Cafs Collection.

<sup>139</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 14 September, 1869.

<sup>140</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Committee of Management Notes (11 March, 1885). Cafs Collection.

These power dynamics were carried out through the bureaucratic rules and tools that positioned the Committee of Management as moral arbiters and ultimate decision-makers over the fates of children and families, reprising the familiar deserving/undeserving poor trope that had been reinforced with the introduction of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act* in 1864. Indeed the Committee's first achievement, asserted by its first President Henry Watson in 1866, was "that they successfully combated the prejudice formerly existing in the minds of parents and guardians who labored under the impression that all Orphans, without regard to legitimacy, morals or respectability, were to be received in your Institution."<sup>141</sup> The possessive pronoun "your" referred not to the children, nor even the wider Ballarat community, but rather to the group of nineteen men who made up the committee of management. The institution was instead, these men had decided, a place for the children of "honorable parents."<sup>142</sup> The ramifications on children and families of Ballarat and the Orphan Asylum of these decisions, power dynamics and the systems that supported them are demonstrated in more detail below in Chapter Two, in a series of "Case Examples".

The Committee itself and its network of Governors and Subscribers were not, however, necessarily a homogenous unit acting in unison. There were disagreements and disputes, as demonstrated in Chapter Two below in their deliberations over the case of Maryanne Pope and her children in 1869, and in some of the correspondence quoted above, where subscribers have publicly outlined their disapproval over the direction and decisions of the Committee. This kind of conflict is perhaps most dramatically demonstrated in a series of incidents in 1877, involving Committee members Rev. Robert Cummins, J.C. Molloy, Charles Dyte, and an anonymous Governor.

Late in 1877 Rev. Cummins brought a motion to the Committee of Management to appoint a sub-committee that would "enquire into the condition of orphans who had been apprenticed, and generally into the working of the apprenticeship system."<sup>143</sup> Before the sub-committee had a chance to do any work, however, he had been "rejected at the election by the annual meeting of subscribers" and was no longer a Committee Member. Unable to pursue the matter further in a formal capacity, Rev Cummins instead wrote a letter to the *Ballarat Star*, "to express the hope that the matter in question will not be allowed to fall through, but that it will be, without further delay, so fully and strictly enquired into as the public may have reliable information."<sup>144</sup>

The following week an anonymous correspondent – "A. Governor, B.O.A." – wrote to the *Ballarat Star* supporting Rev Cummins's support for an enquiry, and pointing out that one of the candidates who had been recently elected to the Committee of Management "was then, and is now

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<sup>141</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Op.Cit. (1866), 12.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 4 February, 1878, 3

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

'an uncertificated insolvent',"<sup>145</sup> thus invalidating his election to the Committee.<sup>146</sup> As the next on the poll, Rev Cummins, the writer believed, should be reinstated to his Committee seat to pursue the investigation he desired.

When this matter was raised at the next meeting by Committee Member J.C. Molloy, all hell broke loose. Charles Dyte, the man accused of ineligibility for the Committee position, "repeatedly called [Molloy] such opprobrious names as 'dog' and 'scoundrel'", before "in a most dastardly way [striking him] upon the mouth, cutting [his] lip, and at the same time kicking [him] viciously on the leg, and trying to strike [him] with a stick."<sup>147</sup> Mr Dyte had previously threatened that "he (Mr Charles Dyte) would make it hot for Molloy if he (Molloy) ventured to attend another meeting of the Orphan Asylum Committee, after Molloy had previously raised the issue of eligibility.

The incident highlights not only that the Committee did not necessarily enjoy the full support of its communities, even those who were part of its hierarchies of power, but that its members were also sometimes willing to forcefully defend themselves from attempts to disrupt that power. The details regarding the Apprenticeship scandal that Cummins was trying to uncover are unknown today, though it does suggest some possible wrongdoing on behalf of the Orphan Asylum and/or those people to whom it entrusted the Care of its children upon their departure.

## Reform and resistance

Although many parts of the local community in Ballarat supported the Orphan Asylum, and claimed a level of "ownership" over it due to their own financial contributions, as we have seen above, there was still some level of unease about the issue of how public funding was being used. In 1867, for instance, a letter to the Melbourne newspaper the *Argus* highlighted the inherent contradiction of a state-supported welfare system that left local organisations to operate to their own rules and beliefs, using the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum to illustrate his point. "The members of our Parliament ... are about to consider the demand of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum for a sum of £3,000", wrote the Melbourne-based correspondent, identified only as "CLIO". "[O]ur legislators and the public should know that this asylum, erected at great cost, and requiring a large amount for its maintenance, is supporting ... only some twenty-five orphans." CLIO went on to identify why he thought such a low number of children were being supported: "The exclusive policy adopted by the committee of admitting only children the legitimacy of whose birth can be proved, shuts out many deserving objects." That is, the Committee's insistence on supporting only children from "honorable" parents, to use President Watson's own term, was excluding children from receiving the Care they needed.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> See also *Ballarat Courier*, 1 February 1878, 2

<sup>147</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 6 April 1878, 4

This “pharisaical [that is, hypocritical] rule is unworthy of a committee acting in the name of charity”, wrote CLIO, “and at variance with the spirit in which large sums are voted annually by our Legislature for the noblest purposes.”<sup>148</sup>

CLIO touched upon at least two anxieties for the institution that were to persist well into the twentieth century: its level of dependence on government funding, and therefore what right it had to assert control over their own operations; and a focus on the volume of children that the institution was able to support. In the Ballarat Orphanage era from the early-to-mid-twentieth century, explored in more detail in Chapter Three, a nexus between State funding and the number of children supported was entrenched, which meant the institution’s viability was tied to the number of State Wards it supported. In the Ballarat Children’s Home era in the mid-to-late-twentieth century, explored in more detail in Chapter Four, as public debate and policy shifted towards de-institutionalisation of children, the issue of how to simultaneously maintain *and* reform established Care and funding models in ways that did not alienate local support was a priority.

Public attention on institutional Care for children escalated in the 1870s with two Royal Commissions into the Charitable Sector.<sup>149</sup> In 1871 the *Age* highlighted how “the increasing call of these charities upon the public revenue is a subject of serious consideration”, indicating that the “system of grants has no doubt tended to multiply these institutions.”<sup>150</sup> The 1872 Royal Commission on Industrial and Reformatory Schools was scathing of the fledgling Industrial Schools and Reformatory system. “The whole system of congregated charitable schools”, wrote the Commissioners, “is based on a wrong principle, which in its practical development, is injurious alike to the interests of the children brought up in them and to the state.”<sup>151</sup>

In place of state run-institutions a “boarding out system” was recommended – an early version of what would later be called Foster Care.<sup>152</sup> While Foster Care would become a key part of the Cafs’s service delivery in the late twentieth century, during this period the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum did not implement boarding out programs, though some similar institutions did.<sup>153</sup>

In 1887 there was the first hint that perhaps the Orphan Asylum was starting to shift its position – ever so slightly – in relation to the “type” of children it would accept. Committee President H. Levinson, in his introduction to the Annual Report, reinforced, as was typical, the notion that “every

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<sup>148</sup> *Argus*, 31 May, 1867, 5.

<sup>149</sup> Musgrove and Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?*, 163.

<sup>150</sup> *Age*, 28 April, 1871, 7.

<sup>151</sup> Cited in Find & Connect, “Industrial School (1846-1887). <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000312>. Accessed 4 March 2019

<sup>152</sup> Musgrove and Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?*, 9.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. For discussion of the growing popularity of “Boarding Out” as a policy response during this period, see also 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).

care [was] being taken by the Committee to see that morality is inculcated.” What had changed slightly, however, was his view that this applied just as much for “the offspring of what were once some of our most wealthy, sober and industrious citizens, who, possessing too much of the spirit of enterprise, knew no limit” and “died leaving their families in poverty and distress”, as it did for “such unfortunate orphans as are left destitute through perhaps the carelessness of improvident parents”.<sup>154</sup> Though a distinction in favour of “enterprise without limits” over “carelessness and improvidence” was still being reinforced, the President was perhaps conditioning the Orphan Asylum’s audiences of donors and benefactors to supporting a broader base of family backgrounds in future.

Perhaps, also, President Levinson was reading the policy writing on the wall. In 1887 the Victorian Colonial Government introduced the renewed *Neglected Children’s Act*, an update on earlier legislation. This had caused some alarm amongst the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum’s Committee of Management. As the Act was being drafted and communicated, concern was expressed that under the proposed changes, independent Orphan Asylums such as theirs would be required to “convert into probationary schools and ... [become] kind of gaols”.<sup>155</sup> Ballarat’s MPs<sup>156</sup> were summoned to a special meeting with representatives of the Orphan Asylum Committee,<sup>157</sup> at the local Craig’s Hotel – itself a bastion of middle-class respectability since the earliest days of the gold rush. At this meeting, the Orphan Asylum delegates took the opportunity to remind their parliamentary representatives of the Orphan Asylum’s purpose. “[The] institution was never intended for children of the criminal class”, they asserted, “but for the offspring of the respectable parents who died without being able to provide for the support of their children.”<sup>158</sup>

William Collard Smith, member for Ballarat West and noted Ballarat patriot,<sup>159</sup> took the lead in reassuring the Orphan Asylum delegates that there was no intention to force their institution to take children that they did not want to support. “[Smith] thought the Chief Secretary [Alfred Deakin] had not yet fully mastered the details of the measure, though he had introduced it. He had just returned from England, and had not time to do so”,<sup>160</sup> and in his haste had inadvertently retained the word “Asylum” in Sub-Section 9 of Section 86, instead of “Institution”. Smith promised to have the

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<sup>154</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Twenty Third Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1887), 12.

<sup>155</sup> *Age*, 26 July, 1887, 6.

<sup>156</sup> Henry Gore from the Upper House seat of Wellington near Ballarat; William Collard Smith, member for Ballarat West; Richard Taylor Vale, also a member for Ballarat West; James Russell, member for Ballarat East; and William Henry Uren, member for the Ballarat rural hinterland seat of Ripon and Hampden. Upper House member for Wellington David Ham, and Ballarat East member Edward Murphy were also due to be at the meeting but got mixed up about the meeting time. See *Age*, 26 July, 1887, 6.

<sup>157</sup> “The institution was represented by Messrs. Jabez Richards (president), in the chair, Dyte, Molloy, J. Curtis, Josephs, W. Scott, W. Gale, D. Fitzpatrick and the secretary (Mr. R. Wreford)” *Age*, 26 July, 1887, 6.

<sup>158</sup> *Age*, 26 July, 1887, 6.

<sup>159</sup> Weston Bate, ‘Smith, William Collard (1830–1894)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/smith-william-collard-4619/text7605>. Accessed online 7 September 2017.

<sup>160</sup> *Age*, 26 July, 1887, 6.

problem fixed, and the Orphan Asylum delegates promised that “a large deputation will wait on [Deakin] in Melbourne to discuss the alleged grievance”,<sup>161</sup> should he not fix the problem. As it turned out, the legislation was passed later that year, and the offending word was retained,<sup>162</sup> but it did not have the feared effect. The Orphan Asylum Committee continued to assert its discretion over who could and could not be admitted. The meeting at Craig's Hotel demonstrated anxieties that were to remain throughout the institution's history, about whether decisions about service delivery should be local, organisational decisions, or centralised and State-driven.

With independence from Government, however, came a different set of pressures. In 1880 a deputation from the Orphan Asylum had approached Graham Berry, the Victorian Chief Secretary and Premier, seeking further financial support. His response was diplomatic, but clear. “[Berry] promised to consider the claims of the Ballarat asylum, though he desired to impress upon local committees the absolute necessity of their doing more for themselves and not looking to the Government in every emergency.”<sup>163</sup> For the time being, the relationship was more or less established: the Orphan Asylum Committee raised its own money, and decided who could enter the institution, so Governments did not feel obliged to support children under the Asylum's Care.

## Conclusion

The 1887 Act that had prompted a “false alarm” amongst the Asylum Committee was in fact a transformative moment for the Victorian children's welfare system. It established some important foundations that were to significantly influence the ways in which independent institutions like the Orphan Asylum could operate and interact with Government. The Act established a new Department for Neglected Children, replacing the Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and established that children under the Care of the Department were wards of the Department.<sup>164</sup> Thus the concept of “State ward” was introduced in a practical manner. A dual-purpose children's welfare system was developing in practice that was to carry through deep into the twentieth century. Institutions such as the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and the Ballarat Orphanage, as it was to become, were the sites on which this complex binary were to be enacted.

From the earliest years the Orphan Asylum's relationships with Governments were largely concerned, in a practical sense, with financial support and funding, but underlying this were fundamental questions about the role and independence of local communities. While the main source

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> “Prescribing the times and conditions during and under which and not longer or otherwise children committed under the provisions of this Act to the care of any private person or institution may be boarded together in any school or asylum or establishment of a like nature.” *An Act to Amend the Law relating to Neglected Children* (Victoria), 1887, No. 941. Part XI, Section 89 (9), 24.

<sup>163</sup> *Age*, 8 October, 1880, 3

<sup>164</sup> *An Act to Amend the Law relating to Neglected Children* (Victoria), 1887, No. 941. Cited in Swain, *History of Child Protection Legislation.*, 34

of funding in these formative years of the institution was from community contributions, in the form of individual and group subscriptions and “Governorships” as described above, over the course of the twentieth century this resourcing ratio would reverse, and the strong community roots and practices of the institution would come to form a co-dependent relationship between State and community organisation. It is a dynamic that still exists today.

The institution occupied a position of extreme trust in Ballarat, which enabled its Committee of Management to carry on with its program of moral control. Criticism was rare, publicly at least. For instance, when Charles Hutchinson died in the care of the Orphan Asylum, and dozens of his fellow Orphan Asylum children were stricken by scarlet fever, the *Ballarat Star*'s response was to write a glowing endorsement of the Orphan Asylum and its operations. When criticism openly arose, as in the example of Rev Cummins and his queries about the apprenticeship program, they were assertively beaten down – literally in his case – and then quietly ignored by the local media.

The next chapter describes in more detail the ways in which these policies, ideas, beliefs and structures effected the lives and experiences of the children and families who came in contact with the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum.

## Chapter Two: Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1866-1909

Chapter One focussed on the establishment and burgeoning operational, strategic and policy functions of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, from before the institution's establishment and into its early decades. This chapter focusses on how those functions affected and were affected by the lives of those who came through the institution, and the ways in which the presumed authority and independence of the institution were challenged by experience.

The children who lived at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum came from a variety of backgrounds, but mainly from the goldfields of Ballarat and surrounding areas. They went on to live all over Victoria and Australia, bringing with them the skills and perspectives built up at the Orphan Asylum. Some details of children's lives and the institutional culture can be understood from the brief details included in Admission Books and Committee Notes, painting a complex picture of institutional independence, childhood dependence on the ideas and decisions of those men who claimed authority over their lives, and the growing interdependence between community organisation and the state.

### The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum's first children – the Organisation's Founders

By way of demonstrating the profile and diversity of children who made their homes at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and to disrupt established notions of "foundation", this chapter opens with a brief description of the first nine children who came to live at the newly established Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, in 1866. The foundation of the modern organisation known as Cafs is usually presented as the year 1865, when the first committee met, and its founders recorded as the men who formed that first committee. These dates and individuals are certainly important to the modern organisation and its history, but it is the intention of this thesis to help shift attention towards the lives of children and their families, and to a deeper understanding of how they were affected by the organisational policies, decisions and interactions with the state, rather than retaining a primary focus on those individuals, policies and decisions.

The first residents of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum were Robert and Henry Phillips, brothers aged nine and seven respectively. Their parents were Presbyterians from Scotland: William Phillips from Arbroath, and Caroline Phillips (nee Glen) from Glasgow. They had migrated to Australia some years before, when exactly is unknown, but they were married in Geelong in 1853. After William's death, Robert and Henry entered the Orphan Asylum on 18 October, 1866. The boys lived at the Orphanage for just under five years, leaving as teenagers into the care of their mother, in Victoria Street, Ballarat.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admission Book, Vol.1", Nos. 1 and 2, 1 (1866) Cafs Collection.

The Phillips brothers were the first of nine children at the Orphan Asylum in 1866, the first year of its operation. Within three weeks they were joined by Mary Ann Watson, aged ten; and siblings Catherine, Sophia and John King (aged nine, seven and four respectively). In December followed James Challen, aged seven; and brother and sister Isaiah and Frances Bisgrove.

Within ten years all of the original residents of the Orphanage had moved on, the last when fourteen-year-old John King moved into 'service' with a Mr Whelan in the nearby village of Warrenheip in 1876. His sisters had left the Orphan Asylum four years earlier. Life after the Orphan Asylum took on a trajectory of domestic servitude, with Catherine having "gone to service", to the home of a Mr Libbow in one of Ballarat's most prestigious areas, Mill St, as a fourteen year-old. Sophia became a domestic servant to a residence in Camp St, Ballarat, aged nearly thirteen. Here we see class dynamics being forged between the orphans and Ballarat's upwardly mobile residents.

Whereas many others of the non-government children's institutions established at around this time were religious, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was established as a non-denominational institution, where "Orphan children are admissible without reference to the creed or country of their parents."<sup>2</sup> Most children who came to the Orphan Asylum were Protestant, as nearby Catholic institutions had already been established, and it was sometimes referred to as the "Ballarat Protestant Orphanage", although Catholics were also accepted, and their traditions accommodated. The Kings, for instance, were a Catholic family, both their parents – John King and Catherine King (nee Boylan) – having migrated from Ireland in 1842 and 1850 respectively. After John, a wood carter, died in 1866, the children entered the Orphan Asylum. Six years later in 1872, their mother Catherine also died, the same year that her daughters left the institution.<sup>3</sup>

Brother and sister Isaiah (nearly six years old) and Frances (nearly three) Bisgrove were the children of English parents – John Bisgrove and Keziah Bisgrove (nee Martin) – who had migrated to Victoria together in 1858, just four months after their wedding. John became a miner in Ballarat, but died on 13 August 1864. Isaiah Bisgrove was in the Orphan Asylum for just over five years, before he left as an eleven-year-old in 1872, to be apprenticed to his uncle, Mr Martin (presumably his mother's brother) in Humffray St, Ballarat. Frances stayed much longer, another three and a half years, before returning to her mother Keziah in the nearby settlement of Egerton. As will be shown below, family reunification was far and away the most common destination for children leaving the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum. Although Keziah Bisgrove was recorded as belonging to the Church of England, her first name, her married name, her children's names, and the fact that the men who "recommended"

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<sup>2</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Rules of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum", *Op.Cit.* (1866), 14. Variations on this sentiment were articulated regularly throughout the life of the Orphan Asylum and the subsequent institutions it became.

<sup>3</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admission Book, Vol.1", No.4,5,6. (1866) Cafs Collection

that her children enter the institution were prominent members of Ballarat's Jewish community,<sup>4</sup> suggest that the children had connections with Jewish traditions.

The original group of children to enter the Orphan Asylum in 1866 were all born in Ballarat, with two exceptions. James Challen had come from Melbourne, where both his parents had died. His father Charles, a butcher, passed away the same year that his son was born, in 1859. James's mother, Jane Merrit, died aged 33 in Melbourne, five years later in 1864. Both had migrated from England. It is not known where James lived for the two years between his mother's death and his arrival at the Orphan Asylum in Ballarat. The only "near relative" recorded in the Admission Book was Richard Challen, in Manchester UK. James stayed at the Orphanage for five years before becoming a carpenter's apprentice to Mr Robinson in Peel Street, Ballarat.<sup>5</sup> Many children who could not be reunited with family would follow a similar path to James, moving from the Orphan Asylum into employment, mainly to apprenticeships or farming vocations for boys, or domestic servitude for girls, either in Ballarat or elsewhere.

Mary Anne Watson had travelled by far the longest distance, having been born in Trinidad in the West Indies in 1856. Her parents were simply recorded as "Both dead". She was the oldest child at the Orphan Asylum in its first year, just a few months older than fellow ten-year-olds Robert Phillips and Catherine King. Three years later Hannah Broadbent from Webster Street in Ballarat wrote to the Orphan Asylum's Committee of Management, asking that they allow her to "again take charge of a girl named Mary Anne Watson, now in the asylum, who had formerly been under her care, as the child had a strong wish to live with her."<sup>6</sup> Hannah promised that she would "take every care of the child and bring her up respectably." The Committee, however, had already decided that Mary Anne would instead become a domestic servant for Mr C. Morgan of Wendouree Parade, around the corner from Webster Street, for a period of four years and nine months.<sup>7</sup> As she was just over thirteen years of age, this would mean she would work for the Morgans until she was almost eighteen years old.<sup>8</sup> Mary Anne was the first of the institution's founding residents to leave the Orphan Asylum.<sup>9</sup>

The extent of the Committee's control over the destiny and destination of the children in its care can be seen in Mary Anne's case. The exact nature of her relationship with Hannah Broadbent cannot be known, and we can question the true extent to which she "had a strong wish to live with her", as Hannah asserted. Even so, that the Committee could unilaterally overrule such an available

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<sup>4</sup> Emmanuel Steinfeld, Mayor of Ballarat East and inaugural Vice-President of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, recommended Isaiah Bisgrove, and E.J. Rosenblum, who was also on the Orphan Asylum Committee of Management recommended Frances Bisgrove. Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admission Book vol.1", Nos. 8, 9 (1866). Cafs Collection.

<sup>5</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum 'Admission Book vol.1', No. 7 (1866). Cafs Collection

<sup>6</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 11 January, 1870

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admission Book vol.1", No. 2 (1866). Cafs Collection

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

option to deliver Mary Anne to domestic servitude indicates the level of authority they possessed. Webster St and Wendouree Parade were both lakeside addresses, indicating that both the Broadbent and Morgan households who were each vying for Mary Anne's services may have been among the new Ballarat elite.

As argued above, these nine children rightly deserve the honour of being recognised as the "founders" of the institution now known as Cafs, alongside the men who have traditionally been acknowledged as the institution's founders, and whose names have been displayed at the Cafs offices for years, the Committee of Management.

### Life at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum

Very few, if any, records have survived that accurately describe the experience of life in the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum. The only remaining records tend to be from official sources or newspaper articles, often public relations exercises aimed at obtaining further investment or community contributions.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum era, the largest facility was the large Orphan Asylum building, separated into three "wings", and dominating the streetscape on Victoria Street. As a newspaper article in the Ballarat *Courier* from January 1881 outlines, it comprehensively covered the physical needs of children – it was where the children slept, ate, worked, learned, played, lived, and were governed.

"The right wing contains the officers' quarters, hospital ward, State school rooms, workroom, several wards, and the swimming bath ... The centre of the building contains the board-room, secretary's office, and waiting rooms. The left wing contains large dining hall ...; kitchen, scullery, laundry, and several wards on both stories."<sup>11</sup>

As one visitor observed in 1875, "[t]here are five dormitories in the lower [level] for female children, and twelve upstairs for the boys...the number of beds in dormitories ranging from 20 to 12."<sup>12</sup> Whether these facilities were adequate or not perhaps depended on one's point of view. While Dr Thornton, whose 1877 letter to the *Courier* was discussed in Chapter One, thought that rooms within were rather "bare and gloomy, and unhomelike"<sup>13</sup>, others described them as "all very comfortable as well as clean", with each bed "provided with a couple of blankets, a quilt and a pillow."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For instance see *Ballarat Courier*, 26 June, 1877, 4. *Ballarat Star*, 17 February, 1875, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 19 January, 1881, 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 17 February 1875, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ballarat Courier*, 26 June 1877, 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 17 February 1875, 3.

## Education and Training

As inaugural President Henry Watson had made clear, the Orphan Asylum was to be more than “a mere place of education”.<sup>15</sup> The aim was to “train the children to labor – to give them an industrial education.” He modelled his thoughts about education and the Care of children on the Royal Freemason Schools for children in London. Here, he noted “no housemaids are kept”, because the girls “are employed ... in all the domestic duties of the house”. The Orphan Asylum did not fully follow through on Watson’s employee-less vision, but it is certainly true that the children at the institution did a great deal of work to support its operation.

Watson made it clear he intended to prepare young girls for the limited roles for which the Committee envisaged, “so as to fit them for workingmen's wives”. After all, he reasoned, “I am sure a man would prefer a wife who could make a good pudding to one who could write an epic poem.” The boys, for their part, would “get their living according to their station, and ... be taught a trade”.<sup>16</sup> This decision to prioritise training and vocational preparation for boys and girls, with clear gender demarcations, was not untypical of the era, but it would have implications for generations of children and the adults they would become.

This is not to say that education was not also prioritised. A school was established on the Orphan Asylum's grounds in the 1860s, even before the introduction of “free, compulsory and secular” schooling for all Victorians with the passing of the *Education Act 1872*.<sup>17</sup> Known as the Ballarat Orphanage School, State School No. 1256 was attended by residents of the children's institution until they reached the end of primary school. As a Government School, it operated separately from the children's institution. This means that it was funded and managed by the Victorian Department of Education. Naturally, practices changed significantly over the considerable period in which the school operated at the institution, and are discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. The school was originally established in the Orphanage building itself, before a standalone building was erected in 1918.

## Ceremonies and celebrations

Christmas was celebrated every year at the Orphan Asylum. It was often an occasion not only for the children, but an opportunity to display and demonstrate the Institution's good works to the broader community, particularly dignitaries. In 1899, “the Xmas Tree and Distribution of Prizes took place on the 28th ultimo, at eight o'clock,” reported Superintendent Arthur Kenny. “There were a large

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<sup>15</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 21 August 1867, 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Craig Campbell, “Free, Compulsory and Secular Education Acts, Australia 1850-1910”, *Dictionary of Australian History in Australia and New Zealand*, Australia and New Zealand History of Education Society (2014). <http://dehanz.net.au/entries/free-compulsory-secular-education-acts/>. Accessed 31 December 2018

number of visitors present including the Mayor of the town Mr J.N. Dunne, Messrs Kline and Harvey” and so on, including the Orphan Asylum Board President, and Committee Members.<sup>18</sup>

Awards would often be given on Christmas Day, such as in 1889, when “two special prizes, value £1” were given to “the best conducted boy and girl during the year”, Bella and Thomas Dougan. This practice would continue well into the twentieth century as well.

It was not unusual in this era for Christmas to be celebrated after 25 December.<sup>19</sup> In 1907, as the Orphanage was in the grip of a measles outbreak, the Superintendent Arthur Kenny recommended that “[u]ntil we are sure the measles epidemic is over we think it advisable to put off the Children’s Xmas tree until the first week in the New Year, and then it would entirely depend if there were no fresh cases.”<sup>20</sup> Before that, in 1900 Christmas was also delayed for the children, as “the President (was) of the opinion the Xmas tree and distribution of prizes should be put off until after New Year in consequence of the Carnival (a major fundraising event at the nearby Eastern Oval that the Orphan Asylum was heavily involved in). That being so the Friday night would suit us in the house best.”<sup>21</sup> For the Orphan Asylum Children, Christmas in 1900 actually occurred on 4 January 1901.

The Committee and Orphanage management was not always fully prepared for Christmas time. In 1905, Superintendent Arthur Kenny asks the Committee, at their Meeting on 7 December, “As we are now coming near to Xmas, will the usual arrangements be carried out re the Xmas tree and distribution of prizes?”<sup>22</sup> The answer was presumably “No”, as Christmas was celebrated late that year, on Friday 29 December.<sup>23</sup> In 1908 on December 17, barely a week before the big day, Kenny was still unclear about the arrangements: “As it is now near Xmas I suppose the usual arrangements are to be carried out for the Xmas tree and distribution of prizes. It will be necessary to fix a date.”<sup>24</sup> It is hard to imagine a date needing to be fixed, or Christmas being delayed for so long in any other Australian families.

At the turn of the century, even though there was often no concerted Christmas campaign for presents and donations, they would usually arrive anyway,<sup>25</sup> demonstrating the standing and profile that the Orphan Asylum had in the community. Even when the presents “were not so numerous” as in previous years, they were, according to the Superintendent at least, “sufficient to give the children

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<sup>18</sup> Superintendent’s Report, 4th January 1900, Report No. 678, vol.1 p.15. Cafs Collection.

<sup>19</sup> See for instance, Superintendent’s Report, January 1905, Vol.1, p.143. “The Xmas tree and distribution of prizes took place on Thursday 29th ultimo.”

<sup>20</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (19 December, 1907). Cafs Collection.

<sup>21</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (20 December, 1900). Cafs Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (7 December, 1905). Cafs Collection.

<sup>23</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (4 January, 1906). Cafs Collection.

<sup>24</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (17 December, 1908). Cafs Collection. In the end, Christmas was celebrated on 30 January that year. See Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report”, 7 January, 1909. Cafs Collection.

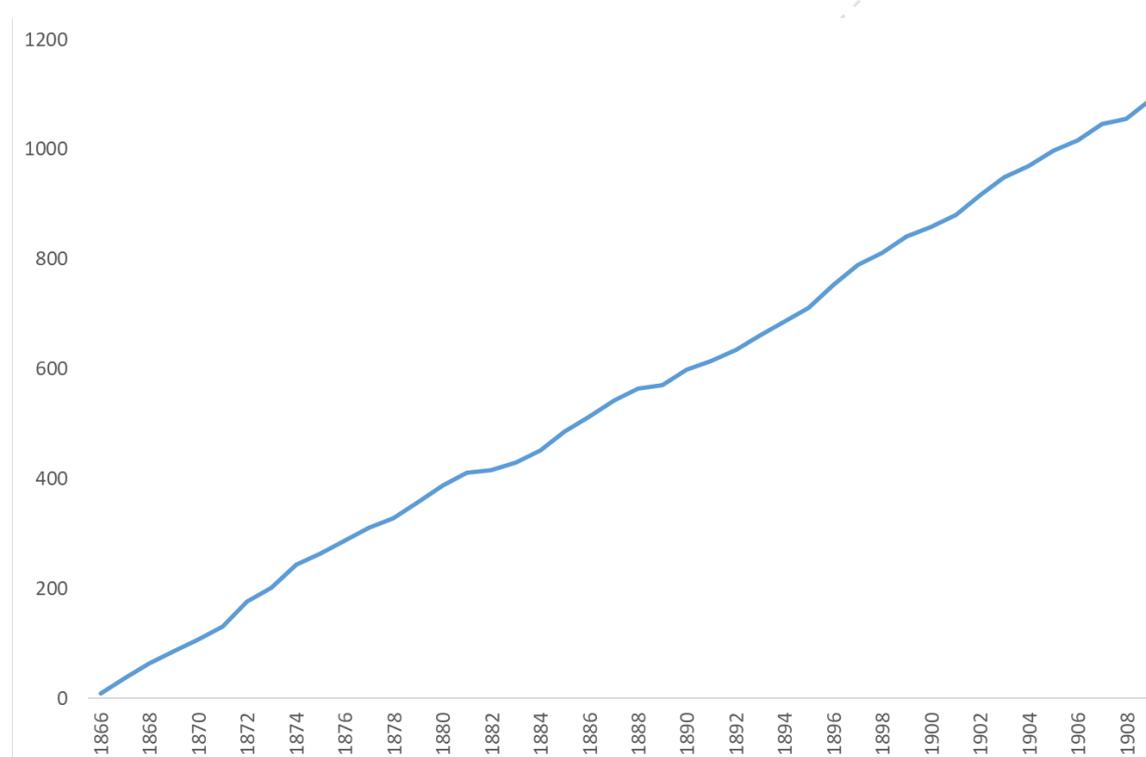
<sup>25</sup> See for instance, Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (January 1905). Cafs Collection.

a pleasant time.”<sup>26</sup> Here is an example of the bureaucratic nature of Orphanage life, with decisions made about fundamental Australian childhood experiences such as Christmas being made according to a mixed logic based on compassion and pragmatism.

### Children entering and leaving the Orphan Asylum

By the start of the First World War in 1914, just after the name change from Orphan Asylum to Orphanage, 1,295 children had come to the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum – an average of 26.4 children per year making their home at the Institution, with some years welcoming as few as five (1882) or six (1889), whilst other years opening its doors to as many as 43 (1874, 1896), 45 (1872), and in the lead-up to 1914, three consecutive years of around 50 children entering the Orphanage (48 in 1911, 52 in 1912, and 57 in 1913).

**Chart 1. Number of Children who enter the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, 1866-1909<sup>27</sup>**



By looking at a sample of these children we can gain an overview of some of the main characteristics of this group. The following analysis is based on detailed reading of the admission records of 226 of these children, selected on the basis of those who entered the Institution at five-year intervals from 1870 to 1910.<sup>28</sup> Of these 226 children, twenty had incomplete records that meant

<sup>26</sup> Superintendent's Report, 7 January 1909, vol.2, p.67.

<sup>27</sup> Using consolidated information gathered from the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum Admissions Book, Volume 1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>28</sup> That is, information about all children who entered the institution in 1870, 1875, 1880, 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900 and 1905 has been collated to inform analysis. From Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Admission Book, 1866-1919. Cafs Collection.

in most cases they have been excluded from analysis. As such the base number for analysis changes slightly for each category in this overview.<sup>29</sup>

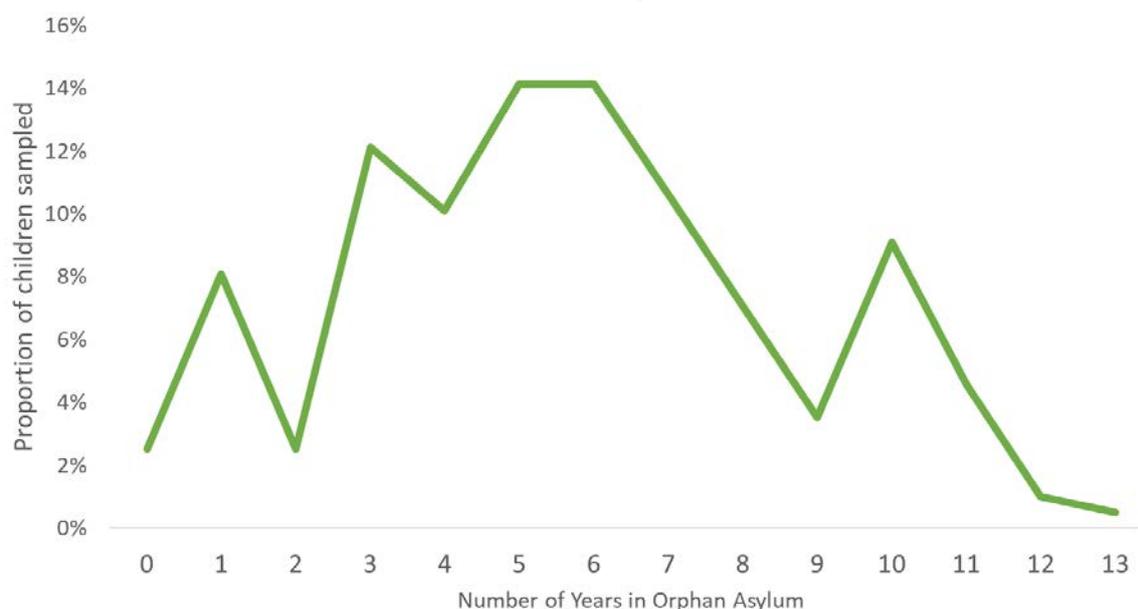
### Cause of admission

The most common cause of admission in this early period for the institution was the death of one parent. More often than not children came to the Orphan Asylum along with at least one brother or sister – less than 26 per cent of the children sampled entered the Orphan Asylum alone. It was not uncommon for some children to enter the institution while others stayed with a surviving parent.

### Age at admission and length of stay

The vast majority – 65 per cent – of children who entered the Orphan Asylum were aged between five and nine. 21 per cent were aged ten to thirteen, and fourteen per cent were under five. Children typically stayed in the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum for around five years, with about 50 per cent leaving after four, five, six or seven years (see Chart 2 below).

**Chart 2. Length of Stay in Ballarat District Orphan Asylum**



The average age of children entering the Orphan Asylum during this period was around seven years, and the average age upon leaving was around thirteen years old, meaning that the average length of stay at the Orphan Asylum was just under six years.<sup>30</sup> More than half of the children included in the analysis sample (60 per cent)<sup>31</sup> were aged fourteen or over at the time of their departure. This

<sup>29</sup> Half of these children with incomplete records entered the Orphan Asylum in the twentieth century – that is, in 1900, 1905, or 1910. This is a significantly disproportionate number from the shorter, later period of this analysis, indicating that record-keeping for basic information about inmates – date of birth, date of entry, date of leaving, and destination upon leaving the Institution – declined in quality during this later period.

<sup>30</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, volume 1”. Cafs Collection.

<sup>31</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, volume 1”. Cafs Collection.

indicates a tendency for children at the Orphan Asylum to stay for as long as possible under Asylum rules, which specified that children could be accommodated until the age of fourteen. In most cases, the data suggests, the Orphan Asylum was a 'Home' for children, rather than a temporary assistance for families. Much of the work of the Orphan Asylum then would have been in managing placements and destinations for children approaching their fourteenth birthday, including identifying family members capable of taking responsibility for their children. In practice this rule was implemented flexibly, with a large number of children – at least 34 per cent – who stayed later than their fourteenth birthdays.

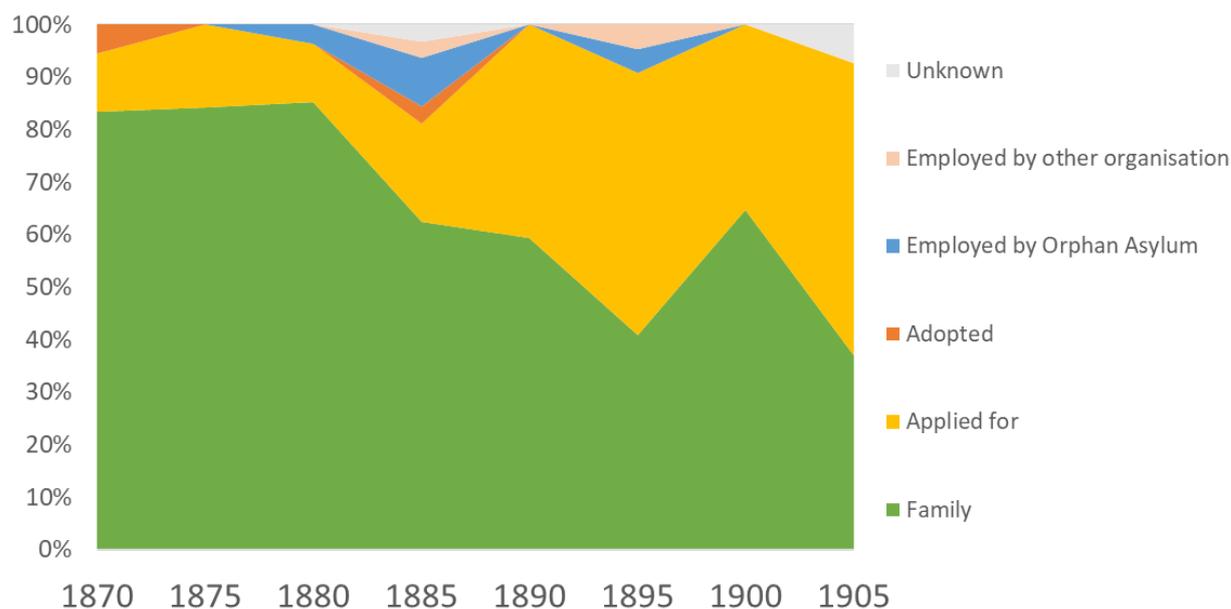
### Destination upon leaving the Orphan Asylum

Basic information was usually recorded for most children about where they moved after their time at the Orphan Asylum, usually relating to the town and often the person who took responsibility for them, and whether they were family or not. Very few children who entered the institution were "orphans" in the sense that they had no surviving parents or guardians. Most children entering the Orphan Asylum had at least one parent still living, and it was the institution's goal to enable those families to reunify, as reflected in the practice of recording the contact details of surviving parents in Application Forms and Admission Book entries. A significant majority of children – 62 per cent of those sampled – left the institution to be reunited with family, by far the most common destination out of the Orphan Asylum. However, family reunification was far more common in the Orphan Asylum's earliest years, with 75 per cent of children who entered in 1870 leaving to family, rising to 84 per cent of children who entered in 1875, and 82 per cent of those who entered in 1885.

In later years the proportion of children who were reunified with family declined rapidly. As outlined in Chart 3 below, 59 per cent of children who entered the Orphan Asylum in 1885 went to family members, 39 per cent in 1890, then down to just 37 per cent of those who entered in 1905.<sup>32</sup> Overall, 30 per cent of the sampled children were 'Applied For' successfully, but this figure rose significantly by the end of the Orphan Asylum period. By 1905 more than half of the children who entered the Orphan Asylum in 1905 – 56 per cent – were eventually "applied for" and left to work in a household. This may be because of strengthening relationships with community members over the life of the Orphan Asylum, as the institution's vocational practices matured and developed.

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<sup>32</sup> Based on Admission Book Entries selected at five year intervals, 1870-1915.

**Chart 3. Destination of Children leaving the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, by year of entry**

The majority of children – 58 per cent – who left the Orphan Asylum moved to an address in Ballarat or its vicinity.<sup>33</sup> (47 per cent to Ballarat including Sebastopol and Buninyong, and 11 per cent to surrounding areas, such as Learmonth, Smythesdale, Dunnstown, and Gordon).<sup>34</sup> The next most common set of destinations was elsewhere in regional Victoria, where 21 per cent went. These were scattered far and wide, as far away as Albury (just over the border in NSW) and Gippsland. Most of those who moved to regional Victoria, though, stayed in the western part of the state, including Warrnambool, Nhill, Horsham, Ararat and other smaller centres around the Wimmera, such as St Arnaud, Birchip, Charlton and Boort. Eleven per cent moved to Melbourne or its suburbs. A handful of other children (five per cent) moved interstate.<sup>35</sup> This reflects the Orphan Asylum’s status as a local institution servicing mainly Ballarat in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, in contrast to the later twentieth century, explored in chapters Three and Four, when the institution became more entrenched in a statewide network of institutions that accepted children on behalf of the State.

<sup>33</sup> Defined as within 50km of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum / Ballarat Orphanage, and includes the towns and settlements of Clarendon, Clarke’s Hill, Dunnstown, Egerton, Gordon, Learmonth, Leigh Creek, Linton, Miners Rest, Mt Rowan, Newlyn, Rokewood, Scarsdale, Skipton, Smeaton, and Smythesdale. Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admissions Book vol.1”, 1866-1914. Cafs Collection.

<sup>34</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”. Cafs Collection.

<sup>35</sup> Four each to NSW and WA, two to Tasmania. Eleven per cent of children did not have their destination recorded, with the vast majority of these children being in the early twentieth-century period when it appears that record-keeping practices declined.

## Family relationships

The large majority of children entering the institution – about 75 per cent – were members of sibling groups.<sup>36</sup> About half of them ended up leaving to the same destination as their siblings (51 per cent), and about half were separated from each other (49 per cent).

As indicated above, the clear majority of children who left the institution were returning to family members, especially in the nineteenth century. When returning to family, those with siblings were more likely to stay together (78 per cent of those returning to families did so with their siblings).

## Case examples

Having outlined the quantitative data available through a sample analysis of available Admission Books, this section will outline a range of specific examples drawn from what can be read and inferred in surviving records. This will help build a richer picture of the developing institutional cultures and practices that would shape the experiences of Care and its aftermath during the Orphan Asylum era.

### Mary Anne Pope and her children: 1867-1869

We know some level of detail regarding Mary Anne Pope and her children, as she recorded much of her experiences in public correspondence with the Ballarat *Star*. As her family's experience shows, family reunification, while relatively common, was not always smooth.

In October 1866, Mary Anne Pope's husband died. Soon after, she and her surviving children lost their home and found themselves in "almost destitute circumstances".<sup>37</sup> In August 1867 Mrs Pope applied to the Ballarat Orphan Asylum for her children to enter the institution, temporarily. She was assured by the committee that her children "would be restored to [her] whenever [she] was in a position to maintain them." (Letter from Mary Anne Pope to Committee, Tabled at August 1869 Committee Meeting.)<sup>38</sup>

In February 1869, Mrs Pope found employment as a housekeeper in Barton, about 115km west of Ballarat between Ararat and Dunkeld. She wrote to the Orphan Asylum Committee to request that her children be taken out of their institution and returned to her, so she could take over their care, education and upbringing.<sup>39</sup>

Notwithstanding the advice that Mrs Pope had received from the Committee initially that her children could stay at the Orphan Asylum temporarily until she found her feet, the Committee decided not to return her children. Their rules were quite clear: clause 27 as it applied at the time stated that

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<sup>36</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admission Book, vol.1". Cafs Collection.

<sup>37</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 15 June, 1869, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 12 February, 1869, 4.

children should not be removed from the Orphan Asylum until they were fourteen years old, or apprenticed to a trade.

In a letter to the *Ballarat Star* on 24 June, Mary Ann Pope was aghast at this suggestion, and passionately outlines how if this were known to her she would have “begged bread for myself and them ... sooner than have consented to part with my children”. Wrote Pope, emphatically: “I never in any way relinquished my right to claim my children.”<sup>40</sup>

Mary Anne Pope's children eventually returned to her in August, after at least five months of prevarication and resistance from the Committee, including multiple exposures in the local newspapers. Mrs Pope – not ungenerously given the circumstances – wrote to the Committee in September 1869, “returning her sincere thanks to the committee for returning her children to her, and thanking them and the officers of the institution for the many kindnesses shown to the children.”<sup>41</sup>

This was the first time such a situation had occurred at the Orphan Asylum, and Mrs Pope's children became something of a test for the Orphan Asylum's Committee about how they saw themselves in their community, and their role as moral arbiters over access to children. Claim and counter-claim went back and forth between Committee members over a number of months, with Mrs Pope's brother even intervening against his sister's claim.<sup>42</sup> One Committee member, Mr Lewis, towards the end of the saga, expressed how he “was really surprised to see so much fuss made to keep children that [Mrs Pope] was ready and willing to support”.<sup>43</sup>

The Committee simply could not work out what they were supposed to do in a situation that was new to them – they were confused. This was a group of men without significant experience of caring for children in an institutional setting. They were drawn from the ranks of shopkeepers, innkeepers and other trades, running an institution that had been operating for less than four years. Without an intuitive or operational understanding of the business of running an Orphan Asylum, they relied instead on the bureaucratic logic of their regulations, choosing a strictly literal interpretation of those rules.

After initially seeking legal advice about the liability of the institution in this case, eventually, it was the advice of their “kindred” institutions, Orphan Asylums in Melbourne and Geelong, that shifted things in Mrs Pope's favour. A sub-committee had been formed to seek the views of these more experienced institutions. Their views? That “[n]o power was arrogated to hold children from their parents”, meaning that there was “no legal right to detain children”. In these institutions'

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 14 September, 1869, 2

<sup>42</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 13 July, 1869, 3

<sup>43</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 10 August, 1869, 2

experience and opinion, “if the person applying for the children ... happened to be a person of good character and ready to support them, they [the children] were given up [that is, returned to their parent/s]”.<sup>44</sup>

According to Committee member Davey, “there was no further excuse for detaining the children, and ... they should be given up to Mrs Pope.”<sup>45</sup> Even so, some committee members could barely hide their distaste for the situation. “Mr Kent thought the woman had been guilty of ingratitude for past services”. Though Mr Watson conceded that the children should be returned to Mrs Pope, he made a point of saying that in years to come “they would be sorry they had been taken from the institution.”<sup>46</sup>

Maryanne Pope had given the committee a lesson in due process, the implementation of policy, good manners, and public self-advocacy. In the years to come, a more solid process by which young people could leave the Asylum was put in place, which would enable the Committee to use discretion and judgment in their decisions, rather than blanket rulings based on inflexible application of policy.

### Julia Clarke and her children, Julia and Bridget

In September 1883, Mrs Julia Clarke wrote to the Orphan Asylum Committee, asking that she be granted custody of her two daughters, Julia and Bridget, who were currently living at the Orphan Asylum.<sup>47</sup> By this stage such a request was not unusual, with the normal procedure being that it would be passed to the House Committee, a reform instituted since the Mary Anne Pope debacle described above.

The House Committee was asked by the General Committee on 11 September 1883 to look into Mrs Clarke’s request “with power” to make a decision. By November Mrs Clarke still had not heard about whether her daughters could return to her, so she wrote to the Orphan Asylum again, at which point “Messrs Martin and Thompson” – both General Committee members – were appointed to form a special Committee of Enquiry and provide a report.

On 8 January Mr Martin reported back to the committee. “On coming to the meeting this evening it was the intention of the Enquiry Committee to recommend Mrs Clark's application be granted”, said Mr Martin. “[B]ut we have since been informed that Mrs Clark was receiving relief from the Benevolent Asylum. Under those circumstances [we] would not recommend the children being granted to her.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 13 July, 1869,3

<sup>45</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 10 August, 1869, 2

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Committee of Management Notes”, (11 September, 1883). Cafs Collection.

<sup>48</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Committee of Management Notes”, (8 January, 1884). Cafs Collection.

So close was Mrs Clarke to getting her children back. Between arriving at the committee meeting, and providing their report, Mr Martin and Mr Thompson had changed their minds. Had the Benevolent Asylum been part of their initial enquiries? Or was it that one of their fellow committee members had some inside intelligence from the Benevolent Asylum that had swayed their thinking, the chance encounter prior to the meeting sealing the Clarke family's fate? Had she not written that second letter, would a Committee of Enquiry have been appointed, with the ad hoc power to change their minds based on what could presumably have been no more than a corridor conversation?

A month later, on 12 February 1884, the attention the committee gave to Mrs Clarke was much shorter. On consideration of her letter asking for Julia and Bridget to be returned – the third she had written – there is a simple one word response recorded in the minutes – “Refused”.<sup>49</sup>

Mrs Clarke then wrote a fourth time, this time “applying for” just her eldest child, Julia. This request was received in March 1884 and referred again to the House Committee, with power to make a decision.

The decision to deny Mrs Clarke access to her children was made, we can only interpret, out of concern that she was in no state to support children if she herself was reliant on Benevolent Asylum support. This ability to make such a judgement, however, remained in the hands of the men elected to the Committee – men who sought influence and power, and were again free to assert it over the lives and bodies of others, often women, and always children. It was a system that forced both Mary-Anne Pope and Julia Clarke to “apply for” their children, and subject them to the judgments of the Committee of Management and their power over their family lives.

### The Cahill family: Susan and Stephen, John, Jane and Catherine

On 18 June 1885, three siblings, John, Jane and Catherine Cahill started their new lives at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum. The eldest, John, was less than one week short of his seventh birthday. Younger sister Jane was nearly six, and the youngest, Catherine, had just turned four. Their parents, Susan (nee Mooney) and Stephen Cahill, had been married eight years earlier, at St Patrick's Cathedral in Ballarat. Their marriage certificate is still held in the Cafs archives. Stephen Cahill died in 1882.<sup>50</sup> Three years later, Susan Cahill, aged 29, filled out application forms for each of her three children to enter the Orphan Asylum.

The application form for John Cahill was signed by his mother Susan, but also by another man – R.W. Tanner. Mr Tanner had contributed a sum of £1 1 s in the previous year, which made him a governor for the year 1885. This entitled him to make one recommendation of a child to enter the

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<sup>49</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Committee of Management Notes” (12 February, 1884). Cafs Collection.

<sup>50</sup> Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, “Death Certificate – Stephen Cahill”, <https://my.rio.bdm.vic.gov.au/efamily-history/5d3fabfcbfc622328769ba0/results?q=efamily>. Accessed 22 October 2019.

Orphan Asylum, which turned out to be John Cahill. Did Mr Tanner make this contribution in order to be able to recommend John, based on some prior relationship with the Cahill family? Or was he sought out by Susan Cahill because he was a Governor? The surviving records do not answer these questions. What we do know, however, is that Mr Tanner signed the application form for John on 23 March 1885, about six weeks before the form was eventually submitted.

In the meantime, Mrs Cahill obtained another signature of recommendation for her daughter Catherine – this time from Robert Wreford, a prominent man at the Orphan Asylum, as its Committee Secretary and Collector, and a former Committee President. Wreford had contributed £13 4s in 1865,<sup>51</sup> entitling him to make up to three recommendations. Mr Wreford signed Catherine's application form on 11 May, the day before Mrs Cahill submitted all three application forms to the Orphan Asylum.

At this point the Cahill family had some bureaucratic luck. 12 May was also the day of the Orphan Asylum's Committee of Management meeting, and their application was considered that night. Under the Heading of 'Fresh Applications', the Cahills were one of six groups or individuals assigned to a "Committee of Enquiry" who would consider their application. Each individual or group of siblings who applied to the Orphan Asylum had a different Committee of Enquiry, and the Cahill's case was considered by "Messrs Fitzpatrick and Richards". D. Fitzpatrick J.P. was a Committee member in 1865. Jabez Richards was President of the Committee.

The content of Fitzpatrick and Richards' deliberations are unknown, but at the next Committee meeting, on 9 June 1885, is the following entry: "Application for the admission of John, Jane and Catherine Cahil (sic.), Bolivarren (?) the Committee of enquiry having reported favorably, the applicant was ordered to be admitted."

A week and half later, on 18 June, the three Cahill siblings were examined by a 'non-resident surgeon' – a Dr Finnegan, it appears to be – who provided the final signature for their application forms and they were admitted to their new home. This rather convoluted process took at least three and a half months, from the first signature of recommendation in March, to John, Jane and Catherine starting their new life in the Orphan Asylum in June.

One can only imagine the difficulty experienced by Julia Clarke and her family as they waited months, actively seeking and obtaining signatures, withstanding missed deadlines and appointments, while she contemplated and initiated what could only have been one of the most painful and difficult decisions of her life. Again, we see an example of the bureaucratic logic of the institution overriding the timely and intuitive consideration of immediate need. The Orphan Asylum Committee's belief, that they and their social and economic peers were best positioned to decide on the suitability or

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<sup>51</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Twentieth Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1887). Cafs Collection.

otherwise of children to receive their Care, ultimately risked further harm to the very same “honourable” and “deserving” children that their systems were set up to protect.

### Anna Mills and her children

In January 1870, Anna M. Mills wrote to the committee, “requesting the committee to allow [her] children to visit her for a few days”. The request was not allowed, illustrating the harsh realities faced by those who “successfully” placed their children in the Orphanage. It also provides a further glimpse into the power and authority wielded by the Orphan management board.<sup>52</sup>

At first parents and family were not allowed to see their children while they were in the Orphan Asylum. In June 1869, however, just before Anna Mills’ request to the Committee, it was decided that parents be allowed to visit their children on the first Monday of each month.<sup>53</sup> It is not clear how long this specific practice lasted, but it did establish a mechanism for connecting with families that would endure into the twentieth century.

### Mary and David Evans

Brother and sister, Mary Evans and David Evans arrived at Ballarat District Orphan Asylum on 16 July 1870. Elder sister Mary was nearly seven years old, born in Cambridgeshire, UK. She had sailed with her parents on the “Great Britain” shortly after she was born, in 1863. Younger brother David was not quite five years old, born much nearer, in “Sebastopol, near Ballarat”. Their father – also named David – was a miner. He died presumably sometime around the date of their entry into the Orphan Asylum. Within a year Mary and David Jr had left the Asylum and returned to their mother and new stepfather in Sebastopol, “by order of the Committee of Management”.<sup>54</sup>

Their brief story shows just one of the trajectories that children of the Orphan Asylum could follow. Their mother, as far as we can tell, had a much easier time of reunifying her family, having proved to the Committee that by remarrying and providing a respectable family situation she could be trusted with the care of her children.

### William and Thomas Richards

On 19 November 1879, brothers William (aged ten) and Thomas (eight) Richards entered the Orphan Asylum, after both of their parents, originally from Cornwall in the UK, died. Father Charles died in 1872, mother Rachel in 1879. Both were recommended by Mr A. Lennon, from Durham Lead, about 15km south of Ballarat, where the brothers were born. William stayed in the Asylum for five years before he was “sent to Mr W. Griffiths as an apprentice” in Hotham, the area now known as

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<sup>52</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 11 January, 1870

<sup>53</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 15 June 1869, 3

<sup>54</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”, No. 101. Cafs Collection.

North Melbourne. His brother Thomas stayed at the Asylum for another four years before going to live with his sisters in 1888.<sup>55</sup> William, according to a note on his Admission Book entry, was reunited with family too, “finally granted to his sisters”, with emphasis on “finally”.<sup>56</sup> Here is another complicated reunification process, resolved gradually over the course of many years.

### William and Ada Salter

On 12 December 1890, brother and sister William (aged seven) and Ada (four) Salter entered the Orphan Asylum, away from their mother Elizabeth Salter (nee Ross), and a sister who stayed with her.<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth was described as a “charwoman” with “no means”. Her husband, William Salter, had died four years earlier in October 1886. The Salters were recommended by noted Ballarat philanthropist and businessman James Oddie – two of many children he would recommend to the Orphan Asylum. William left as a fifteen-year-old, “hired to Mrs McCann” at Lake Charm,<sup>58</sup> 400km north of Ballarat. Ada died while living at the Orphan Asylum, in 1894.<sup>59</sup> Her unfortunate and sudden death – by an embolism of the heart – was documented in detail by the Coroner’s Office, ultimately absolving the Orphan Asylum of responsibility for her death, while heading off potential community fears of cholera.<sup>60</sup> Here we see the divergent paths followed by siblings. The reader of these records is left to imagine the difficulty faced by Elizabeth Salter in losing two children to distance and death, while maintaining custody of another.

### “Applying for” children to leave the Orphan Asylum – some more examples

There is no evidence to suggest that decisions about applications for children ever involved those children themselves. Any surviving information usually comes from the Orphan Asylum Committee Meeting minutes, which did not routinely consider the details of such cases, in surviving records at least. Sometimes family members would apply for their own children, as we have seen in the cases of Julia Clarke and Mary Anne Pope, and the sisters of the Richards brothers.

In many cases, however, unrelated community members would apply for custody of children, usually for labour. We have seen this already in the case of Mary Anne Watson, one of the institution’s founding children, who was subject to a disputed claim over where she should go upon leaving the Orphan Asylum. In most cases like this, the person applying for a child would ask only in the most general terms. In 1869, for instance, S.B. Pitt “express[ed] a wish to obtain a girl from 12 to 15 years

<sup>55</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”, No. 358. Cafs Collection.

<sup>56</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”, No. 357. Cafs Collection.

<sup>57</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1” Nos. 597 & 598. Cafs Collection.

<sup>58</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”, No. 597. Cafs Collection.

<sup>59</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”, No. 598. Cafs Collection.

<sup>60</sup> Crown Law Offices. “Proceedings of Enquiry (sic) held upon the body of Ada Stork at Ballarat Orphanage (sic)” (April 10, 31 March, 1886). VPRS 24 / PO Unit 495, Item 1886/377

of age from the asylum for household work or nursing". The committee "decided to inform Mr Pitt there were no girls of that age in the institution".<sup>61</sup>

The Committee routinely received correspondence of this nature. For instance in 1873 "From B. Lindo, Ararat; Peter Lalor, Richmond; A. Kemp, Clunes, applying for orphan girls". All were "referred to the [House] committee."<sup>62</sup> In 1883, a Mrs E. Clapham wrote to the Orphan Asylum applying for "a girl", "age 13 or 14". No particular reason for the application was recorded. The Committee responded that there were "none available".<sup>63</sup> At around the same time, a Mrs Chisholm also applied for a girl, as a "companion". Again, the Committee found that there were "none available".<sup>64</sup> By 1889, the details kept by the Committee of Management were more scant. In August it was reported only that "a number of applications for children were received, and referred to the ... house committee."<sup>65</sup>

In the year between the Septembers of 1883 and 1884 – to choose a fairly typical year – fifty-four children were applied for. At least fourteen of these appear to be for family members, either immediate or extended. E. Watson, for instance, applied for their daughter, Sarah to be returned. A decision was "Referred to the House Committee with power"<sup>66</sup> to make a decision. The House Committee Minutes from this era have not been retained, so we do not know the details of their deliberations. In March 1884, Lydia Rice wrote to the Committee of Management, "applying for her children and thanking the committee for their great kindness towards them." Her application was granted immediately.<sup>67</sup>

Eleven of the fifty-four applications in this year – 1883 to 1884 – requested either a "Nurse" or "servant" to be provided by the Orphan Asylum. All of them were told that there were "None available". Applicants would either ask for a specific person – usually in the case of a family member – or they would ask for a general demographic profile, as the men cited above did. This highlights the way in which the Orphan Asylum was treated as a source of labour not just for the institution itself, but also for the community more broadly.

The other main destination for young people and children was into the "service" of other families. Adoption (one per cent of the sample population) and Apprenticeship (three per cent) were rare.<sup>68</sup> Families would write to the Orphan Asylum to "Apply for" a child, a more informal form of those two categories. If granted to the family, the child would usually work for them. Detailed

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<sup>61</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 11 January, 1870, 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 14 May, 1873, 2. It is not known whether this is the Peter Lalor of Eureka Stockade and Victorian Parliament fame, but in 1873 he was heavily involved in politics in Melbourne, and his son Joseph is known to have lived in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond.

<sup>63</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Committee of Management Minutes" (11 September, 1883). Cafs Collection.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 14 August, 1889, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Committee of Management Meeting Notes" (12 August, 1884). Cafs Collection.

<sup>67</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Committee of Management Meeting Notes", (11 March, 1883). Cafs Collection.

<sup>68</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Admission Book, vo. 1.". Cafs Collection

information is not available about the nature of these applications, that is, what those young people were expected to do upon having their application accepted. What is known is that a large number of the boys who were applied for went into farming roles, and many of the girls who left went into domestic service.

In 1884, sisters Rachel Hicks and G. Richards wrote to the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum Committee, asking for their brother W.G. Richards to be returned to them. W.G. had recently been released from the Orphan Asylum, into the service of a Mr Griffiths in Horsham, but as the sisters explained, their brother was unhappy in Horsham, “as he does not like the place that he is in”.<sup>69</sup> The Committee decided to make investigations into the accuracy of the sister's claims. While a record of their final decision has not survived, it can be seen here how the Committee maintained power over the children even after they left. This was an informal arrangement between the Orphan Asylum and the households they sent children to, that would never be definitively resolved in this or later eras.

In 1873 Lizzie Fisher, it was reported in the *Ballarat Star*, “not liking her residence” with the family that had “Applied For” her, “[d]esired to leave, and ... had [been] sent ... to the asylum again.”<sup>70</sup> Lizzie's case was a particularly animating one for the Committee of Management. It was “incidentally mentioned” during their meeting in April 1873 that Lizzie “had not been fairly treated by Mr Murray and his family”, with whom she had been living before returning to the Orphan Asylum.<sup>71</sup> This triggered “[s]trong expressions of opinion” amongst the men assembled, with “some of the committee-men pointing out that the committee must protect the children at all hazards.” Lizzie had highlighted for the committee a fundamental concern of child service providers across the life of the institution: what responsibility did the institution have for the welfare of children throughout their lives? “If the orphans were allowed to be ill-treated by one person, other persons would follow suit.”<sup>72</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century a customary one-month “probationary period” applied after someone had left the institution into the service of another household, as Superintendent Arthur Kenny wrote in 1905 when one of the boys was “sent to Mr Higgins, Warrenheip on the usual month's probation”.<sup>73</sup> It was not uncommon for people to return to the institution after some time with their placement. For instance, In 1906, a girl “was returned from Mrs Morris's after 2 days not being suitable”, wrote Superintendent Kenny.<sup>74</sup> Another household, a Mr Haymes, subsequently applied for her, she having already been at his house previously.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Committee of Management Meeting Notes” (May 1884). Cafs Collection

<sup>70</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 9 April 1873, 3.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Superintendent's Report, “6 September 1900”, No. 692. In 1884 a similar practice was described by the Superintendent, Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (10 June, 1884). Cafs Collection.

<sup>74</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (3 May, 1906). Cafs Collection.

<sup>75</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (31 May, 1906) Cafs Collection.

Another boy in 1906, Sam Collins, returned from the house of a Mr Jenkins in Warrnambool, “having again become dissatisfied”.<sup>76</sup> It is unclear who exactly was dissatisfied, Sam Collins or Mr Jenkins. Other times, however, arrangements would proceed seemingly well. In August 1884, for instance, the Committee received correspondence from “Robins”, “stating that he was much pleased with the place with Mr Andrews at Elaine and that he and Mr Andrews would be up on Tuesday evening for the purpose of signing deed of indenture of apprenticeship”. “Received with satisfaction”,<sup>77</sup> noted the Committee.

From the earliest years of the Orphan Asylum, right through to the present day, there has been a strong vocational emphasis. As described above, in the Orphan Asylum years this way was mostly reflected in more informal arrangements with individual applicants, who were not required to provide much detail about how and why children would be taken on. There are rarer examples during this time of people entering more formal working arrangements, either as apprentices, or with a firm or organisation. The most commonly indicated place of employment in the sample group was the Orphan Asylum itself.<sup>78</sup>

Some children were transferred to other institutions through intervention by the State. For instance in 1900, the Orphan Asylum made an “application” through the Victorian Chief Secretary for fifteen year-old Samuel Harper, after nine years at the Orphan Asylum, to be transferred to “the boys' Idiotic School at Kew”. Both he and his mother were described as “mentally weak”<sup>79</sup> by the Orphan Asylum's Committee of Management.

### Escape and absconding

In 1884 “a boy called Morgan” ran away from the Orphan Asylum. As Committee President Jabez Richards reported it at their Committee meeting on 12 February, he “had absconded from the Institution and ... the Superintendent had taken action to find out his whereabouts but without success – as yet.”<sup>80</sup> A month later, Richards provided an update, indicating “that the whereabouts of Morgan was known and that he would be brought back to the Asylum as early as possible.”<sup>81</sup> Several months later, in August, the Committee received a letter from John Cary, returning an amount of two pounds “being the amount of reward paid for recovery of D. Morgan”. John, it seems, was the one who had located Morgan and alerted the Orphan Asylum, though he clearly did not do so for reward. Morgan, however, had not returned to the Asylum. Rather, Cary informed the Committee, “he was

<sup>76</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (3 May, 1906) Cafs Collection.

<sup>77</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (12 August, 1884). Cafs Collection.

<sup>78</sup> Based on sample analysis of Admission Book entries, Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Admission Book, vol.1”. Cafs Collection, as outlined in Footnote 243 above..

<sup>79</sup> Superintendent's Report, no. 695, 4 October 1900. Cafs Collection.

<sup>80</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Committee of Management, 12 February 1884.

<sup>81</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Committee of Management, 11 March 1884.

employed in a nice comfortable position with Mr Thomas Bath at Swanwater West ... and is getting 6/- per week and that his employer is very much satisfied with him.” No further comment was recorded about Morgan's unauthorised travels from Ballarat to the Wimmera, more than 150km away, other than to say that Cary's correspondence had been “Received.”<sup>82</sup> The Committee of Management simply noted receiving this information, without any apparent follow-up action, seemingly satisfied that in Morgan's case a satisfactory enough resolution had been reached.

Some children would be returned to the institution, only to attempt escape again. In the early 1900s, thirteen-year-old William Millieson, for instance, attempted to escape the institution at least seven times. One of the later attempts involved a locked second floor room, an improvised rope made of tied up blankets, and a 2:00am escape. As at 2 February the Melbourne *Argus* reported that William had so far “eluded his pursuers”.<sup>83</sup>

Often the Police would get involved with escapes, sometimes accidentally, sometimes by active request of the institution. In 1900 “two boys absconded ... Charles Wilson and Roland Veal”.<sup>84</sup> Roland got on a train to get to Bacchus Marsh. Unfortunately for him, though, he fell asleep and ended up at North Melbourne Station, where he was apprehended for fare evasion, sent to Bacchus Marsh and “handed over to police”. When they “found out where he had come from ... [t]hey sent him on the next train” and to the Ballarat Police. The Superintendent picked him up and explained to the Committee of Management that he “had to pay 4/6 for train fare.”<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

The first iteration of the institution now known as Cafs, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, which housed children aged four to fifteen (sometimes younger, sometimes older), was in many ways typical of a Victorian children's institution of its time. It established itself as one of the major institutions in the State, setting itself up to become a key pillar of Victorian welfare policy in the twentieth century.

Despite being set up with clear purpose and with a thorough set of governing rules and structures, the institution fumbled its way through various policies, and positions, driven by an abiding sense of righteousness and authority. The Orphan Asylum was independent to the point of defensiveness, and conscious of its accountability not to government, not even to the children it housed and their families, but primarily to the communities in which it operated. As the both symbolic and practical custodians of moral authority in Ballarat and its surrounds, the institution's leaders maintained that it was they, and they alone, who had discretion over who could live at the asylum and

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<sup>82</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Committee of Management, March 1884.

<sup>83</sup> *Argus*, 2 February 1906, 6

<sup>84</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” No. 699 (20 December, 1900). Cafs Collection.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

who could not. At this point, then, the prime relationship that drove the operation and strategy of the institution was to be useful locally, to assert Ballarat's role in the project to build a strong Colony and State – to develop the next generation/s of “Good and Useful Colonists”.

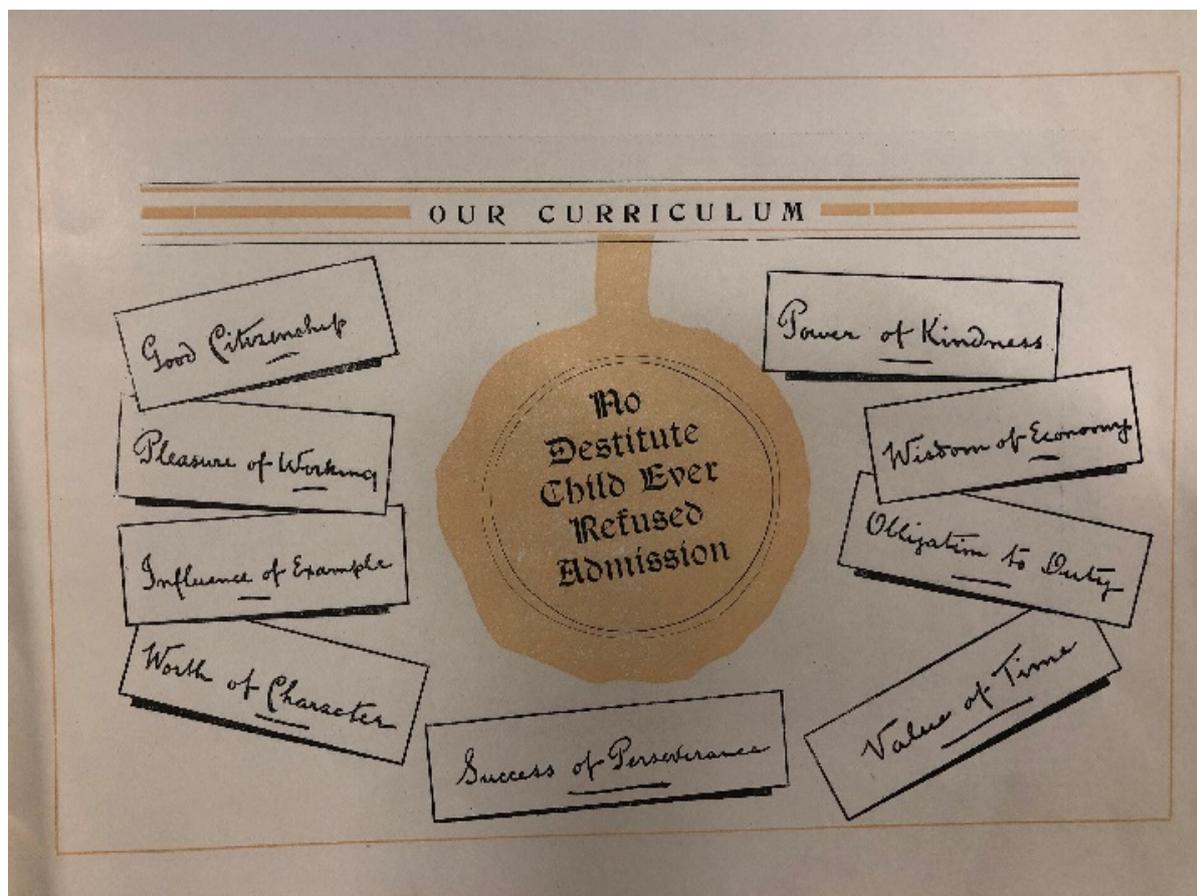
The Orphan Asylum regarded the children as their responsibility alone, sometimes even more so than the families of those children. This can be seen from the earliest years of the institution, in its public rhetoric, and in its treatment of Mary Anne Pope and her children. The institution's leaders, they were convinced, had more authority to understand Mrs Pope's ability to parent than she herself did.

The children themselves speak only faintly from this era – even more quietly than in the institution's other eras. We are left straining to observe and understand the refracted glimpses of children who are almost exclusively represented through distorting perspectives of the community and institutional leaders of the time, and the bureaucratic processes they had established. Nonetheless, some pictures do emerge of the institutional, cultural and social priorities that shaped the ways in which children interacted with the world around them. They were confined, physically and socially, to a campus, at a safe distance from the rest of the community. When they did break free, they were often put back into their place. As more distinct voices emerge in the institution's next era – the Ballarat Orphanage from 1909 onwards – so too does a better understanding of the interaction between children and the institution, and the institution and the State.

## Chapter Three: The Ballarat Orphanage and the development of a statewide network of service providers, 1909-1968

In 1909 the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum changed its name to the Ballarat Orphanage. The nineteenth century was characterised by local, hierarchical efforts to control children's and families' access to the institution, based on their perceived "respectability" and "suitability". At the dawn of the Orphanage era, a subtle change of emphasis signalled the new direction in which the institution was heading. "No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission", proclaimed the 'Jubilee Souvenir' published in 1915 to celebrate the institution's fiftieth year.<sup>1</sup>

Image 3.1: "No destitute child ever refused admission": Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee Souvenir, 1915<sup>2</sup>



The Orphanage was still a place where "as yet innocent waifs and strays" could be accommodated and "converted into useful and creditable members of society, rather than falling into

<sup>1</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, *Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee 1865-1915*, (Ballarat, 1915), 36. Cafs Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

vagrancy and crime”,<sup>3</sup> but the language used to describe the institution had changed. Addressing “destitution” was now the mission, rather than providing an alternative institutional option to those provided for “destitute” and “criminal” children, as had been the case for much of the nineteenth century, and described in Chapters One and Two above. This change came gradually in emphasis rather than substantively or suddenly in content. There was no definitive change discussed or debated at the Committee of Management. Rather, the language shifted as the times changed. The kind of purpose thought objectionable in the 1880s had now become central to the Orphanage’s identity.

This Chapter will describe this continuing shift in purpose for the Ballarat Orphanage, as its Committee of Management’s tight control over the “kinds” of children who would be allowed to enter the institution diminished. Contrary to the limited early vision of the institution's founders, thousands of State wards came to live at the Ballarat Orphanage. As will be shown, by the 1930s the Ballarat Orphanage had become an indispensable part of the State Government's approach to children's Care, rather than the entirely independent and community-run institution that the early leaders tried to maintain.

The Chapter will outline the variety of drivers for this long change, including shifting societal impressions of what the Orphanage was for, and a change in Government provision for young people in its Care. Most compelling among these factors, however, was financial. In short, the Orphanage received payment for each child that the State asked it to care for. The society-wide financial disaster of the Great Depression era in the late 1920s and 1930s had the largest impact on the way in which the institution interacted with government, shifting it from a financially independent organisation to one that relied much more substantially on State-funded child placements. Even so, the institution continued to pride and identify itself on being a local leader focussed on local issues. Community relationships were still very important, and considerable effort was put into building and strengthening local contributions and support. However, the reduction of the institution’s influence on decisions over the worthiness or otherwise of children receiving Care, and the diminished importance and relevance of the traditional “subscriber” and “governor”, led to more innovative ways of the Ballarat Orphanage engaging with, and asserting its place in its local communities.

Surviving voices from this period are much more numerous than from the earlier era, with a range of primary documents and sources produced by people who lived at the Ballarat Orphanage as children. These are used in this chapter to build a richer – though still incomplete – picture of life at the Ballarat Orphanage, to show the ways in which shifting institutional and State policy and practice affected the ways that children lived in institutional Care. The experiences of children in this era, and other eras, are also explored in more detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## Septic Tanks and Jam Jars – the growing influence of government

A tangled web of encounters with Government officials in the early 1900s exemplifies the institution's relationships with the state. Even though this chain of events started before the institution had changed its name to the Ballarat Orphanage, it typified the competing demands that emerged throughout the twentieth century, combining strategic thinking, attention to mundane details, improvisation, personal relationships, political manoeuvring, and opportunism.

This was a period of change for the institution, as it embarked on a round of infrastructure upgrades to its ageing premises. As well as the usual accreditations and approvals required from government, the institution, not surprisingly, also sought financial support from government. In February 1907 Superintendent Arthur Kenny visited Melbourne to visit the Board of Health to discuss some planning approvals.<sup>4</sup> While in Melbourne he also visited the Secretary of the Austin Hospital to inspect their septic tank. "After viewing it", wrote Kenny, "I am of the opinion that there will be no difficulty in erecting a similar one on the grounds here, and would be of great advantage".<sup>5</sup> An upgrade of the Orphanage's septic tank was clearly a major short-term priority.

In what must have been a very busy day, Kenny "also had an interview with the Inspector of Charities and Mr Muk" from the Premier's Department. Mr Muk did "a good deal of the Premier's Secretarial work", making him an important bureaucrat to be friendly with. "I told them of the alterations proposed at the orphanage and they advised to apply for a grant, it being an opportune time as the grant was to be allocated during this week."<sup>6</sup>

Here we see the serendipitous emergence of opportunity for the Orphanage, with a previously unknown funding round communicated at the last minute during a personal meeting with an influential bureaucrat. Kenny rushed back to Ballarat, and with the Committee's President, A.W. Hifer, "took action at once", putting together a funding application for £500.<sup>7</sup>

Two years after the hopeful meeting with Mr Muk, however, the septic tank had not yet been funded, let alone finished. The situation was getting desperate. Kenny expressed his frustration in uncharacteristically blunt fashion to the Orphanage's Committee of Management. "[I]t appears there is very little chance of getting any money from the Government ... seeing that they have cut the maintenance grant by £200 this year." Clearly frustrated, Kenny recommended a somewhat rash financial approach of simply going ahead and building the new septic tank without government funding. "[I]t now appears that the more economy you practice the less you get from the Government."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Superintendent's Report" (21 February, 1907). Cafs Collection.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, "Superintendent's Report" (8 April, 1909 ). Cafs Collection.

A few weeks later, by chance, a different government agency got involved in the septic saga. “The Hnble [*sic*] Geo Graham, Minister for Agriculture accompanied by [local member] the Hon R. McGregor with several agriculture Depts. Officers visited the Institution” in April 1909.<sup>9</sup> Graham was interested in the Orphanage's farms, and was engaged in ongoing strategic negotiations with the Orphanage Committee about its operation and revenue distribution.<sup>10</sup> The Minister “expressed himself highly pleased with the Institution and the improvements made since his last visit and thought it a pity the Premier and Treasurer had not seen it when in Ballarat.”<sup>11</sup> However, having being shown the state of the septic tank and the reduction of the grant, “the Minister was thoroughly sympathetic and stated that he would have pleasure in accompanying any deputation to the Treasurer and ... Cabinet.”<sup>12</sup> These are high-level strategic negotiations relating to the future business model of the Orphanage and its relationship with enterprise and government, being conducted alongside protracted negotiations over the funding of septic tanks.

The Orphanage eventually got its septic tank. Suffice it to say, however, that it proved very difficult, and that seemingly straightforward transactions with government did not always turn out to be so simple. Although this frustrating chain of events would not be entirely unfamiliar to contemporary practitioners in social services, at Cafs or elsewhere, the “septic tank” funding arrangement, and no doubt hundreds of others like it, highlights the precarious nature of the institution's relationship with government.

The above example shows the way in which institutional relationships operated, involving the adaptation of individual skills in political awareness, patience and persistence. “Wins” sometimes celebrated prematurely. Ideas carefully planted and cultivated, while the most unexpected and unpredictable outcomes result. These tensions demonstrate the unequal relationship between the nominally independent institution and the residually powerful State Government, whose arcane operations have inadvertently shaped the strategy and operation of this organisation. It is an example that applies not only to the specific time from which it comes, but also across the span of the Institution's subsequent life.

As a happier postscript to this convoluted story, the children got more than just an operational toilet system out of this interchange. “When in Ballarat”, reported Kenny”, “the Minister of Agriculture promised that Miss Mendoza (jam making expert) would be sent to the orphanage to give the girls

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<sup>9</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (22 April, 1909). Cafs Collection.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. During this visit, the President, W.M Glasson, “made the following proposal to [the Minister] in connection with the farm. That the Orphanage Committee carry on the farm under the direction of the Agriculture Dept. Take all the products and profits that may accrues [*sic*] and relieve the government of the expenses of working the farm. The pair of horses supplied by the Dept to become the property of the Orphanage. A certain portion of the land to be set a part [*sic*] each year for the experimental work under the direction of Doctor Cherry. The seed and manure of same to be provided by the government.” From Cafs Collection

<sup>11</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (22 April, 1909). Cafs Collection.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

lessons in fruit preserving and canning.”<sup>13</sup> A few weeks later, “[a]s promised by the Minister of Agriculture when visiting the institution, 2 officers, Mr Knight and Miss Mendoza of the Agriculture Dept spent 4 days giving instruction in the preserving and canning of fruit. The girls took a great interest and the instruction should be of great benefit to them.”<sup>14</sup> Let it not be said that these relationships and interactions did not bear fruit, so to speak.

### Growing dependence on the State

The septic tank example demonstrates why the Ballarat Orphanage needed to stabilise its relationships with government and secure more reliable revenue streams. An analysis of the Orphanage's revenue sources in this early period provides a snapshot of the shifting dynamics between State and institution. As indicated elsewhere, the institution received funding from a range of sources. Right up until the early decades of the twentieth century community contributions were always the largest source of revenue.<sup>15</sup> Between 1917 and 1924, 25 per cent of Ballarat Orphanage's revenue came directly from Government grants.<sup>16</sup> By 1930-33, the period straight after the Great Depression, that figure had risen to 38 per cent of revenue coming from direct grants.<sup>17</sup> This proportional increase is due partly to the significant decrease in community contributions over this period. In the period 1917-24, community contributions accounted for 30 per cent of revenue. By 1930-33 they were 21 per cent of revenue, with a particularly pronounced drop-off in local contributions in 1934.<sup>18</sup>

The most significant change, however, was the rise in revenue received for “Inmates”. This is the term used to describe payments received on behalf of individual children. In 1917 this accounted for 11 per cent of revenue.<sup>19</sup> By 1934, Payments on behalf of Inmates had increased significantly, accounting for 32 per cent of revenue.

It was not common for children who were admitted to the Orphanage “privately” – that is, those children who were not classified as State wards – to be supported financially by their families, although it was not unheard of. Those children who were classified as State wards came with a guaranteed financial payment provided by the State. Although the Ballarat Orphanage had not yet started publicly recording the number of State wards in its care during this period, the rapid rise in

<sup>13</sup>Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (6 May, 1909). Cafs Collection.

<sup>14</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent's Report” (27 May, 1909). Cafs Collection.

<sup>15</sup> All Ballarat District Orphan Asylum Annual Reports provided detailed information about funding sources. Apart from the first year, 1866, when substantial government grants were acquired to fund construction of the main building, community contributions always comfortably surpassed government contributions.

<sup>16</sup> 22 per cent from the Victorian Government, 3 per cent combined from various Local Governments. From Ballarat Orphanage Annual Reports 1917-1934. Cafs Collection.

<sup>17</sup> 35 per cent Victorian Government, 3 per cent combined from various Local Governments. From Ballarat Orphanage Annual Reports 1917-1934. Cafs Collection.

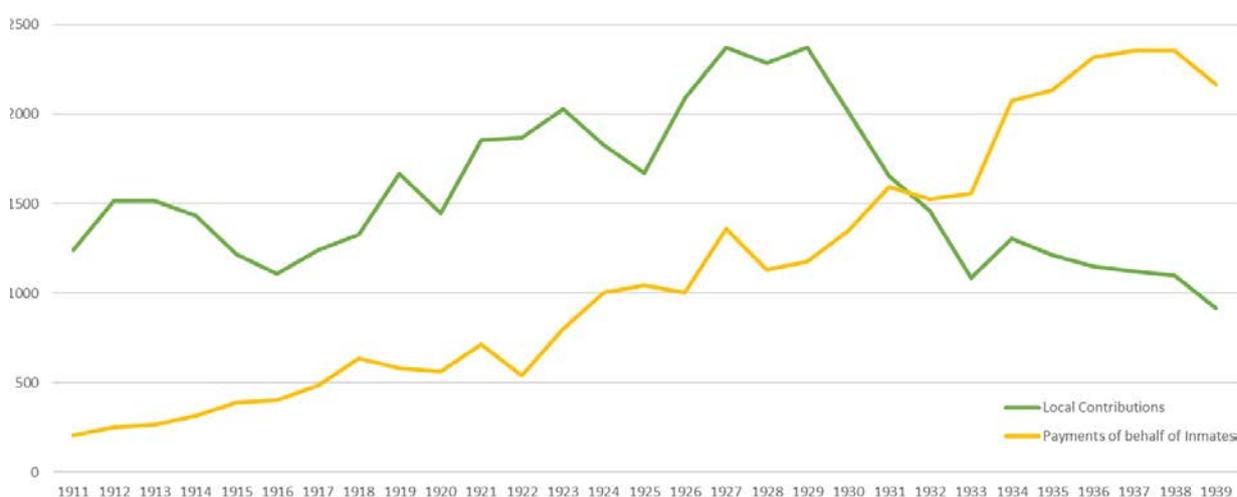
<sup>18</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, *Annual Reports, 1917-1934*. Cafs Collection.

<sup>19</sup> Based on consolidated financial information from Ballarat Orphanage Annual Reports 1917-1934. Cafs collection. Compiled by the researcher.

revenue from “Inmates” in this period can nevertheless be read as a significant increase in State wards’ admission to the institution. With the rapid rise in the number of wards came the more reliable source of income that it had been seeking. The economic difficulties that came with the Great Depression had fundamentally shifted the operation of the State’s child welfare, and with it the service and business model of the Ballarat Orphanage. The State’s reliance on institutional care increased during this time and the provision of “private” foster homes declined.<sup>20</sup>

Before the Depression, government funding was consistently below half of all regular revenue received. After the Depression, by the late 1930s, government funding for the Orphanage was consistently above half of revenue received, and it would never be below half again.<sup>21</sup>

**Chart 3.1: Ballarat Orphanage Revenue (rounded to nearest £): “Local Contributions” and “Payments on behalf of inmates”.** Source: **Ballarat Orphanage Annual Reports 1911-1939**



This was a very important moment for the institution. Due to decreasing community contributions, and increasing acceptance of State wards, the institution was now more than ever an instrument of State policy, rather than primarily a local institution enacting local priorities as it had been in the nineteenth century. Not only were its operations now funded more reliably, it was set on its path towards serving a broader range of the communities in which it operated, and towards being an organisation that worked with children and families from all walks of life, rather than the narrower range of families whom previous Committees had deemed worthy. Moreover, the state and local positions had been established that enabled the Ballarat Orphanage to participate significantly in the removal of Aboriginal children under Victoria’s Assimilation policies. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 below.

<sup>20</sup> Musgrove and Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Based on consolidated financial information from Ballarat Orphanage Annual Reports 1917-1934. Cafs collection. Compiled by the researcher.

## Influence over authority – relationships with the state

Although the State did not necessarily have the formal authority to direct independent welfare organisations such as the Ballarat Orphanage, its growing influence could be seen in various interactions, even before it took over from the local community as the institution's main funder. For example, on 14 December 1923, the Ballarat Orphanage Superintendent and Secretary, Arthur Kenny, wrote to the Victorian State Government's Charities Board, informing it of a decision that had been made by the Orphanage to participate in a child migration program.<sup>22</sup>

“Ballarat Orphanage desire to notify the ... Charities Board that, at a Special Meeting held recently a proposal was made and adopted that the necessary steps be taken to accept the responsibility of the care and control of fifty (50) Orphan children from the Home Land”.<sup>23</sup>

The letter described an arrangement that had seemingly been reached between the Ballarat Orphanage and another agency<sup>24</sup> that was organising the migration. Many of the details of this arrangement were reasonably detailed,<sup>25</sup> indicating that the Orphanage was operating with some level of advanced planning, rather than speculation. The letter was not written as a request to the State, rather as a formality, or a courtesy, to the State agency responsible for the strategic oversight of the children's welfare system in Victoria. “It is the wish of the Orphanage Committee to have the approval of your Board [the Charities Commission Board] to the proposal after which the Honorable the Treasurer will be approached with a view to following the matter up.”<sup>26</sup>

Given the tone of the Orphanage Committee's correspondence and the air of expectation it contained, and the independent manner in which it was accustomed to operating, the Charities Commission Board Secretary's reply less than a week later would have been unexpected. The Charities Board, wrote the Secretary, “feel that they should not recommend the proposal to take orphans from overseas”.<sup>27</sup> It was “regarded as a matter of politics,”<sup>28</sup> by the Charities Board. No further elaboration was provided, nor requested, at least not on the public record. No more was heard about the matter by the Charities Commission, and no children “from the Home Land” on formal Child Migrant Schemes subsequently made their new home at the Ballarat Orphanage.

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<sup>22</sup> Around 7,000 children were sent to Australia from Britain and Malta, without parents or guardians, on programs that have come to be known as “child migrant” schemes.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur Kenny to the Secretary, Charities Board, 14 December 1923, PROV 4523-P-1-52-490, Correspondence Ballarat Orphanage 11/101923 to 24/6/1934.

<sup>24</sup> The details of which agency were not included in the letter.

<sup>25</sup> “The children are to be fatherless orphans and their ages range from five to eleven years old. It is understood that all expenses connected with the transport etc will necessarily be borne by the Immigration authorities”. Letter from Ballarat Orphanage to Charities Commission, 14 December 1923, PROV 4523-P-1-52-490, 153

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Ballarat Orphanage to Charities Commission, 14 December 1923, PROV 4523-P-1-52-490, 154

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Charities Commission to Ballarat, 20 December 1923, PROV, 1923-34 4523-P-1-52-490, 154

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Charities Commission to Ballarat, 20 December 1923, PROV, 1923-34 4523-P-1-52-490, 154

This correspondence demonstrates the ambiguous relationship between the Institution and the State in the early twentieth century. Although the State did not have the authority to direct the independent institution in matters of practice and strategy, it was clearly influential. The correspondence shows the way in which the balance of authority over children's welfare institutions was shifting towards the State in this period, even as the State was at pains to respect the independence and autonomy of agencies such as the Ballarat Orphanage. Even in this rather blunt letter of refusal, the Inspector of Charities still politely and supportively outlines the independent course of action the Orphanage could notionally take. "If you submit the matter to the Honorable the Treasurer, and he endorses the project, the Board will allow me to report to the Treasurer in the most favorable terms on the high standard of the Orphanage."<sup>29</sup> It was advice that was never intended to be followed, and nor was it.

### Information, knowledge and responsibility

As has been shown, from the 1930s onwards, an increasing proportion of children entering Ballarat Orphanage were State wards, which meant that those children were the responsibility of the State of Victoria. Over and above the shifting funding relationship between State and institution, however, the State's role as a strategic overseer of the Children's Care system continued to grow. Even though they were responsible for a large proportion of the children who lived in institutional care, namely those who had been classified as "State wards", the Commission realised that it had very little awareness of, let alone authority over, the way in which these children were cared for. So in 1938 the Hospitals and Charities Commission ran its first comprehensive survey of children in institutions across Victoria. The State may have been surprised to learn through this exercise that the institutions also felt that they did not know much about the children over whom they had caring responsibilities.

In 1938 the Hospitals and Charities Commission issued a survey to all children's institutions in Victoria, asking each of them to outline the reasons why the children in their care had been admitted.<sup>30</sup> It came in the form of a blank typed-out template, mailed to the Secretary of each institution. Of the forty-one Victorian children's institutions that received forms, thirty-seven forms were returned, most handwritten, some typed. There seems to have been no compulsion on these institutions to respond to the Commission's requests, as the institutions being surveyed were all operating independently of the State government. Like the Ballarat Orphanage, they had their own histories, foundations, philosophies and connections to local communities.

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Charities Commission to Ballarat, 20 December 1923, PROV, 1923-34 4523-P-1-52-490, 154

<sup>30</sup> Hospitals and Charities Commission correspondence. "Survey of causes of admission to children's institutions", (1938) PROV 4523/P/1/48/454.

Moreover, the Commission appears to have set minimal guidance for institutions to fill out their templates, and as such the institutions applied slightly different interpretations to their respective responses. The figures gathered through the survey therefore do not provide a definitive profile of the Victorian children's Care sector. Nevertheless, the responses do provide a useful indicative snapshot of the children who stayed in the Ballarat Orphanage and other Institutions, and the prevailing relationship between these Institutions and the State.

The Ballarat Orphanage's response indicates that on 3 September 1938, there were 195 children "in residence", making it the sixth largest children's institution in Victoria.<sup>31</sup> Nearby St Joseph's Orphanage in Sebastopol housed another 150 children, all boys. No figures were returned by Nazareth House, the Catholic Orphanage for girls in Ballarat.

**Image 3.2: Ballarat Orphanage Response to Hospitals and Charities Commission, Survey of Causes of Admission, 1938.**<sup>32</sup>

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	TOTAL
Reason for admittance:	Wards of State	Committed by the Court not included in Column 2.	Admitted Temporarily	Admitted indefinitely	
(a) Both parents dead	1			16	17
(b) Father dead	3		3	8	11
(c) Mother dead	2			42	44
(d) Desertion by Father				6	6
(e) Desertion by Mother				32	32
(f) Home unsuitable					
(g) Parent in mental hospital				1	1
(h) Child abandoned				5	5
(i) Illegitimate				14	14

REMARKS: Particulars of 65 Wards of State unknown.

Of these 195 children at Ballarat Orphanage, 71, or 36 per cent, were "wards of the State". Accompanying the Ballarat Orphanage's response to the survey is a typed additional "REMARK...: Particulars of 65 Wards of State unknown".<sup>33</sup> That is to say, the Orphanage did not have any relevant

<sup>31</sup> Behind the Industrial and Preservation with 273 children; St Joseph's Foundling Hospital in Broadmeadows with 263; St Augustine's in Geelong with 260, St Vincent de Paul's Boys Orphanage in South Melbourne; and Salvation Army's Box Hill Boys Home with 207 children.

<sup>32</sup> Hospitals and Charities Commission correspondence. "Survey of causes of admission to children's institutions" (1938) PROV 4523/P/1/48/454.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

information for 65 of the 71 State wards who were living with them. The Orphanage did not know if these 65 children had living parents, let alone where they lived or who they were.

This is typical across most of the Institutions surveyed. For instance, the Geelong and Western District Protestant Orphanage's response notes: "The Children's Welfare Department gives us no particulars of *their children* except name, date of birth, and religion."<sup>34</sup> This indicates that the Institutions also had no record of where State wards had come from prior to being placed with them. The semiotics of the language used here are of particular interest – "their children", meaning the State's Children's Welfare Department.

Across all children statewide who were referred to in the surveys, nearly 31 per cent were State wards, slightly lower than at Ballarat Orphanage. However, of the six institutions accommodating around 200 children or more, approximately 44 per cent were State wards. These six Institutions accounted for 37 per cent of the total number of children covered in the survey, but between them housed nearly half (47 per cent) of the State wards. These larger institutions, it can be seen, were taking on a comparatively larger proportion of State wards compared to smaller Institutions, notwithstanding some exceptions.<sup>35</sup> As one of these larger community-based institutions, Ballarat Orphanage was a key part of the State apparatus for accommodating State wards.

Another category that was of particular interest to the Hospitals and Charities Commission in 1938 – and no doubt to each of the institutions – was the number of children who were "Paid for by parents or relatives". While fewer than one in five children covered in the survey across Victoria were financially supported by family members (17 per cent), over a quarter of children at Ballarat Orphanage had such support (25.6 per cent). This is by far the highest proportion among the larger institutions outlined above, where just over one in ten children were supported by relatives (12.9 per cent).<sup>36</sup> Details of the level of support provided to children by relatives are not available. Those children whose places at an institution were funded by neither the State nor their relatives, or other identified supporters, must therefore have been supported by alternative revenue raised through the institution – community fundraising, philanthropy and private enterprise.

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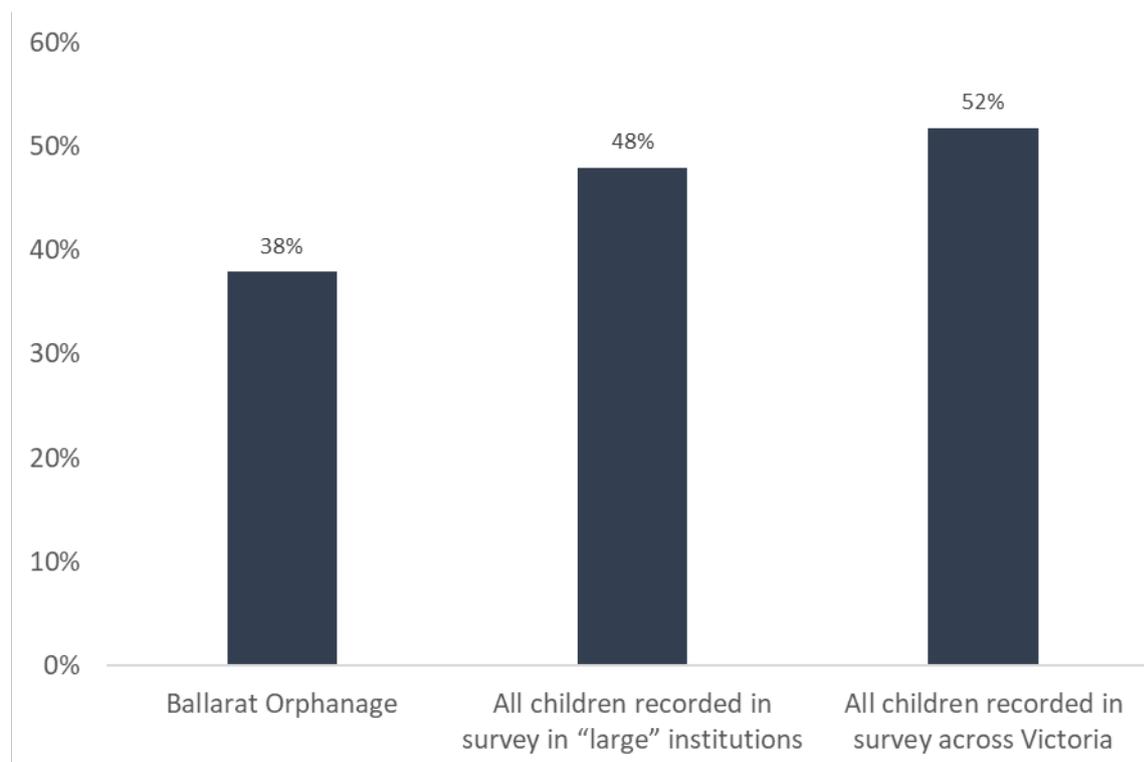
<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>35</sup> Minton Boys Home had 86 per cent "Wards of State"; St Vincent de Paul's Girls Orphanage South Melbourne had 61 per cent; Andrew Kerr Home 58 per cent, "Ruperts" Salesian School 58 per cent. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Industrial Preservation was at 19 per cent; St Vincent de Paul's at 15 per cent; and Box Hill, St Joseph's Broadmeadows and St Augustine's each at around 6 per cent. Ibid.

**Table 3.1. Summary of Hospitals and Charities Commission, Survey of Children's Institutions, 1938.**

	Total no. of children	Paid for by parents or relatives	Wards of the state	Funded by community contributions
<b>Ballarat Orphanage</b>	195	25.6%	36.4%	37.9%
<b>All children recorded in survey in "large" institutions</b>	1,437	12.9%	39.1%	48.0%
<b>All children recorded in survey across Victoria</b>	3,890	17.6%	30.6%	51.8%

**Chart 3.2: Proportion of children in non-State institutions funded by community contributions, 1938<sup>37</sup>**

In this way the Ballarat Orphanage was quite different to the other larger Institutions. Just 38 per cent of its inmates were fully funded by institutional revenue, compared to nearly half of all children in the largest six children's institutions, and more than half of all children in the network of community-based, non-State children's institutions.<sup>38</sup>

The surveys also provide further details about reasons why children entered institutions, except for most State wards, for whom information was largely unavailable as indicated above. More

<sup>37</sup> "Funded by Community Contributions" refers to children who were neither paid for by family nor by State. Based on analysis of data contained in *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

detailed aggregated information was, however, provided for the remaining 124 “inmates” at Ballarat Orphanage.

The form requested that each institution provide them with the number of children who fitted a range of pre-defined categories explaining the reason for their admission: “Both parents dead”, “Father dead”, “Mother dead”, “Desertion by Father”, “Desertion by Mother”, “Home unsuitable”, “Parent in mental hospital”, “Child abandoned”, “Illegitimate”.<sup>39</sup> Each child was required to fit into one of these categories, even though no doubt there would have been overlap and ambiguity around varying interpretations of what each term really meant.<sup>40</sup> Again, analysis of these surveys provide an indicative snapshot rather than a definitive profile.

In 1938 Ballarat Orphanage had the second highest number of orphans – that is, children who had lost both parents to death – of any institution in Victoria, with 16 (12.9 per cent of all non- State ward inmates). The only other institution to house more orphaned children was its neighbour, St Joseph's Sebastopol, with 23 (18.3 per cent). Statewide, relatively few children – 5.5 per cent – in these institutions were orphans who had lost both parents to death, at least among those who were not State wards.

A very high proportion of Ballarat Orphanage inmates (59.8 per cent, compared to 31.6 per cent statewide) were assessed to have been admitted because they did not have a mother who could look after them, either through death (33.9 per cent) or “desertion” (25.8 per cent). This was the third-highest proportion of all institutions in the state, and second only to Box Hill of the larger institutions. Proportionately fewer inmates at Ballarat Orphanage were assessed as having a father unable to look after them (11.3 per cent compared to 18.2 per cent statewide), either through death (6.5 per cent) or “desertion” (4.8 per cent).

The circumstances of children prior to their institutionalisation remained largely a mystery to the Ballarat Orphanage and its managers. As far as they were concerned, it was the State's responsibility to gather and know this information. Private admissions typically had quite detailed information available, with almost all fields completed. This was because for these children, the institution itself had gathered that information through its application forms and interviews with prospective families and children. For children who were State wards, however, the level of information available through admission entries is minimal. Progressively as the twentieth century unfolded and the proportion of private admissions became smaller, less and less information was collected in admission registers about the children who were coming to live there. By the 1950s, in

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, the distinction between “Desertion” by either mother or father, and “Illegitimate” is not further defined. Some Institutions, such as the very large Foundling Hospital in Broadmeadows, categorises 94 per cent of its inmates as “illegitimate”, possibly influenced by its focus on newborn infants. Six other institutions, by contrast, do not record a single child as “illegitimate”.

the majority of cases almost no information other than name and birthdate was officially recorded by the institution.<sup>41</sup>

The information gap ran both ways, however. Donella Jaggs was employed by the Children's Welfare Department and later the Social Welfare Department as a Charities Inspector in the 1960s. She recalls how she would visit all the children's institutions with a colleague. "[T]he two of us ... tried to work out a little system, and we would try to interview all the children ... Who were Wards [of the State]... We couldn't interview the non-wards." Because the Department had no jurisdiction over so-called "private" admissions, the Charities Inspector had no authority to talk to them. Consequently, even though there was more information available on those private admissions that was held at the institution, there was more information held centrally at the Department regarding the others. "I remember Ballarat Children's Home [and Ballarat Orphanage before it], we took, I think, two days" to conduct all the interviews, remembers Jaggs.<sup>42</sup>

## Reform and redesign

The relationship with the State continued to shift significantly through the mid-twentieth century. In 1941 the Commonwealth Government became more involved in family and child policy when it introduced Child Endowment Payments.<sup>43</sup> These were weekly payments of five shillings per child made universally and directly to mothers.<sup>44</sup> Charitable institutions were eligible to receive these payments on behalf of children in their Care,<sup>45</sup> and in 1942, "Child Endowment" started appearing in the Ballarat Orphanage's financial figures.<sup>46</sup> It proved to be a significant income source for the institution, accounting for more than 25 per cent of ordinary revenue in some years,<sup>47</sup> and contributing further to the shift in emphasis from community ownership to Government-supported operations.

Through the mid-twentieth century the State played a key role not just in the distribution of funds and regulation of standards, but in the strategic stewardship of the children's services system. In 1943, the Ballarat Orphanage started thinking seriously about service and facility re-design. In

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<sup>41</sup> See Ballarat Orphanage, "Admissions Book, vol.1". Cafs collections.

<sup>42</sup> Donella Jaggs, *Donella Jaggs Interviewed by Jill Barnard in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project*. (2011).

<sup>43</sup> *Child Endowment Act 1941* (Cth).

<sup>44</sup> See Find and Connect, "Child Endowment (1941-1976)", [findandconnect.gov.au](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au). <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/australia/FE00135>. Accessed 15 August, 2018, and Dale Daniels, "Social Security Payments for People Caring for Children, 1912-2008: A Chronology," (Canberra: Australian Parliament House, 2009). Family endowment can be regarded as a pre-cursor to what came to be known as Family Allowance in the 1970s, Basic and Additional Family Payments in the 1990s, and Family Tax Benefit Parts A and B from the 2000s.

<sup>45</sup> Children in State- and Commonwealth government-run institutions were initially excluded. Find and Connect, "Child Endowment (1941-1976)", [findandconnect.gov.au](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au). <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/australia/FE00135>. (Accessed 15 August 2018).

<sup>46</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Statement of Receipts and Payments from July 1st 1941, to June 30th, 1942", *Ballarat Orphanage Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1942).

<sup>47</sup> 26 per cent. in each of 1947-48 and 1950-51. See Annual Reports.

correspondence with the Orphanage, State Inspector of Charities C.L. McVilly responded to some early plans for the institution's redevelopment outlined by Superintendent Herbert Ludbrook.<sup>48</sup> "There is much in the detail of each of the unit plans with which I find myself in disagreement", wrote McVilly. "Dealing first with the size of the units (about 30 beds), I cannot see how such proposals fit into the general idea of developing cottages on a domestic plan."<sup>49</sup>

This shows the way in which the State was pushing institutions such as the Ballarat Orphanage towards its preferred operating model. "I much prefer what I saw at [Melbourne boys' residential Care facility] Tally-Ho recently", continued McVilly, "where the cottages hold about ten beds – in theory a large family under the control of a house-mother. A unit of 30 beds could not get back to this idea of family training, if that is intended."<sup>50</sup> This points towards an additional role for the State, in connecting thinking and ideas between different institutions, who otherwise worked relatively independently. It would take another twenty years before the Orphanage eventually got rid of its enormous dormitory-style institutions and replaced them with the smaller units that came to characterise the Ballarat Children's Home era from the late 1960s onwards.

McVilly also had some feedback about the Ballarat Orphanage's plans to consolidate the Boys' Hostel into the main Orphanage site.<sup>51</sup> The Boys' Hostel had been established in the 1920s as a transition point between the Orphanage and the broader community, where older boys would live with relative independence while they looked for employment or worked outside of the institution. It was in Victoria Street, about a kilometre from the main institution towards the city. The Inspector of Charities was not impressed by the Orphanage's plans to move it onto the Orphanage site. "I find myself in complete disagreement here because it seems to me that it would be better for the older boys and girls not to be in residence on the orphanage or Home site." This is because "grown-up boys and girls must be given some reasonable latitude to come and go as they wish ... it seems to me to be essential that some freedom is part of their preparation to handle the problems of life as they grow up ... hence my opinion that hostels should be established on a site away from the main building."<sup>52</sup> In this matter, the Inspector's recommendations had a more immediate effect, and the Hostel remained off-site.

The post-War period was an era of intense reform and innovation in children's services. In 1946 the UK's "Care of Children Committee" Report was released.<sup>53</sup> It was a very influential document

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<sup>48</sup> Though the original letter from Ludbrook has not been recovered, McVilly's response provides context for understanding Ludbrook's initial correspondence.

<sup>49</sup> McVilly, C.L., to H.C. Ludbrook, "Correspondence with Charities Board 1935-43", (17 November 1943) PROV 4523-P-1-52-490.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> The Hostel was a residential facility for older boys and young men from the Orphanage, where they lived in a separate facility, away from the Orphanage, with relative independence as they adjusted to life in the open workforce.

<sup>52</sup> M McVilly, C.L., to H.C. Ludbrook, Op.Cit.

<sup>53</sup> Myra Curtis, "Report of the Care of Children Committee," (London, 1946).

that signalled a major shift in approaches to Child Welfare, not just in the UK but also in Australia.<sup>54</sup> Commonly known as the Curtis report, after its chair, Dame Myra Curtis, it was written in response to a high profile case of neglect, abuse and death in the UK Child Welfare System. Though Victoria did not fully follow the service model laid out and subsequently adopted in the UK, it spurred on a long process of reform.

While the State could not assert power in order to align independent institutions such as Ballarat Orphanage with broader strategic directions of children's Care, it was able to influence the institutions' strategy and operations through funding and persuasion, and using its influence to shift the at times entrenched thinking of children's institutions, with informal information exchange and relationships. This meant that the State often did not have control over when and how such reforms occurred, even though it was largely funding and driving the children's service system.

Ideas were changing about the ways in which children could and should be accommodated and cared for within institutional settings, and the States were sharing these ideas, in preparation for the coming revolution. "I have ... been informed", wrote Ballarat Orphanage Superintendent Morton to the Committee in 1951, "that Mr Mayne of the Charities' Commission is at present in New South Wales gathering the very latest ideas in modern buildings".<sup>55</sup> "[O]n his return to Victoria [he] will forward for the Board's perusal, plans for the erection of the up to date Play and Hobby rooms."<sup>56</sup> Mr Mayne's report to the Board – if it ever happened – has not been recovered, but as we shall see, within a decade and a half, the ambition for "modern" practices were to extend well beyond just "Play and Hobby rooms."

This domestic version of soft power was reflected in the Ballarat Orphanage's revenue, continuing the decisive shift identified earlier in the 1930s. Overall revenue – and expenses – increased steadily and significantly from the 1940s. Most of the growth in revenue by far over this period came from government sources. The Ballarat Orphanage was dependent on the money provided by the State in order to remain viable. It was a co-dependent relationship that would define the institution's role in the local and statewide community for generations to come.

**Chart 3.3 Percentage change in revenue Sources, 1942-1953.**<sup>57</sup>

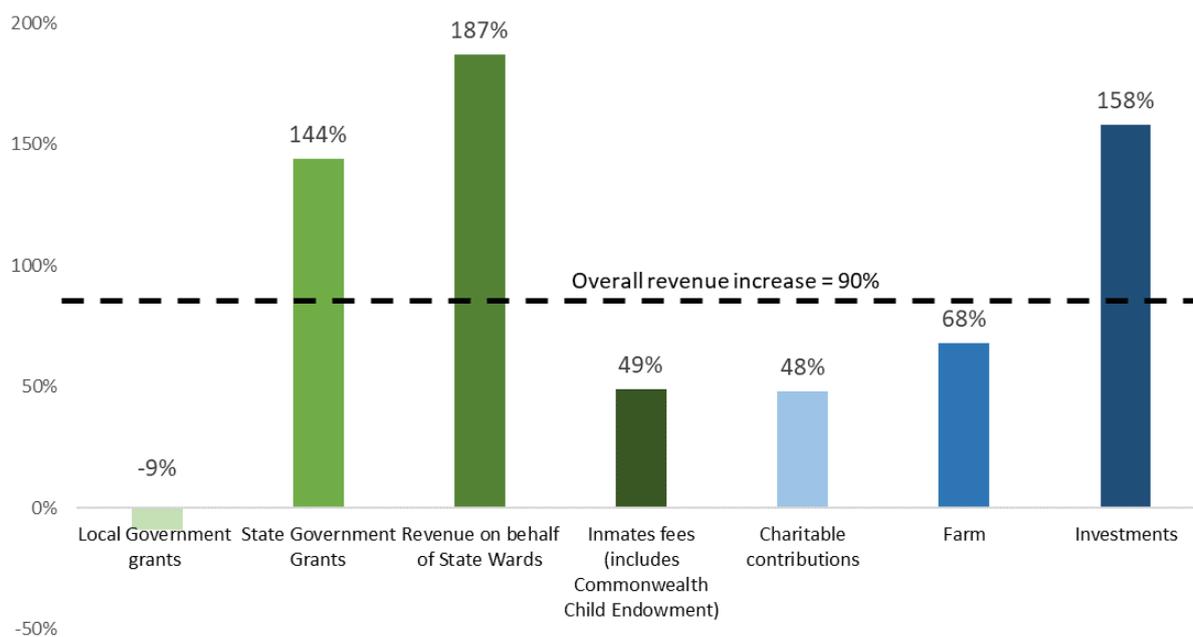
<sup>54</sup> Musgrove and Michell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?*, 4.

See also Bob Holman, "Fifty Years Ago: The Curtis and Clyde Reports," *Children & Society* 10, no. 3 (1996): 197., and Find and Connect, "Care of Children Committee (1946-1946)", [findandconnect.gov.au. https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000347](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000347). (Accessed 17 August 2018)

<sup>55</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (September-October 1951), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Based on analysis of Annual Reports, 1942-'53. Cafs Collection.



In the ten years between 1942/43 and 1952/53, overall revenue increased by 90 per cent. Revenue on behalf of State wards, however, increased by around 187 per cent, and funding from State Government increased by approximately 144 per cent. The amount of revenue received from “Charitable contributions” – meaning contributions from community members – also increased, but at a much lower rate, by around 48 per cent. The Ballarat Orphanage was now well and truly delivering government services, and being funded accordingly.

Also during this period a range of different government revenue items were introduced. As well as the Commonwealth Child Endowment payment discussed above, a regular (though modest) School Grant was paid by the Education Department. Additional “Special” grants from the Children’s Welfare Department were paid regularly from 1946 to 1950, until they were incorporated into the ongoing “Maintenance” grant from 1950 onwards, as this leapt from around £1,500 to over £3,000 annually. An additional regular “Collective Buy” government grant was introduced from 1949/’50.<sup>58</sup> Superintendent Morton outlined the increase in government support in one of his reports to the Committee of Management in 1951. “The Charities Commission Grant for this year will total £3,725, an increase of £350 on the previous year.”<sup>59</sup> This stands in contrast to Superintendent Kenny’s complaints about funding reduction and stagnation in previous generations. “The weekly maintenance payment of 12/6 for State ward children”, Morton continued, “is to be increased to 17/6 by the Children’s Welfare Department”.<sup>60</sup> So not only was the number of State ward children in Care at Ballarat Orphanage increasing, but also the amount of funding received for each.

<sup>58</sup> See Ballarat Orphanage, Annual Reports, 1942/’43-1953/’54.

<sup>59</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (September-October 1951), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

## Community contributions

Even though the proportion of community contributions had declined in relative terms over this period, this is not to suggest that there were not significant contributions made. The Ballarat Orphanage was clearly an important part of Ballarat civic identity, and continued to enjoy the esteem and support of many local people. As in the earlier period discussed in Chapters One and Two above, contributions made by individuals and businesses were listed publicly in the Annual Report, covering a cross-section of Ballarat community members.

The continuing patronage of Freemasons – who as discussed in Chapter One above were so prominent in the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum’s nineteenth century foundations - can be seen in the vast range of contributions made by individual Masonic, Australian Natives Association, and Oddfellows Lodges. In 1947/’48, for instance, twenty-six different “Lodges” made contributions to the Orphanage, from Ballarat and surrounding areas.<sup>61</sup> However, upon analysis the dwindling influence of such institutions can be seen. The proportion of “Subscription” income from Lodges not rising above three per cent in the mid-century period. As a proportion of overall revenue, in 1954 Lodge contributions accounted for just 0.0001 per cent by 1954. While the Lodges may have seen themselves as part of the story of the institution and its role in the city, as their continued diligent contributions to the Institution demonstrate, they had been well overtaken in terms of their overall contribution to the resourcing of the Orphanage.

Instead, revenue came from a variety of other sources, often the proceeds of special fundraising events organised by other entities. In 1948, for instance, came a £205 donation from the “Ballarat Sportsmen’s Effort”, £100 from the “City Bowling Club, Electric Light Tournament”, and £662 9s 3d from “The Wavie Williams Ponto, Production Co.”,<sup>62</sup> with these three eclectic contributions alone at least twenty-three times larger than the combined contribution of Lodges.

Individual bequests were also a significant source of community revenue. James Kerslake, for instance, one of the Ballarat Orphanage’s Life Governors and described as a “friend of the orphans”,<sup>63</sup> contributed significantly to the Orphanage, providing regular large donations,<sup>64</sup> and a bequest of over £10,000 upon his death in 1941. This was used to build the new Toddler’s Block, with a wing named after him. The building to this day still bears his name.

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<sup>61</sup> Including Fiery Creek Lodge, Ballarat Lodge No.20 I.O.O.F., Ballarat East A.N.A., Yarrowee Masonic Lodge, Sebastapol Masonic Lodge. Ballarat Orphanage, “List of Subscribers”, *Eighty Third Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1948), 30.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>63</sup> So marks the inscription on his headstone. Cited in Adrienne Schneider, “Follow-up and Submission re Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C164” (17 April, 2014).

<sup>64</sup> “A gift of £1,000 for the toddlers’ block, from Mr James Kerslake, was announced at a meeting of the Ballarat Orphanage... Mr Kerslake has been a generous benefactor of the orphanage in the past. In recognition of his gifts, the block will be named the Kerslake Wing.” In “£1,000 for Orphanage”, *Argus*, 15 February, 1939, 5. “James Kerslake, Life Governor, donated £20 to the Christmas Tree fund and gave each child a silver coin.” Ballarat Orphanage, *Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1939). Cited in Adrienne Schneider, “Follow-up and Submission re Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C164” (17 April, 2014).

### Private admissions and pressure to enter the State system

One family – the *Sharpes*<sup>65</sup> – was one of the few to apply for private admission in the early 1950s. Their experience demonstrates some of the ambiguity and arbitrariness of the distinction made between “private” and “State ward” admissions, and indicates the pressures that came to bear on the institution as it sought to secure and maintain reliable funding from the State. It also, of course, demonstrates the ways in which this shifted strategic and operational direction had direct effects on the ways in which children and families experienced care in this era.

In 1951 Mrs and Mr *Sharpe*, aged 44 and 50 respectively, had eleven children, ranging in age from five to 24 years old.<sup>66</sup> They had been living in Ballarat with their younger children, while some of the older children had moved into professions of their own. Earlier that year, however, the *Sharpes* had moved to another town, more than 100km away. Mrs *Sharpe* was not living at the family home, her whereabouts “unknown”,<sup>67</sup> having left in a “very nervous condition”.<sup>68</sup> Mr *Sharpe* had been “rather a victim to strong drink”, though he had reportedly made efforts to stay sober since leaving Ballarat.<sup>69</sup>

Mr *Sharpe* had resisted the idea of his children going to the Orphanage, but when he lost his farming job in December 1951 he “[came] to believe that it will be much better for the children to have better care than they can get in his home.”<sup>70</sup> With the help of Rev. A.C. Wright, whose persistent correspondence with the Orphanage Superintendent has provided the details of this story, Mr *Sharpe* obtained an application form and filled it out, requesting that five of his children, aged between five and eleven years, be admitted to the Orphanage. The requirement established in the nineteenth century, that a Governor of the institution sign a recommendation for a child to enter the Orphanage, had since been revised so that now other respectable citizens could make such recommendations, including a “Clergyman, Magistrate, Officer of Police, or Subscriber to the Institution”.<sup>71</sup> In the *Sharpes'* case, it was Rev. Wright who vouched for them.

Rev Wright made a compelling case for the children's admission, and encouraged Mr Morton to speak with Pastor F. Bunting in Ballarat, with whom the *Sharpe* family had had a relationship. “Since receiving your last letter”, Morton wrote to Rev. Wright in January 1952, “I have been in telephone conversation with Pastor Bunting and as he has not made a strong recommendation for these children

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<sup>65</sup> Information comes from the “Prescribed Uniform Ticket of Admission to Children's Homes”, otherwise referred to as an Application Form, and accompanying correspondence between Ballarat Orphanage Superintendent Morton and Rev. A.C. Wright, who is acting on behalf of the family. From Cafs Collection.

<sup>66</sup> Prescribed Uniform Ticket of Admission to Children's Homes - Ballarat Orphanage, (15 December, 1951). Cafs Collection.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. In the section titled 'Particulars of Parents – Mother', her address is listed as “At present unknown.” Cafs Collection

<sup>68</sup> Letter from Rev. A.C. Wright to Superintendent Morton (3 December, 1951). Cafs Collection.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Prescribed Uniform Ticket of Admission to Children's Homes – Ballarat Orphanage, 15 December 1951. See Section titled “Certificate of Clergyman, Magistrate, Officer of Police, or Subscriber to the Institution”

I feel that you should contact the Police and get their advice on these children being taken over by the State".<sup>72</sup>

Rev Wright was shocked. "I don't feel at all satisfied that the right conclusion has been arrived at regarding the children of the *Sharpe* family".<sup>73</sup> He put the blame at the feet of Pastor Bunting, accusing him of changing his story and harbouring the children's mother, Mrs *Sharpe*. "Please don't take too much notice of Mr Bunting's story. I have given you the story of them since coming here [to their new home away from Ballarat]. Please have the case brought before the Board of Management as [sic] your earliest convenience."<sup>74</sup>

Their case was not considered again by the Board. Rev. Wright's correspondence rated only the driest of mentions, a single line in the "Applications for Admission" section of the Board of Management Meeting Minutes, 23 January 1952: "From Rev. A.C. Wright re Sharpe family", with the usual instruction "that the admissions be left in the hands of the Chairman and the Superintendent."<sup>75</sup>

Only Morton and Bunting would know what was really discussed, and what lay behind the decision to deny the Sharpe children entry to the Orphanage. There is an interesting detail in Morton's advice to the Sharpe family that indicates the way in which admissions to the Orphanage had changed over the preceding decades. As mentioned above, Morton recommended that Rev. Wright "should contact the Police and get their advice on these children being taken over by the State."<sup>76</sup> Children who were State wards made up the vast majority of the children in the Orphanage at this point. So there was in fact nothing stopping Morton from accepting the Sharpe children to the Orphanage, whether a "strong recommendation" had been made by Pastor Bunting or not. Children came from all sorts of backgrounds and experiences and could be accommodated in the Orphanage. The requirement for children to be from families of so-called "good character" had long since lapsed. The persistence of a "character-based" assessment that private admission to the institution entailed, requiring respected (mostly) men to vouch for the "desirability" of a child's admission to the Orphanage, is an indication of the strategic and operational confusion that afflicted the Orphanage in the mid-twentieth century. They were unclear, still, about whether they were a local and regional service provider for the "deserving poor", a legacy of nineteenth-century attitudes towards Care.

Additionally, a different factor may have been behind Morton's decision to turn back the *Sharpe* children. Mr *Sharpe* had indicated in the application form he completed, in the section titled "Amount which will be contributed towards cost of maintenance whilst in the care of the Institution, and by whom", that this would be confined to "Endowment money for the five [children], and

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<sup>72</sup> Letter from Superintendent Morton to Rev. A.C. Wright, 2 January 1952. Cafs Collection

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Rev. A.C. Wright to Superintendent Morton, 5 January 1952. Cafs Collection

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Board of Management Meeting Notes" (23 January, 1952) s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Superintendent Morton to Rev. A.C. Wright, 2 January 1952. Cafs Collection.

whatever can be spared from wages; paid by myself.”<sup>77</sup> In other words, Mr Sharpe was only able to commit the bare minimum amount to his children's maintenance, being the small amount he would receive from the Commonwealth Government Child Endowment Payments, which would have been paid directly to the Orphanage in any case. For children who entered the institution as State wards, however, the Victorian Government would fund that child in the institution, on top of the endowment payment they would already be receiving. What the *Sharpes'* case shows is how uneconomical it was for the Orphanage to accept children by private application, when they could be encouraged or coerced into the State system instead. It simply did not make financial sense for the Ballarat Orphanage to accept private admissions without the promise of additional support from the family. Better to transfer the children to the State system, so the Orphanage could receive additional funding.

### More reform and redesign

In 1954 the *Children's Welfare Act* consolidated and centralised various elements of welfare legislation, including the abolition of the Department for Reformatory Schools,<sup>78</sup> and the establishment of new State facilities. 1960 would become a “landmark” year for children's services in Victoria,<sup>79</sup> with the introduction of the *Social Welfare Act* formalising a statewide system of referrals from Reception Centres to independent Children's Homes.

Throughout this period, the Ballarat Orphanage and later the Ballarat Children's Home became even more entrenched in the consolidated, more formal network of residential and transitional Homes for children that were set up by the State. New and consolidated State-run children's Residential and Reception Centres were established in the 1950s and 1960s – places such as Allambie, Baltara, Winbirra, Winlaton, and Ashdene in and around Melbourne, Warrawee in Ballarat and Miralee in Mildura – aimed at strengthening the State's ability to accommodate State wards. The State assumed responsibility for children in these facilities and through their onward journey into the Ballarat Orphanage. These facilities were to play a major role in the lives of many children of the Ballarat Orphanage and the Ballarat Children's Home to come, as most of them began their experience of institutionalisation in these places, passing through them temporarily as they eventually made their way involuntarily to Ballarat, at the direction of the State. Some of their stories are outlined below, and in Chapter Four.

Even with the State's significant investment in these facilities across Victoria, the size of the “voluntary”, “independent”, “charitable” institutions, such as Ballarat Orphanage dwarfed the State

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<sup>77</sup> Prescribed Uniform Ticket of Admission to Children's Homes - Ballarat Orphanage, (15 December, 1951). Cafs Collection.

<sup>78</sup> Children's Welfare Department and Department for Reformatory Schools, *Report of the Secretary for the Year 1955* (Melbourne: Victorian Government, 1955).

<sup>79</sup> J.D. Norgard, *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*. (Melbourne, Victorian Legislative Assembly, 1976), 17

infrastructure for children classified as State wards. In 1967 the total number of children classified as State wards in State-managed Reception Centres, Children's Homes and Group Homes was 482, compared to 2,335 State ward children in the voluntary sector, including a capacity for 200 children at Ballarat Orphanage.<sup>80</sup>

In 1963 social researcher Leonard Tierney released a report into the Victorian children's welfare system called *Children Who Need Help: A Study of Child Welfare Policy and Administration in Victoria*. Tierney had spent three years researching the state of children's institutions in Victoria, speaking with hundreds of practitioners and policy-makers, including a number from Ballarat Orphanage, during a significant time for the Victorian children's welfare system, beginning his investigation just as the Social Welfare Act took effect in 1961.

His findings, to put it mildly, were not complimentary. As a "veteran child welfare worker" remarked to Tierney during the course of his research, "there was neither meaning nor purpose in the existing child welfare programme".<sup>81</sup> His report pointed towards the need for greater professionalisation and skills development in the children's welfare sector, rather than simply providing more resources to the system as it stood. "It is commonly believed", wrote Tierney,

that, given more funds, more equipment and more personnel, most welfare problems can be overcome. This is a mistaken viewpoint. More resources are certainly needed, but ... social welfare programmes ... depend upon what may seem a curious compound of ideals, attitudes, facts, skills, beliefs and concepts of social needs all trimmed to the resources available... In addition, the programmes have grown up piecemeal under different auspices. There has been no very clear idea that together they have unity of purpose ... There has been little serious discussion at all, of problems of structure, of organization, and administration.<sup>82</sup>

Tierney emphasised the need for greater planning in the lives of children and young people in the care system. "For numbers of children, particularly those in regular contact with a responsible relative, the experience of being in an institution has had at least some positive qualities," wrote Tierney, pointing towards the varied experiences of children in Care, as discussed below. "But for the other children ... there has been a lack of conscious planning for the child's welfare. It is impossible to review their situation without feelings of dismay."<sup>83</sup>

The ambiguous nature and ill-defined scope of responsibility between the spontaneously developed network of community institutions and the increasingly reform-driven Victorian state led

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<sup>80</sup> Social Welfare Department, *Annual Report: Year ended June 30 1967*, (Melbourne, 1968) VPARL1968-69 No.4., 57

<sup>81</sup> Tierney, *Children Who Need Help: A Study of Child Welfare Policy and Administration in Victoria*, 4.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

to something of a time lag between idea and implementation. This emerges as a key characteristic of the institutional culture and practice of the organisation across its various eras.

### Growing involvement of the State in Ballarat Orphanage operations

By the 1960s the State had begun to take a more active role in the Orphanage's affairs, as demonstrated through the recruitment of a new Superintendent. Seventeen applications were received for the role in 1965, the details of whom are now kept in the Public Record Office Victoria in the form of correspondence with the Hospitals and Charities Commission.<sup>84</sup> These provide us not only with an indication of the State's increasing interest and influence over operational matters previously considered the sole domain of the Committee of Management, but also an instructive overview of the position Ballarat Orphanage occupied in the network of non-State service providers.

The average age of the seventeen applicants was around forty-one years, and all applicants were male. All but one applicant was married, with the majority also having children of their own. The role seems to have been considered an attractive one, as at least seven applicants had held senior positions or Superintendent roles at other Children's or Welfare Institutions.<sup>85</sup> All but three applicants were from outside of Ballarat and were therefore prepared to relocate in order to take up the position. Most applicants – eleven – lived in Melbourne or its outskirts; one was from Adelaide, and another from Sale.

The range of experience and qualifications of those applying for the position varied considerably. As well as those coming from senior institutional positions referred to above, previous applicants' positions included headmaster of a secondary school, "Social Welfare Worker" at the Austin Hospital, a foreman at the Country Fire Authority, and institutional and State Government administrators and public servants.<sup>86</sup>

Although all seventeen applicants were assessed as technically "Not qualified" under the regulations newly introduced by the Hospital and Charities Commission, all were still considered for the role.<sup>87</sup> Despite being a relatively prestigious and sought-after role, the qualifications of senior appointments at this stage had not caught up with the State's ambition to regulate the charity sector. In the meantime, other factors were prioritised. "War Service" was a category of assessment, marital status another, and whether any other qualifications were held, including specifically "Hospital" qualifications.

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<sup>84</sup> Hospitals and Charities Commission, "Schedule of Appointment for Position of Ballarat Orphanage" (Melbourne, 1965) PROV 4523 / P / 2 / 893.

<sup>85</sup> Including St John's Boys Hostel, Bedford Boy's Home in South Australia, Greenvale Sanitorium, Sutherland Houses, Sutherland Homes for Children, Kioman Park Farm Home for Boys, Burwood Boys' Home, and the Menzies Home in Frankston. Hospitals and Charities Commission, "Schedule of Appointment for Position of Ballarat Orphanage" (Melbourne, 1965) PROV 4523 / P / 2 / 893.

<sup>86</sup> Hospitals and Charities Commission, Op.Cit. (1965)

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

Five men were shortlisted for interview, all of whom had prior experience in the Care sector. Interviews were conducted by members of the Ballarat Orphanage Committee, and subsequently confirmed by the Hospital and Charities Commission. Their choice was Raymond Jenkins, previously Director and Secretary of the Menzies Home in Frankston,<sup>88</sup> and prior to that Assistant and Acting Superintendent of the Melbourne Orphanage. He was forty years old, married with three children, and had a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education from the University of Melbourne. His experience with the Menzies Home, which itself was undertaking a significant transformation in its model from institutionalised care to family group homes,<sup>89</sup> would have been considered favourably, and he certainly made much of it in his application. He was well-connected with an impressive range of referees who wrote generously in his favour.<sup>90</sup>

His appointment as the new Superintendent of Ballarat Orphanage was announced at the Committee of Management meeting on 25 January 1965. Jenkins went on to serve as Superintendent for nine years, until 1974, and seems to have been for the most part a forward thinking moderniser. By the time he left, Ballarat Orphanage was established in its new identity as Ballarat Children's Home, and was firmly moving towards overseeing the transition from institutional accommodation into community-based Care that would characterise its operations into the 1980s, 1990s and beyond.

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<sup>88</sup> The Menzies Home was originally for neglected boys under the age of eighteen who had been recommended by the Children's Welfare Department, until 1961 when it opened also to girls, so that family groups could be accommodated together. At around the same time the model of care changed away from an institutionalised care towards family group homes. Find and Connect. "The Menzies Home for Boys (1943-1961)" [findandconnect.gov.au. https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000397](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000397). (Accessed 8 December 2017). Find and Connect. "The Menzies Home for Children (1961-2000)" [findandconnect.gov.au/ https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000344](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000344) (Accessed 8 December 2017)

<sup>89</sup> Find and Connect. "The Menzies Home for Children (1961-2000)" [findandconnect.gov.au/ https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000344](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000344) (Accessed 8 December 2017)

<sup>90</sup> His referees included the Chairman of the Family Welfare Advisory Council and Director of Social Services at the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

## Life in the Ballarat Orphanage.

This section provides a descriptive overview of some aspects of life at the Orphanage. The shifting policy and strategic environments described above played out not only in the meeting rooms and on the correspondence desks of the organisational and system leaders and administrators, but in the dormitories, school rooms, dinner halls and sporting grounds of the children who lived at the Ballarat Orphanage. The preceding section in this chapter has explored the relationships that shaped the institutional development of the Ballarat Orphanage, between institution, government and community. This section aims to better understand the experiences that shaped and were shaped by those administrative manoeuvrings.

The children of the Ballarat Orphanage, and the adults they have become, did not and do not typically care nor take particular notice of the policies and ideas that swirled around them as they experienced institutional life. It is neither possible nor productive to systematically trace the shifting strategic environment alongside the experiences of children in Care. Not all reforms, changes and missteps had a corresponding experiential effect in the institution itself.

The aim of this section is twofold: Firstly, to ensure that the lives of children, partial as these representations may be, are situated centrally in the accompanying discussion(s) about the policy and strategic environments in which the Ballarat Orphanage developed. Secondly, by describing lives that are restricted and confined, but also subject to a range of influences and exchanges, to highlight the ways in which the notion of the “total institutionalisation”, as discussed in the Thesis’ introduction, is only partially accurate at the Ballarat Orphanage.

The descriptions that follow mostly come from the memories and recollections of former residents of the Ballarat Orphanage. The Orphanage, as shall be seen, provided security for many children who had come from insecure backgrounds. It provided the essentials for life, and it was the scene of many good times and happy memories. It also provided the institutional background on which many traumatised lives were founded. A unifying theme is most neatly summed up by former Ballarat Orphanage resident *Mavis Hatfield*.

“[W]e didn't know any different. We were fed. We were educated. We were secure. But we were institutionalised. We didn't realise there were good things about institutions, and there are bad things.”<sup>91</sup>

The Ballarat Orphanage’s stories are not only stories of confinement and constraint at 200 Victoria St, but are important parts of the broader city of Ballarat.

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<sup>91</sup> “CAFS Digital Stories”, (Ballarat, 2018). Cafs Collection.

## Entering the Ballarat Orphanage

Institutional life did not always start at the Ballarat Orphanage, and nor did it always end there. Children who were classified as State wards would typically be sent initially to a State-run “Reception Centre” while decisions were made about their next destination. From 1880 the Royal Park Depot in Parkville, Melbourne, was the main place where these children would stay. Its name changed to Turana in 1955, but its function remained much the same, as a processing centre for children entering the State system. It also had an overt juvenile justice function, providing an introduction to institutional life that resembled an introduction to the culture of criminalisation. From 1961 Allambie Reception Centre opened in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs, to relieve overcrowding at Turana.<sup>92</sup> Many of the children at Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage, and Ballarat Children's Home came via one of these institutions.

Former Ballarat Orphanage resident Marge Crawford has only the faintest memory of being at Royal Park, before her life at Ballarat Orphanage began. “We were separated... I can remember seeing [my brothers] through a big wire fence... I can see [them] on the other side. I had no other memory of Royal Park.”<sup>93</sup> Though Marge has no distinct memory of day-to-day life there, the stark symbols of criminalisation – separation from family, big wire fences – have stuck.

Phyllis Cremona and her siblings were also introduced to institutional life via the criminal justice system. They were removed from their parents in 1960 and taken to Turana where they stayed for two months before being relocated to Ballarat. Her mother had been experiencing domestic violence at the hands of her husband. As Phyllis notes, “the police were able to take us from the court house and drive us to Melbourne but not able to protect my mother from the unrelenting domestic violence she was subjected to.”<sup>94</sup>

In 1948, before coming to Ballarat Orphanage, Murray Harrison and his sisters were at Turana for about a month.

They take my sisters to what was said to be the good side and they take me to where the juvenile delinquents were. Now I don't know if they thought I was a juvenile delinquent or what but they just took me in and they got me in a little

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<sup>92</sup> Allambie Reception Centre (1961-1990), Find & Connect. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000152>. Accessed 1 February 2019.

<sup>93</sup> Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project*. (2011).at 29.35.

<sup>94</sup> Phyllis Cremona, “Submission to the Inquiry into Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations”, Family and Community Development Committee, (2012). [https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/commalanittees/fcdc/inquiries/57th/Child\\_Abuse\\_Inquiry/Submissions/Phyllis\\_Cremona.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/commalanittees/fcdc/inquiries/57th/Child_Abuse_Inquiry/Submissions/Phyllis_Cremona.pdf). Accessed 22 October 2019.

room ... with a very small high window and it's dark. Ten year old boy. ... they slammed the door and tripped the lock.<sup>95</sup>

Murray and his sisters had been removed the previous day from their family by court order. His introduction to institutional life resembled a form of child imprisonment and criminalisation. When they were transferred to the Ballarat Orphanage a few weeks later, he could recognise the difference. Compared to life at Turana, Murray could see that Ballarat Orphanage “was the beginning of something good”.<sup>96</sup> Murray and his family’s experiences are described in Chapter Five about Stolen Generations and Assimilation.

Hans Fumberger’s experience of first arriving at the Ballarat Orphanage was quite different. He had been at the Minton Boys' Home in Frankston, arriving in 1937. He remembers being visited there by Prime Minister Robert Menzies’ father. While there Hans and his brothers had read books about orphanages, such as Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, so when they were transferred to Ballarat Orphanage and saw the enormous sign on the building “BALLARAT ORPHAN ASYLUM 1865 ... the thought of having to reside in an orphanage initially put terror into them.”<sup>97</sup> The contrasting experiences of institutional life before being transferred to the Ballarat Orphanage perhaps affected how they initially experienced it. Hans experienced it as dark and “terrifying”. Murray as “a relief”.

### Fond memories

Upon entering the Ballarat Orphanage, children mostly found their basic needs met, particularly compared to the difficult environments many of them had come from. In contrast to his initial feelings of dread, by the account of Hans Fumberger, “life in the [Ballarat] Orphanage was a piece of cake... There was a bed, regular food, even if it was bread and dripping quite regularly, plenty of kids to play with and no restriction on where to play.”<sup>98</sup>

“The most important thing”, believes Kennedy Edwards, “when I first got there we got to have our own bed. I had me own bed, I had sheets, and I had three meals a day.”<sup>99</sup>

*Fred Granger* has an overwhelming gratitude for the Ballarat Orphanage. “They treated me well”, he says. “It [the Orphanage] done everything for me. We had a roof over our head, three meals a day, warm clothes, cool clothes you know in the summertime. I can't say anything against it.”<sup>100</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Murray Harrison, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations' Testimonies” (Reverb Films, 2009). <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/murray-harrison.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Hans Fumberger, Unpublished “Life Story”, c.2005, 2. Mr Fumberger voluntarily sent a copy of his own life story to former Ballarat Orphanage resident, Frank Golding in about 2005, following the publication of Frank’s memoir, *An Orphan’s Escape*.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Kennedy Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations' Testimonies”, 2009, transcript, Reverb Films. <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/kennedy-edwards.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

<sup>100</sup> “CAFS Digital Stories” (Ballarat, 2018). Cafs Collection.

As Joanna Penglase pointed out in her study of life in Children's Homes and Orphanages, three meals a day and a roof overhead may be the least that can be expected of children's institutions like the Ballarat Children's Home and Ballarat Orphanage, but their importance obviously cannot be underestimated.<sup>101</sup> Even so, food was a divisive topic. At an Ex-Resident Reunion in 2018, *Adrian Peters* recalled that when he would go out to the Tech School, "some of the kids would be waiting there to have the Orphanage sandwiches. They loved the Orphanage sandwiches!" *Adrian* was interrupted at this point by a woman, off-camera. "Well we used to make them!"<sup>102</sup>

Mavis Crawford, remembers her sister Marge, "was always really thin." Not because she was not fed properly, "she was really healthy and she was strong and that's just the way she was." The Orphanage staff "used to try to fatten her up a bit, and she was supposed to have malt every day." Mavis, however, would not eat it, even though she loved malt. So her sister "used to eat it so she wouldn't get into trouble".<sup>103</sup> When asked whether she herself got enough food at the Orphanage, Marge recalls that she would "go down to the potato paddock and pinch potatoes, and sit in the potato paddock and eat a [raw] potato ... You don't do that if you're not hungry. You know."<sup>104</sup>

Jo Frances, who was at the Orphanage in the 1940s, lived at several institutions around Victoria, including the Ballarat Orphanage, which in contrast to the others she found to be a "normally-run, free sort of institution", where she "had a wonderful time." Jo recalled to the *Ballarat Courier* in later years that the Ballarat Orphanage was a "lovely and peaceful" from which she "has many fond memories." In particular she remembers going to the impromptu theatre set up in the Gymnasium on Saturday nights where she would drink lemonade in bottles bought with pocket money from the mil bar across the road. She remembers surreptitiously exploring the stormwater drains around the city, which she and her friends would follow to "go into town and straight back again."<sup>105</sup>

Camaraderie and unity are commonly reported among those who grew up in the institution. "We had all the kids to play with", remembers Nora Walters. "They were all our brothers and sisters."<sup>106</sup>

For *Joseph Ashton* "it was just like a home". In fact, for him, "it was better than a home ... you had people."<sup>107</sup> *Joseph* also provides some insight into the way in which family relationships could

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<sup>101</sup> Penglase, *Orphans of the Living : Growing up in Care in Twentieth-Century Australia*.

<sup>102</sup> "Digital Stories" (Ballarat, 2018), Cafs Collection.

<sup>103</sup> *Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording].* Session 2, at 40:40.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Jo Frances, quoted in Erin Williams, "From hands wiped clean to clean new start at Ballarat Orphanage", *Ballarat Courier*, 10 April, 2009. <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/533891/from-hands-wiped-clean-to-clean-new-start-at-ballarat-orphanage/>. Accessed 27 September 2019.

<sup>106</sup> Nora Walters in Richard Frankland, "Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations," (Melbourne: Connecting Home, 2010), 13.03.

<sup>107</sup> "Digital Stories" (Ballarat, 2018). Cafs Collection.

operate in an institution like the Orphanage. “[A] brother and sister doesn't mean much to you when you're in a place like that, because there are so many other friends, and you put most of your attention on them instead of your brother. And although I had a brother, he wasn't a brother to me until we left the Orphanage.”<sup>108</sup>

For *Joseph* and many others, the Orphanage became like a family. Billy Price became friends with a fourteen-year-old girl who would teach him at Sunday School on Sunday afternoons, when he was just a small boy. She “lived just around the back of the church, and I would pop down there to see [her and her family], and then we'd have to run home, to make sure we'd get home with all the other mob.” Billy recalls that this girl “took a fancy to me, and she wanted to take me on her knee and the teacher said 'well if you do that, you're responsible for him'.” While it is not clear how much responsibility she took for Billy, the relationship has held firm, “and it's been going on now for 75 years, 76 years”. Billy still sees her now: “She's 93 years of age, and still going reasonably strong ... we've kept up with her.”<sup>109</sup>

When Kennedy Edwards arrived at the Ballarat Orphanage, it opened him up to new relationships. “The best thing about Ballarat was later on everybody knew me,” he remembers. “[T]here was a couple of girls who wanted to be hanging around me all the time ... and I preferred their company than the boys. .... And those four girls were my friends... and you know, I didn't need anyone else.”<sup>110</sup>

In the mid-twentieth century the Ballarat Orphanage Ladies' Auxiliary would regularly organise parties and gatherings for mass celebration of children's birthdays. In 1958, for instance, “[o]n Sunday February 16th a very enjoyable birthday party was arranged for the 31 children whose Birthdays fell during the months of January and February.”<sup>111</sup> This was repeated regularly through the year, sometimes held at individual Ladies' Auxiliary members' houses.<sup>112</sup>

## Holidays

Holidays were keenly anticipated. Most years<sup>113</sup> children would go together to the seaside property owned by the Orphanage at Queenscliff, about 100km away near Geelong. Though exact arrangements varied from year to year, the older children would usually travel by train<sup>114</sup> from Ballarat

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Billy Price, Op.Cit. at 4.13. Cafs Collection.

<sup>110</sup> Kennedy Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations' Testimonies” (Reverb Films, 2009). <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/kennedy-edwards.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

<sup>111</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report”, (November 1957-February 1958), s.1 v.7. Cafs Collection.

<sup>112</sup> See for example Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (July-August 1958) s.1 v.9. “Members of the Ladies Auxiliary held the Birthday Tea for the children on Sunday the 17th inst.” Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report”, (August-September 1958), s.1 v.9. “This month the children's Birthday Party was given by the Ladies Auxiliary at the home of Mrs P.B. Sullivan.” Cafs Collection.

<sup>113</sup> Holidays were cancelled in 1937 on advice of the medical officer. Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Meeting”, (9 November 1937), s.1 v.6. Cafs Collection.

<sup>114</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Meeting”, (10 November, 1942), s.1, v.6. Cafs Collection.

in late December and return in early-to-mid January, followed by the children from the Toddlers Block in later January.<sup>115</sup>

There had been annual day trips and excursions to Queenscliffe going back to at least 1900,<sup>116</sup> though they often had more of a focus on fundraising.<sup>117</sup> In 1920 the Ballarat Orphanage purchased a property in Queenscliffe, and many of the children would go there annually on holiday. Annual holidays to Queenscliffe took place until the Queenscliffe property was sold in 1976.

“Oh we, yeah, we always loved Queenscliffe”,<sup>118</sup> remembers Marge Crawford. Queenscliffe, or as Frank Golding describes it, “parole in paradise”,<sup>119</sup> held cherished memories for many children.

Lorraine Rodgers recollects, “[t]here were times when I remember, some good times at the Orphanage, like going to Queenscliffe for our holidays”, and a trip to the Melbourne Olympics, but “to be honest that is all I can remember of the good things.”<sup>120</sup> *Mavis Hatfield* also recalls fondly the “good time” she would have in Queenscliffe “for a few weeks of the year”, getting “sunburnt out of our brains” on the beach.<sup>121</sup>

Bob Golding remembers that things were a lot more lenient on holidays at Queenscliffe, with fishing on the front beach, and trips out with “the fishermen” and barracuda to share with his friends.<sup>122</sup> When Marge Crawford was asked whether it was “a different life at Queenscliffe from what Ballarat was?”, she replies “Oh completely!” They had more freedom to move around, got away with sneaking out at night, spent endless hours at the beach, and most importantly the children’s endless task of keeping the Orphanage building up to a polished standard ceased. As Marge exclaimed, “the work, the workload’s different!” On holidays they “haven’t got that big building to do”. They still “would’ve had to do dishes and all that sort of thing, and floors would’ve ... had to be swept and mopped, but they wouldn’t have been polished. Yeah it was good.”<sup>123</sup>

Annual trips to Queenscliff were an opportunity for the children to feel like they were not institutionalised – or less institutionalised – for a while at least. Frank Golding emphasises that the

<sup>115</sup> See Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Meeting” (27 January, 1960). S,1 v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>116</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (22 February, 1900). No. 681. Cafs Collection. “The children’s picnic to Queenscliff on Thursday passed off very successfully”.

<sup>117</sup> “The excursion to Queenscliff took place last Friday and was successful in every way ... The gross profit amounted to £27.18.9 but after paying for the children’s attendance and 2 complimentary tickets to see Major Brough and £4.11.6 for advertising, the nett profit is brought down to £14.9.3”. Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Superintendent’s Report” (7 February, 1907). Cafs Collection.

<sup>118</sup> *Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.at 4:49.

<sup>119</sup> Frank Golding, *An Orphan’s Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood* (Melbourne: Lothian Books, 2005), 85.

<sup>120</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, “Submission 103”, *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*. 2

<sup>121</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018), at 4:00. Cafs Collection

<sup>122</sup> Bob Golding, *Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project*. (National Library of Australia, 2011).transcript p.72.

<sup>123</sup> *Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]* at 6:00.

clothes they wore on holiday – “runners, singlets and shorts, not at all like the daggy outfit the institution made us wear in Ballarat”, helped them feel like “normal kids”. That they got to make for themselves what might seem like “trifling choices” to outsiders – which end of the bed to sleep at for instance – “meant a lot to us.”<sup>124</sup> The Queenscliff property was also used regularly for children recovering from illness,<sup>125</sup> and in smaller groups for shorter holidays and excursions through the year.

Others would spend holidays with relatives or other families, or in host families. This became more frequent in the later period of the Ballarat Orphanage and leading in to the Ballarat Children’s Home era, as family reunification became more common. In such cases children would spend holidays with parent/s “with a view to home release”.<sup>126</sup> In the summer of 1965/’66 for instance, twenty-two children went to Queenscliff, twenty-nine children went to families for holidays, and 103 children went to holiday host families.

### Sport, Leisure and Recreation

Sport, at the Ballarat Orphanage as elsewhere in Australia, was an important part of daily life for the children. “We played a lot of sport”, remembers *Camille March*. “There was a lot of sport.”<sup>127</sup> *Camille’s* memory of life in the Ballarat Orphanage in the 1940s and 1950s vividly recalls the importance of sport in the daily life of the children who lived there.

Bob Golding, who lived at the Ballarat Orphanage in the 1940s, remembers the rough conditions in which the children would play. ““Get them bloody shoes off!””, the Orphanage staff would yell as the children kicked a ball around. “You know, because ... you’d ... wear your boots out ... with hobnails, on the gravel... You’d have to take them off and you’d be lucky somebody didn’t pinch your socks”.<sup>128</sup>

The institution usually had good sporting facilities, including a football and cricket oval down near the back paddocks, and tennis and basketball courts.<sup>129</sup> Team sports were a specialty at the Orphanage, with a ready supply of participants not just on the field, but on the sidelines too. “The whole of the Orphanage population would line the boundary line confronting visiting players with a rectangle of faces two-deep, cheering the home team’s every advance and greeting the opponents’ good play with stolid silence”.<sup>130</sup> It was an intimidating environment for the visitors.

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<sup>124</sup> Golding, *An Orphan’s Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 87.

<sup>125</sup> See for instance Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (9 August, 1921) s.1, v.3; (14 May, 1940), s.1 v.6; (29 January, 1964), s.1 v.10. Cafs Collection.

<sup>126</sup> Ballarat Orphanage Committee of Management (26 January, 1967), s.1 v.11. Cafs Collection.

<sup>127</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018). Cafs Collection.

<sup>128</sup> *Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>129</sup> Eunice Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2000), Sound Recording and Transcript.at 44:30.

<sup>130</sup> Golding, *An Orphan’s Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 89.

“If you were sporty, you were encouraged to play sport”, continues *Camille*. “We’d play basketball, we’d play softball, and because we all lived together and trained together, we were all very good. We had wonderful teams, you know. That was marvellous.”<sup>131</sup>

Many of the children would represent the Orphanage, or the Orphanage school. Teams in a range of different sports formed together under the banner of the “Orphanage Sports Club”, which competed in local competitions from 1951 onwards. In 1962, by way of example, the Ballarat Orphanage Sports Club fielded teams in basketball (as netball was then known), softball, cricket, Australian football, and tennis. It was resourced by community members who came together to “finance the various Sports, provide equipment, and also Social activity for the boys and girls of the Club”,<sup>132</sup> helping out with coaching, administration, scoring, and other logistical assistance.

Former Orphanage girl Eunice Wright remembers that “we used to go out [to play against] the local teams. We had the Ballarat Orphanage team and then we’d have to go out and play. Say, Redan or someone like that, or Golden Point.”<sup>133</sup> Asked if that provided opportunities to meet children from other parts of Ballarat, Eunice remembers that “no, [we] just went and played and, yeah, come home.”<sup>134</sup> Even so, sport provided happy memories. “We won the A-grade softball, and I think we won the basketball too. So we were all pretty good, the kids at the [Orphanage].”<sup>135</sup>

Boxing, along with wrestling, provided an outlet for some of the boys. “[S]crapping was a daily affair anyway”, explains Frank Golding, “and the sport legitimised it.”<sup>136</sup> In the 1940s, boxing lessons were taught by Gus Henderson, a local blacksmith, at the Orphanage’s own gym, and sometimes at the YMCA gym in Camp St and Curnoe’s Gym in Drummond Street.<sup>137</sup> “Two or three times a year the gym work heated up as news of a forthcoming tournament came through”,<sup>138</sup> and Ballarat Orphanage boys would often take out prizes.<sup>139</sup> The famous Australian boxer Bobby Bath, who was Ballarat’s first Olympian in 1956,<sup>140</sup> recalled that his toughest fights growing up were against Orphanage boys.<sup>141</sup>

The Orphanage teams gave the institution an identity. “[Sport] was a great leveller”, wrote Frank Golding. “It gave us the chance to show we were as good as the next person, if not better.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018). Cafs Collection. “But we all worked like dogs”, continues *Camille*, showing the ways in which sport could be seen as a release from the back-breaking drudgery of life and work at the institution.

<sup>132</sup> Ballarat Orphanage Sports Club, *Annual Report* (1962), 3. Cafs Collection.

<sup>133</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*.at 44:30.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Golding, *An Orphan’s Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 90.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (October–November, 1951), s.1 v.8. Cafs Collection. “The YMCA held a very successful Boxing Tournament last Friday evening and three of our boys were the recipients of Trophy Orders for their success.”

<sup>140</sup> Margaret Burin, “Ballarat’s first Olympian: the fight for a 1956 blazer”, ABC Ballarat, 8 August, 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2012/08/08/3562900.htm>. Accessed 14 November 2018.

<sup>141</sup> *Ballarat News*, 11 October, 1995, 38. Cited in Golding, *An Orphan’s Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 91.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

Orphanage teams won many premierships,<sup>143</sup> and players from the Orphanage won league-wide Best and Fairest awards<sup>144</sup>, and were often selected for representative honours.<sup>145</sup> In 1954, for instance, the entire Ballarat Orphanage basketball team (what would now be called its netball team) was selected to represent Ballarat against Bendigo.<sup>146</sup>

Coaching and leadership would often come from volunteers. Eunice Wright remembers their softball coach: “This bloke that used to be in the orphanage himself, he used to coach us.”<sup>147</sup> In 1952, many of the girls at the Orphanage banded together, with the assistance of some orphanage staff,<sup>148</sup> to form “the Girls Club”.<sup>149</sup> It started as a Netball (Basketball) team, then a hockey team, and then eventually came to be known as simply the 'Girls Club', which covered all sports and other activities. “The Girls' Club continues to be a success”, wrote the Orphanage's Matron in 1952, the institution's most senior female staff member. “The Basket Ball team were runners up in the Premiership and a Hockey team has been formed”.<sup>150</sup> The Girls Club would hold events to raise money for sporting equipment and other costs associated with their competitions.<sup>151</sup>

The Orphanage received some famous sporting visitors, including the VFL's leading goal kicker, John Coleman, and some of his Essendon Football Club teammates, in 1952.<sup>152</sup> Orphanage football teams would regularly visit Melbourne as the guests of VFL teams. In 1955 for instance, the “Collingwood Football Club ... invited the Orphanage Football Team to be their guests at the match in Melbourne<sup>153</sup>”. On this instance the Ballarat Football Club arranged to provide cars to transport the

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<sup>143</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (August-September, 1951), s.1 v.8. “Since last meeting, the School teams had won the A grade Basketball and Football premierships” Cafs Collection. Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report”, (July-August, 1950), s.1 v.8. “Orphanage won a double in the State Schools' football and basketball competitions yesterday. In A grade the girls won the basketball and the boys the football, the latter beating Humffray Street in the grand final.” Cafs Collection. Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report”, (August-September, 1951), s.1 v.8. “Since last meeting, the School teams had won the A grade Basketball and Football premierships.” Cafs Collection.

<sup>144</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (July-August, 1954), s.1 v.8. Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (August-September, 1955), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

Ballarat Children's Home, “Committee of Management Notes” (22 October, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>145</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (June-July, 1950), s.1, v. Vol.1 p.16. Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (April-May, 1960), s.1, v.9.

<sup>146</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (July-August, 1954), s.1, v.8. “The Ballarat Orphanage State School Basketball Team has been selected to represent Ballarat against Bendigo on Wednesday next.”

<sup>147</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*.at 44:50.

<sup>148</sup> “Miss Sealey and Miss Holderhead, members of staff, hold executive positions and will look after the girls' interests”. Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (March-April, 1952) s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Matron's Report” (July-August, 1952), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>151</sup> “A successful social evening was held at the Home for the Basket Ball Team and Mrs Weir, Nurse Conn's Aunt held an afternoon at her home and raised the sum of pounds 13 for the Girls' Club.” Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report”, (August-September, 1955), s.1, v.9. “The Orphanage Girls Sports Club held a social evening at the Home on the 12th inst and Mr S.J. Weir screened a moving film of his trip to Japan.” Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (September-October 1955) s.1v.9. “The Girls Sports Club held a social evening in the concert hall on the 27th inst to raise funds to purchase equipment for the softball team.”

<sup>152</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (June-July, 1952), s.1, v.8, “A number of Essendon Footballers paid a visit to the Home and John Coleman addressed the boys.”

<sup>153</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent's Report” (July-August, 1955), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

boys to Melbourne.<sup>154</sup> In 1956<sup>155</sup> and 1957<sup>156</sup> they were again hosted by Collingwood, in 1956 playing a game in the morning at Mentone against the “Mighty Midgets”. Other football clubs such as North Melbourne, St Kilda and Melbourne would also host Orphanage teams in years to come.

1956 was a big year for sport in Victoria, with Melbourne hosting the Olympic Games. The Orphanage got into the spirit of it all, with fifty of the children heading in to Melbourne to see a day of the action<sup>157</sup>. The rest of the children had a rare treat, similar to that experienced by many other children of Australia, with the launch of television for the Olympics. “Through the kindness of [local benefactor] Mr Alf Kerr, all the children were privileged to watch per the medium of T.V. the Opening of the Olympic games in Melbourne” reported the Superintendent. “The children were thrilled with this unique experience and marvelled at the wonderful reception of this colourful ceremony.<sup>158</sup>” Swedish rowers, staying in Ballarat to compete in the Olympic rowing competitions being held on Lake Wendouree, visited the Orphanage, and their coach Mr Erickson “gave an interesting talk about his country and invited questions from the children.<sup>159</sup>” Australian runner John Landy visited the Orphanage and gave “an interesting talk” for the children,<sup>160</sup> just a month before he was to become a legend of Australian athletics at the 1956 Olympics.

## Health and services

Unsurprisingly, there were many illnesses, scraps and scrapes at the Ballarat Orphanage, requiring treatment and care. In the Superintendent’s Reports children’s health and treatment incidents were mentioned a total of 695 times between 1919 and 1968, or an average of about fourteen reported incidents a year.<sup>161</sup> These reported incidents ranged from “6 children with heavy colds [and] 3 with minor virus infections”,<sup>162</sup> and broken fingers while playing football,<sup>163</sup> to hospitalisations for appendicitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy.<sup>164</sup> In more serious cases there were outbreaks and epidemics, including 75 cases of influenza in November 1951;<sup>165</sup> and a “slight epidemic of measles” in August and September 1942.<sup>166</sup> During the 1937 “epidemic of Infantile Paralysis”,

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid..

<sup>155</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (July-August, 1956), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>156</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (July-August, 1957), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>157</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (September-October, 1956), s.1 v.9. “An anonymous donor has forwarded through the Town Clerk a 35 pound donation towards the cost of the children’s visit on the 30th November to the Olympic Games. I have been told that the bus will be all right and I have forwarded application for same. At present we are discussing ways and means of decorating the Institution for the Olympics.”

<sup>158</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report”, (October-November, 1956), s.1 v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. “John Landy visited the Home on the 18th inst and gave an interesting talk about the Olympic Games.”

<sup>161</sup> From analysis of Ballarat Orphanage Board Reports 1919-1983,

<sup>162</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (30 August, 1965), s.1 v.11. Cafs Collections.

<sup>163</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (24 May, 1967), s. 1, v.11. Cafs Collections.

<sup>164</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (12 September, 1922), s.1 v.3. Cafs Collection.

<sup>165</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (27 November, 1951), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collections.

<sup>166</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (8 September, 1942), s.1 v.6. Cafs Collections.

otherwise known as polio, that afflicted many parts of Australia,<sup>167</sup> “[i]t was decided that ... no visitors be admitted and no children to go out.”<sup>168</sup> No cases of polio were reported in the Orphanage at this time.

Regular medical and dental inspections were carried out at the Ballarat Orphanage. By the 1950s these were funded by the State, rather than by the institution or on a *pro bono* basis as had been delivered previously. In 1951, during the lingering influenza epidemic noted above, and just before an “epidemic of scabies”, Dr Richardson was appointed as “Departmental Medical Officer for State ward children”. Similarly, “Departmental Dentists” were assigned to the Orphanage.<sup>169</sup> Even though the medical officers were funded and appointed by the State to treat State wards, they would also treat other children who were not State wards.<sup>170</sup>

## Work

Children in the Ballarat Orphanage were expected to work. In its residents the institution had a ready supply of labour that underpinned its business and service models. “After school we were lined up again to be sent to work, in groups of three or four,” explains Frank Golding, recalling his time at the Orphanage as a boy in the 1940s.

There was a glut of cheap labour. Many girls stayed on after reaching Grade Eight to do domestic labour at the Orphanage. Others were sent to private homes as servants. By contrast boys were farmed out, literally.<sup>171</sup>

Memories and experiences of work at the Orphanage have provided some of the most vivid and lasting impressions on those who grew up there. Most, if not all, children performed work for the Orphanage, boys often in the farm and other agricultural functions, and girls often doing what would be characterised as “domestic” services. There were three main reasons for this emphasis on work: to provide vocational skills and pathways to prepare children for leaving the institution as shown below; to provide cheap or free labour to keep the institution's operational costs down; and as a form of discipline and punishment.

In 1915, children could stay at the Ballarat Orphanage until they reached the age of fifteen. At this point, “they are apprenticed out by the committee until they reach the age of 18.”<sup>172</sup> The “apprenticed” children were paid at set rates, per week: “6s 6d, 7s 6d. And 10 s per week for boys, and 5s 6d. And 7s 6d. In the meantime though, the children worked for their keep, and not much else.

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<sup>167</sup> Joan McMeeken, “Remembering Australia's Polio Scourge,” <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/remembering-australia-s-polio-scourge>.

<sup>168</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (10 August, 1937), s.1 v.6. Cafs Collections.

<sup>169</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (27 November, 1951), s.1, v. 8. Cafs Collections.

<sup>170</sup> See for instance Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Notes” (25 November, 1952), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collections.

<sup>171</sup> Golding, *An Orphan's Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 79.

<sup>172</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, *Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee 1865-1915*, (Ballarat, 1915), 36. Cafs Collection.

“Our first job at the Orphanage was picking up cow dung in the top paddock,” recalls Frank. “Rain, hail or shine we were on the job. With our bare hands we threw the pickings on a sheet of iron pulled along by a boy with a hatband rope around his shoulders. We piled the manure under the trees to be put on the garden later on.”<sup>173</sup>

Bob Golding remembers working regularly at the Orphanage Farm when he was a resident there in the 1940s and 1950s, and how difficult it was for a small child. “I was about 12, and my exact weight was 69 pounds. I had to lift bags of pollard and bran, which weighed about 120 pounds. They were one on top of the other and you took the top one off.”<sup>174</sup> Bob also used to get sent to the Ballarat Brewery, about three kilometres from the Orphanage, “to pick up grains for the cows” at the farm. “I drove the horse and dray up there. I would see the superintendent pick up the grains and eat them when I brought them back.”<sup>175</sup>

Phyllis Cremona remembers that her brother “had to work at the farm at the Ballarat Orphanage ... He was always tired, he had to get up earlier than the others, have an early breakfast then go to work on the farm. He would come home from school, have an early tea and go back to the farm to carry out more work.” This load took its toll, naturally. “He was constantly tired, had difficulty concentrating in school and felt his education was compromised.”<sup>176</sup>

*Andrew Francis*, who was also at the Ballarat Orphanage in the 1940s, would play pranks on others, dunking his pals’ heads into the fifty gallon milk drum after offering them a forbidden drink from it.<sup>177</sup> *Andrew* was employed at the Orphanage Farm after he left the institution as a resident, so he was, as he puts it, “in there a bit longer.”<sup>178</sup>

In 1952, fourteen year-old *Ian Reed* explained in a letter to anti-assimilation activist Anna Vroland, who had formed relationships with him and other Aboriginal children, that “I get 1/- pocket money each week, and sometimes of a Saturday morning I do some gardening for a lady who lives near the orphanage and I earn up to 5/-.”<sup>179</sup> *Sandra Johnson*, who also corresponded with Anna Vroland, outlined some of the work required of her, in 1950. “I am working on toddler’s all the smaller children [are there]. ... it is very hard working on Tods we only get sixpence a week.”<sup>180</sup> As these letters

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<sup>173</sup> Golding, *An Orphan's Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 79.

<sup>174</sup> Robert Golding, in Australian Senate, Community Affairs References Committee, 11 November 2003, Children in Institutional Care, CA18  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Community\\_Affairs/Completed\\_inquiries/2004-07/inst\\_care/hearings/index](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Completed_inquiries/2004-07/inst_care/hearings/index). Accessed 9 March 2019

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Phyllis Cremona, “Submission to the Inquiry into Handling of Child Abuse” (2012).

<sup>177</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018) at 1:24. Cafs Collection.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, at 00:34

<sup>179</sup> Letter to Anna Vroland (5 April, 1952). National Library of Australia MS 3991 Folder 20.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

show, while some children received payment, either formally or informally, they did not necessarily consider it fair exchange for the work performed.

Many turned to the informal economy of barter and begging to improvise a way to self-subsistence and a level of independence. Russell, exercising a degree of independence and agency by operating outside the institutional confines of the Orphanage. Russell Middlemiss remembers swapping old collected bottles for gobstoppers at Mrs Morgan's Corner Shop in the 1930s.<sup>181</sup> Frank also remembers the tricks that some of the children deployed to gain sympathy – and money – from gullible citizens. “Some older boys used to stand outside the Orphanage in Stawell Street and ambush the drunks from the nearby Meagher's pub at closing time, in those years the infamous six o'clock swill. When the merry men came out, the waifs sobbed their hearts out... 'What's the matter little feller?'. 'I've lost a three-penny bit, mister and the boss is going to give me a hiding.' 'That'll never do. Here, put this in yer kick. Now let's see you smile.' ... If the drunks ignored or abused them, the little beggars threw stones at them”.<sup>182</sup>

Sometimes children would work outside of the Orphanage to earn money, on top of the “pocket money” provided by the institution. Frank Golding remembers that in the 1940s, “Ritchie's poultry farm at the back of the Orphanage in Eureka Street provided some casual work for a few shillings a week, big money in those days.<sup>183</sup>” What happened to that 'big money'? Frank goes on: “If we wanted to save our money we took it to the front office where Mr Petch opened an account for the summer holidays at Queenscliff. He did not enquire about the source of our income. Ask no questions, you get no lies.”<sup>184</sup> Here we can see the ways in which the staff and children participated in an informal economy based on exchange from outside the Orphanage.

### Leaving the Ballarat Orphanage

Leaving the orphanage could be a sad and distressing occasion. “A lot of people left ... when their time was up”, says *Joseph Ashton*, “and they were very sad”.<sup>185</sup> *Joseph* describes how he never really wanted to leave the Orphanage. For him, the “Ballarat Orphanage was one of the greatest places... one of the greatest places on earth.”<sup>186</sup> When he left the Orphanage, *Joseph* went to Queenscliffe and stayed as a private boarder at the Orphanage's Holiday Home, while working at a local shop.<sup>187</sup> For *Joseph*, Queenscliffe with its Orphanage connections offered security and a way of life that was familiar.

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<sup>181</sup> Russell Middlemiss, “Digital Stories”, (2015). Cafs Legacy and Research Centre Exhibition Space.

<sup>182</sup> Golding, *An Orphan's Escape : Memories of a Lost Childhood*, 81.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>185</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018). Cafs Collection.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* at 0.30.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* at 4.20.

Many people stayed at the institution for as long as they could – whether by choice or circumstance. For others, circumstance led to an abrupt end to their time at the Orphanage. In the summer of 1958-'59 for instance, *Natasha Langslow* stayed with her mother instead of accompanying most of the other children to Queenscliffe. “My mother fell ill and passed away in January 1959. So I did not get to return to Ballarat Orphanage as my father's mother came and looked after us.”<sup>188</sup>

Phyllis Cremona left the Ballarat Orphanage in 1965 after five years there, to live in Melbourne. “Mother visited on a regular basis and I went to Melbourne for holidays on a regular basis. The transition from the home to Melbourne was not traumatic for me, in fact it was welcomed.”<sup>189</sup> In this regard, however, Phyllis recognised how lucky she was. Many others in the Orphanage “had little to no contact with mainstream society” outside of the institution. The transition from a managed life to “having to now work, manage their wages, deal with banks and do their own shopping”<sup>190</sup> was difficult. Many “felt alone, isolated with no one to turn to for support”, and some “went back to the very home they had just left.”<sup>191</sup> Whether going into employment, into new families, or returning to their own families, life was difficult and unfamiliar.<sup>192</sup> “Institutionalisation”, writes Phyllis, with straightforward clarity, “has a lifelong impact on Care leavers.”<sup>193</sup>

In 1968 *Rodney Armstrong* was trying to leave the institution, but experienced difficulties in finding employment because of “fits and blackouts”. It was suggested by the Children's Home Committee of Management that a job be “created” for *Rodney* at the institution itself, that he “could be employed keeping a small vegetable garden.”<sup>194</sup> *Rodney* did indeed work at the Orphanage, switching between the garden and the kitchen, while still battling with blackouts.<sup>195</sup> After ten days in hospital, *Rodney* moved to Melbourne, into “a very good Church of England Hostel”.<sup>196</sup> *Rodney* telephoned the Superintendent, Ray Jenkins, “to say that he had had five black outs since he arrived there, but was now feeling fine, in his new abode”.<sup>197</sup>

Marge Crawford describes a similar sense of vulnerability. “We were kids. We were naive little kids. We're not like today's sixteen year olds, you know.” When the interviewer suggested that “you virtually had no preparation for life”, Marge replied, “None. Nobody did.”<sup>198</sup> After getting in trouble as a sixteen-year-old for an attempted escape from the institution, and being punished by doing extra

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<sup>188</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018). Cafs Collection.

<sup>189</sup> Phyllis Cremona, “Submission to the Inquiry into Handling of Child Abuse”, 2.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (24 July, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>195</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (August, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>196</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (25 September, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Crawford, *Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.10.00.

work in the Toddler's Block, Marge remembers being discouraged from returning to school, but instead promised a job in Melbourne: "So that's what I opted for... I went to a Hostel in Middle Brighton," with "about twenty teenagers."<sup>199</sup> Marge got a job in insurance, but had dreamed of being a teacher. Asked if she was bothered that she had not had that opportunity, she said, "It does... but it wasn't meant to be I suppose. It's pointless arguing. It's pointless kicking against it."<sup>200</sup>

*Mavis Hatfield* was in the Ballarat Orphanage in the 1940s and early 1950s. She remembers the pressures she experienced as the time approached for her to leave. "So you got to form 5 then you either had to go to High School to matriculate, or go into a profession. They had me sized up for nursing whether I wanted to do it or not."<sup>201</sup> Options were limited. Not only that, but there were dangers for girls in particular. "So I was then taken out of the Orphanage, a totally naive female...We were all thrown out, you know. It was awful."<sup>202</sup>

Families and friends could apply to the institution to be allowed to take their children, which would then need to be approved by the Children's Welfare Department, for children who had been categorised as State wards at least.<sup>203</sup> In 1952, sixteen children went to their families for the holidays, out of a total of 192.<sup>204</sup>

Many children and young people left the institution into the Care of other families or businesses, as employees, generally at around the age of fifteen. Their wages would be deposited into an account held by the institution, and paid out to them when they reached the age of eighteen.<sup>205</sup> As such then, in the case of children admitted privately, the Committee of Management maintained responsibility for them until the age of eighteen. For children deemed wards of the State, the relevant government Department was technically responsible for them, but the institution would still take a role in their "after-Care" by maintaining accounts for their wages. Mostly, however, whether Private or State admissions, ex-residents were left to get on with their lives outside of the institution, although there were instances where the institution would follow up on the lives of those who had left. But these lives were often lived without the normal familial supports that most young adults take for granted.

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., at 15.30.

<sup>201</sup> "Digital Stories" (2018), at 5.46. Cafs Collection.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> In October 1956 for instance the Superintendent reported that "as is usual this time of year applications are being received from parents and friends for custody of children during school holidays". Superintendent's Report October-November 1956. CAFS Collection. In 1952, "Quite a number of applications have been forwarded by friends anxious to take a child with them on their holidays. The applications have been submitted to the Children's Welfare Department." Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (October-November, 1952), s. 1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>204</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (April-May, 1956), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>205</sup> "The demand for our boys and girls for positions for which they would be suited continues unabated and we are quite unable to supply even half of the applicants. The children continue to be under the care of the Committee until they reach the age of eighteen years, when the wages which have been saved for them are handed over to each. During the past year £499/6/10 was so paid out to boys and girls." Ballarat Orphanage, *Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1923). Cafs Collection.

In some cases when children's escape attempts were discovered they were moved to other institutions and were never to return. In 1950 at the Ballarat Orphanage the Superintendent reported to the Committee of Management about "two boys [who] absconded from the Home, and were picked up in Bacchus Marsh by the Police". In this instance the boys were not returned to the Ballarat Orphanage, but rather one returned to his mother, and the other to "Royal Park Depot".<sup>206</sup> The boys' names were not mentioned. In 1952 *Annette Clifford* absconded just four days after arriving at the Ballarat Orphanage, she was arrested, and promptly "returned to Royal Park".<sup>207</sup>

Sometimes absconding resulted not in punishment but in an improved situation for the children. In 1971 after two sisters absconded, one of them "had moved to a very good hostel and employment in Melbourne", while the younger sister had been "transferred to the Reception Centre [in] Ballarat pending investigation of foster placement with relatives."<sup>208</sup> Sometimes children would be moved to other places and then abscond, and the Ballarat institution would take on a level of responsibility. For instance, in 1950 the Ballarat Orphanage Superintendent, Eric Morton, was "obliged to visit Castlemaine to bring home from there one of the girls who, without permission, had left her position at Elmhurst."<sup>209</sup>

In 1952 *Harold Simpson* was transferred to Janefield Colony, a State-run institution in Bundoora, Melbourne, for children aged over fourteen with learning disabilities.<sup>210</sup> He absconded, was found and "returned to the Orphanage", and soon after sent on to his uncle to be "tried in employment".<sup>211</sup> In 1956, *George Coventry* had moved into outside employment and was staying at the transitional Hostel. When he lost his job however, he left the Hostel under his own steam, seemingly not to return.<sup>212</sup>

In 1960, Mr Taylor called at the Home and took his son back to Warracknabeal. "The boy was soon returned, along with an apology from Mr Taylor."<sup>213</sup>

This dual pressure – the cultural pressure of the institution's expectations, and the external pressure of the criminal justice system – come together in the story of Marge Crawford. By her account, a short-lived escape attempt was to have serious ramifications for her future prospects. One evening Marge and her friend climbed out the window with packed cases while the others were watching movies. They escaped because they were both "homesick for mum ... That's all it was," says

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<sup>206</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (February-March, 1950), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>207</sup> Superintendent's Report, (22 October, 1952), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>208</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (28 October, 1970), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>209</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report", (September-October, 1950), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>210</sup> Find and Connect, "Janefield Colony (1937-1996)". <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000548>. Accessed 2 April 2019.

<sup>211</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (May-June, 1952), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>212</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (September-October, 1956), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>213</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (May-June, 1960), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

Marge.<sup>214</sup> “We put our shoes tied together around our neck so we wouldn't make a noise on the gravel”, but as they were making their way out of the grounds “[the Superintendent] Eric Morton and his son-in-law [were] go[ing] for a stroll in the garden.” Upon being discovered Marge and her friend dropped their cases and ran, climbing over the fence and away. They walked into the city, with no money or clothes, having dropped their cases in the commotion. They were intercepted by the Police and were returned to the Orphanage.<sup>215</sup> In the eyes of those running the Orphanage, suggests Marge, “running away” was “a dreadful thing to do”. She was made to feel ungrateful for all that had been done for her. She felt ostracised, told that even her “best friend didn't want to know me”, that her school teachers were “shamed” by her, and that “nobody wanted to see [her]” at her school, even though she herself loved school, and had ambitions to continue learning. Two weeks later she made the decision not to return to school, but to leave the Orphanage and take a job in Melbourne.<sup>216</sup>

## Conclusion

The Ballarat Orphanage era saw the institution become much more deeply entrenched in the Victorian State's network of services. Whereas the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum era in the nineteenth century, saw the development of dispersed infrastructure that was entrenched in community ownership, the succeeding period through the start and middle of the twentieth century saw this infrastructure being co-opted by the State to help cobble together what they hoped resembled a coherent system. Even though it was financially dependent on the State, the independent self-identity of the Orphanage meant that decision-making was still concentrated locally, characterised by polite correspondence in which the State was left to assert its reforming influence over the independent institution. This influence was to finally take effect in the subsequent Ballarat Children's Home era, as it inched its way towards deinstitutionalisation.

Meanwhile, the children of the Ballarat Orphanage grew up institutionalised in ways as varied and diverse as the number of individuals who lived there. Having built up deep, lived expertise in institutional ways of life that helped them navigate as best they could the uncertainties of life without their families, they were usually wholly unprepared for life outside the institution. Opportunities to interact with the city outside their walls, through sport, music, visits, holidays, mischief, and escape were limited, but highly valued.

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<sup>214</sup> Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, at 7:38

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, at 8:30.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.* at 14:15.

## Chapter Four: Ballarat Children's Home, 1968-1983.

In 1968 the Ballarat Orphanage changed its name to the Ballarat Children's Home. It was to herald a decisive change for the institution. The old building was already gone, but over the next decade and a half many of the things that had defined institutional life – the Farm, the school, holidays at Queenscliffe, and eventually the whole Victoria Street residential site – one-by-one disappeared, leaving an almost unrecognisable organisation in the mid-1980s. This is reflected not just in the institution's strategic decisions and infrastructure changes, but in the shifting patterns of institutionalisation experienced by children in Ballarat Children's Home's Care during this period.

In order to contextualise and illustrate the broader change and reform that was happening at the institution in this period, this chapter provides an outline of children's lives at the Ballarat Children's Home, including a series of case examples, alongside the shifting policies and practices that would lead to the end of the consolidated institutional care at the Ballarat Children's Home. The perspectives of children and families have been gathered through available primary sources including Oral Histories and testimony to inquiries, as well as detailed reading of available institutional records, such as Admission Book entries and Superintendents Reports.

Although children had dispersed into a number of smaller units, and it was a very different place to the Ballarat Orphanage before it, the Ballarat Children's Home with its regimentation and control over everyday life was still, clearly, a total institution as per Erving Goffman's characterisation discussed in the Introduction and in previous chapters. As discussed in the Introduction above, despite their institutionalised lives, the children of these Ballarat institutions were always part of the wider society in which they lived. In this later incarnation, the children of the total institution became harder to contain, as they moved around more frequently, both between institutions and around the city. Of course it worth emphasising that throughout the lives of these institutions, experiences for some were more "total" than others, as the hardships and minor reliefs of institutional life would be dealt unevenly between individuals.

As will be demonstrated in more detail below, the lives of children in this era, from 1968 to 1983, even more than earlier periods, were characterised by multiple experiences of Care at various facilities, often repeat admissions to the Ballarat Children's Home, with typically shorter stays at each institution and a growing emphasis on de-institutionalisation, driven by the potent dual factors of shifting beliefs about the Care of children, and limited resources.

As this period unfolded, the cost of housing children in institutions like Ballarat increased and was no longer more economical than state-run institutions, so that by 1983 there was no longer a compelling financial logic for the State to keep directing children to Ballarat Children's Home. In

anticipation of this change, the organisation moved towards more proactive approaches to family reunification and Foster Care, and services underpinned by the organising logic of Human Rights that would come to characterise the modern era of service delivery at CAFS in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Moreover, as the Ballarat Children's Home changed its identity, role and service models through this period, there was a need to re-position itself locally so that it could continue to receive the patronage and support of its communities. The work in this period through the 1970s and early 1980s established a way of working locally that has shaped Cafs' modern public relations and fundraising approaches, and emphasised the need to work hard at maintaining local relevance and attention.

### Living at the Ballarat Children's Home

The clearest and most visible example of the institution's modernisation in the mid-twentieth century – the gradual demolition of the old Orphanage building – signalled the transition from the established practice of dormitory accommodation to the emerging practice of accommodating children in smaller units. The institution's major emblem and asset, the building that had stood for over one hundred years since 1866, finally came down in 1965. No longer would that building stand as a multi-storey beacon – simultaneously grand, magnificent, and foreboding – of children's Care in Ballarat. The rebuilding program had commenced in 1959,<sup>1</sup> and was completed in 1968.<sup>2</sup>

Although the old Ballarat Orphanage had made a decisive move away from dormitory accommodation, it was also committed to maintaining the number of children in its Care. “It is interesting to know”, wrote Superintendent Ray Jenkins in 1969, “that Ballarat Children's Home is one of the very few homes which has modernised, but has not decreased the number of children for which it cares.”<sup>3</sup> That is to say, according to Jenkins himself, that the Ballarat Children's Home simultaneously modernised *and* maintained its established ways of working.

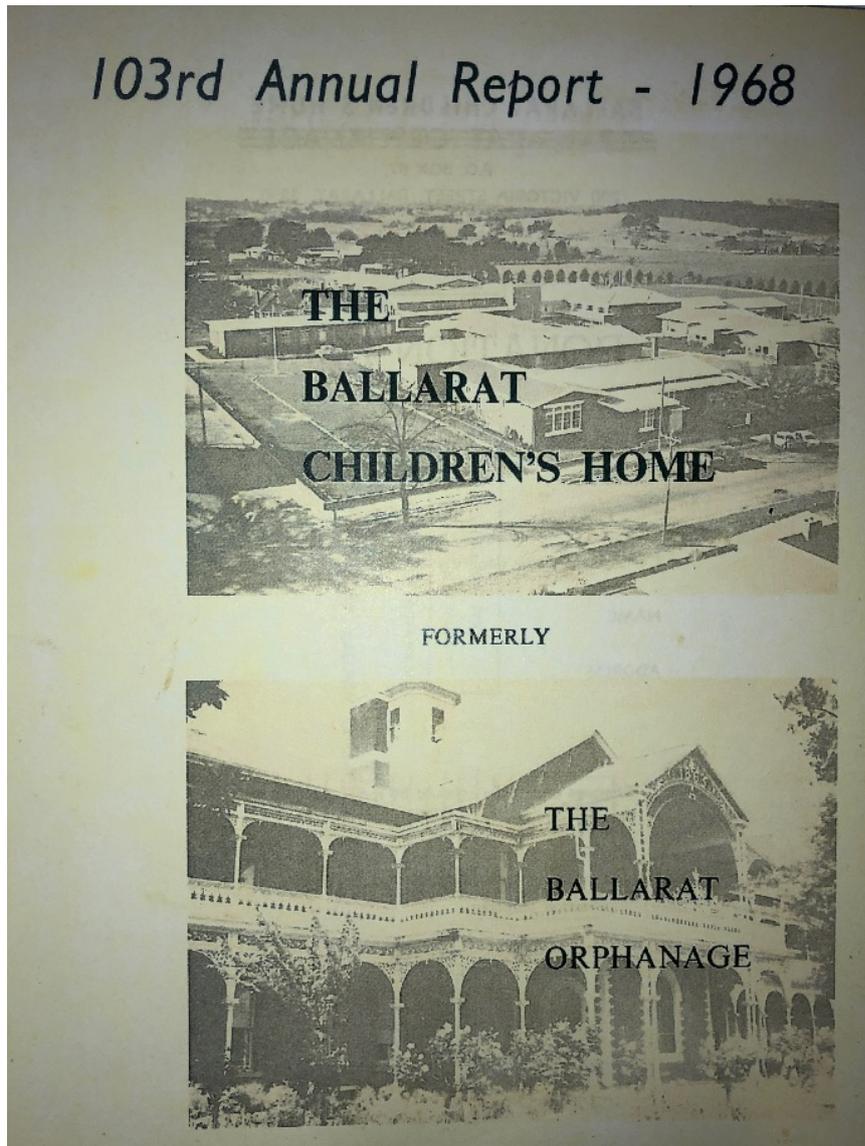
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<sup>1</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, *One Hundred and Second Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1967), 1. Cafs Collection

<sup>2</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Superintendent's Report” (10 May, 1970), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection

<sup>3</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Minutes” (25 June, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

Image 4.1 Cover of the 1968 Ballarat Children's Home Annual Report, showing before and after images of the Victoria St campus. Source: CAFS Collection



When it was established in 1968, the Ballarat Children's Home had five main buildings where children lived.

- Up to fifty younger children aged five to nine were in the “Juniors” building, which was actually an older section of the original building.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See James Jenkinson, "Guide to out-of-Home Care Services, 1940-2000. Volume One: Agency Descriptions," (North Melbourne: James Jenkinson Consulting, 2001), 15., and Ballarat Children's Home, "Board of Management Minutes" (24 July, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

- Up to forty “intermediate” girls and twenty “intermediate” boys in the newly built “Albert Leach Cottage”.<sup>5</sup> This was named after former Ballarat Orphanage resident Albert W. Leach, who fought and died in the Second World War, and left a bequest to the institution.<sup>6</sup>
- Up to fifty-four boys who stayed at a new unit divided into three sections. The unit was called the “3BA Bluebirds Cottage ... in recognition of valuable benefactions made” by the local fundraising group known as the 3BA Bluebirds Club.<sup>7</sup>
- Up to thirty “senior” girls in the newly built Farrell Cottage,<sup>8</sup> and
- The Toddler's Block, which had been built in 1921, and continued to house children aged between four and eight.

Each of these Cottages were then also divided into smaller “wings”, each of which were under the care of staff members who were routinely described as “Cottage Parents”. Practices changed throughout the Ballarat Children's Home era, and the dispersal of authority across different Cottages and Wings meant that distinct practices and cultures developed in each of them over time. Former Ballarat Children's Home resident Deb Findlay, who spent more than a decade in different parts of the Ballarat Children's Home, has described these differences. The Albert Leach Cottage, for instance, was divided into two wings, the M.B. John Wing, and the Leach Wing, each with up to twenty girls and up to three staff.<sup>9</sup> “I started up in Leach Wing at first”, describes Deb, “and the carers there weren't too bad.”<sup>10</sup>

Children would be moved to different Wings and Cottages depending on age. When Deb was moved up the corridor of Leach Cottage into M.B. John Wing, her experiences changed significantly. “My life basically changed in that I had different cottage staff. And those cottage staff were the problem, started with the discipline and the way they treated us, and how we had to basically live our everyday life with those staff”,<sup>11</sup> some of whom she described as “quite hard, quite cruel with their discipline.”<sup>12</sup> Deb and the other girls imagined themselves as part of the popular television series *Prisoner*. “It was actually very much like living in that series ... the children were the inmates and ...

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<sup>5</sup> See Jenkinson, “Guide to Out-of-Home Care Services”, and Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Minutes” (24 July, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>6</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee Meeting Notes” (26 January, 1964), s.1, v.10. Cafs Collection.

<sup>7</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee Meeting Notes”, s.1, v.10. Cafs Collection. The 3BA Bluebirds were a Radio Listeners Club for local radio station 3BA. They had been donating to the Ballarat Orphanage since at least 1935. See *Argus*, 20 December, 1935, 3.

<sup>8</sup> See Jenkinson, “Guide to out-of-Home Care Services, 1940-2000. Volume One: Agency Descriptions,” 15., and Ballarat Children's Home, 24 July 1968, Board of Management Minutes. Cafs Collection

<sup>9</sup> Debbie Findlay, *Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the staff were screws.”<sup>13</sup> At other times of her experience at the Children’s Home, however, Deb and others experienced “a lot of understanding and care” from staff members.<sup>14</sup>

In the earlier period of the Ballarat Children’s Home, boys and girls were accommodated separately. All-girls Wings had only female staff, while all-boys Wings had male and female staff.<sup>15</sup> This practice changed partially over the life of the Ballarat Children’s Home, with mixed-gender sibling groups living together in some cottages in the later period.

As in earlier eras, the children of Ballarat Children’s Home experienced the institution simultaneously as a mixture of good times and bad. This ambivalence is captured in the Residents’ Newsletter – a short, manually typed, hand-drawn and photocopied publication, called “Look Around” – written and edited by Ballarat Children’s Home residents and staff. The only surviving edition in the current Cafs Archive is from 1975:

“The old school groaned and nestled into the sandy soil and reflected back upon his life. It seems lonely now that the children have left and gone to other schools and the [sic] school begins to laugh as he remembers some of the children... Oh yes, pleasant memories as the old school closed its eyes and went to sleep”.<sup>16</sup>

Even with this document however, there are abstractions at work. No authors or editors are identified. It is so filled with in-jokes, strange vocabularies, and obscure references that the modern-day researcher can only guess at the meanings contained within. What the document shows, however, is that it was produced primarily, perhaps even solely, for the benefit and consumption of the children themselves. It does not contain the inevitable public relations and donor-driven narratives that typify most public documents, nor the institutional jargon and obscure priorities of management and administration documents. In this way it provides probably the best available insight into the cultures and perspectives of young people over the organisation’s 130-plus years as a residential institution.

It is largely a record of wistful impressions, documenting some of the highlights and small happinesses that young people have experienced at the Ballarat Children’s Home in 1975. On page three, for instance, is a short report on the “BEST HOLIDAY IN THE HOME”, describing how “Miss Campbell and Miss Liversley had taken me and a few boys up to Halls Gap for a week”.<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere, a

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

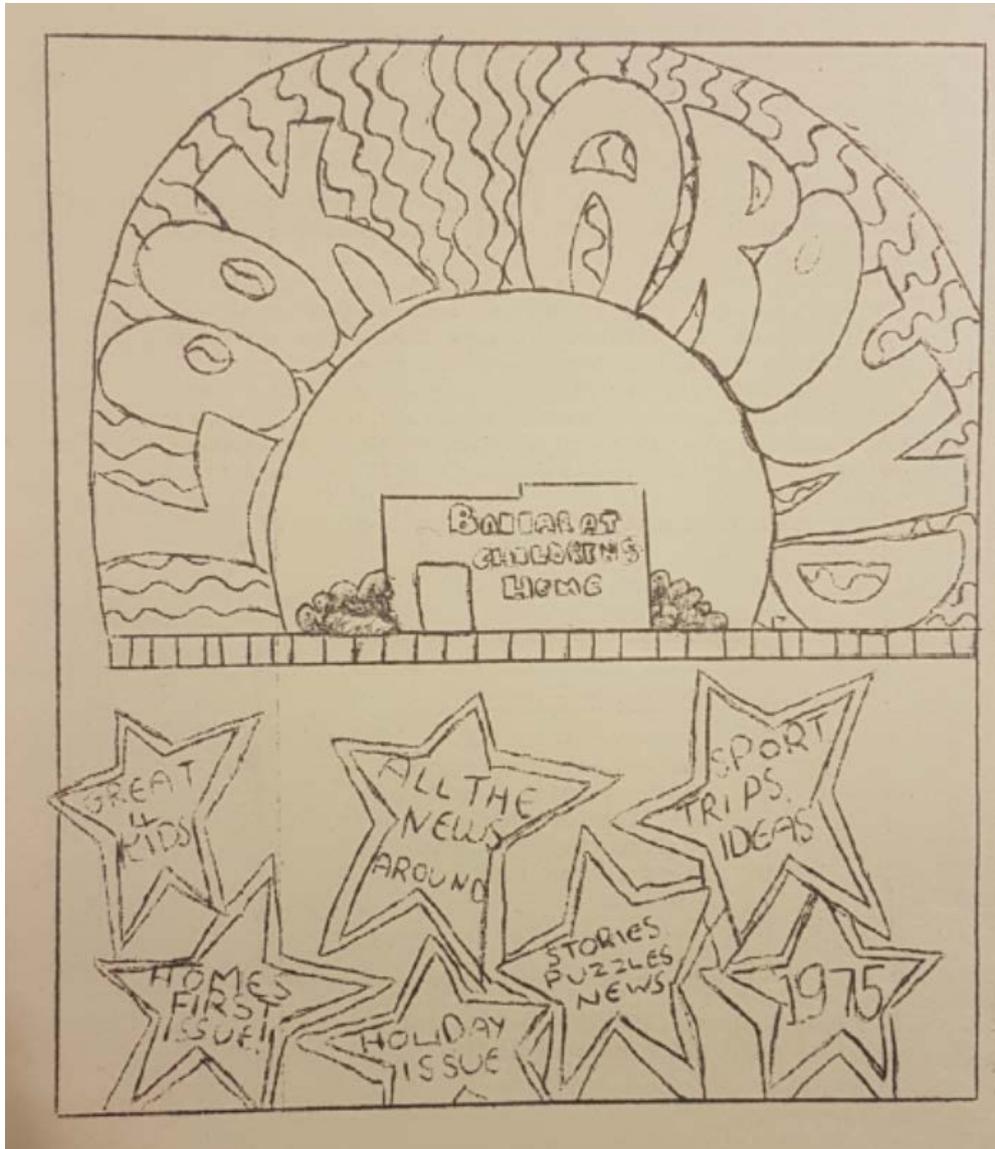
<sup>15</sup> See for instance Ballarat Children’s Home, “Cottage Parents Instructions”, (Date unknown, between 1969 and 1975), 1. Cafs Collection. This document which lists duties of both ‘Cottage Husband’ and ‘Cottage Wife’, in all-boys Wing. The document is likely to be from before 1975, as it makes reference to the “farm-boys”, and to children attending the State School, which is how the onsite Ballarat Children’s Home School was often described. The Farm and School both closed in 1976 and 1975 respectively.

<sup>16</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Look Around - Annual Residents’ Newsletter, (Ballarat, 1975), 5. Cafs Collection.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

“Trip To The Beach” is described,<sup>18</sup> and a trip to Alfredton to visit “THE MOST DELIGHTFUL PLAYGROUND” with “Beautiful, Beautiful, Mrs White”.<sup>19</sup>

Image 4.2 Front cover of “Look Around”, Residents’ Newsletter, 1975. Cafs Collection



Some items however, leave a more ambiguous and sinister impression, hinting at the parallel experiences of joy and fear within the institution. “Thanks to all the people who have assisted in any [sic] for this magazine to become possible”, wrote the Editor, who remains unnamed. “I am only sorry the wooden spoon had to be stirred so often to produce the articles we have. Next year it will be a different story!!!!”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

The story about the trip to Halls Gap concludes with what reads as an uneasy scene: “Did we hear the screams from the poor innocent little mouse being battered by a rather irate Housefather at 3a.m. one morning or was it from the Housemother who lay trembling under cover in the safety of her bed?????????”<sup>21</sup> After an article about a trip to the beach is a “WANTED” notice: “A little lady for sneaking around the showers with a camera!!!”<sup>22</sup>

The precise meanings of these snippets remains unclear. Were the contributors hit with a wooden spoon until they finally wrote their articles? Perhaps the Housemother was simply afraid of mice, rather than violence. Who was the little lady with a camera? Was she simply supervising the students? At the very least, these written images evoke the suggestion of coercive discipline, unwanted surveillance, and fears of domestic violence. Whether these are incidents that happened or not, the casual nature by which such references are produced suggest that staff and residents were at the very least familiar with the presence of such force and fear.

A double-page fold-out contains a game that reveals much about the characters who inhabited the world of Ballarat Children's Home. Under a bubble-written heading “Guess Who?” are thirteen caricatures, presumably of people who live and/or work at the Children's Home.<sup>23</sup>

A professionally dressed woman with what might be weeping eyes, who has just spilled a pile of papers from an overflowing file. A lanky man with wide-brimmed hat and farming implements. A short man – or is it a boy? – with a tight fitting jacket and a lit cigarette. A manic-looking elderly nurse, jabbing an over-sized syringe into the arm of a protesting boy. A younger woman, dressed fashionably in flared jeans, holding a bemused child by the back of his shorts, about to smack him. Most of the drawings are of adults, though it is not always clear. The only ones who are clearly children are under the command of adults – the nurse, the fashionable woman.

Presumably these pictures were funny to many of those in the sub-cultures of Ballarat Children's Home. They represent unflattering portraits of the authority figures who controlled life in the Home, providing a fleeting opportunity to lampoon the foibles and offenses caused by them. It is not clear on whose direction and influence “Look Around” was produced. Only a handful of names are mentioned, almost all of them staff members. The identity of the writers, editors and their friends remain mostly unrecorded. It reads to modern audiences like an expression of rebellion against those who purportedly controlled their lives, but perhaps it was all done in good fun, with the staff in on the joke against them. That there is only one surviving issue of the newsletter seems to indicate, at least, only a fleeting enthusiasm for giving children such a platform for lampooning the authority figures around them.

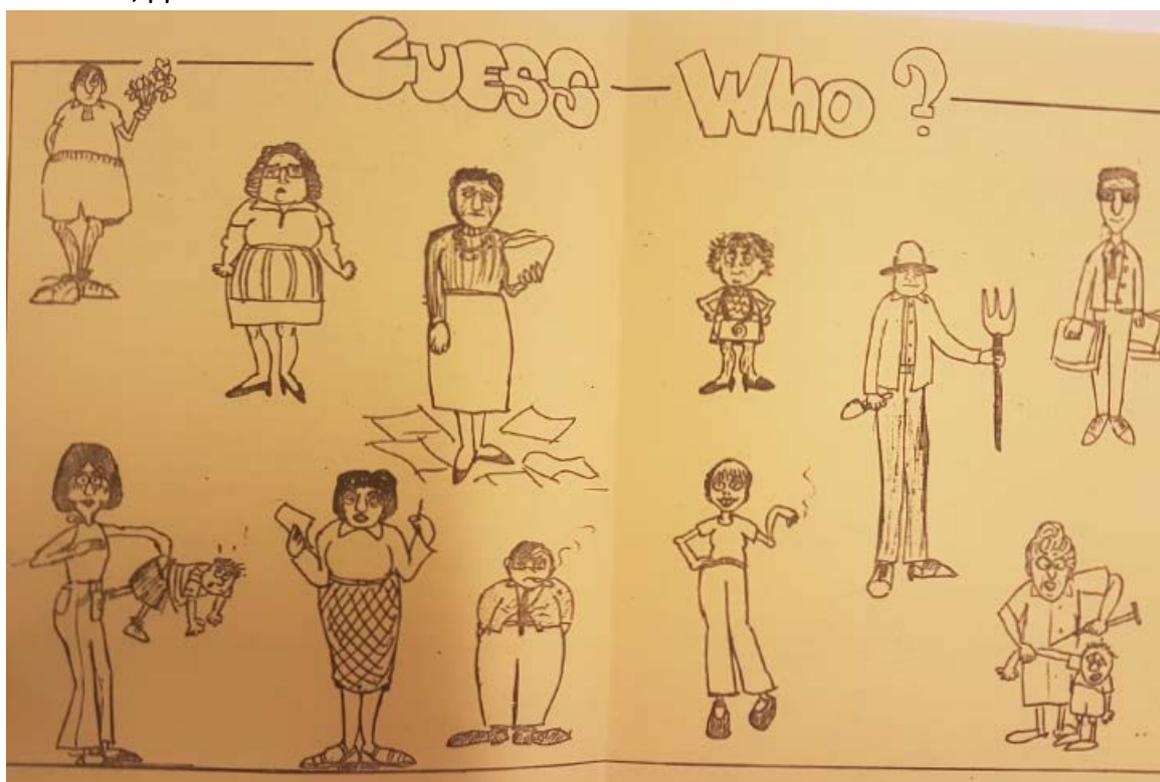
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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Image 4.3: “Guess Who?”, from “Look Around”, Ballarat Children’s Home Residents’ Newsletter, pp.6-7



### Routines and Daily Life at Ballarat Children's Home

At 7.00 am, the children would wake to a ringing siren,<sup>24</sup> though Deb Findlay remembers that wake-up time was closer to 6.30am.<sup>25</sup> One of the House Parents would have slept overnight in their own small quarters within the Wing for which they were responsible. Other staff would arrive at about seven o'clock to help with getting the children ready. “The children were made to make their own beds”, remembers House Mother Flo Wallace, “[b]ut the little ones didn't do a very good job of it so we would do it after!”<sup>26</sup>

As well as making their beds, the children would wash and dress themselves, and do general “jobs”.<sup>27</sup> Some children would work in the kitchen and shared dining room, which doubled as a television room, to set up breakfast. “Each child had to do a chore”, remembers Deb. “[C]leaning up ... bedrooms swept and mopped ... the carpets vacuumed and the rooms had to be polished with the polisher ... The bathrooms, toilets, showers, all had to be wiped out and cleaned before school.”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Cottage Parents Instructions”, (Date unknown, between 1969 and 1975), 1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>25</sup> Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>26</sup> Flo Wallace, Flo Wallace Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> “Cottage Parents Instructions”, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Findlay, Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

In the early years of the Ballarat Children's Home, primary-school-aged children would go to the on-campus Ballarat Children's Home School – otherwise known as State School No.1256.<sup>29</sup> In 1975 this school closed down, and children were sent to other local primary schools. Deb, for instance, went to Queen Street Primary School, but others attended Dana St Primary School, Brown Hill, Humffray Street, Eureka Street, Canadian, and the Ballarat Special School.<sup>30</sup>

Older children would also attend local High Schools. Most children went to Ballarat East Secondary, which was just 500 metres up Victoria Street from Ballarat Children's Home, though children also went to Sebastopol Technical High School, Ballarat North Technical High School, Ballarat Boys Technical High School, and the Ballarat Girls School (and later, after those two schools merged in 1976, to what became Mt Clear Technical High School). Local community members would often help students from Ballarat Children's Home who were having difficulties with schooling, including teachers from other schools,<sup>31</sup> and volunteers with other community groups, such as the Quota Club.<sup>32</sup>

During the day Cottage Parents had a list of general care, cleaning and administrative duties to perform. Twice a week for each wing, “Husbands” were expected to clean the bathrooms, including “Brush & disinfect toilets and urinal, clean bath & basins & mirrors. Clean & polish nickelware in toilets, showers and washroom. Replenish toilet soap & paper”, and so on. “Mothers”, meanwhile, would clean and dust the common room, bedrooms, passages and lockers, as well as inspecting for “tidiness”.<sup>33</sup> Between “check[ing] and dispatch[ing] [children's] mail, writ[ing] up reports, records, records of outings etc” and “submit[ting] requests for approval for school books, clothing, outings etc.”, they would share responsibility for looking after any sick children, taking them to the doctor, dentist or hospital.<sup>34</sup> It was a busy schedule, and all this before lunch.

In the years before the Ballarat Children's Home State School closed down, the primary-school-aged children would gather for lunch, in the common dining room.<sup>35</sup> When the children went to outside schools they were given lunch – typically a piece of fruit and a sandwich. “[T]hey didn't always get what they wanted”, remembers Flo, “but unfortunately, that was it.”<sup>36</sup> Deb remembers that the stale sandwiches would often be thrown off the bridge on the walk to school, leaving a growing pile of rotting brown paper bags on the railway tracks as the term wore on.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The school and its history is explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Staff Newsletter”, No. 9 (Ballarat, May 1976). Cafs Collection.

<sup>31</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Staff Newsletter”, No. 4 (Ballarat, May 1974), 4. Cafs Collection.

<sup>32</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Staff Newsletter”, No. 6 (Ballarat, November 1974), 3. Cafs Collection.

<sup>33</sup> “Cottage Parents Instructions”, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> See *Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, and “Cottage Parents Instructions”.

<sup>36</sup> *Flo Wallace Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>37</sup> *Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

At 3.30pm the Cottage Parents would welcome the children back from school. After a range of duties and personal jobs, such as “shoe cleaning”, reading and replying to letters, cleaning clothes, and so on, many of the children would have some free time.<sup>38</sup> The life described here in the Ballarat Children’s Home era, while still constrained, had a degree more freedom and leisure than in the Ballarat Orphanage era. There were more staff with responsibility for looking after children, and as can be seen, they took on many of the responsibilities that had previously been left to the children.

At 4.45, a “siren” would sound to signal that the children should prepare for tea.<sup>39</sup> Dinner-time was early, and usually finished by 5.30pm.<sup>40</sup> In the early years of the Ballarat Children’s Home dinner would be served in a communal Dining Hall, “boys on one side, girls on the other”.<sup>41</sup> Children would “walk in a line to the dining room and ... wait and stand till the doors were open”, before going to set tables for their own cottage groups.<sup>42</sup> Eventually as old practices changed, the cooks would prepare meals and distribute them to the cottages in bain-maries, where children could eat as smaller groups in their own cottages.<sup>43</sup> Again, here is an example of established routines and practices being changed and relaxed in the modern era.

Despite the differences in practice and culture between different cottages, and the greater flexibility of the Ballarat Children’s Home era compared to earlier times, routines were still relatively fixed. “It was like being in the Army”, remembers Raylene Fernell. “They had their rigid sort of thing. You eat at a certain time, they wake you up early in the morning and pull the blankets off ... and you had to make sure that everything was spick and span.”<sup>44</sup>

When asked what memory of the Ballarat Children’s Home “stands out most in your mind”, Karen Atkinson declares that it is “[t]he punishments and the regimentation of everything, you had to ask permission to do anything.”<sup>45</sup> This hindered her and others’ ability to express individuality. “[Y]ou weren’t allowed to just be yourself and if you were you got into trouble.”<sup>46</sup> On one occasion after cutting her leg open, Karen was “scared shitless” that one of the cottage parents in particular would punish her for it.<sup>47</sup>

Dianne Clarke “used to get barred from a lot of those activities” at the Ballarat Children’s Home, like swimming and using the trampoline for “being naughty... speak[ing] up a lot”. As she

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<sup>38</sup> “Cottage Parents Instructions”, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> *Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> *Flo Wallace Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>44</sup> Raylene Fernell in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*

recalls, “I spoke my mind and they didn't like it so they would punish me for it.” In particular she would “stick up for my little sister ... because I was her mum while we were in the Home.”<sup>48</sup>

### Sport and collective identity

As in earlier eras, sport was a big part of many of the children's lives, and many excelled on the sporting fields.<sup>49</sup> At first, most children represented the Ballarat Children's Home, through the institution's Sports Club, which had been established in 1951 during the Ballarat Orphanage era. Sometimes the Children's Home teams would be topped up by children from outside the institution, such as in 1970, when the Superintendent reported that “some of the bigger boys from East Ballarat [Football Club]” were made available “to help our [Ballarat Children's Home] lads. This will enable us to give at least 12 boys a game of football each Saturday”.<sup>50</sup> Here is an example of the ways in which the children of the institution exchanged with children from outside.

In another sign of the changing times, after twenty years and premierships in multiple sports, the Ballarat Children's Home Sports Club disbanded in 1971, as “the children were now integrated as individuals in various sporting clubs throughout the Ballarat area”.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, some Ballarat Children's Home sporting teams would still be formed for specific competitions.<sup>52</sup>

Deb Findlay recalls fondly her time as a badminton player at Ballarat Children's Home. The Badminton team would represent the Home at nearby Ken Kay Badminton Stadium. Coach Errol Classen would come in to the Children's Home to lead training sessions at least twice a week at the Children's Home gymnasium,<sup>53</sup> get the team to the stadium on Fridays, and take them out for fish and chips afterwards.<sup>54</sup>

Playing badminton, says Deb, “taught us about teamwork, and ... backing each other up... to be polite on the court and have manners off the court.”<sup>55</sup>

“[A]t the Badminton Stadium everyone knew that we were Home kids ... and we played for the Children's Home, but I mean, we were proud. We were representing ... the home that we lived in ... we had our name of Ballarat Children's Home and [...that] made us really proud over the years.”<sup>56</sup>

Even so, Deb's coach bore the brunt of her frustration and rebellion. “I gave my coach a hard time and used to tell him to stick his sport”. Her coach however, persisted. “[H]e stuck by me ... said

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<sup>48</sup> Dianne Clarke in *ibid.*, 54.

<sup>49</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (27 August, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>50</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Superintendent's Report” (20 May, 1970), s.1, v.12., Cafs Collection.

<sup>51</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (26 May, 1971), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection

<sup>52</sup> See for instance Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Meeting Notes” (20 October, 1977), s.1, v.15. Cafs Collection. “A boys team and a girls team have been entered in the Junior tennis competitions”.

<sup>53</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Staff Newsletter” (November 1974), No. 6, 3. Cafs Collection.

<sup>54</sup> *Debbie Findlay Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

to me that I could ... represent Victoria one day, if I kept going, and put in the hard work." A shared love of badminton and sport spilled over into a respectful relationship that has provided an ongoing positive example for the adult that Deb has become. "[W]e made a friendship over the years of learning the game ... even today, you know, I thank him for [it]."<sup>57</sup>

These examples of sporting achievement at the Ballarat Children's Home, and at the Ballarat Orphanage as discussed in Chapter 3, demonstrate the value that competitive sport brought for the children, helping to build trust in each other, and communities from outside the institution, including other children and adults. Sport instilled pride in the collective identity as "Home" children, while providing a platform on which to excel. The importance of sport is demonstrated in how prominently it features among the positive recollections and memories of former residents.

### Coming and going: patterns and experiences of institutional Care

As has been emphasised throughout this thesis, there was no such thing as a "typical" experience at the institution. Each child entered and left in their own unique circumstances. Through comprehensive analysis of the Ballarat Children's Home admission book, however, a picture can be built of some broader characteristics and patterns in how those journeys in and out of the institution occurred.

More than 750 children were residents at the Ballarat Children's Home between 1968 and 1984, according to records kept in the official Admissions Book,<sup>58</sup> including 598 new admissions. An average of thirty-five admissions were recorded per year, with 1973 the largest intake, when seventy-nine children were admitted.

Ballarat Children's Home Superintendent Ray Jenkins's vision of maintaining high numbers while modernising held firm initially. While the average annual number of new admissions to the Ballarat Children's Home decreased significantly over the entire Ballarat Children's Home era from 1968 to 1984, admissions actually peaked from 1972 to 1975 when an average of sixty-five children per year came to the Ballarat Children's Home, including seventy-nine in 1973, making it one of the busiest years in the institution's history.<sup>59</sup> Admissions declined sharply after 1975 however, after which an average of just over twenty-one children per year came to Ballarat Children's Home.<sup>60</sup>

Nearly half of all children who entered the Ballarat Children's Home between 1968 and 1976 (48 per cent) had come from Allambie Reception Centre. Allambie was a state-run residential facility in the outskirts of Melbourne. Since 1961 it had been the Victorian Government's main reception,

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> There were 598 admissions during this period, as well as the 185 children who were living at the institution when Ballarat Orphanage became Ballarat Children's Home. Based on analysis of Admissions Book entries, 1968-1984. Cafs Collection.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

treatment, classification and transit centre.<sup>61</sup> Allambie was a key part of the network of institutions where mostly State wards would come prior to being shifted elsewhere in the system, either to foster homes or institutions such as the Ballarat Children's Home. Allambie was larger than Ballarat Children's Home, with a capacity of 228 in 1972, which was often exceeded.<sup>62</sup> It had three main sections in 1971 which accommodated groups of mixed age and sex, enabling sibling groups to be housed together, although this did not always occur.<sup>63</sup>

At least 192, or 32 per cent, of all children admitted to Ballarat Children's Home had come from Warrawee Reception Centre – also known as Ballarat Regional Reception Centre.<sup>64</sup> In most cases, like Allambie, it was a place where State wards were sent in order to be processed, before being placed in other institutions. Established under the Social Welfare Act reforms in 1961, it was just down the road from the Ballarat Children's Home at 28 Victoria Street, accommodating up to eighteen children at once,<sup>65</sup> in the building that had previously been the Ballarat Orphanage Boys Hostel.<sup>66</sup>

### Leaving the Ballarat Children's Home

The vast majority of children from Ballarat Children's Home (66 per cent) were “Home Released” to family members upon leaving the institution, mostly to their mother, but many also to their father, to both parents, or to siblings, aunts or grandparents. Of those children who were Home Released, just over a quarter (26 per cent) moved to an address in Ballarat or its surrounds, and a further 15 per cent to an address in Western Victoria.<sup>67</sup> The largest proportion of children and young people who moved “back home” to their families (37 per cent) moved to an address in the greater Melbourne area. What this shows is that Ballarat Children's Home was operating not only on a local and broader regional level, but more at a statewide level, through Melbourne in particular. Based on these figures, we can see that the largest proportion of children at Ballarat Children's Home were most likely originally from Melbourne.

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<sup>61</sup> Cited in “Allambie Reception Centre (1961-1990)”, Find and Connect. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000152>. Accessed 18 February 2019.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Its name formally changed from Ballarat Regional Reception Centre to Warrawee Reception Centre in 1964, though it was known by both names until at least 1982, according to the notes inclined in Admission Records. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), “Finding Records – Ballarat Reception Centre”, <https://findingrecords.dhhs.vic.gov.au/collectionresultspage/Ballaratreceptioncentre>. Accessed 5 June 2019.

<sup>65</sup> “Warrawee Reception Centre (known as Ballarat Reception Centre 1961 to 1964)”, Research Data Australia, <https://researchdata.ands.org.au/warrawee-reception-centre-1961-1964/933305>. Accessed 24 February 2019.

<sup>66</sup> DHHS, “Finding Records – Ballarat Reception Centre”.

<sup>67</sup> The three most frequent destinations in Western Victoria were Geelong, Ararat and Horsham. Others went to a range of other towns and settlements, including Bacchus Marsh, Beaufort, Colac, Doveton, Dunnolly, Elmshurst, Hamilton, Kerang, Lal Lal, Lexton, Maryborough, Minyip, Portland, St Arnaud, Stawell, Timor, Torquay, Trentham, Wallinduc, Warracknabeal, Warrnambool, Wedderburn and Willaura. Based on analysis of Ballarat Children's Home, 1968-1984, “Admissions Book”, Cafs Collection.

Many other children – fifteen per cent overall – were “transferred” to other Children's Homes or facilities, continuing their experience of institutionalisation in other cities, places and with other people. The majority of these went to institutional settings in Melbourne and its suburbs – mainly State run institutions such as Baltara or Turana at Parkville, or Allambie or Winlaton in the eastern suburbs. A number of others, however, were transferred to alternative regional institutions: for instance, at least eleven children were transferred to Catholic institutions in Bendigo – St Aidan's or St Luke's. A handful went to institutions in Geelong, mainly Glastonbury, and some went to specialist institutions in Stawell.<sup>68</sup>

There is a relationship between absconding and the onward journey into the criminal justice system. Of the twelve children officially listed as “Absconded” during the Ballarat Children’s Home era from 1968 to 1983, at least eleven of them were transferred to another facility:<sup>69</sup> six went to State-run processing facilities – Allambie in Melbourne or Warrawee in Ballarat – while five went to state-run Juvenile Justice facilities – Turana or Baltara in Royal Park or Winlaton in Nunawading.<sup>70</sup> In 1970 “two of our girls”, as the Superintendent put it, *Kirsten Grey* and *Grace Hobbs*, were transferred to Winbirra “which is the remand section of Winlaton”, after a late-night escape attempt from the Ballarat Children’s Home. For whatever reason, they were not officially listed as “Absconded” in their Admission Book record. *Kirsten* came back to the Ballarat Children's Home after about three weeks, but *Grace* remained at Winbirra.<sup>71</sup> In 1970 *Rosemary Andrews* was reported to police when she was not returned to the Children’s Home after “an outing with her mother”.<sup>72</sup> Given the onward transfer of these individuals and presumably others to Juvenile Justice facilities and other State-run facilities, it can be inferred that the Ballarat Children’s Home in these instances did not take a sympathetic view of these escape attempts, and treated them as akin to criminal acts.

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<sup>68</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, 1968-1984, “Admissions Book”, Cafs Collection.

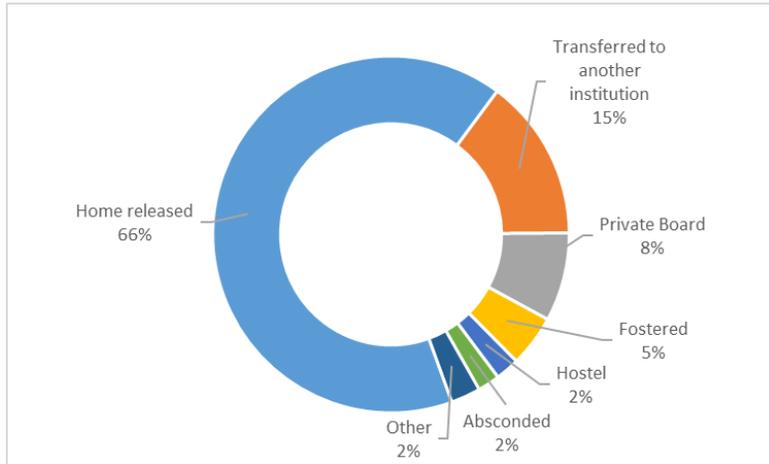
<sup>69</sup> No information is available for the other child who absconded.

<sup>70</sup> Based on analysis of Ballarat Children's Home, 1968-1984, “Admissions Book”, Cafs Collection.

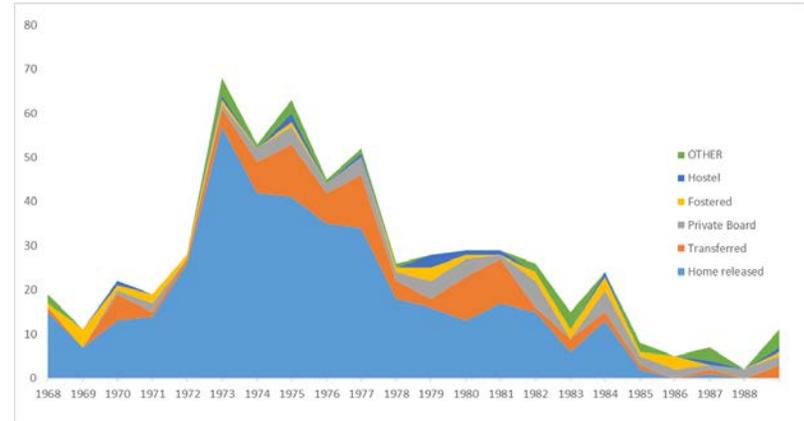
<sup>71</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Superintendent's Report” (17 July, 1970), s.1, v.12; and “Committee of Management Meeting Notes”, (24 June, 1970),s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>72</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Committee of Management Meeting Notes” (23 September, 1970), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection

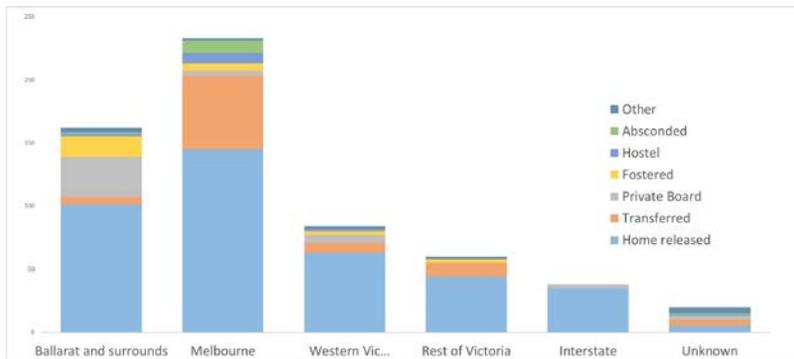
**Chart 4.2. Reason for leaving the Ballarat Children's Home**



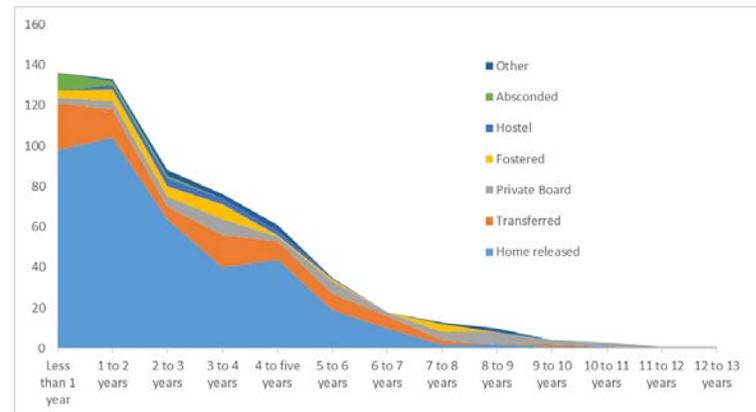
**Chart 4.3. Reason for Leaving Ballarat Children's Home by year of leaving**



**Chart 4.4. Reason for leaving Ballarat Children's Home by Destination upon leaving**



**Chart 4.5. Length of stay at Ballarat Children's Home by reason for leaving**



## “After Care”

In the early 1970s, Ballarat Children's Home introduced a practice known as “After Care”, which involved attempts to follow-up and understand the whereabouts and circumstances of those who had left the Care of the institution. One folder of After Care Reports survives, from 1973, containing brief pro-forma information on seventeen young adults who had relatively recently left the Ballarat Children's Home.

The youngest were a girl aged fourteen, and another aged fifteen, each living in Geelong at the time of the report, while the eldest were six men and two women aged eighteen, and a man aged nineteen. The average age of those about whom After Care reports were collected is 17.1.<sup>1</sup> The younger girl's whereabouts were unknown after she had travelled away from Geelong following a death in her family. In the remarks the Case Worker has written “Please investigate,”<sup>2</sup> although it is not clear by whom, how or exactly why such investigation should occur.

Ballarat Children's Home staff expressed concern about a few of the individuals. One “appears to be drinking heavily”,<sup>3</sup> another should be “approach[ed] with caution” and only “keeps in touch by obscure methods”.<sup>4</sup> Forms of contact are consistent only in their sporadic nature, including multiple variations of “Birthday cards forwarded. No acknowledgement”.<sup>5</sup> Of those who have maintained contact – usually described as no more than “sparse” or “spasmodic”, although in one case as “Frequent” – most have done so on the basis of visiting or contacting siblings who were still in the Ballarat Children's Home.<sup>6</sup>

The reports collectively indicate how difficult it was for the institution to maintain contact with individuals. Although we do not know how many other files and reports were made, the relatively scant information surviving from this initiative – seventeen records in one year – does not build a picture of deep engagement with Care leavers. Those records that do exist are themselves brief, and tend to indicate a lack of information and contact. Presumably there were countless more people with whom contact had not been possible at all.

The After Care Program continued through the 1970s, despite the difficulties encountered by Ballarat Children's Home staff. This is not to suggest mismanagement on their behalf in relation to its After Care initiative. The attempts at contact and expressions of concern were no doubt genuine and hard-earned. “Our attempts, together with Social Welfare Department workers, who share responsibility in this area”, wrote President Hollioake in 1978 in relation to After Care, “have not been

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<sup>1</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “After Care Reports” (15 May 1973). Cafs Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid..

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10,12.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Nos.5, 7, 8, 26.

particularly successful.”<sup>7</sup> Throughout its history the institution's ongoing role in the lives of those it cared for has been ambiguous and ill-defined, particularly given the shared responsibility between State and institution that was established in the Ballarat Orphanage era, and described in Chapter Three above. The ability of the institution to provide any support to children after they left its care depended mostly on the willingness of individuals to engage, rather than a systematic practice of post-Care support.

## Families and Children at Ballarat Children's Home

The experiences of multiple institutionalisation, family reunification and de-institutionalisation that characterised much of the Ballarat Children's Home era were felt in endlessly different ways by the hundreds of children who came through the Children's Home in the 1970s and 1980s. Just some of these experiences have been represented here, to help build a more human picture of these challenges.

### **The McCartney Family**

In September 1971 a group of three sisters and a brother first arrived at the Ballarat Children's Home – *Emily* (aged ten), *Kevin* (nine), *Lois* (eight) and *Amy* (six) *McCartney*. Their convoluted journeys through the interlocking public and private social service systems for children typifies the difficulties and uncertainties encountered by children in this era.

For the two older children – *Emily* and *Kevin* – some familiar faces from earlier in their childhood may have greeted them as they settled in, as this was the second time that they had come to the Ballarat Children's Home to live. Born in 1961 and 1962, *Emily* and *Kevin* had spent at least some of their infancy at the Alexandra Babies Home in Ballarat, before moving in to the Ballarat Orphanage, as it was known then, within a year of each other in 1966 and 1967. This was a fairly common pathway for people entering the Institution: ten per cent of children who came to live at the Ballarat Children's Home had been at the Alexandra Babies / Toddler's Home previously, almost all of them State wards, including the *McCartneys*.<sup>8</sup>

*Emily* had stayed for exactly two years before going home to her parents in Melbourne's outskirts, aged seven, with her six-year-old brother. This was in 1968, when her younger sisters were aged five and three.

Sometime in the next three years, however, all four siblings ended up in Allambie Reception Centre, before being transferred to the Ballarat Children's Home. How long the *McCartneys* were in Allambie is not known, as the Ballarat Children's Home did not routinely record such information. In

<sup>7</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "After Care", *113<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1978). Cafs Collection

<sup>8</sup> Based on analysis of Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, vol.2", (1961-1969). Cafs Collection.

journeying from Allambie to Ballarat they were hardly unusual; 179 other children made the same trip between 1968 and 1984.

The *McCartney* kids spent three and half years together at the Ballarat Children's Home. The first to leave was fourteen-year-old *Kevin* in April 1975, though his time in institutional Care was not yet over. *Kevin* was transferred to Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm Home in Burwood, not far from Allambie in Melbourne's east.<sup>9</sup> Although Tally Ho was known as an innovative and progressive institution within the Victorian children's welfare network,<sup>10</sup> it was still described as “inescapably institutional” in the mid-1970s when *Kevin* made his way there.<sup>11</sup>

The youngest of the *McCartneys*, *Amy*, was the last to leave Ballarat Children's Home. She went to a private address – described as “Private Board” – in Sebastopol, aged fifteen, in 1980,<sup>12</sup> near her sisters who had already left the Children's Home to private board, also in Ballarat. The *McCartney* family's relationship with the institution had spanned fourteen years, from *Emily's* first entry in 1966 to *Amy's* departure in 1980.

#### **The Hackett family and Bucknor family**

In October 1968 the *Hackett* siblings arrived at Ballarat Children's Home after some time at Warrawee. All four of them – *Judith* aged twelve, *Abigail* (ten), *Patty* (eight), and *Simon* (seven) – stayed for less than three months before being reunited with their mother in another state.<sup>13</sup> While in Ballarat Children's Home, perhaps the *Hacketts* met eleven year old *Katie Bucknor*, who had also just come from Warrawee in September 1968. She stayed, along with her sister *Caroline*, for just under one year, before she was Fostered to a couple in central Ballarat. Five months later, *Caroline* was at Ballarat Children's Home again, being re-admitted in February 1970, and then in October that same year was transferred back to Warrawee, presumably then on to another placement, whether foster or institutional is unknown.<sup>14</sup> Here we see an example of the typically disjointed and fragmented trajectory experienced by many children in Care.

#### **The Beasley family, Gould family and Keenan family**

In August 1974, twelve year-old *Olivia Beasley* was moved from Allambie to Ballarat Children's Home. After six months she moved to Bendigo, “Home released” to her father and stepmother.<sup>15</sup> Two

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<sup>9</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3542. Cafs Collection.

<sup>10</sup> For instance Tally Ho was an early adopter of several reforms, including small-scale cottage accommodation from the 1950s, as opposed to the mid-1960s at Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home. Tally Ho made concerted efforts to integrate within its surrounding communities from the late 1950s and led the professionalisation of the sector's workforce in the late 1960s. See “Tally Ho”, Find and Connect, <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000119>, accessed 18 February 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3544. Cafs Collection.

<sup>13</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3438-3441. Cafs Collection.

<sup>14</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3432. Cafs Collection.

<sup>15</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3739. Cafs Collection.

months later *Olivia* was back at Ballarat Children's Home, having been re-admitted through Warrawee Reception Centre in April 1975. This time she stayed for just over a year and a half, returning to Bendigo and her father again in December 1976.<sup>16</sup>

What we know of *Olivia's* experiences at Ballarat Children's Home and beyond in some ways typifies a number of emerging trends in the patterns of children's welfare in the 1970s. During a period of just over two years, she lived at four different locations, in three different cities, on six different occasions: Allambie Reception Centre in Melbourne, Warrawee Reception Centre and Ballarat Children's Home (twice) in Ballarat, and her father's address in Bendigo (twice). Her stays at Ballarat Children's Home were relatively short – just a few months initially, then a little over a year and half, when in earlier generations children would typically stay for four or five years and more. *Olivia* was reunited with her family – twice – a favoured practice in the children's service system of the time. Though we do not know the circumstances of *Olivia* and her family, her return to Warrawee and Ballarat Children's Home less than two months after her initial release to her father in 1974 would indicate that perhaps her family reunification happened prematurely, before whatever conditions that led to her removal in the first place had been resolved.

Shorter stays at Ballarat Children's Home were much more common in those years. In February 1972, six brothers and sisters from the *Gould* family – *Ella* (age fourteen), *Jessica* (thirteen), *Diana* (twelve), *Katrina* (nine) and *Paul* (eight) – had all come and gone from the Ballarat Children's Home within three and half months. They came at first from the Warrawee Reception Centre, and were 'Home released' to their mother, in a nearby town.<sup>17</sup> So too the five *Keenan* siblings, who went to their parents' home in Creswick after three months at the Ballarat Children's Home, having come from Warrawee Reception Centre, in 1969.<sup>18</sup>

#### **“Private admissions” in the Ballarat Children’s Home: The *Goodwin* family and *Busby* family**

In August 1970, brothers *Steven*, *Craig* and *Dennis Goodwin* from a small town a few hundred kilometres away arrived at the Ballarat Children's Home. The *Goodwin* brothers' mother had died and with their father's whereabouts unknown, they had been staying with their grandmother in Ballarat when she became sick. The “City Welfare Officer” at the Local Council had obviously become aware of the situation, and in a throwback to nineteenth-century practices, “Recommended” that the brothers be admitted to the Ballarat Children's Home. They were “admitted privately and without charge, on a temporary basis only”.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3829. Cafs Collection.

<sup>17</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, Nos. 3555-3561. Cafs Collection.

<sup>18</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, Nos. 3423-3427-3561. Cafs Collection.

<sup>19</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Committee of Management Meeting Notes” (26 August, 1970) s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

The *Goodwin* brothers were “Private Admissions” to the institution, meaning that they were referred to the Institution not by the State, but by community members. This had become an extremely uncommon practice; between 1961 and 1972, just four per cent of all admissions to the institution were Private Admissions,<sup>20</sup> reflecting and continuing the overwhelming trend towards State ward admissions that had been established earlier in the twentieth century, as described in Chapter Three above.

Less than two weeks later, in early September, they had left, after “spending the September vacation at Queenscliff”.<sup>21</sup> “As these boys have no parents”, reported the Superintendent, “they may ultimately come into our care as Wards of the State if grandmother cannot cope”.<sup>22</sup> Their Grandmother had experienced “an improvement in health”, and they returned to her, and did not return to the Children’s Home.<sup>23</sup> Here can be seen an example of how the institution could on rare occasions be accessed by local families as a form of respite care, with support from a growing network of local providers, such as the Welfare Officer at the local Council. Contrast the *Goodwin* brothers’ experience with Maryanne Pope’s children and Julia Clarke’s family at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum generations earlier, as described in Chapter Two, to see the ways in which notions of institutional authority over children’s lives had shifted significantly over the eras.

Two other private admissions around this time were brothers *Scott* and *Dean Busby*. Recommended by *Mr Cameron Busby* in 1968, they were discharged seven months later to Mr and Mrs *Busby* in July 1969. The family details are unclear, but it not hard to imagine a scenario where Mr *Busby* as a single man sought the help of the Children's Home, but upon getting married, applied to get his sons back – a model that was rare in the 1970s, but much more common in the institution's early years.

### **The *Sagona* family**

Although it was not typical for children to come back to the Ballarat Children's Home after they had been released, it was not uncommon. For instance, the *Sagona* children – *Mark* aged twelve, *Bridget* aged eleven, *Lorraine* aged six, and *Matthew* aged nine<sup>24</sup> – came from Allambie Reception Centre to the Ballarat Children's Home in 1972. Their mother had passed away, but her name and date of death were not recorded by the Children's Home. Their father, *Kyros Sagona*, was from a regional Victorian town. After less than a year the four siblings were reunited with *Kyros*, who was by then

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<sup>20</sup> Based on analysis of Ballarat Children's Home, 1961-1972, “Admissions Book”, Cafs Collection.

<sup>21</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Committee of Management Meeting Notes” (26 August, 1970), s.1 v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.2”, Nos. 3508-3511. Cafs Collection.

<sup>24</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.2”, Nos. 3695-3697 & 3710. Cafs Collection.

living in Ballarat. Within two years, however, they were back in the Ballarat Children's Home, via the Ballarat Reception Centre.<sup>25</sup>

The oldest child – *Mark* – left less than a year later as a fifteen-year-old, returning again to *Kyros*, who had now moved interstate.<sup>26</sup> The two middle siblings – *Bridget* and *Matthew* – would stay in the Ballarat Children's Home for another five years, eventually leaving in 1979, aged seventeen and sixteen respectively, to live with each other in a shared home nearby in Ballarat East<sup>27</sup> with two others from the Children's Home, *Elicia Berry* and *Amanda Garrett*.<sup>28</sup> Youngest child *Lorraine Sagona* stayed at the Children's Home for many more years. While she left the Care of the Ballarat Children's Home in 1982, she moved into the same address – 200 Victoria St – as the Children's Home, possibly to work at one of the group homes.<sup>29</sup> The *Sagona's* stories provide another example of the often complicated and difficult patterns of movement and migration that would surround institutionalisation, including repeat stays at the Ballarat Children's Home.

### Relationship with Government and Community

The significant changes that were occurring at Ballarat Children's Home in the late 1960s and through the 1970s came in response to and alongside a broader shift in Victorian social policy towards deinstitutionalisation. This is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

Throughout this period of change there were at least three main, inter-related factors that helped entrench the co-dependent relationships between the State and the institution that had been established in the Ballarat Orphanage era, all played out against a background of ongoing financial crisis.

Firstly, Ballarat Children's Home's status as a local, independently resourced and supported organisation had diminished greatly. Local contributions to the institution were decreasing significantly and had been for years. In 1969 “charitable contributions” from the public accounted for just nine per cent of revenue – \$16,000.<sup>30</sup> With a major shift in its service model and a change of name, the institution was dealing with a local identity crisis as well as a financial crisis.

Secondly, Ballarat Children's Home was thoroughly dependent on the State. The institution had become almost exclusively a home for State wards, who were technically the responsibility of the State of Victoria. “Of the children in care here,” wrote Ballarat Children's Home Board President BH

<sup>25</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, Nos. 3589-3592. Cafs Collection.

<sup>26</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3696. Cafs Collection.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. and Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3710, p.92. Cafs Collection.

<sup>28</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3804, p. 102. Cafs Collection

<sup>29</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Admission Book, vol.3”, No. 3697, p. 90. Cafs Collection

<sup>30</sup> Report from Ballarat Children's Home to Hospitals and Charities Commission, included in Letter from Hospitals and Charities Commission to the Premier and Treasurer Sir Henry Bolte, 13 March 1970, VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

Floyd in 1969, “only two are privately placed, and 99% are Wards of the State.”<sup>31</sup> As outlined above in Chapter Three about Ballarat Orphanage, the State provided regular and reliable funding for each of these children – a reliable income source that had already changed the institution's strategic intent and position in its communities, and which meant it could not now go back to the community-funded model on which it was founded in the nineteenth century.

Thirdly, the State had become dependent on institutions like the Ballarat Children's Home. “[S]urely the Government must recognise”, noted the President during a Committee of Management meeting in 1970, “the position that will arise if we are unable to continue.”<sup>32</sup> While almost all of the children who lived in the Ballarat Children's Home were the responsibility of the State, the operation of the institution was mostly independent of the State, as described in Chapter Three above. Conditions and practices had been established gradually over a long period of time, so that the institutional environment for children and staff at the Ballarat Children's Home was quite different to that of State-run facilities. In short, Ballarat Children's Home, and the Ballarat Orphanage before it, operated on an even thinner shoestring than their State-run counterparts. Each child in the Ballarat Children's Home had just over \$17 a week spent on them to cover all costs of living, compared to more than \$36 per child in State-run facilities.<sup>33</sup> Put another way, to house a child in the Ballarat Children's Home cost the State less than half the amount it would have cost to accommodate them in its own facilities.

The service and infrastructure transformation of the 1960s had not been a cheap undertaking for the Ballarat Children's Home. Alongside this was another set of essential, but costly, changes. A new generation of “Social Workers” was being regulated and educated into existence. As welcome as this was, with an increase in skills came increased wages. Changes to industrial conditions in the late-1960s left the institution financially vulnerable, perhaps more vulnerable than ever before. In 1970 Ballarat Children's Home Committee President T.P. Guthrie summarised the problem in a quite matter-of-fact manner in the Annual Report: “The crux of the problem is that costs, especially wages, have increased sharply, but our income has not.”<sup>34</sup>

An early indication of the turmoil to follow came in April 1968, when the Children's Home Superintendent, Ray Jenkins, wrote to Mr Cremean, Chairman of the Victorian Hospital and Charities

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<sup>31</sup> Submission, Ballarat Children's Home to Hospitals and Charities Commission, 1969. Included as attachment to a letter from AT Evans MLA to Vance Dickie MLA, Health Minister, 1 April 1969. VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>32</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Minutes of the Board of Management Meeting” (25 February, 1970) s.1, v.12, 136

<sup>33</sup> “A comparison of costs for the financial year ended 30th June, 1968 shows that the Ballarat Children's Home saved the Government of Victoria \$183,658.” This figure, quoted in correspondence between local Ballarat member of State parliament Thomas Evans and the Health Minister Vance Dickie, was calculated using a comparison of “Cost per child per week (a) Family Welfare Division homes \$36.6; (b) Ballarat Children's Homes \$17.3. Difference \$19.”

Submission, Ballarat Children's Home to Hospitals and Charities Commission, 1969. Included as attachment to a letter from AT Evans MLA to Vance Dickie MLA, Health Minister, 1 April 1969. VPRS 4523-P-2-893. Emphasis in original

<sup>34</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, *Ballarat Children's Home 105th Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1970), 10. Cafs Collection.

Commission. "I wish to enquire whether the Commission would make available additional financial assistance from time to time on occasions when the Home has to meet long-service payments."<sup>35</sup> The institution was seeking direct financial assistance from the State to meet the growing financial commitments required to maintain a professional and engaged workforce. While the practice of providing Long Service Leave for workers was well-entrenched in public service employment, it was only gradually being introduced in non-government workplaces through the expansion of industrial agreements from the 1950s onwards.<sup>36</sup> The Commission's response was short, swift, and direct. "It is not the intention of the Commission to make additional financial assistance to meet long service payments. This would be precluded by shortage of funds alone".<sup>37</sup>

This straightforward knockback was just the start of a much more complex set of exchanges to follow relating to the industrial conditions of Ballarat Children's Home staff. From October 1968 a new wages award was applied to workers at the Ballarat Children's Home, known as the Hospital and Benevolent Homes Award.<sup>38</sup> This new award required the institution to increase wages for 27 staff, with more to follow as its remit expanded in years to come.<sup>39</sup> This would cost the Ballarat Children's Home an additional \$11,750 in 1968/69, and up to an additional \$28,000 annually in subsequent years.<sup>40</sup>

Over the succeeding months, countless letters, memos, minutes, reports, submissions and the like were exchanged between a range of organisations: Ballarat Children's Home, the National Bank, local members of State Parliament, the Hospitals and Charities Commission, the Children's Welfare Department, the Family Welfare Advisory Council, the Treasury, the Premier.<sup>41</sup> Ballarat Children's Home came very close to closing down. In February 1970, the Superintendent was instructed to "write to the Director of Family Welfare requesting advice on the correct procedure to be followed should the Board of Management decide that the Home will have to close as a private institution and be handed over to the Government".<sup>42</sup>

Though it was indeed a desperate situation, the interlocking obligations between State and institution meant that it was in both parties' interests to find a solution. It was a solution progressed

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<sup>35</sup> Letter from Superintendent Jenkins to Mr Cremean, Chairman Hospitals & Charities Commission (23 April, 1968). VPRS 4523-P-2-893

<sup>36</sup> Shauna Ferris et al., "Long Service Leave: Past, Present and Future " *Australian Journal of Actuarial Practice* 3 (2015).

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Mr Cremean to Superintendent Jenkins, 29 April 1968. PRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>38</sup> See Letter from Department of Labour and Industry to St John's Home for Boys & Girls, Canterbury (4 July, 1968). VPRS 4523-P-2-893. Also Letter from Superintendent Jenkins to MR Cremean Chairman Hospitals and Charities Commission (16 January, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Superintendent Jenkins to Mr Cremean Chairman Hospitals and Charities Commission, 16 January 1969. VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Commission Chair John Lindell to Health Minister Vance Dickie (13 March, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>41</sup> VPRS 4523-P-2-893; and Ballarat Children's Home, "Committee of Management Meeting Notes" (July 1969-June 1971). Cafs Collection.

<sup>42</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Committee of Management Meeting Notes" (25 February, 1970), 136. Cafs Collection.

in incremental compromises over a number of years. In 1969 the Hospitals and Charities Commissioner, John Cremean, in a letter to the Treasurer floated “the possibility of some minimal assistance in the current year”,<sup>43</sup> though he admitted that any amount would “be no more than a gesture ... in recognition of the need”.<sup>44</sup> Some months later the Ballarat Children's Home was given an additional \$6,000 maintenance grant, and a \$10,000 capital grant.<sup>45</sup>

Fully aware of the ineffectiveness of this measure, the Hospitals and Charities Commission continued to push the case to the Health Minister, the Chair writing in “desperation” for further funding.<sup>46</sup> This was not a crisis confined to Ballarat Children's Home. Children's institutions all over Victoria were experiencing similar pressures. “[Ballarat Children's Home] is in the same position as all children's homes”, wrote the Hospitals and Charities Commission Chair John Lindell in 1969, “... I cannot over-stress the serious financial situation which all of these homes face. I think we can expect an avalanche of similar requests in the near future”.<sup>47</sup>

In 1973 the Social Welfare Department<sup>48</sup> continued to point out that “Children's homes [across Victoria] ... are suffering from the levels of spiralling costs and increased wage levels for staff whom many are now employing in their endeavours to provide better and more comprehensive services”.<sup>49</sup> It warned that “[u]nless increased amounts are made available by way of grant or other payment, a number of these organisations will be forced to close their doors permanently.” This, the Department stressed, would be a dire outcome not only for the institution and its children, but for the State. “Should this happen, the Department will be required to take over many of their functions, doubtless at increased cost, and the variety and breadth of services available to the community will, in all probability, be reduced.”<sup>50</sup>

While the local community had long since been replaced as the main source of funding, as described in Chapter Three above, the Ballarat Children's Home still drew on community contributions and donations through ongoing subscriptions and, importantly, through regular public appeals. The 1968 Public Appeal had fallen well short of its target, raising just half of the \$60,000 it had sought from

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<sup>43</sup> Letter from Hospitals and Charities Commission Chair Mr Lindell to Health Minister Vance Dickie MLA (11 April, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893. Emphasis handwritten in pen.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Notes from Alec McLellan, Hospitals and Charities Commission, on visit to Ballarat Children's Home (13 June, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893

<sup>46</sup> “May I stress again that the Commission would appreciate your representations to the Treasurer for additional financial provision for these homes, in particular, in the financial maintenance allocation for 1969-70. The Commission has sought \$300,000 for this specific purpose and the need is becoming desperate, as you will see from this correspondence.” Letter from Hospitals and Charities Commission Chair Mr Lindell to Health Minister Vance Dickie MLA (11 April, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893. Emphasis handwritten in pen.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Commission Chair John Lindell to Health Minister Vance Dickie. (13 March, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>48</sup> The Social Welfare Department had been formed in 1970 under the provisions of the Social Welfare Act 1970 (No. 8089). See Find and Connect, “Social Welfare Department (1970-1978)”, <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000131>. Accessed 27 May 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Social Welfare Department, *Annual Report*, (Melbourne, 1973), 10

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

the Ballarat public.<sup>51</sup> It was a telling result, and one that did not brook much celebration. Superintendent Ray Jenkins thought that “this [was] a clear sign of public reaction to constant appeals being conducted in Ballarat.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1969 State Upper House Member for Western Victoria, Murray Byrne, who was based in Ballarat, appealed directly to the Premier and Treasurer, Sir Henry Bolte, vouching for the Ballarat Children's Home Board Members as “respectable public people”, who “are all known to you”. They were “frustrated because of the impossible financial position the Home finds itself in.” “I am afraid”, wrote Byrne, “I just don't know what to do other than to put this matter before you.”<sup>53</sup> The National Bank had been willing to grant the Children's Home an expanding overdraft over a period of many years previously, but was getting impatient, and frequently demanded that the institution's finances be controlled.<sup>54</sup> The Ballarat Children's Home was discovering the pressures of a corporatised community in which their local good standing and “respectability”, as Byrne characterised them, only got them so far.

The Ballarat Children's Home endured another year of crisis and tenacious campaigning. In April 1971 the Treasury agreed to provide a “special maintenance grant” of \$25,000 – “additional to the amount of \$71,000 being provided by the Commission for the Home this financial year.”<sup>55</sup> This did not provide a permanent solution to its financial difficulties, but was substantial enough to relieve pressure from the bank, keep the institution afloat, and keep the children in the Ballarat Children's Home.

The heavy advocacy performed by the Ballarat Children's Home helped highlight the issue of sustainability not just at a local Ballarat level, but statewide. The State was motivated to find a set of ongoing solutions, rather than rely on the ad hoc approach it had just been through. These changes would have a profound effect on the future of children's services in Victoria into the twenty-first

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<sup>51</sup> “Our recent ... Appeal for \$60,000”, wrote Superintendent RJH Jenkins in January 1969, “raised only \$30,000”. Letter from Superintendent Jenkins to MR Cremean Chairman Hospitals and Charities Commission (16 January, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893 (p. 21)

<sup>52</sup> RJH Jenkins, Letter to Hospitals and Charities Commission, (February, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Murray Byrne MLA to Premier and Treasurer Sir Henry Bolte MLA (10 December, 1969). VPRS 4523-P-2-893. Byrne's tenacity and commitment to the Ballarat Children's Home would be harnessed again several years later when he spearheaded the very successful Public Appeal in 1977.

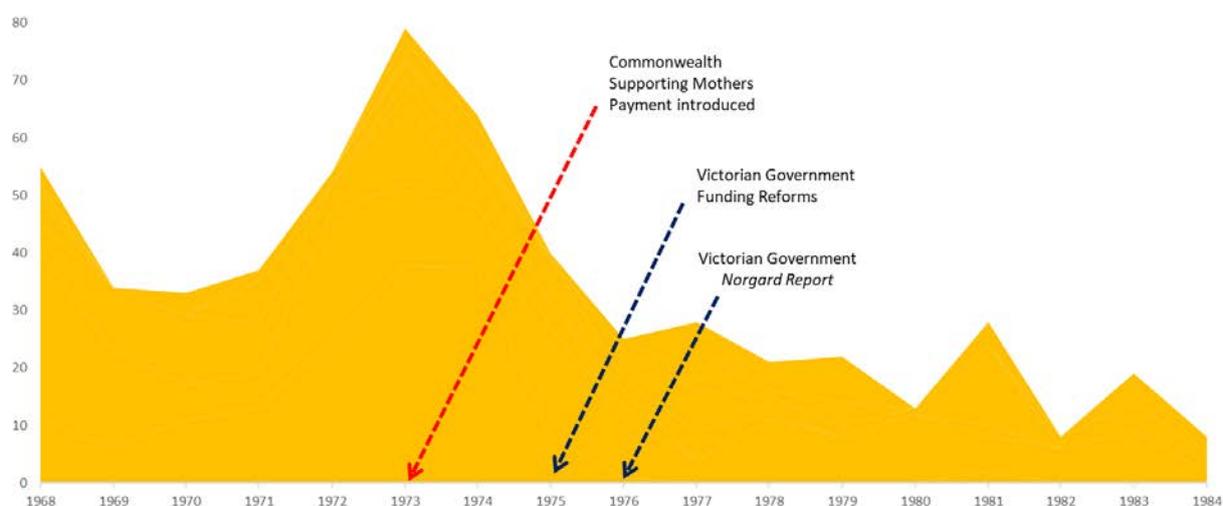
<sup>54</sup> Correspondence with the National Bank advising of overdraft increases date back to at least 1962, when the overdraft was increased from £8,000 to £10,000. Letter from National Bank Divisional Inspector Western Division to Chairman Hospitals and Charities Commission (11 May, 1962). By 1969, their patience had worn thinner. “We advise that the overdraft limit on the Home's account is due to reduce by at least \$20,000 on the 31st December and the Bank desires the arrangement made in June last year to be observed. You will recall that the increase in overdraft was approved as a temporary measure only and was to clear by increased government assistance.” From K. Todd, National Bank of Aust. Ltd., Ballarat, to the Secretary, Ballarat Children's Home, (1 December, 1969) VPRS 4523-P-2-893.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from E.W. Coates, Director of Finance, Department of Treasury to the Chairman, Hospitals and Charities Commission (29 March, 1971). VPRS 4523-P-2-893. \$71,000 in 1971 is roughly equivalent to roughly equivalent to \$775,000 in 2018 currency, according to the Reserve Bank of Australia, Inflation Calculator, <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html>. Accessed 23 October 2018.

century, reflecting further widespread change in the delivery of social services and the emergence of a “welfare state” in Australia.

The mid-1970s was a period of social change and policy reform. In addition to Child Endowment payments which had been available since 1942, in 1973 Gough Whitlam’s Commonwealth Government introduced the Supporting Mother’s Benefit, extending income support to single mothers previously only available to widows.<sup>56</sup> The significant difference, however, was that once a child had been made a State ward or otherwise institutionalised, Child Endowment payments went directly to the institution, such as the Ballarat Children’s Home, rather than the family. As discussed in Chapter Three above, it was essentially used as a de facto Commonwealth subsidy for the operation of Children’s Homes. The Supporting Mothers Benefit was aimed instead at preventing children from becoming State wards, by providing material support for families in vulnerable circumstances. There were now fewer orphans and children “relinquished” by their mothers into the State and institutional Care systems.<sup>57</sup> Commonwealth policy and welfare was now aimed at keeping children in the family home with mothers, rather than in the institutional system, and State wardship was no longer the default instrument of the state in family policy.<sup>58</sup>

**Chart 4.1. Children entering Ballarat Children's Home 1968-1984<sup>59</sup>**



Along with these broader national reforms, in 1976 the Victorian Government released its Report into Child Care Services in Victoria, known as the Norgard Report. It recommended that “separation of children from their parents is to be avoided”, through the provision of “adequate

<sup>56</sup> Kim Bond, Susan Devereux, and Jie Wang, “A Short Genealogy of Income Support Payments,” in *Research FaCS Sheet*, ed. Department of Families and Community Services (Canberra: Department of Families and Community Services, 2001).

<sup>57</sup> Penglase, *Orphans of the Living : Growing up in Care in Twentieth-Century Australia*, 18.

<sup>58</sup> Lois Bryson, *Welfare and the State : Who Benefits?* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> From analysis of Ballarat Children's Home, “Admissions Book, vol.2”, (1968-1984). Cafs Collection.

supportive services ... within the community".<sup>60</sup> Its findings were to shape the ongoing transformation of Ballarat Children's Home, towards the broad-based multi-service agency it was to become in the 1980s.

As can be seen in Chart 4.1, the number of new admissions to Ballarat Children's Home dropped rapidly from around 1973, when the Supporting Mothers Payment was introduced. After 1976 and the Norgard Reforms, the number of children being referred to Ballarat Children's Home from Victoria's largest State-run institution – Allambie – fell away almost completely.<sup>61</sup> As discussed above, from 1968 to 1976, 49 per cent of all children came to Ballarat Children's Home from Allambie. From 1976 onwards, only another eleven children would come to the Ballarat Children's Home from Allambie.

At around the same time, in 1975 the State updated its funding formulas so that institutions such as Ballarat Children's Home received revenue that was tied to its staffing levels, rather than just the number of State wards it accommodated. "The subsidy provides for 90% of staff salary costs plus an additional per capita rate" with "[a]djustments ... made as salary costs increase."<sup>62</sup> This was both a response to and spur towards the further professionalisation of the community services sector workforce, acknowledging the sharp increase in staff costs since the introduction of award wages. This was an important moment for the institution and the social services sector in Victoria. It was when the State acknowledged in practice that service delivery to children need not be linked directly to providing consolidated accommodation for State wards, but to resourcing staff to develop and implement flexible programs, and it acknowledged, too, that formal Care demanded rigorous standards and trained staff. This emphasis would lead towards the emergence of new service-based, rather than residential-based, models in the coming years. It also further entrenched the community sector's dependence on State funding. In the short term though, in the words of Ballarat Children's Home President A.E. Mills in the 1976 Annual Report, it certainly "assisted this Home in particular to meet [its] financial commitments".<sup>63</sup>

Even so, the Ballarat Children's Home's financial difficulties persisted. "The average cost per child is now \$68.00 per week", pointed out the 1976 Annual Report, "nearly double the cost experienced in 1973-74", with "[t]he Annual cost to run the Home now exceed[ing] a half million dollars."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria, *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria*, ed. Victoria Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services in, et al., Parliamentary Paper (Victoria. Parliament) ; (Melbourne: C. H. Rixon, Government Printer, 1976), 125.

<sup>61</sup> From 1977 to 1984 fewer than ten more children would come to Ballarat Children's Home from Allambie. Between 1968 and 1976, 179 children had come from there. From analysis of Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, vol.2" (1973-1975). Cafs Collection.

<sup>62</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, 1976, *One hundred and eleventh Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1976), 6. Cafs Collection.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

As the role of Ballarat Children's Home changed significantly after the mid-1970s, it was faced with the task of defining and communicating its altering identity to its local communities. Committee President Rex Hollioake reflected candidly in the 1977 Annual Report: "The future role of Ballarat Children's Home in this community has still largely to be determined."<sup>65</sup>

It was a remarkable public acknowledgment of vulnerability by the president of an organisation that had been operating locally for 112 years. Hollioake went on to signal further significant changes that were coming to the institution's service models, and pointing towards the kind of de-institutionalisation that Superintendent Jenkins and the Board had been at pains to avoid in the late 1960s:

[T]he Home will continue to provide residential care for many years to come but *on a much smaller scale...* [We] will support the community *in whatever manner possible...* With this thought in mind the Home faces a challenge as great, if not greater, than the challenge that the Ballarat Orphan Asylum faced in 1865, the Home's foundation year."<sup>66</sup>

If Hollioake sounded downbeat, it was perhaps understandable. With all the recent changes to the institution, in name and in the way it operated, there was even more confusion in the public mind about the institution's role locally than there had been in 1969 during that year's disastrous public appeal. The 1977 Appeal was particularly crucial, not only financially but to define the institution's purpose and position in Ballarat and beyond.

In July 1977 Ballarat Children's Home set itself an ambitious fundraising target, aiming to raise \$150,000 in three months – roughly equivalent to nearly \$850,000 in 2019 currency.<sup>67</sup> The 1977 Appeal – called 'Be a Child Helper' was launched with the specific purpose of purchasing further Family Group Homes in Ballarat, in support of the shifting service models away from institutional Care and towards a more community-based Care model. Changing beliefs in the way that residential care should occur came to impact on the day-to-day operations of Ballarat Children's Home, as they attempted to keep up with and stay ahead of emerging Care and business models.

An Appeal Campaign office was opened on the corner of Albert and Sturt Streets, led by Appeal Chairman and by-now former local MP Murray Byrne, using his profile and connections to amplify his role as an advocate for the institution.<sup>68</sup> Organisation after organisation donated, ran

<sup>65</sup> R.T. Hollioake, "President's Report", *Ballarat Children's Home 112th Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1977), 9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>67</sup> \$150,000 in 1977 is worth an equivalent value of approximately \$840,000 in 2018 in 2018 currency, according to the Reserve Bank of Australia, Inflation Calculator. Australian Inflation Calculator, <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html>

<sup>68</sup> Courier, Nov 7 2012, "State Funeral for Ballarat Political and legal identity Murray Byrne", <http://www.thecourier.com.au/story/763072/state-funeral-for-ballarat-political-and-legal-identity-murray-byrne>. Accessed 14 July 2018.

fundraising events, and lined up for photo shoots to display their generosity.<sup>69</sup> The Appeal broadened well beyond Ballarat, with press releases distributed to fifteen radio stations, seven TV stations, and thirty-two newspapers, covering a wide Victorian and even national base.<sup>70</sup> Barely a day went by, over the three months of the Appeal from August 1977, in which the newspapers of Ballarat and the region did not include some story, photograph or mini-feature on the Appeal and the money it was raising. It became a time of colour and celebration for the Ballarat Children's Home, with innovative fundraising methods sitting alongside tried, true, and to our modern eyes, anachronistically dated techniques.<sup>71</sup> In all, "more than 200 groups and organisations took part", raising well in excess of the targeted \$150,000.<sup>72</sup>

The 1977 Appeal did not put an end to the institution's financial problems, nor did it shift the organisation's continued dependence on the State.<sup>73</sup> The Appeal did, however, serve a number of other crucial functions for the institution. If Committee President Hollioake was unsure of Ballarat Children's Home's status in its local community in February 1977, by September the 'Be a Child Helper' Appeal had provided a happy reminder of the positive regard in which the organisation was held. It signalled publicly an openness to change and flexibility that would come to characterise the coming years. It showed that a clear funding goal and a sustained, creative and original public relations campaign could provide a new connection to the community that was missing at the beginning of the Ballarat Children's Home era. Superintendent Jenkins may have been correct back in 1969 in his initial assessment that the Ballarat public had grown weary of repeated public appeals. However, as the contrasting response to the 1977 Appeal showed, perhaps it was not so much the volume of Appeals that was the problem, but rather the ability of those Appeals to connect the public to a coherent and relatable message.

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<sup>69</sup> For instance, the Buninyong and Mt Helen Lions Club donated \$250 raised from a White Elephant Sale – what would probably be known today as a Garage Sale. Not to be outdone, the Ballarat Lions Club ran a "dogathon", which was claimed to be "the first of its kind in Australia", in which dog owners paid a small fee to walk their companions around Lake Wendouree, and to participate in dog obedience trials. *Ballarat Courier*, 6 August 1977. The Eureka Apex Club held a 'monster auction' that raised \$600. *Ballarat Courier*, 26 November, 1977. The Ballarat Italian Association held a dance, the entire proceeds going towards the Ballarat Children's Home Appeal. *The News*, August 3, 1977. Mt Clear Technical High School raised \$256 by making a 170-metre-long line of 2c pieces. *Ballarat Courier*, 7 December, 1977. A number of concerts were held, and even songs written, *Ballarat Courier*, 26 July, 1977; *Ballarat Courier*, 1 August, 1977.

<sup>70</sup> Including media outlets in Colac, Horsham, Bendigo, Hamilton, Warrnambool, Portland, Maryborough, Ararat, Stawell, Daylesford, Geelong, Castlemaine, Creswick, Camperdown, St Arnaud, Woodend, Sunbury, Ballan, Bacchus Marsh, Mt Gambier, Warracknabeal, Donald, Echuca, Werribee, Melbourne and the Australian newspaper. Ballarat Children's Home, "Media for potential Queen Quest", Press release (Ballarat, 1977 – exact date unknown). Cafs Collection.

<sup>71</sup> A new Chrysler was donated by a local dealership as a prize for the "Queen of the Home" competition, which was won by nineteen-year-old Robyn Kors, continuing a fundraising tradition at the Children's Homes stretching back at least to the 1933 Orphanage "Queen Carnival".

<sup>72</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Media for potential Queen Quest", Press release (Ballarat, 22 February, 1978). Cafs Collection.

<sup>73</sup> "I might mention", reminded Victorian Premier Rupert Hamer as he handed over a cheque for \$10,000 for the Appeal, "that my Government already subsidises some 90% of the home's wages and about 60% of all other costs." *Courier*, (Ballarat, 5 August 1977); *Courier*, (Ballarat, 30 July 1977).

The institution was heading into a new service future in which it was prepared to provide support in “whatever manner possible”, as Hollioake had indicated. The 1977 Appeal provided impetus and confidence for the institution to evolve further into a multi-program, broad-based family support organisation in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

### Conclusion: planning for a new service future

In 1977, as the Appeal was being carried out, the Ballarat Children's Home “Forward Plan” included six more family group homes,<sup>74</sup> whereby children would be accommodated in houses outside the Victoria Street Campus. It also identified the need for further services outside the institutional setting, “over the next three years”: “a boys hostel, an attendance centre, a treatment centre, a family aide programme, a pre-school programme, .... emergency overnight shelter for families and an after school program.”<sup>75</sup> In the coming years a Budgeting Support Service and Youth Support Unit would also be added to the services delivered by – not *at* – Ballarat Children's Home.<sup>76</sup> New staff were being recruited into specialist roles, rather than as House Parents, forming a new generation of young, professionally qualified workers for the organisation.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Minutes of Forward Planning Meeting” (15 August, 1977). Cafs Collection.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> For instance, in March 1980 Catherine Laffey was appointed as “Budget Advisor”, with a broad-based and community-focussed role aimed at preventing family breakdown. Ballarat Children's Home, “Superintendent's Report” (17 March, 1980), s.1 v.15. Cafs Collection.

**Chart 4.6. Ballarat Children's Home. Number & location of Children in residential Care, 1977-1984**

As these new programs were being rolled out, the number of children accommodated at the consolidated Victoria St campus of the Ballarat Children's Home steadily declined. Indeed, the number of children in residential institutions across Victoria was also declining. The number of Victorian children classified as State wards based in independent community-based children's institutions across the state had more than halved in less than a decade, from 2,488 in 1972,<sup>78</sup> to 1,159 in 1980.<sup>79</sup>

In 1977 there were 105 children at Ballarat Children's Home, 81 per cent of them at the cottages of 200 Victoria St, 19 per cent in the newly established Family Group Homes. By 1980, there were sixty-nine children at Ballarat Children's Home, with 58 per cent at Victoria Street. In 1984, there were no children living at the Victoria St Campus, and twenty-eight living in Family Group Homes.<sup>80</sup> (See Chart 4.6.) The transformation of the Ballarat Children's Home, from a consolidated residential "total institution" to a multi-site, early intervention and support organisation, was complete.

<sup>78</sup> Social Welfare Department, "Table 5: Family Welfare Division and Youth Welfare Division, Trends in Location of Wards, 1972-1976", *Annual Report: Year ended 30 June 1976*, (Melbourne, 1976) 59.

<sup>79</sup> Department of Community Welfare Services, "Statistical Tables - Table 3: Regional Services Division & Family and Adolescent Services Division, Trends in Location of Wards, From 1976-1980" (Melbourne, 1981) 10. See row titled "Approved Children's Homes".

<sup>80</sup> Adapted from data available through Ballarat Children's Home, "Superintendent's Report" (20 October, 1977 & 17 March, 1980); and Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *120th Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1985) 13. Cafs Collection.

As the Ballarat Children's Home Board articulated in 1980, while it made plans for transitioning away from a long era of total institutionalisation, "continuing the use of the [200 Victoria Street] campus is not feasible in the light of current needs and trends."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Meeting of the Board Executive (and other Board Members) To Discuss the Possible Sale of the Campus Complex and Other Options", (19 August, 1980), s.1, v.16. Cafs Collection.

## Chapter Five: Storylines: Aboriginal experiences of policy at the Ballarat Children’s Home, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and beyond

Before Colonisation, Aboriginal nations, including the Wautharang and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples in what is now known as Ballarat and its surrounds, had no need for formalised systems of child care and welfare. As highlighted in Chapter One, local Aboriginal Children were at the centre of social structures, with intricate and extensive kinship networks that made sure that children had people around them to parent and protect them.<sup>1</sup> After colonisation – particularly in the mid-twentieth century – Aboriginal children from all around Victoria and Australia came to live at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and the Ballarat Children’s Home. The exact number of Aboriginal children who stayed at the institution is not known, as comprehensive and accurate records have not been kept, or retained by the institution. It is thought that the first Aboriginal children entered the institution in 1935,<sup>2</sup> though it is possible that some were part of the institution’s earlier population.

As home to hundreds of Aboriginal children over its life as a consolidated residential institution for children, the institutions that are now known as Cafs were key participants in the policies of Assimilation carried out by the Victorian state. There is evidence that the institutions at the time were resistant to some of the ideas and principles of the Assimilation era, especially in the Ballarat Orphanage. The Orphanage welcomed anti-Assimilation activists, and enabled those advocates and activists to form relationships with Aboriginal children and provide for their particular needs. In the Ballarat Children’s Home era there are many examples of young Aboriginal people leaving the Care of the institution and into the emerging network of Aboriginal-controlled organisations established for the advancement of Aboriginal people around Melbourne in particular.

The experiences of losing connection to family and culture were not unique to Aboriginal children in these institutions. However, as the “Bringing Them Home Report” outlines, the terms under which many Aboriginal children came to be removed from their families into institutions such as those being studied distinguishes their experiences. That is to say, “[i]n contrast with the removal of non-Indigenous children, proof of “neglect” was not always required before an Indigenous child could be removed. Their Aboriginality would suffice.”<sup>3</sup> This chapter describes the ways in which these experiences of removal and institutionalisation, which stand as part of the shameful national legacies

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<sup>1</sup> Nell Musgrove, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia Just Like a Family?* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 8.

<sup>2</sup> See Cafs, “Timeline”, Legacy and Research Centre Exhibition Space (2015).

<sup>3</sup> Australia, *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, 9.

of the policy era that produced what are now known as the “Stolen Generations”, occurred at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home.

### Aboriginal child institutionalisation in Victoria in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: from “Protection” to “Assimilation” to “Self-Determination”

In 1860 the Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines was established, and its powers to dictate where and how Aboriginal people could live and work were legislated and strengthened in 1869 with the *Aborigines’ Protection Act* and subsequent regulations passed in 1871.<sup>4</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two above, settler pastoral expansion in the early Colonial period of the 1830s and ‘40s was characterised by the dispossession of Indigenous people and the disruption of traditional family structures.<sup>5</sup> The policies of “protection” involved in broad terms the continuation or establishment of Reserves where Aboriginal communities would live and work together, and the provision of supplies and rations for Aboriginal people who did not live in Reserves, to be supplied by a network of Stations, where the Protection Board’s representatives were responsible for distributing goods to and reporting on the conditions of local Aboriginal communities.<sup>6</sup>

By the time the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was founded in 1866 there were at least seventeen Missions or Stations in operation around Victoria, of varying size.<sup>7</sup> Larger Missions and Reserves were operating under the Protection Board’s control: in Coranderrk near Healesville, Lake Hindmarsh in the north-west, Lake Wellington in Gippsland; and a large Station at Framlingham in the south-west was on its way to becoming a Reserve.<sup>8</sup> Smaller Stations were dotted around the Colony, including at Lake Tyers in Gippsland, which would also develop into a larger Reserve, Bacchus Marsh, Geelong, Carngham and Buangor in Western Victoria, and many more, especially along the Murray River.<sup>9</sup> Many of these had been established in the 1830s and ‘40s, along with other Stations, Protectorates and Missions that did not survive, such as the Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate Station located at Mt Franklin near Daylesford, which disbanded in 1848.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Find and Connect, “Central Board for the Protection for Aborigines (1869-1900), <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000425>. Accessed 19 August 2019. See also *An Act to provide for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria* (Victoria) 1869.

<sup>5</sup> Jessie Mitchell, “Country Belonging to Me: Land and Labour on Aboriginal Missions and Protectorate Stations, 1830-1850,” *Eras* 6 (2004), <http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/eras/country-belonging-to-me-land-and-labour-on-aboriginal-missions-and-protectorate-stations-1830-1850/>. Accessed 23 October 2019.

<sup>6</sup> As described in Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*, 1st ed.. ed. (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Reports to the Aborigines Protection Board in 1866 were received from Corranderrk, Lake Hindmarsh, Lake Wellington, Framlingham, Yelta, Lake Tyers, Geelong, Bacchus Marsh, Carngham, Mount Shadwell, Buangor, Carr’s Plains, Sandford, Tangambalanga, Echuca, Gunbower, and Tyntyndyer. Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, “Fifth Report of the Central Board Appointed to Watch over the Interests of the Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria,” (1866).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Reports to the Aborigines Protection Board in 1866 were received from Coranderrk, Lake Hindmarsh, Lake Wellington, Framlingham, Yelta, Lake Tyers, Geelong, Bacchus Marsh, Carngham, Mount Shadwell, Buangor, Carr’s Plains, Sandford, Tangambalanga, Echuca, Gunbower, and Tyntyndyer. *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*, 115.

Under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1886* and subsequent regulations, “half-caste” Aboriginal children could be removed from their families, whether on Reserves or not, made wards of the State, and sent to government institutions or boarded out with other families.<sup>11</sup> As we have seen in Chapters One and Two above, the Orphan Asylum was established “in contradistinction” to the policies and mechanisms that had already been established by the Victorian colony to accommodate children. There is no evidence that indicates any interaction between the Protection Board’s Reserves and Stations, and the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, whether any Aboriginal children lived at the Orphan Asylum, nor whether any particular consideration was given to issues relating to Aboriginal children in Ballarat or its region. As with the network of Industrial and Reform Schools established under the *Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act 1864* and subsequent variations, it appears that the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum saw itself as operating in parallel with Aboriginal policies, not within them.

As the nineteenth century developed, a more consolidated network of Aboriginal Reserves would emerge.<sup>12</sup> Framlingham Mission, approximately 150km south-west of Ballarat, near Warrnambool; Lake Condah Mission, approximately 300km south-west of Ballarat, near Portland; Ebenezer Mission at Lake Hindmarsh, approximately 300km north-west of Ballarat; Cummeragunja Mission about 250km north of Ballarat on the Murray River, and Corranderrk Station; and Lake Tyers Mission. These would become places of great significance for many Aboriginal communities in Victoria, and for many of the Aboriginal children of the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home. The Cummeragunja Mission in Yorta Yorta country, on the Murray River near the town of Barmah, also played a significant role in the stories of many Aboriginal children at the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home, as will be discussed below.

By 1923 only one Reserve remained under the Victorian Protection Board’s direction, at Lake Tyers.<sup>13</sup> The Protection Board refused to help anyone who was not under their control at Lake Tyers Reserve. This left hundreds of Aboriginal people without government welfare assistance, on top of their experiences of discrimination in employment and housing. In these circumstances many Aboriginal communities either migrated to Melbourne, or lived in “shanty towns” on the outskirts of former missions and settlements that offered employment, such as the communities at Mooroopna near the fruit-picking orchards of Shepparton and the Goulburn Valley.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1930s Australian policy towards Aboriginal populations began to shift towards what would be characterised as a period of attempted “Assimilation” of Aboriginal populations into the

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<sup>11</sup> Australia, *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*.

<sup>13</sup> *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

prevailing worldviews and characteristics of broader Australian society.<sup>15</sup> In 1937 the Conference of Chief Protectors and Boards in Canberra made a resolution that it “believes that the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin ... lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end”.<sup>16</sup>

After long histories of institutionalisation, resistance and community-building at the sites of the former missions and elsewhere,<sup>17</sup> by the mid twentieth-century less than 200 people were under the Protection Board’s control.<sup>18</sup> The “welfare” of Aboriginal children in Victoria had shifted towards the larger network of children’s institutions, such as the Ballarat Orphanage, with the establishment of the *Aborigines Act 1957*, which replaced the Aborigines Protection Board with the Aborigines Welfare Board.<sup>19</sup> Though the Aborigines Welfare Board did not have the power to remove children from families, it could notify police if it had concerns about particular children, who could then act upon those concerns by removing them from their families. In 1956 more than 150 Victorian Aboriginal children were living in children’s institutions across Victoria. Most of these children had been “seized by police and charged in the Children’s Court with ‘being in need of care and protection’”,<sup>20</sup> and they included many children at the Ballarat Orphanage.

The 1967 Constitutional Referendum<sup>21</sup> changed the status of Aboriginal people in the Commonwealth Constitution so that the States no longer had sole responsibility for their welfare.<sup>22</sup> It prompted the abolition of the Victorian Aborigines Welfare Board and ushered in the *Aboriginal Affairs Act 1967*.<sup>23</sup> Even so, the number of Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families increased in Victoria, from 220 in 1973 to 350 in 1976.<sup>24</sup> Many of these children would come through the Ballarat Children’s Home.

In the early 1970s the policies of “Assimilation” were actively dismantled in favour of “self-determination”, including the introduction of the capacity for Aboriginal communities to incorporate

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<sup>15</sup> John Gardiner-Garden, "From Dispossession to Reconciliation," Parliament of Australia, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp9899/99Rp27#twentieth](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp9899/99Rp27#twentieth). Accessed 19 August 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, "Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities," in *Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1937), 3.

<sup>17</sup> See for instance Giordano Nanni and Andrea James, *Coranderrk : We Will Show the Country* (Canberra, ACT: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2013). Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*.

<sup>18</sup> See Gregory Lyons, "Official Policy Towards Victorian Aborigines, 1957-1974," *Aboriginal History* 7 (1983): 62.

<sup>19</sup> Find and Connect, "Aborigines Welfare Board (1957-1959)". <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000434>. Accessed 19 August 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Diane Elizabeth Barwick, "A Little More Than Kin: Regional Affiliation and Group Identity among Aboriginal Migrants in Melbourne," (1963): 294.

<sup>21</sup> Across the Commonwealth 91 per cent of voters voted in favour of Constitutional change. In Victoria 95 per cent voted in favour, the highest “Yes” vote of all States. Figures cited in Matthew Thomas, "The 1967 Referendum," Parliamentary Library, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/FlagPost/2017/May/The\\_1967\\_Referendum](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2017/May/The_1967_Referendum). Accessed 19 August 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Gardiner-Garden, "From Dispossession to Reconciliation".

<sup>23</sup> Australia, *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*.

<sup>24</sup> Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, late 1970s. Quoted in *ibid.*, 58.

for the conduct of their own affairs.<sup>25</sup> Aboriginal-controlled agencies were established in Victoria in the 1970s and 1980s, building on significant advocacy and campaigning work throughout the twentieth century, such as that conducted by the Australian Aboriginal Advancement League in established 1932.<sup>26</sup> These included Statewide bodies such as the Victorian Aboriginal Law Service (VALS), Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL), and locally the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), established in 1979. Through advocacy, case work and policy reform these agencies contributed to a significant reduction in the number of Aboriginal children placed in children's homes in the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>27</sup> though Aboriginal children did continue to come to the Ballarat Children's Home. For many of them, this burgeoning network of Aboriginal-controlled organisations became an additional support, encouraging onward migration from Ballarat to Melbourne and the Aboriginal population and service hubs that formed in its inner northern suburbs. This was no guarantee of success for them, and many continued to have challenging life circumstances into this new era of Aboriginal policy and self-determination.

This chapter will go on to outline how the policies and approaches to Aboriginal children were enacted through the Ballarat Children's Home and Ballarat Orphanage. In the storylines of children's and adults' lives we can see policies and attitudes regarding Aboriginal children develop and unfold. From the "protectionist" missions of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, to Aboriginal settlements around former missions and other urban and regional communities in the twentieth century, to experiences in the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home and other institutions in the broader statewide children's Care network, and on to self-managed facilities and service hubs of the 1970s and 1980s, Aboriginal children and families of these Ballarat institutions have been affected at every turn. In particular, the active participation in – and resistance to – the policies of Assimilation by Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home provide a tangible background upon which contemporary efforts at Reconciliation must be enacted for the contemporary organisation known as Cafs.

### Assimilation in Action at the Ballarat Orphanage: the *Reed* family

As has been done throughout this thesis, an illustrative example based on the inferred experiences of those who lived at the institution will help demonstrate and frame some of the key issues that are addressed in this chapter. On 13 March 1940, Yorta Yorta woman *Edwina Nolan* from

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<sup>25</sup> Subsequent Liberal-National Governments would update the concept of "Self-Determination" to "Self-Management" and "Self Sufficiency." Gardiner-Garden, "From Dispossession to Reconciliation".

<sup>26</sup> Aboriginal Advancement League, "A Victorian Aboriginal Tradition". [http://aal.org.au/HOME/HOME\\_01.html](http://aal.org.au/HOME/HOME_01.html). Accessed 19 August 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Australia, *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, 58-9.

Mooroopna had a daughter called *Christine Reed*.<sup>28</sup> *Christine* entered the Ballarat Orphanage aged six on 9 May 1946, followed by her older sister *Betty* in 1947,<sup>29</sup> and their younger brother *Ian* in 1950.<sup>30</sup> The Ballarat Orphanage simply recorded *Christine* as having been referred to the institution through the “Welfare Department”.<sup>31</sup>

*Christine*, as it turned out, was a gifted singer. Between the ages of twelve and sixteen, she placed either first or second in singing and acting categories at the South Street Eisteddfod in Ballarat, specialising mainly in choral singing.<sup>32</sup> Her talent was identified as early as 1951, when an adjudicator from the St. John’s Competitions<sup>33</sup> noted that he “anticipated that *Christine Reed*, who did so well at the recent competitions, has every prospect of making her mark as a singer”.<sup>34</sup>

In 1954 *Christine* sang as a soloist leading a choir of over 1,000 people at City Oval in Ballarat to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II’s visit to the Begonia Festival, singing “two new songs inspired by the Queen’s visit”.<sup>35</sup> In December 1956, *Christine* left the Ballarat Orphanage, to live with foster parents in Coburg, Melbourne.<sup>36</sup> By 1959 she was studying full-time at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music,<sup>37</sup> and appeared at a Royal Garden Party and Ball in Melbourne, in honour of Princess Alexandra – Queen Elizabeth II’s cousin – who was on a national tour of Australia. The Ballarat Orphanage Ladies’ Auxiliary subsidised her outfit for the evening.<sup>38</sup>

As well as being a student at the Melbourne Music Conservatorium, *Christine* was part of the Aboriginal Moomba Choir.<sup>39</sup> Here she sang alongside the famous Harold Blair,<sup>40</sup> regarded as a pioneer among Aboriginal artists pursuing mainstream musical careers, particularly in opera.<sup>41</sup> From a young age through the 1950s, *Christine Reed* was a regular feature in Aboriginal celebrations in Melbourne. On 30 January 1954 the Melbourne *Argus* reported on a “native choir ... at a special Australia Day

<sup>28</sup> Children’s Department, “Information Form”, 9 May 1946. Cafs Collection.

<sup>29</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Admission Book, vol.2”, No. 2453. Cafs Collection.

<sup>30</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Admission Book, vol.2”, No. 2284. Cafs Collection.

<sup>31</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Admission Book, vol.2”, No.2439. Cafs Collection.

<sup>32</sup> *Argus*, 16 September, 1952, 5; *Argus*, 25 September, 1953, 9; *Argus*, 25 September, 1954, 19; *Argus*, 24 September, 1955, *Argus*, 11 October, 1956, 3.

<sup>33</sup> The St. John’s Competitions were for younger children, and were seen as preparation for those who wanted to enter the more prestigious South Street Competitions in Ballarat. See Amy Young, “An interview with Amy Young”, [http://www.hulballarat.org.au/cb\\_pages/files/An%20interview%20with%20Mrs%20Amy%20%20Young%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.hulballarat.org.au/cb_pages/files/An%20interview%20with%20Mrs%20Amy%20%20Young%20(1).pdf) Accessed 11 May 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (March-April 1951), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>35</sup> *Age*, 10 March 1954, 3

<sup>36</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Admission Book, vol.2”, No. 2241. Cafs Collection.

<sup>37</sup> Ballarat Orphanage Ladies’ Auxiliary, “Meeting Notes” (3 September, 1959). Cafs Collection.

<sup>38</sup> “Through the generosity of Mrs Geo. White and other well-wishers, only one third of the cost of Christine’s wardrobe was outstanding ... it was agreed that this be met by the auxiliary, the amount involved being £10.” Ballarat Orphanage Ladies’ Auxiliary, Meeting Notes (3 September, 1959), 8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>39</sup> *Northcote Leader Budget*, 30 January 1957, 7

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 & 7

<sup>41</sup> Alan T. Duncan, ‘Blair, Harold (1924–1976)’, Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/blair-harold-9520/text16761>, published first in hardcopy 1993, accessed online 9 February 2018.

service at the Churches of Christ Aborigines' Mission, Fitzroy ... Soloist will be *Christine Reed*, a 13 year-old aborigine."<sup>42</sup> In 1956 she was described in the *Argus* as "*Christine Reed*, the aboriginal contralto", suggesting a level of local fame.<sup>43</sup>

These Aboriginal Australia Day events were led by Aboriginal communities in Fitzroy and Northcote on the first Sunday after January 26, and were intended to show solidarity and common cause between Aboriginal and settler Australians. The general public were invited to hear from Pastor Doug Nicholls,<sup>44</sup> the famous Aboriginal leader and activist, with impassioned and compelling arguments for Aboriginal equality and shared citizenship. In 1957 the local newspaper in Northcote reported that "[t]he crowd soundly applauded Pastor Doug Nichols when he suggested, as his theme, that the bridge between white and aboriginal inhabitants should be bridged".<sup>45</sup> These are the Aboriginal-led foundations of what is now known as "Reconciliation" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia.

The Orphanage was also connected to the movements that resisted Assimilation and were committed to the advancement of Aboriginal lives. It fostered active relationships with respected activists for Aboriginal rights in Victoria, such as Cora Gilsenan-Waters<sup>46</sup> and Anna Vroland.<sup>47</sup> Vroland in particular developed close relationships with individual Aboriginal children at the Ballarat Orphanage, responding to their needs and connecting them with family. "I got a letter from my grandmother yesterday," wrote a child from the Ballarat Orphanage in 1950 to Vroland, "and she said she got a letter from you."<sup>48</sup> "Do you ever write to untie [sic] Dora", wrote another in 1950, "if you do tell her to write to me." *Christine's* brother *Ian Reed* wrote politely and persistently to Vroland in 1952, enquiring about a bicycle that had been promised to him. "I am saving up to buy a bike", he wrote, because most of the boys who go to the Tech [School] have a bike."<sup>49</sup> A month later: "I have

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<sup>42</sup> *Argus*, 30 January, 1954, 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Argus*, 28 January, 1956, 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Argus*, 30 January, 1954, 8; *Age*, 30 January, 1954, 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Northcote Leader Budget*, 30 January, 1957), 1 & 7. Collected through Darebin Heritage, [http://heritage.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au/Assets/Files/A-JANUARY\[10\]\[11\]\[12\].PDF](http://heritage.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au/Assets/Files/A-JANUARY[10][11][12].PDF). Accessed 9 January, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (July-August, 1950), s.1 v.8. (November-January, 1951-1952), s.1, v.8. (July-August, 1954), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection. Alick Jackomos described Cora Gilsenan as a "great worker with the Aboriginal people at Lake Tyers", who "organised the first Aboriginal debutante ball ever to be held in Victoria". "Alick Jackomos (1924 to 1999)," National Museum of Australia, [https://indigenousrights.net.au/people/pagination/alick\\_jackomos](https://indigenousrights.net.au/people/pagination/alick_jackomos). Accessed 25 October, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> See Anna Vroland letters, National Library of Australia. MS 3991 Folder 20. It is possible that prominent Yorta Yorta woman Elizabeth Morgan, who would go on to establish the first Indigenous Women's Refuge in Australia in the 1970s, and become Director of the Aborigines Advancement League, was also directly involved with the children. One Ballarat Orphanage girl signed off a letter to Anna Vroland's collection in 1950 with "Love ... to you Mrs Vroland, Miss Gilsenan and Miss Morgan." Letter to Anna Vroland, 4 February 1950. National Library of Australia MS 3991 Folder 20, 12. See also Leonarda Kovacic, "Hoffman, Elizabeth Maud (1927-2009)," National Foundation for Australian Women, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0962b.htm>. Accessed 25 October 2019; and Sitarani Kerin, *An Attitude of Respect: Anna Vroland and Aboriginal Rights, 1947-1957* (Department of History, Monash University, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> "Murray and Eileen" to Anna Vroland, (2 March, 1950), National Library of Australia, MS 3991 Folder 20.

<sup>49</sup> Letter to Anna Vroland (24 April, 1952), National Library of Australia, MS 3991 Folder 20.

not received the bike yet ... I suppose I have written back too soon but I am very anxious to get it.... I will be very happy when I get it. Tell the man I said thanks very much for giving it to me.”<sup>50</sup> These examples and others give an indication of the extent to which anti-Assimilation activists were involved directly in assisting children of the Orphanage, signifying a level of familiarity and regularity of contact.

Some of the Aboriginal children would go to special concerts and performances, such as in 1956 when the Superintendent reported that “[a] number of our aboriginal children were taken to the Celebrity Concert presented by Mr Harold Blair, at the Creswick Town Hall.”<sup>51</sup> Blair’s tour was in support of raising funds for the establishment of an Aboriginal Girls Hostel in Melbourne.<sup>52</sup> In 1957 the Ballarat Orphanage Board of Management made a note of congratulations to Pastor Doug Nicholls on having been made “[a] Member ... of the British Empire in recognition of [his] valued services to the community”.<sup>53</sup> It was not common for the Board to make particular note of the achievements of a public figure like Nicholls, again indicating a level of connection and familiarity with his advocacy work.

Murray Harrison remembers from his time as an Aboriginal boy at the Ballarat Orphanage when Doug Nicholls and others would visit.

“He [Nicholls] knew lots of people in and around Melbourne and he, of course, told people about the Aboriginal kids here at the orphanage. And they got together and they then used to come up and visit us possibly four times a year. Every quarter. And they’d bring us things to eat and they’d tell us stories and give us books to read.”<sup>54</sup>

The Ballarat Orphanage, it can be seen, occupied an ambivalent position between supporting Aboriginal advancement, through its active support and participation in activism and advocacy, as well as being part of the cultural erasure that Assimilation represented, as a destination for children removed from their families. It participated – as might be expected – within the prevailing policy logic of the time, and did not see itself as having a role necessarily to challenge or advocate for broader policy reform. Yet it also participated, or at least permitted the children under its Care to participate, in the reforming activities of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activists. This kind of ambivalence – as an institution caught between the enactment of and resistance toward policy – also played out for some of the key figures. When the Victorian *Aborigines Act* 1957 established the Aborigines Welfare Board, formalising “assimilation” as Victorian State policy towards Aboriginal Australians,<sup>55</sup> Harold Blair and

<sup>50</sup> Letter to Anna Vroland (5 April, 1952), National Library of Australia, MS 3991 Folder 20.

<sup>51</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (June-July, 1956), s.1, v.9.Cafs Collection.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (May-June, 1957), s.1, v.9.Cafs Collection.

<sup>54</sup> Murray Harrison, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations’ Testimonies”, 2009, transcript, Reverb Films. <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/murray-harrison.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Lyons, “Official Policy Towards Victorian Aborigines, 1957-1974,” 64. See also Australia, *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, 53.

Doug Nicholls themselves were appointed as Aboriginal representatives to the Aborigines Welfare Board.<sup>56</sup>

The Ballarat Orphanage was rightly proud of *Christine's* achievements. She was a talented girl who had been living at the Orphanage in Ballarat for over a decade. She sang opera at the Melbourne Conservatorium, and performed for royalty. Her success was celebrated by the Orphanage and by newspapers in Ballarat and Melbourne. In the mid- to late-1950s, as the Victorian State formally implemented its policies of Aboriginal Assimilation, *Christine's* story represented a positive and palatable example of Assimilation in action, reflecting well not just on her, but on the Orphanage. After 1959, however, there is no further record of *Christine Reed's* singing career, either in public records or in surviving institutional records at Cafs. In the figure of *Christine Reed* and the ways in which her story has been presented in the past, we can see how this ambivalence that characterises the Orphanage's participation in policies of Assimilation – simultaneously eager and reluctant, participating and resisting – was played out. Many of the other Aboriginal children themselves and the adults they became have experienced a similar ambivalence, between gratitude for the Orphanage and Children's Home, and grief at the destruction of self- and collective cultural identity, as will be explored further below.

### Life before the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home

As noted above, for many Aboriginal communities in Victoria the former missions had become focal points for settlement, whether at the sites themselves, or in and around surrounding towns. Many of the Aboriginal children who came to the Ballarat Orphanage were taken from these former Mission communities. That is, experiences of institutionalisation for Aboriginal children in Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home often built upon the experiences of institutionalisation – and the rejection of institutionalisation – experienced by their parents and grandparents on the Missions and their aftermath.

Mooroopna, across the Goulburn River from Shepparton in the north of Victoria, was home to one of largest Aboriginal settlements in Victoria. Many Yorta Yorta and other Aboriginal families settled in a part of Mooroopna known as 'the Flats' following the Cummeragunja Walkoff in 1939,<sup>57</sup> when residents and workers left the Cummeragunja Mission in protest against prevailing conditions there.<sup>58</sup> Though Cummeragunja had been a thriving and relatively self-managed settlement in the late

<sup>56</sup> Lyons, "Official Policy Towards Victorian Aborigines, 1957-1974," 65-6.

Richard Broome, 'Nicholls, Sir Douglas Ralph (Doug) (1906–1988)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/nicholls-sir-douglas-ralph-doug-14920/text26109>, published first in hardcopy 2012, accessed online 18 January 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative, "Our history". <https://www.rumbalara.org.au/our-history>. Accessed 19 August 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: A History since 1800*. See also Michael Victor Ward, "The Cummeragunja Walk-Off: A Study of Black/White Politics and Public Discourse About Race, Ideology and Place on the Eve of the Second World War" (Sydney, Australia: Macquarie University, 2016).

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by 1939 conditions had deteriorated significantly.<sup>59</sup> In defiance of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board, the Cummeragunja community staged a walk-off in protest against the harsh conditions being enforced, crossing the border into Victoria. It was a significant moment in the expression of Aboriginal resistance to white power in Australia.

In 1946 – the year that *Christine Reed* came from Mooroopna to the Ballarat Orphanage – there were about 130 people living at the Flats in makeshift huts and tents.<sup>60</sup> “The floors were just hard dirt,” recalled Wayne Atkinson, who grew up there, “but it was a clean, tidy place”.<sup>61</sup> Many worked at the local fruit canneries, or as labourers, on the railways, at the local tobacco factory, or at local restaurants as waitresses.<sup>62</sup>

By the mid-1950s there were about 300 people living at the Flats.<sup>63</sup> In 1956, when Queen Elizabeth II visited Shepparton and Mooroopna, hessian barriers were erected in front of the Yorta Yorta community at the Flats, so the sovereign need not see them. This was the same royal tour on which Elizabeth had earlier listened to the girl from the Flats, *Christine*, singing for her as an Orphanage girl in Ballarat. After State official Charles McLean visited Mooroopna later that year while compiling a report for the Premier that would inform the development of the Aborigines Welfare Act, a “more aggressive” policy of removal was pursued by the police, with 34 Aboriginal children from the Flats separated from their families.<sup>64</sup> Many of these children ended up in the Ballarat Orphanage.<sup>65</sup> One of the children who was removed from Mooroopna and taken to Ballarat Orphanage in 1956 was twelve-year-old Kennedy Edwards, with his four brothers and sisters.

“My mother finished work at the cannery on the Friday. And on the Monday, a police car came to my grandmother’s humpy where we were all living. We were all put into the cars, the police car, taken down to the Mooroopna courthouse and when we got to the courthouse mum was there and my aunty. And mum was kissing us all goodbye, she was crying... And they put us into one of those big blue divvy wagons they transport prisoners around. And drove us to Melbourne.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See “The Cummeragunja Walk-Off: A Study of Black/White Politics and Public Discourse About Race, Ideology and Place on the Eve of the Second World War.”

<sup>60</sup> Sergeant S.H McGuffie, ‘Conditions of the Aborigines Residing on the Goulburn River Flats Between Shepparton and Mooroopna, 16 September 1946, VPRS 242/P, unit 887, file C90480. Cited in Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*, 285.

<sup>61</sup> In John Armstrong et al., *Living Aboriginal History, Living history of Aboriginal Victoria* (Bendigo, Vic.: Video Education Australasia, 1990).. Cited in Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*, 264.

<sup>62</sup> *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*, 265.

<sup>63</sup> Barwick, “A Little More Than Kin: Regional Affiliation and Group Identity among Aboriginal Migrants in Melbourne,” 174.

<sup>64</sup> Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians : A History since 1800*, 266.

<sup>65</sup> *Bringing Them Home : Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, 54.

<sup>66</sup> Kennedy Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations’ Testimonies”, 2009, transcript, Reverb Films. <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/kennedy-edwards.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

Kennedy's brother Howard was just six or seven at the time of his removal. "They said that me mother got into debt, we were vagrants. We were uncared for they said, which is wrong."<sup>67</sup> In Melbourne Kennedy, Howard and their brothers and sisters were held at the Turana Holding Centre, before being transferred to the Ballarat Orphanage. As discussed in Chapter Three, Kennedy and Howard's experiences of institutionalisation, like many Aboriginal children, started in a criminalised context in the Victorian justice system.

Eunice Wright was in the Ballarat Orphanage during the 1950s. Before this she had lived at the former Lake Condah Mission, near Portland and Hamilton in the south-west of Victoria. Her father would "go away to work ... cartin' and splittin' posts and fellin' trees and things like that" and her "Mum and us kids and our old granny... used to be home all the time." Her father and uncles would "set eel nets in the Darlot Creek", and hunt rabbits, selling their catches at local pubs in Hamilton, Heyward and Condah, "and get money that way to feed us."<sup>68</sup> Her father was famous locally as a boxer at local shows. Eunice enjoyed an annual Aboriginal community picnic with ice-cream and races, organised by local Christian organisations;<sup>69</sup> going to school with local white farmers' children;<sup>70</sup> going to the Royal Shows at Hamilton and Portland; and traditional sports days at Easter, where her father would win running races and boxing matches, and she would eat fairy floss.<sup>71</sup> "Oh my God ... they were the good old times."<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, as in Mooroopna, living conditions were difficult. Eunice's family lived in the converted remnants of the old Lake Condah Mission Dormitories.<sup>73</sup> Her mother worked hard, gathering water to boil in big metal tubs to wash clothes, dragging her family's beds to the creek to wash, painting the house with limewash.<sup>74</sup>

In 1954, Eunice's mother was sick with Tuberculosis, so Eunice and her brothers and sisters were staying with aunties and uncles at Lake Condah. A police car came to take them away. "They carted us off to Heywood and they locked us up in a cell."<sup>75</sup> Eunice's Auntie had tried to hide Eunice's brother under the bed, but the police threatened to take her kids too if she did not hand the boy over. The next morning Eunice and her siblings were in court. That afternoon they were escorted by a police officer by train to Hamilton, and then next day to Royal Park in Melbourne, to be held at Turana. "[E]veryone's standing there looking, you know. To think of it today, it was so degrading ... anyone'd think we were three little criminals, you know, everyone gawking and staring", recalls Eunice, of their

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<sup>67</sup> Howard Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, "Stolen Generations' Testimonies", 2009, transcript, Reverb Films. <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/howard-edwards.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

<sup>68</sup> *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-12.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-10.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

police escort through Heywood and Hamilton. "All of our aunties and uncles standing there crying and everything because they couldn't help us."<sup>76</sup> They were at Turana for about three weeks or a month before being transferred to Ballarat Orphanage.<sup>77</sup> Like Kennedy and Harrison Edwards, Eunice's first interaction with institutionalisation was through the criminal justice system. "It still traumatises [me] today, you know."<sup>78</sup>

Murray Harrison arrived at the Ballarat Orphanage as a ten-year-old in 1949. He had just been at Turana in Melbourne, and was held "where the juvenile delinquents were", though he had committed no crime. His mother had died when he was so young that he cannot remember her. He and his sisters lived at Dimboola, 225km north-west of Ballarat, with his father. "Dad would take us out to the Little Desert and show us how the old people lived. There were places you could have honeysuckle honey and how to catch rabbits ... [h]ow to throw the waddi and the boomerang, even the spear"<sup>79</sup> Murray remembers traditional life in Dimboola "like it was yesterday".<sup>80</sup> "[My grandfather would] sit down and he'd talk to us about the times that he remembered of his early times when tribes were really prevalent". He would "often talk in the language" which to this day has helped him "understand what language really means and where it fits in [his] kinship with the country." When his father had to go away to find work, Murray and his sisters went to stay with his auntie and uncle many miles away in Gippsland, near Lake Tyers. When "[t]he welfare people decided to come and have a look at [their camp]", he and his sisters were taken abruptly to the Courthouse, to Warragul, and then to Turana by midnight, before their family had the chance to see them.<sup>81</sup>

Karen Atkinson also has vivid memories of being taken away from her family. "I remember Mum running along the river with me in her arms trying to get away from the Welfare. I remember Dad hiding in the long grass to get away from the Police ... You know, my parents always running and trying their very best."<sup>82</sup> "The Welfare" had been visiting their home regularly, "coming around checking every week". Karen, her siblings and cousins went to a Reception Centre, "and then all of us were put on a train and we ended up in Ballarat".<sup>83</sup> She was to stay at the Ballarat Children's Home for ten years, until she was fifteen.

In these examples can be seen some of the ways in which many Aboriginal children came into the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home under Assimilation policies, through forced interaction with criminal justice systems. While conditions were often difficult in these children's

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 17-8.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>79</sup> Murray Harrison in Frankland, "Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations," 12.14.

<sup>80</sup> Murray Harrison, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, "Stolen Generations' Testimonies", 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Karen Atkinson in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*, 5.

home communities, their memories of them tend to include many positives, and the trauma of removal and what amounted to unjust imprisonment remains vivid for many.

### Aboriginality in the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home

There is no evidence to suggest that the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home management or staff made particular efforts to adjust or modify their practices when it came to the experiences or needs of Aboriginal children in its Care. There was no note or comment made in any of the Admission entries for Aboriginal children. The local bureaucracy – on paper at least – was colour-blind. Some ex-residents experienced this – not unreasonably – as hostility towards their culture. Nancy Peart has since made sure that her own children “are very much involved in learning the Aboriginal culture and ways”, because for her, “we weren't allowed to know of any such thing when we were in the Orphanage. To them in the Orphanage, our culture was forbidden.”<sup>84</sup>

Even though the practice of Aboriginal culture and language was effectively banned, connections between Aboriginal children were often strong, and Aboriginal cultures were formed and maintained. Though he regrets the loss of a deeper connection with land, language and family, as discussed above, when Murray Harrison arrived at the Ballarat Orphanage after a month at Turana, he remembers it as “a tremendous thing, because we not only see a lot of black faces, some of them are family as well, which really was the beginning of something that was really good”.<sup>85</sup>

Eunice Wright remembers the feeling of dread as she and her brother and sister approached Ballarat on the train from Melbourne, accompanied again by a police escort to keep “us three big criminals” from running away. “Oh god, you know, we're going to be separated again”, like they had been in Turana. “[S]o we all started howling again, but when we got there it was all right because it was boys and girls together, there was no separation.”<sup>86</sup>

In fact when they arrived at Ballarat Orphanage, they found familiar faces, just as Murray Harrison had some years earlier. “[W]e got to the Orphanage and that's where we met ... me cousins were there... me dad's sister's kids,” who had lived with them at Lake Condah and had themselves been removed and placed at Ballarat Orphanage.<sup>87</sup> She also remembers a stronger set of relationships within Aboriginal family groups at the Orphanage. “You know what I found too ... there was a big mob of Koorie families there and we used to stick together ... used to always look after one another ... we were always together.”<sup>88</sup> When asked why, Eunice thinks that it was because “we were Koories and Koories have got an extended sort of family ... and I never seen that in the non-Koori things while I

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<sup>84</sup> Nancy Peart in *ibid.*, 39.

<sup>85</sup> Murray Harrison, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations' Testimonies”, 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

was there... It must be something that's carried on traditionally or something ... That's the only thing I can think of."<sup>89</sup>

There are some parts of the experience at Ballarat Orphanage that could be described as unique to Aboriginal children, such as the connection felt between Aboriginal children described by Eunice Wright and Murray Harrison above. Even so, some Aboriginal former residents of the Ballarat Orphanage have identified a sense of connection not only with other Aboriginal children at the institution, but with others too. When asked whether she saw differences between herself and the "non-Koori" kids, Eunice replies that they were "[s]ort of all in together ... we were".<sup>90</sup> Nancy Peart remembers that she "had lots of friends in the orphanage, not only my Koorie family, but white friends also."<sup>91</sup> Raylene Farrell "didn't look at people as black or white, I thought we were all just kids." She knew "there were other Koori kids or black kids there", but did not put particular emphasis on those relationships. Nora Walters remembers that "[w]e had all the kids to play with. They were all our brothers and sisters".<sup>92</sup>

Karen Atkinson remembers a different kind of bond between the children, related to the common need for survival. When asked whether the Koori children stuck together at the Orphanage, she replies that she did not think so. "We all knew where we came from, we knew we were black, but it didn't sort of matter in there. We were just a whole lot of kids trying to survive ... We were just all kids trying to get through each bloody day without being punished."<sup>93</sup>

We can see here a number of examples of the ways in which Aboriginality was felt in the institution, emphasising the way in which Aboriginality was seen as important in the memories of former residents, even if it was not necessarily the only or primary defining characteristic of identity. For some the connection with previous family and community relationships within the Orphanage helped ease the transition into institutionalisation. Even within the same individuals a simultaneous "pull" towards a "Koori"-ness, and a broader connection with other non-Aboriginal children, can be discerned.

### Separation from family and culture

In one of her letters to activists Anna Vroland, Cora Gilsenan and Elizabeth Morgan in 1950, Ballarat Orphanage girl *Sandra Johnson* articulated a simple truth which captured the ineffable loss that permeated Aboriginal experience of institutionalisation. "There is really nothing wrong, but we are just unhappy because we want to be with our own people."<sup>94</sup> In an earlier letter *Sandra* picked up

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>91</sup> Nancy Peart in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 38.

<sup>92</sup> Nora Walters in Frankland, "Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations," 13.03.

<sup>93</sup> Karen Atkinson in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 8-9.

<sup>94</sup> Letter to Anna Vroland, 25 March 1950. National Library of Australia, MS3991 Folder 20.

on a similar theme. “Do you know we are go home [sic] it is so lonely here without [our] own people. I would rather be with my own people”.<sup>95</sup> Removal from culture was a particularly heavy burden for many Aboriginal children, not just after leaving the institution, but as *Sandra’s* letter demonstrates, while they were living there too.

Like other children in the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home, Aboriginal children experienced not only separation from family in their home communities, but separation from family within the institutions themselves. Howard Edwards summarises the dilemma succinctly: “Too much separation, you know”.<sup>96</sup>

Roseanne Haynes was removed from her parents as a baby, with her two brothers and sisters, and placed at Alexandra Babies Home in Ballarat. Her father was from England, and her mother was Aboriginal. In 2010 she reflected on what this experience must have been like for her parents.

“If a father’s got a child, and they love that child, just imagine if that child was taken away from them. You know. And the same for a mother. If they. You know, they lose that child, what it’s like to actually lose one child. I mean my mother, she lost 15 children.”<sup>97</sup>

Connection to family was a key factor in being able to endure and transcend attempts at Assimilation. Eunice Wright’s mother “used to come up on the train ... every Sunday, whenever she could afford the fare up.”<sup>98</sup> “So I count meself lucky ..., not being taken away, but because I’ve been in contact with my family..., and I knew I had people that cared for us.”<sup>99</sup> For too many others, though, the effects of separation from their families, cultures and languages has had lifelong effects.

Merv Atkinson “loved it” at the Ballarat Orphanage. “It was good,” he said in an interview in 2008, “probably because, although the orphanage kids weren’t exactly family, they were like your brothers anyway.” Even so, this apparent gratitude towards the Orphanage comes along with the regret that institutional life had “taken away the cultural side of my life”, which he was “in the process of re-learning”. Aged “four or five” Merv had been removed from his family “in the mission on the New South Wales side of Swan Hill” by police “and locked up overnight in police cells” He and his siblings “fronted up to the children’s court and became wards of the state”. According to Merv “[t]he relationship that you have with other members of your family and your parents”, as a result of that

<sup>95</sup> Letter to Anna Vroland, 4 February 1950. National Library of Australia, MS3991 Folder 20.

<sup>96</sup> Howard Edwards in Frankland, “Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations,” 25.41.

<sup>97</sup> Roseanne Haynes in *ibid.*, 18.10. Many experiences like Roseanne’s and her family’s have been recorded and acknowledged officially, through the Australian Senate’s *Bringing Them Home Report* in 1997, through the Commonwealth Government’s official Apology to Stolen Generations in 2008, and subsequent projects, books, memoirs, and others.

<sup>98</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

separation, “is not like your average family and I still don’t have that connection.”<sup>100</sup> Merv passed away in 2019 aged 60, as a highly respected community member in Ballarat and elsewhere.

Some Aboriginal children were taken from beyond Victoria. Eunice remembers at least three children who had been taken from Broome, in north-western Australia, to the Ballarat Orphanage. “They would have been [very homesick]”, she reflects, “the poor buggers.”<sup>101</sup>

Fred Clarke was an Aboriginal boy at the Ballarat Orphanage in the early 1960s. Like many children, he started off at the Toddler’s Block, before being moved to the main Orphanage area, where his brothers had already been for years. “And that’s when I mucked up”, states Fred. “Me and my brother was split up.” His mistake? “We was too close... me and my brother used to go out at recess time and hold our hands around each other ... And they said that we’d have to bring Freddie back ... because him and his brother are too attached.”<sup>102</sup> Even when they were separated the brothers would do what they could to be together. “Me and my brother used to hold our arms through the fence here, because he was out the back there ... we’d just hold each other’s arms through the iron fence there”,<sup>103</sup> remembers Fred while pointing at where the iron fence used to be, beside the old Toddler’s Block. This separation was to affect Fred and his brother for years to come. “[W]e lost our little brother who was in here... We never even seen him until he was 38 years of age, but I finally found him... His life was all mucked up, drugs and grog, and he’s never been the same since.”<sup>104</sup>

Nora Walters was in the Ballarat Orphanage through the whole of the 1950s, leaving in 1960 as a sixteen-year-old. She remembers being “called up to the office [with her sister], and we were told that we had two brothers coming to the Orphanage to live”. This was the first time she and her sister had heard of her brothers.<sup>105</sup> Here is an example of the ways in which bureaucratic systems and assumptions about information and its control could disrupt family relationships. There was no intention, seemingly, to hide from Nora the fact that she had siblings. Rather it seems that it simply did not occur to administrators to communicate and update her with this information until it came to affect her life in the institution.

Lloyd Clarke was taken to Ballarat Orphanage in 1953, aged thirteen, with his younger brother Ivan, aged twelve,<sup>106</sup> after eight years at St Cuthbert’s Home for Boys in Colac. When his little brother came to join him at St Cuthbert’s, remembers Lloyd, “I wondered if he would remember me ... I was

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<sup>100</sup> Merv Atkinson, interviewed by Ballarat Courier in 2008. Re-published in Greg Gliddon, “Merv Atkinson is being remembered as a trailblazer for the Aboriginal community”, *Ballarat Courier*, 21 October, 2019. <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/6447782/obituary-merv-atkinson-is-being-remembered-as-a-leading-force/>. Accessed 8 November 2019.

<sup>101</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*.

<sup>102</sup> Fred Clarke in Frankland, “Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations,” 13.41.

<sup>103</sup> Fred Clarke in *ibid.*, 8.35.

<sup>104</sup> Fred Clarke in *ibid.*, 13.41.

<sup>105</sup> Nora Walters in *ibid.*, 19.55.

<sup>106</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Admission Book, vol.2”, Nos. 2741-2. Cafs Collection.

scared he wouldn't know me."<sup>107</sup> Lloyd had already been separated from his family for so long, he did not know everyone who was part of it. When they got to Ballarat Orphanage they discovered a younger sister. An older sister had also been there, but had already left by the time they arrived.

Earlier, at St Cuthbert's Lloyd had been told by a Minister that his mother and father were dead. However, his cousins from Lake Condah at the Ballarat Orphanage told him that his "mum and dad were very much alive and well." When he was in Colac, Lloyd "would climb up into this big tree and look out to the west, knowing deep in my heart that that was the direction I came from, where my home was".<sup>108</sup> Home for Lloyd was Lake Condah Mission. We can see in Lloyd's and Ivan's examples the ways in which multiple institutional placements and separations could create significant confusion and misinformation, prompting a longing for the idea of a "home", somewhere else.

Roseanne Haynes "got told that [my father] never loved me, and that my mother was a no good woman". In later years Roseanne read letters that her father wrote but which she had never received. "They loved us so much. So much. And to read dad's letters, just tore me apart. Tore my heart out of my body."<sup>109</sup>

Howard Edwards has a letter in his possession from his mother to the police in Ballarat, wanting to know where and how to get in touch with her children.<sup>110</sup> She moved from Mooroopna to Ballarat, to be close to Howard and his brother Kennedy, after they had been removed from her, as discussed above. "She lived... oh, a kilometre or so from the orphanage", recalls Howard, "and mum used to always be coming up to the orphanage and telling them off for bashing us around and picking on us."<sup>111</sup>

It meant that the Edwards family had an ally and advocate while they were in Ballarat.

"[M]um was a constant hassle to the mob here [at the Ballarat Orphanage], you know... [she] was always up here arguing with the establishment... That's when they said that we were, mum was too close, and we were a bit of a handful for them, and they sent us back to Turana then."<sup>112</sup>

By getting "too close", the family's relationship was jeopardised, and damaged. Howard's brother Kennedy describes how another of their brothers never knew that their mother had fought for them. "He said, 'oh I thought mum and dad just dropped us off at the orphanage and said, here.' And he didn't know... [H]e's fifty years old [and] [h]e thought that mum and dad just dropped us at

<sup>107</sup> Lloyd Clarke in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 41.

<sup>108</sup> Lloyd Clarke in *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Roseanne Haynes in Frankland, "Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations," 25.07.

<sup>110</sup> Howard Edwards in *ibid.*, 18.10.

<sup>111</sup> Howard Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, "Stolen Generations' Testimonies", 2009.

<sup>112</sup> Howard Edwards in Frankland, "Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations," 24.25.

the door, at the orphanage and left us there.”<sup>113</sup> In fact, it was *because* their mother had fought so hard to stay in touch with them that the State and Orphanage had further fractured their family.

These are experiences not exclusive to Aboriginal children and families. Roseanne, Howard and Kennedy were not told about the ways in which their families were connected to them, wanted to stay connected, and had been fighting for them. They were left with an impression that their families had abandoned them, through active efforts at misinformation. This is where the devastating effects of Assimilation can be seen.

### After the Orphanage and Children’s Home

Aboriginal children and young people, like everyone who came through the Ballarat Children’s Home and Ballarat Orphanage, eventually left. As we have seen, public policies concerning Aboriginal children changed significantly over the life of these institutions, which had some effect on the destinations of some Aboriginal young people, particularly in the Ballarat Children’s Home era, with the advent of Aboriginal Hostels in Melbourne, in the wake of growing Aboriginal-led service delivery and advocacy. However, as the examples below demonstrate, the pathways out of institutionalisation remained just as difficult for many of those individuals as for other young people.

A range of Aboriginal services were established and strengthened in this period in the inner-north of Melbourne, around Fitzroy, Brunswick, Northcote and Thornbury. This had long been an important area for many Aboriginal communities, developing into a hub of population and service delivery since the 1930s and 1940s. Typical of their activities were the Australia Day concerts at which *Christine Reed* appeared with Howard Blair and Doug Nicholls. As discussed above, in the 1970s the Aborigines Advancement League led the establishment of a number of Aboriginal-led institutions that in turn welcomed children from the Ballarat Children’s Home.

For instance, in November 1976, thirteen-year-old *Ruth Bradley* left the Ballarat Children’s Home, “Transferred” to what was described as an “Aboriginal Hostel”, at 276 Brunswick Road, Brunswick.<sup>114</sup> This address was also known as the Aboriginal Legal Service Hostel, and was part of a network of Hostels established through the AAL in the late twentieth century known as “Aboriginal Hostels Ltd”.<sup>115</sup> Though the details of her life in Brunswick have not been recorded, it was not the end of her institutional life. Less than a year later in May 1977, *Ruth* returned to the Ballarat Children’s Home, via Allambie, before moving to Lisa Lodge in Ballarat “and employment in Wendouree”.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Kennedy Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations’ Testimonies”, 2009.

<sup>114</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Admissions Book, Vol. 3”, No. 3502. Cafs Collection.

<sup>115</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, “Aboriginal Hostels Limited”, Finding Records, <https://findingrecords.dhhs.vic.gov.au/CollectionResultsPage/AboriginalHostelsLimited>. Accessed 28 August 2019. This also included the Wirraminna Family Group Home, Lionel Rose Hostel for boys, Kurrumbee for girls, Bert Williams Hostel in Thornbury. Not to be confused with the contemporary Commonwealth Agency “Aboriginal Hostels Ltd” which today runs a network of fifty Aboriginal hostels around Australia.

<sup>116</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Admissions Book, Vol. 3”, No. 3853. Cafs Collection.

In May 1977, fifteen-year-old *Rebecca Everitt*, originally from Mooroopna, returned to the Ballarat Children's Home, after a "Fostering Breakdown" in Geelong, before leaving again a little over a year later, this time "Discharged to Employment in Geelong".<sup>117</sup> Ten years earlier she had been sent to the Ballarat Orphanage, as it was then known, with her sisters, *Stacie* and *June*, from the Mildura Reception Centre.

In March 1984, after three years at the Ballarat Children's Home, *Nadine Santino* moved to the Koorie College to "study [in the] Health Worker Education Program".<sup>118</sup> This program, described by Aboriginal activist Gary Foley as a "revolutionary education program", had been started at Swinburne College by prominent Aboriginal leader and academic Bruce McGuinness.<sup>119</sup> *Nadine* went to live at "56 Cunningham St, Northcote",<sup>120</sup> otherwise known as Lady Gladys Nicholls Hostel. This had been set up in 1956 as the "Northcote Hostel", by Gladys Nicholls, wife of Doug Nicholls and a significant Aboriginal activist in her own right, originally from Cummeragunja.

The *Thompson* family had a long and complex relationship with the Ballarat Children's Home, and other institutions around Victoria. In 1966, *Brian* (aged ten), *Elleen* (eight), *Josephine* (seven) and *Eddy* (five) *Thompson* first came to the Ballarat Orphanage, as it was then known, from the Ballarat Reception Centre. The two youngest children – *Josephine* and *Eddy* – were the first to leave. *Josephine* went to a Foster Family in Geelong in 1967, after a year and half at the institution. *Eddy* also went to a family in Geelong, though a different one to his sister, in 1968, aged seven. Whether they saw each other in Geelong is not known – they lived about six kilometres from each other.<sup>121</sup>

*Eddy* did not stay long in Foster Care, returning to what was now called the Ballarat Children's Home just two months later. *Josephine* was back seven years later in 1973, referred back to the institution by "Miss Lloyd" from the Geelong Regional Office of the Social Welfare Department because of a "Fostering Breakdown".<sup>122</sup> She stayed for another two years before leaving as a sixteen-year-old, to the Aboriginal Legal Hostel in Gertrude St, Fitzroy, to "possible employment", as recorded by the Ballarat Children's Home.

The *Thompsons*, like other families from the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, lived rich and complex lives in places all over Victoria and elsewhere. Their story belongs not just to Ballarat and 200 Victoria St, but are part also part of Geelong where *Josephine* spent up to seven years as a child, and to Fitzroy and the Aboriginal Hostel movement where she eventually moved. Their stories belong also to Dareton, NSW, on the Murray River near

<sup>117</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, Vol. 3", No. 3854. Cafs Collection.

<sup>118</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, Vol. 3". No.3932. Cafs Collection. The "Leaving" Entry misspelt it as "Koori Kollig".

<sup>119</sup> Gary Foley, "Memoriam to My Friend and Mentor: Bruce McGuinness," *Tracker Magazine* (2012).

<sup>120</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, Vol. 3", No.3932. Cafs Collection.

<sup>121</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, vol.3", Nos. 3690-3692. Cafs Collection.

<sup>122</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Admissions Book, vol.3", No. 3643. Cafs Collection.

Mildura, where their mother has become a fierce and famous advocate for Aboriginal land rights to this day.<sup>123</sup> Their family stories were shaped by the Ballarat Children's Home, but not defined by it.

## Conclusion

The effects of Assimilation policies on the "Stolen Generations" have been lifelong. For Aboriginal children, life in the institution and its aftermath was shadowed by the trauma of separation from families, home communities, and cultures.

Howard Edwards describes the surprise he felt upon learning of the systematic nature of the institutionalisation he experienced, and the regret he has felt at not being connected to the broader cultural life of his people. "When I first heard stolen generation, well I guess I'm part of that ... it amazed me that these things had happened." He wishes that he knew more about it at the time, "[b]ut I was so brainwashed in all their white history and culture that ... there was no room for me own." When Howard went to South Australia later in life "there was three tribes there. You know the Arnamuthna, the Kookatha and the Pintjinjara mob ... and they all spoke in their language ... and I'm thinking where's my language, you know, where's my culture."<sup>124</sup>

Fred Clarke "just wanted a mother and father you know, and I've never had that chance in my whole life ... I've never seen me mother or father or any photos or any[thing]." As an adult he "hitch-hiked around Australia twice", visiting former Aboriginal Mission sites "looking for mum and dad". Eventually he "ran into this Koori lad over in South Australia ... and he goes are you any relation to old Freddie Clarke in Shepparton, and I said that's who I'm looking for." Fred immediately hitch hiked all night to Shepparton, "found me family. And the first thing I said was where's mum and dad you know. They both told me they were deceased. Mum died when she was 28. Dad, he died ... at 38." His father had died while incarcerated in Sale, "the wardens wouldn't give him his tablets", and he died overnight.<sup>125</sup> Fred's story contains haunting echoes familiar to many Aboriginal families around Australia, with systemic incarceration exacerbated by disproportionate rates of deaths in custody.<sup>126</sup>

These are experiences shared with others at the Orphanage and Children's Home, in endlessly different and individual forms. The kind of confusion that had such a profound impact on Fred Clarke – removed from his community, from his parents and then again from his brothers – was not unique to him or to Aboriginal children. It was the kind of separation experienced by many in the Orphanage

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<sup>123</sup> Debra Jopson, "'We Were Always Here': Dorothy Lawson's Daring Land Claim," 2016. <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/feature/we-were-always-here-dorothy-lawsons-daring-land-claim>. Accessed 26 October 2019.

<sup>124</sup> Howard Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, "Stolen Generations' Testimonies", 2009.

<sup>125</sup> Fred Clarke in Frankland, "Among Us: A Story of the Stolen Generations," 21.15.

<sup>126</sup> See Elliot Johnston, "Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, National Report," ed. Commonwealth of Australia (Canberra: Australian Government, 1991).

over many generations. However, the systematic and policy-driven nature of Aboriginal experiences of institutionalisation warrants the particular focus given here.

The Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home were key participants in the racialised State policy of Assimilation. As has been made clear, in this Chapter and in the *Bringing Them Home Report*, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and placed in these institutions and others like them as a way of erasing Aboriginal identities.

As is self-evident in the twenty-first century, these policies failed. Aboriginal cultures, communities and individuals have resisted the State's perverse logic, and survived – strengthened and emboldened. The movement towards self-determination created an environment where the children and grandchildren of the stolen generations are now part of proud, diverse Aboriginal communities in Ballarat and around Australia.

The organisation now known as Cafs was deeply connected to the implementation of Assimilation policies in Victoria, particularly through children's experiences of institutionalisation, following State-led experiences of separation. It was also part of the era of self-determination and self-management, through participation in the emerging network of Aboriginal managed institutions. There is no simple binary between eras. In some instances, as with the Edwards brothers, the Walters family, the Clarke brothers, and the children from Western Australia, connections with family within and outside of the institution were actively disrupted by the practices of the institution and its State networks. In other cases contact with families was possible, as in the case of Eunice Wright, who feels at least "lucky" that through the efforts of her family, and the relationships with extended families and Aboriginal communities within the institution, she has been able to maintain some extended family relationships. Others, such as Murray Harrison, have been able to maintain some connections with family and traditional knowledge on the strength of both their experiences before being removed from family and their actively seeking out traditional culture in later life. The *Thompsons* experienced life in institutions, with foster families, and in Aboriginal-controlled institutions, yet their lives were no more or less complex than others. *Nadine Santino* became part of a revolutionary Aboriginal-led education movement. In these ways, through memory, experience, ongoing relationships, the acknowledgement of loss and an ability to recover, at least some of the children of Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home, and their families, have helped overcome the misplaced authority of Assimilation in Victoria.

"Assimilation" has long been discredited as an official policy and practice. The policies of Self-Determination have developed alongside the movement for "Reconciliation" between Australia's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. In this context then, the ways in which Cafs now displays

its connections with Aboriginal culture have meanings very different to the ways in which Assimilation was displayed through *Christine Reed* with Harold Blair and others in the mid-twentieth century.

In February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the historic apology to the Stolen Generations, the victims and survivors of the policies of Assimilation, including those from the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home. Catherine King was a social worker at CAFS in the 1990s who went on to become a member of the Federal Parliament, as the representative for the seat of Ballarat. She was present when the historic apology was made. On 14 February 2008, the day after the Prime Minister's Apology, King reflected in Parliament on her own position. "I am ashamed to say that, as a 20-year-old working in what was the Ballarat Orphanage, I did not know its part in the history of this generation of children and I would like to add an apology for my ignorance and lack of curiosity about the history of the institution I worked in."<sup>127</sup>

Catherine King's remorseful acknowledgment of her role in this period of history serves to emphasise the fact that Cafs' participation in Assimilation policies that produced the Stolen Generations cannot be kept in the dark. The experiences of the past need not be hidden. They represent a mixture of institutional sorrow and shame, and pride in achievement and survival that together can form the basis for a shared experience of Reconciliation. These shared understandings of Care and recovery must inform contemporary service design and delivery, with these Aboriginal histories at their forefront.

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<sup>127</sup> Catherine King, "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," ed. House of Representatives (Canberra: Hansard, 2008).

## Chapter Six: Symbols of change, and the end of the total institution

As explored in Chapter Four, the move towards deinstitutionalisation of children's services began slowly in the mid-twentieth century. By the 1970s and 1980s, consolidated children's Care facilities like the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home were mostly a thing of the past.

This Chapter will focus on the ways in which deinstitutionalisation occurred at the Ballarat Children's Home, by focussing on the ways in which modernisation was simultaneously both embraced and resisted by the institution's leadership. In particular it will focus on the establishment, operation and discontinuation of two particular elements of institutional practice that cut across all institutional eras: the institution's farming operations, and the Primary School that operated on the institution's grounds.

These three elements demonstrate the ways in which children's development, learning, working and recreation were integral to the operation of the institution. They also show the ways in which the institution – in the manner of Goffman's "total institution" – managed and controlled virtually all aspects of children's lives while they lived there, from infancy to departure, from education to play. As beliefs, policies and models of children's Care shifted and modernised, so too did these practices of education, vocational training, and recreation. However, they did not change evenly, or simply. Organisational resistance and inertia, community attitudes, and operational needs and practices combined to both propel and constrain the changes required. Together these changes were to signal a move away from the "total institution" era and into more modern forms of service delivery, recognisable to contemporary social services practitioners. These fading practices and facilities are described in more detail below. Before then, however, two particular moments in the final stages of organisational change are explored, in order to demonstrate the uneven and sporadic ways in which such fundamental change occurred.

### Simultaneous modernisation and resistance to modernisation

The Ballarat Children's Home both embraced and resisted deinstitutionalisation simultaneously. It was driven by a desire to modernise and keep up with the times, while not wanting to alter its operations too drastically, in a way that would provide a shock to the local children's service system. Eventually, the surging tides of deinstitutionalisation swept the Ballarat Children's Home along with it, towards the establishment and development of the modern organisation that is Cafs. As Gibson et al. indicate, "The process of deinstitutionalisation was undoubtedly one of the leading policy

and structural transformations in health and community services over the second half of the twentieth century.”<sup>1</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Four above, there was significant movement in the late 1960s and 1970s in the broader community services sector around workforce professionalisation and the enforcement of “minimal standards” for Children’s Homes, through bodies such as the Children’s Welfare Association of Victoria.<sup>2</sup> This movement reflects the ways in which reform proved a long process driven by government, and responded to by institutions such as the Ballarat Children’s Home.

Two particular moments at the Ballarat Children’s Home – in the late 1960s and mid-1970s – help demonstrate the dynamics of enacting organisational and practice change. Both are relatively mundane moments, occurring on the pages of official documents and the Boardroom of the Committee of Management. The seeds of major change often appear to be quite banal at the moments in which they happen, as the larger strains of progress and reform are missed in the detail of contemporary operational priorities, and historically developed institutional cultures.

### 1975 – a new constitution

The mid-1970s was a period of progressive change in Australian society, and especially in social services. As discussed in Chapter Four above, the number of children declined rapidly in the mid-1970s on the back of fundamental reform to the ways in which social services were delivered and administered. The socially progressive Labor government of Gough Whitlam was leading a reform-based agenda that included a shift of emphasis in social policy towards supports designed to enable children to stay in their homes, rather than become the responsibility of the State and institutions. Meanwhile, as described in Chapter Five above, the Commonwealth Referendum in 1967 in relation to Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal populations’ status in Australia, and the period of Aboriginal Self-Determination and Self-Management it heralded, also pointed towards the momentous shifts that were happening nationally.

On top of this broader reforming strategic environment, the Ballarat Children’s Home was in the midst of a financial crisis across the children’s Care sector, as discussed in Chapter Four above. In 1974 the Ballarat Children’s Home Board of Management President, Robert Richardson, described how government resourcing “fell far short of requirements”, not just for the Ballarat Children’s Home but for “most other Children’s Homes and Welfare Agencies” too. He pointed out, rightly, that “[t]his matter is of vital concern to all Voluntary Welfare Agencies in Australia and will no doubt become a

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Gibson et al., “Deinstitutionalisation: The Move Towards Community-Based Care,” in *Australia’s Welfare*, ed. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2001), 96.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Ballarat Children’s Home, “Committee of Management Notes”, (27 October, 1971), s.1 v.13, for discussion by the Committee about the introduction of Standards for Children’s Homes. Cafs Collection.

major issue this financial year.”<sup>3</sup> Also as discussed in Chapter Four, the State fundamentally changed its funding formulas in 1975 so that Children’s institutions were resourced by the State according to their staffing levels, rather than just for the number of children it accommodated,<sup>4</sup> enabling organisations like Ballarat Children’s Home to plan and deliver different and more flexible services than the total institutionalisation of children.

If ever there was a time to plan a radical change of direction, it was in the mid-1970s. The Ballarat Children's Home had the opportunity to do so that same year, 1975, when it updated its “Constitution, Objects and By- Laws”.<sup>5</sup> In some ways the institution did take advantage of this opportunity to reform, but in other ways, it did not.

The new “Objects” of the Ballarat Children’s Home in 1975 – that is to say, its Aims – were as follows:

(a) To admit and provide long or short term residential care for children who for some reason are unable to remain with parents or relatives, such admission being subject to conditions as may from time to time be adopted by the Board;

(b) To guide and encourage such children to their full potential through education and planned experience providing social enrichment and community involvement;

(c) To provide for the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the children without reference to their nationality or the religious denominations to which they belong during the life of their parents. No change shall be permitted in the child's religious beliefs during the child's continuance in the Children's Home.<sup>6</sup>

There was a familiar tone struck with these Objects, which appear at this point not to have substantially changed in intent for at least one hundred years. The first “Bye-Law” of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum in 1875 was that “[t]he object of the Institution shall be the reception, maintenance, and education of children deprived of one or both parents by death”. The second Bye-Law in 1875 was that “Orphan children are admissible without reference to the creed or country of their parents ... [and] that no change [to their religious denomination] be ... made or permitted during their continuance in the Asylum.”<sup>7</sup>

Naturally there were significant differences between the 1975 and 1875 versions of the institution’s bye laws, but substantively they were remarkably similar. The primary aim of the 1975

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<sup>3</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, *One hundred and ninth Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1974) 7. Cafs Collection.

<sup>4</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, *One hundred and eleventh Annual Report*, (1976) 6. Cafs Collection.

<sup>5</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, *Constitution Objects and By-Laws* (1 December, 1975), 1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, “Bye-Laws of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum”, *Tenth Annual Report*, (1875), 17. Cafs Collection.

version remained the provision of residential care to children. Note who it was that maintained access to that Care in 1975 – the Board. This was emphasised later in the Constitution, in By-Law 90. “The Board or Sub-Committee duly appointed for the purpose or an officer of the institution authorised to act on its behalf will determine the admission of children.”<sup>8</sup> In reality, however, it had been a very long time since the Board had any substantive role in determining access to the institution, with Ballarat Children's Home and Ballarat Orphanage before it having been well-entrenched in the Government's statewide network of service providers for the accommodation of State wards, as described in Chapter Three above. This insistence on the Board's primary role in determining access to the institution was a legacy of the organisation's founding principles and practices that asserted their own right to determine the worthiness or otherwise of children, itself a hangover from Colonial attitudes towards children as either deserving of assistance or not, as described in Chapter One above.

“Object (b)” related to education and training, expressed as “guidance” and “encouragement”. Children had been “guided” and “encouraged” into various vocational and educational pursuits since the institution's foundation. The Orphanage's farm operations and other working practices, such as domestic duties for girls, were intended to provide an appropriate vocational foundation upon which children could build when leaving the institution. Schooling was provided at the on-site primary school, and attendance at local high schools.

By focussing on children's “potential”, rather than just work or learning, the new Constitution opened the possibility for more flexible and tailored program design in future. However, even as the organisation's leaders opened the door for reform, they also kept a foot firmly jammed against it. As it was stated in the updated Constitution of 1975, object (b) maintained the necessary connection between the provision of residential Care and capacity-building activities. By insisting that the institution work only with “such children” as are admitted into residential Care, it precluded the possibility of developing the kinds of early intervention and prevention activities that were being developed elsewhere at that time.

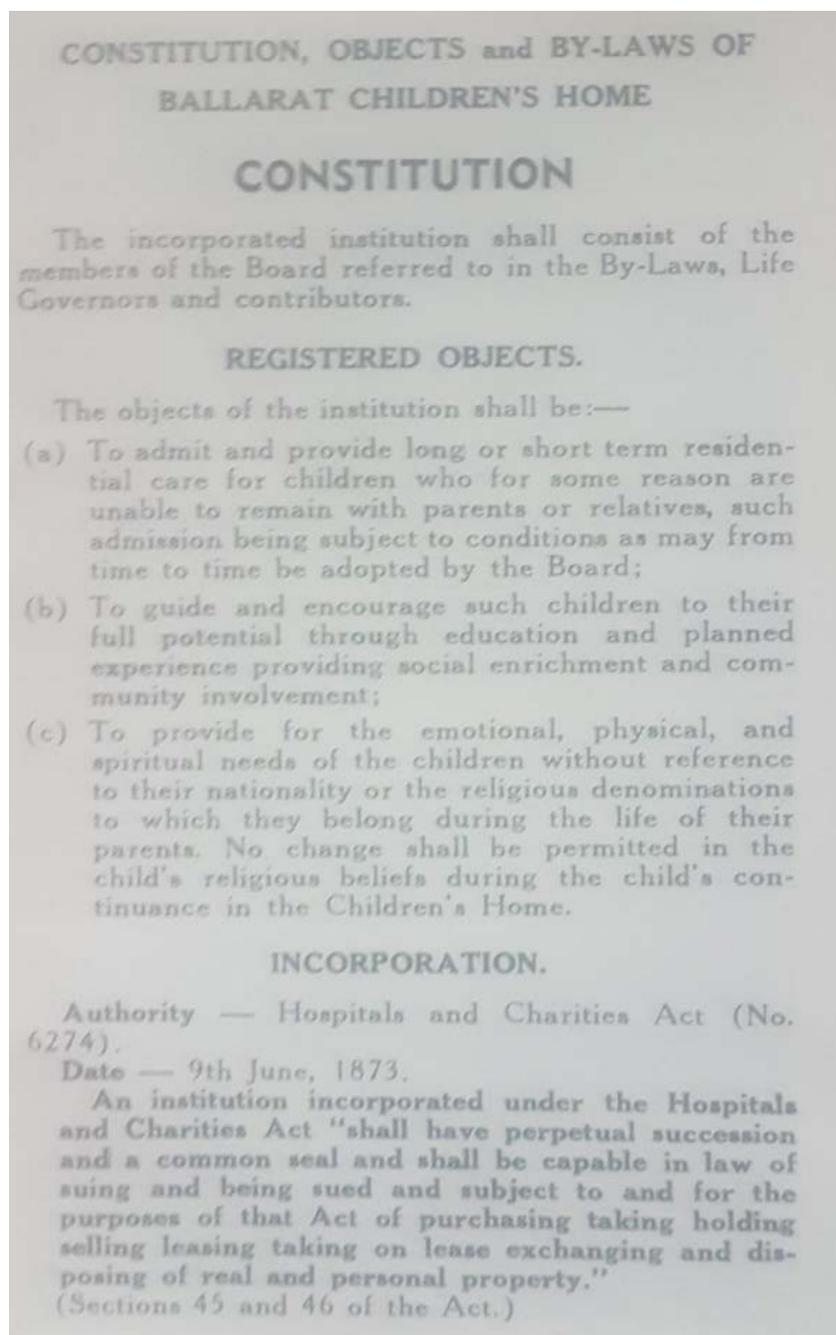
The institution had always been proud of and insistent upon the neutrality of its principles, in that it was a secular institution that welcomed children of all religious and ethnic backgrounds, notwithstanding whether such ideas survived into operations. This notion was reinforced in 1975's updated “Registered Object (c)”. The new Object in 1975 included more holistic notions of the child's self, committing the Ballarat Children's Home to address the children's “emotional, physical, and spiritual needs”. Again, while this opened up a much broader range of service options than the residential and vocational focus that had driven the institution for nearly 120 years, it limited its

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<sup>8</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “By-law 90”, *Constitution Objects and By-Laws* (1 December, 1975), 21. Cafs Collection.

application only to the children under its direct Care, and by implication reaffirmed the Ballarat Children's Home's primacy in guiding and directing the lives of those for whom it Cared.

**Image 6.1. "Updated Constitution, Objects and By-Laws of Ballarat Children's Home", 1975**



The document goes on to outline the governance structures and operations of Ballarat Children's Home. For instance, the Constitution section opens by stating that "[t]he incorporated institution shall consist of the members of the Board ..., Life Governors and contributors."<sup>9</sup> In reality,

<sup>9</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, *Constitution Objects and By-Laws* (1 December, 1975), 1. Cafs Collection.

however, the Ballarat Children's Home had long since drifted away from the Governor and Subscriber funding model that sustained its local operations and identity through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its emphasis on the role of Life Governors and Subscribers strikes a particularly anachronistic tone, given that the role and number<sup>10</sup> of these individuals were significantly reduced in the late twentieth century.

This “new” constitution, in other words, was largely a variation on the same wording that can be found in Constitutions dating right back the founding decades of the Orphan Asylum. This document from 1975, however routine it may appear, provides an indication of the ways in which the institution's histories of Care can both constrain *and* point towards new futures. Without a clear vision of exactly what future service delivery would look like, it relied on established ideas and themes, such as accommodation, vocation, and religious neutrality. However, by relinquishing these traditions, within a few years the next generation of the organisation's staff and leaders were able to significantly transform the way in which it operated and supported children and families in Ballarat.

### 1969 – identifying the need for change

The need for modernisation, not just in facilities but in design and practice, had already been firmly identified by the Board, at least six years before the new Constitution was written. Even after the major infrastructure upgrades that had been made in the 1960s, the conditions in which children lived was an ongoing concern. In November 1969, the institution's Honorary Medical Officer and Board Member, Dr C.E. Richardson, “expressed concern with the health hazards”<sup>11</sup> he had identified at the Ballarat Children's Home, including health standards and washing, but also in relation to standards of Care. Dr Richardson:

... considered it wicked to have fifty young children in a situation where they have no worthwhile relationship with adults who care for them. Because the staff are on shift work there is constant change and no individuality is possible... It runs completely contra to present-day ideas of child care and alterations are necessary to raise the standard of care.<sup>12</sup>

A few months earlier, at a Committee of Management meeting in May, Superintendent Ray Jenkins had laid out the case for re-considering the organisation's fundamental service models, reporting on some figures he had obtained “from a reliable Government source”.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> By the 1970s the practice of listing all Life Governors in the Annual Report had been discontinued, preferring instead to list only new Life Governors. In 1974 there were two new Life Governors.

<sup>11</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Notes” (26 November, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Notes” (28 May, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection. Jenkins insisted that he “not reveal the source of this information, especially publically”.

During the period [between] 1956 and 1968 the number of State Wards [of school age] increased by 73%. During the same period the number of children under 16 years in the general community increased by 25%. Therefore the number of wards coming in is increasing three times as rapidly as the general child population.<sup>14</sup>

This increase was coming at the same time that the provision of institutional Care was decreasing overall. Jenkins's source outlined this dilemma: "Generally speaking, modernisation has led to smaller groups and unfortunately fewer children being provided for."<sup>15</sup> His anonymous government source was backed up by official figures. Hospitals and Charities Commission data indicated that the total number of children in Children's Homes in Victoria decreased from 4,235 in 1958, to 3,220 in 1968.<sup>16</sup> Alongside this reduction in the number of children accommodated in Children's Homes came an increase in the number of children being "home released", that is, as Jenkins explained, "State Wards [who] are returned to the care of their parents under supervision from the Department".<sup>17</sup>

Jenkins also noted the changing socio-demographic profile of children entering Care at the Ballarat Children's Home:

"It appears that in the old days the main causes for admission were breakdown of homes due to death or poverty of parents. Nowadays there are increasing numbers of the very young, unstable, immature parents being unable to cope and their marriages breaking down with the result their children are requiring care. Their plight is aggravated by the difficulty of obtaining jobs for unskilled men, plus high living costs."<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the level of complexity and support required for this new cohort of children had increased, requiring more intensive support and more skilled staff. Other Children's Homes were adjusting their practices in the face of these shifting circumstances. "Most of the children's homes which have modernised over the last 12 to 13 years have re-housed their children in family groups," he noted, resulting in "an average reduction of 20% in the numbers accommodated."

It is difficult to tell whether Superintendent Jenkins was speaking with pride or dismay when he noted that "Ballarat Children's Home is one of the very few homes which has modernised, but has not decreased the number of children for which it cares."<sup>19</sup> He was exposing a strategic dilemma for the Committee of Management – to continue on the course of modernisation and reduce the number of children, or to maintain higher numbers under increasingly outdated methods. Regardless, the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Hospitals and Charities Commission, *Ninth Report of the Hospitals and Charities Commission* (1958) 87; and Hospitals and Charities Commission, *Nineteenth Report of the Hospitals and Charities Commission*, (1968) A80.

<sup>17</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Board of Management Minutes" (28 May, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Committee instead tried to do both, and “agreed that efforts be made to bring the building up to standard without reducing numbers”.<sup>20</sup>

Jenkins continued his investigations and strategic research. In May 1970, he and colleagues from the State Health Department and the Family Welfare Advisory Council<sup>21</sup> visited other children’s Care facilities to gain ideas.

Resulting from all the inspections and discussions there has emerged clearly the fact that we could provide really good care for our young children by re-housing them in, say, four groups of eight ... [by converting] the Junior Building to “flats”.<sup>22</sup>

While this particular idea never came to pass,<sup>23</sup> a similar idea eventually did. Rather than converting existing buildings, in 1973 the Board decided to build a new “Family Group Home” on the Victoria Street site,<sup>24</sup> so that sibling groups could live together, “something quite difficult to do in [the] present buildings”.<sup>25</sup> In 1975 Ballarat Children’s Home took the Family Children’s Home concept a step further, and purchased a residential property in Black Hill, outside of the Victoria Street campus,<sup>26</sup> in what was to start a major shift in service model into community-based Care.

Jenkins’s strategic vision, based on data and first-hand observation, was pointing the way towards new service options, which were gradually being implemented on the ground. The institution was changing bit by bit, rather than in swift, definitive moments. As we have seen in the “new” constitution of 1975 – even after at least six years of addressing issues of change, after 120 years of operation, and the experience of contemporary experimentation in new service options – the fundamental service model, philosophies and intent of the institution still had not changed. Another eight years later, in 1983, the organisation had been transformed almost completely.

What changed in the meantime that enabled such ultimately rapid reform to occur? Through the 1970s, one by one, the old practices, habits and cultures of the long institutional era faltered, and folded. The end of group holidays at Queenscliffe after the institution sold the property there in 1973, the closure of Alexandra Babies Home in 1974, the end of the school in 1975, and the end of farming operations in 1976, all demonstrate the changing ways of life that by the late twentieth century could no longer hold. The remainder of this chapter will outline the histories of two of these elements of institutional life in the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s

<sup>20</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Board of Management Notes” (26 November, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>21</sup> “Dr Wilmot from the State Health Department, and Rev. G. Gregory from the Family Welfare Advisory Council.”Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Staff Newsletter” (May, 1974), No.4, 1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>24</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Staff Newsletter” (November, 1973), No.3, 1. Cafs Collection. “The year has produced interesting developments and of these the most significant would be the Board’s decision to proceed with the construction of family group home units on our property”.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Staff Newsletter” \*May, 1976), No. 9, 3. Cafs Collection.

Home, focussing particularly on farming operations and the onsite primary school. Their operations over more than 100 years show the ways in which the institutional cultures these practices encouraged constrained the ways in which the institutions could operate. Their decline – slow, partial, and resisted organisationally as they were – opened the way for the necessary cultural shift that enabled the fundamental service transformation to occur in the 1980s. The chapter concludes with a contrasting example from 1979 of how the Board at that point was able to deal differently with strategic opportunities and service change.

### The Institutions' Farms

A farm was first established at the main Victoria Street premises of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum in 1868.<sup>27</sup> Over the next century, the institution in its various incarnations operated a network of farms in Ballarat and surrounds. The farm initially came about through a simple requirement to “assist the Institution in becoming self-supporting”.<sup>28</sup> That is, the farm, and orchard, which was also planted that same year, were expected to save costs and contribute revenue to the Orphan Asylum, through providing supplies for the children, and through sales in the open market.

In the earliest years of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum era, “ample supplies of commodities” were produced to “supply the Orphanage [sic] and a surplus for outside sale”, including milk, fruit, vegetables, “green fodder and hay”, and pork from a piggery.<sup>29</sup> The farm property steadily grew through the nineteenth century. It was reported that in 1893, for instance, the Victorian Minister for Lands visited the Orphan Asylum Farm, commenting on “the excellent results that the boys had achieved in bringing the poor soil up to an excellent standard”.<sup>30</sup>

In 1915 the Ballarat Orphanage's Jubilee Celebration Booklet, produced to mark the institution's fiftieth year, described how the advantages the Orphanage boys gained from working on the farm “are of a two-fold character .... [Firstly] affording a sound practical education to the boys... [Secondly] the produce from their labor considerably lessens the cost of maintaining the Institution.”<sup>31</sup>

As an indication of how highly the institution's farming practices were regarded, in 1907 the Department of Agriculture established an “experimental farm” under the direction of the Orphan Asylum's Superintendent, Arthur Kenny, at neighbouring Mt Xavier. The intention was to test the viability of converting former gold-mining land to productive agricultural purposes. The land was chosen in part because it was “[a]djoining ... the property belonging to the Orphan Asylum, originally

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<sup>27</sup> Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, *Fifth Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1869). Cafs Collection.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>29</sup> Author Unknown, Date Unknown, “History of the Ballarat Children's Home Farm”. Cafs Collection.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, *Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee 1865-1915*, (Ballarat, 1915) 36. Cafs Collection.

similar in character, which has turned into a model farm under the management of Mr Kenny.”<sup>32</sup> Some boys would attend lectures and classes at the Ballarat School of Mines to build their understanding of farming techniques, and a chemical laboratory was established.<sup>33</sup>

The farm grew to become a great source of pride for the Committee of Management. Over the course of its one hundred-plus years of operation, it was used as a way of tangibly demonstrating the value and achievement of the institution and its children. There were countless public displays of the achievements of the institution’s farmers. Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century the Orphanage entered and won countless agricultural shows and contests around Victoria.<sup>34</sup> “I went to the (orphanage) school and worked on the farm,” recalled Basil in an interview with the *Courier*, as a 78 year-old in 2009. “Work included milking cows, rearing calves and making hay feed ... I went to all the shows including Ararat and Ballarat. I led the cows around and used to win.”<sup>35</sup>

When the Orphanage cattle finished with second, third and fourth prizes at the Melbourne Show in 1955, the Superintendent expressed disappointment, lamenting that “results this year were not up to expectation.”<sup>36</sup> His mood improved the next month however, with a flurry of firsts and seconds at the Ballarat Show.<sup>37</sup> Ballarat Orphanage cattle were highly regarded, with sales and awards as far afield as Queensland,<sup>38</sup> and even India.<sup>39</sup>

The Jersey Herd had multiple functions in the Orphanage era. It was a source of vocational training,<sup>40</sup> prize-winning pride,<sup>41</sup> revenue,<sup>42</sup> and in the context of post-war food rationing, supplied

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<sup>32</sup> *Argus*, 25 September, 1906, 9. In a grim irony, this article about experimental farming and the Orphan Asylum’s suitability for driving innovation in agricultural practices appeared on the same page of the *Argus* as the article quoted in Chapter One above, regarding the manslaughter charges laid against Catherine Mason, an unmarried mother from Ballarat East whose child would not have been eligible to enter the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum because she was unmarried. If the same commitment to innovation had been applied to children’s services as it had to agriculture, Catherine’s child may have survived.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in “History of the Ballarat Children’s Home Farm.”

<sup>34</sup> For instance, in 1949, “Orphanage Dawn – one of the cows of the Institution – won the coveted [sic] prize of the highest producing cow in a radius of 35 miles of Ballarat. She produced 576 lbs butter fat. Since then, two other cows – Rodhesia and Garrene have both broken records. These two cows have produced 600 lbs butter fat.” Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (November-December, 1949), s.1, v.7. Cafs Collection. In 1951, the Superintendent Mr Morton described his visit to the Royal Melbourne Show where, “Quicksand the 52nd (one of the cattle from the Orphanage) (won) the three year old Heifer out of 16 entries, and Wildapark Goldfinder gain(ed) fourth place in the Champion Bull section, which also had 16 entries.” Morton goes on to describe further entries in some level of detail. Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (August-September, 1951), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>35</sup> “Ballarat Orphanage a riddle but no regrets for Basil”, *Ballarat Courier*, April 16, 2009. <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/533352/ballarat-orphanage-a-riddle-but-no-regrets-for-basil/> (Accessed 10 May, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (September-October, 1955), s.1, v. 9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>37</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (October-November, 1955), s.1, v.9. Cafs Collection.

<sup>38</sup> “Mr Beattie from Queensland wired the Farm Manager that Orphanage Golden Boy had won the championship of Queensland. This young bull was flown to Queensland as a calf and has since won as a 2 year old, 3 year old, and now champion.” Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (July-August, 1954), s.1 v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>39</sup> Cited in “History of the Ballarat Children’s Home Farm”.

<sup>40</sup> “Our farm activities are still one of the principal factors in the training of our boys”, Ballarat Orphanage, *Eighty-third Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1948), 6. Cafs Collection.

<sup>41</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (October-November, 1949), s.1, 8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>42</sup> All Annual Reports from the 1870s onwards provide details of revenue raised through the sale of agricultural and farming products.

the Orphanage with an important, high-yielding source of dairy nutrition. The Jersey Herd won countless prizes through various Agricultural Shows and industry awards, both local and further afield.<sup>43</sup> In the immediate post- World War II period, Ted Taylor was an important figure at the Ballarat Orphanage, as the Jersey Herdsman. Ted's influence extended beyond the Orphanage, receiving prizes and judging competitions at Agricultural Shows around Victoria.<sup>44</sup> Ted himself had grown up in the Orphanage,<sup>45</sup> and can be seen as a prominent example of the way in which farming and institutional life converged. These are just a few of the many, detailed descriptions of farming activities and achievements that a number of Superintendents provided routinely to the Committee of Management, reflecting the level of pride the Orphanage hierarchy derived from the farming activities, and the attention they gave them.

By the mid-twentieth century the Orphanage's Victoria Street headquarters included a considerable urban farm on the outskirts of Ballarat. Though farming enterprises were not untypical in its Ballarat East neighbourhood, the size and scale of the Orphanage's operation stood out in the local landscape. It had grown steadily in size and sophistication, and by now included expanded and upgraded piggeries, a poultry run, cattle, stables and horse works, an orchard and gardens, a brick farm cottage, office facilities for the farm manager, hay shed and all the other markings of a thoroughly modern farm. The Orphanage also operated a potato farm in the richer soil of nearby Bungaree,<sup>46</sup> another in the same region at Millbrook, and at Trawalla, about fifty kilometres west of the Orphanage.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "The orphanage dairy herd is a frequent winner at leading Australian shows", *Argus*, 10 October, 1953, 2. "Ballarat Orphanage ... not only rears first-class dairy cattle, but wins championships with them at State and country shows... Orphanage Quicksand 32<sup>nd</sup> won first prize first prize for a three-year-old cow at last year's Melbourne Show, and Wilda Park Goldfinder was champion bull at both Ballarat and Colac Shows." *Argus*, 16 April, 1953, 29. "Mr Beattie from Queensland wired the Farm Manager that Orphanage Golden Boy had won the championship of Queensland" Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (July-August 1954), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>44</sup> "Mr Ted Taylor has been asked to judge at the Warrnambool Show." Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (September-October, 1951), s.1, v.8. October-November 1951: "Mr E. Taylor has been asked to judge the cattle at the Traralgon Show next Saturday", Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (October-November, 1951), s.1, v.8.vol. Cafs Collection.

<sup>45</sup> Born in Dereel in 1909, Edward Taylor was older brother to Allan and Arthur. Their mother Leila Taylor died in 1917, when Edward was nearly eight, the three brothers were admitted to the Ballarat Orphanage. Ballarat Orphanage, "Admissions Book, vol.2" Nos. 1412-1414. Cafs Collection.

<sup>46</sup> "Potatoes dug at the Bungaree Farm are of good quality and it is estimated that about 12 tons will be gathered. The Crop grown at the Orphanage was disappointing." From Ballarat Orphanage, "Superintendent's Report" (April-May, 1954), s.1, v.8. Cafs Collection.

<sup>47</sup> "Orphans are top farmers", *Argus*, 16 April, 1953, 29.

Many ex-residents went on to become farmers after they left the Institution, often quite successfully.<sup>48</sup> It was reported that in 1915 an estimated “between fifty and seventy per cent of former trainees were now on the land and doing well after their thorough grounding at the Home”.<sup>49</sup>

This was due not only to skills obtained during their stay at the Institution, but also to the network of farmers and farms throughout Victoria, connected to the Orphanage, and sustained and promoted by the Orphanage's ongoing prominent role in the public farming life of Victoria and Australia. One place that welcomed a relatively high number of young people from the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was Mooroopna, in Northern Victoria. At least eighteen boys moved from the Orphan Asylum to Mooroopna or its neighbouring settlement, Ardmona, in the period between 1893 and 1904. Up to five Mooroopna households accepted more than one child from the Orphan Asylum (Mr Wilson, Mr Thomas, Mr Pearson and Mr Martin each taking two children each, and Mrs Crawford three), and the rest in other houses around town.<sup>50</sup> Though there is no further information provided in the records about why these boys were sent to Mooroopna, it is a fair assumption that most, if not all of them, were to work on farms.<sup>51</sup>

On the one hand, the Orphanage's management were eager to project an image of high achievement. It not only helped instil a notion of high standards in the children but also served to effectively advertise the skills of Orphanage farmers. Participating and achieving at awards was an effective way of advertising in the network of farmers that would provide opportunities for children as they grew up and left the institution. As indicated above, many of the boys did move into farming when they left.

On the other hand, as has been made clear, the farm helped reduce the institution's expenses. The boys who worked on the farm provided cheap labour. Farm produce supplied the institution, and revenue was generated through sales. In this way, farming operations were of paramount importance to the institution, which helps explain the prominence it was given in reporting and publicity. It is not

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<sup>48</sup> “Mr Hollioake read a letter he had received from [name omitted] who was now share farming between Rochester and Echuca. He had applied for a block of land in the Heytesbury Settlement and was very happy with his farming. Ballarat Children’s Home, “Board of Management Notes” (28 May, 1969), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection. “One of the former Orphanage residents went on to become “herd tester for Timboon District”. Cited in “History of the Ballarat Children's Home Farm”.

<sup>49</sup> Cited in *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>50</sup> See for instance Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Admission Book, Vol.1 Entries 473 and 474 (1885); 564 (1885); 609 (1891); 616, 627 & 623 (1892); 637 & 638 (1892); 657 (1893); 675 (1894); 694 & 705 (1895); 771 (1897); 817 (1899). Cafs Collection.

<sup>51</sup> As discussed in Chapter Five above, Mooroopna would later become an important part of the Ballarat Orphanage’s history with the large number of Aboriginal children removed from their families there, and sent to the Ballarat Orphanage. Mooroopna is not a large town – there must have been quite a community of former Orphan Asylum boys and their descendants. One of these Orphan Asylum boys who went to Mooroopna in 1895 was Charles Wentworth Turner, was five years later off to South Africa to fight in the Boer War. His diaries and letters to his brother Horace, who also left the Orphan Asylum and went to Mooroopna, are now held in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Turner, Charles Wentworth (b.1880-d.1954), Diary, Letters, Service papers. PRO1357, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C392868>.

always an exaggeration to suggest that in Board of Management reports and newspaper articles about the institution, more attention was given to the bulls and jersey cows than the children.

The overview of farming operations outlined above was drawn largely from a short, unpublished history of the farms written around the time of their eventual closure in 1976.<sup>52</sup> While the author and exact date of this narrative is unknown, it was written with a sense of nostalgia and regret at the passing of farming operations at the Ballarat Children's Home. Other sources, including Oral Histories and testimony, provide different perspectives again on the institutions' farming practices. While many considered their farming experiences to be extremely valuable in preparing them for a career in farming, others who did not see themselves as farmers reflect ruefully on what they experienced as a form of forced labour that constrained their own and others' expectations of themselves.

With an emerging understanding of these kinds of experiences, the future of farming at the Ballarat Children's Home was openly debated by the Committee in 1968. The preference for maintaining farm operations can be seen among some of the older leadership heads on the Committee. Long-serving Committee member Rex Hollioake indicated that "he felt that the success of some of the boys who had worked on the farm indicated that the farm had served a satisfactory purpose".<sup>53</sup> This was countered by the Superintendent, Ray Jenkins, who "stressed the increasing problem" that "fewer and fewer boys were interested in farming as a career".<sup>54</sup> Along with a greater "'turnover' of children and changing interests of children", he said, "it would not be possible to continue a regular supply of schoolboys for farm work". Children simply had other interests, and could no longer be compelled to work on the farm. In Jenkins's opinion, "many of the boys only go for the sake of \$1.00 per week wage".<sup>55</sup> While some were initially interested, they "soon tire[d] of farm work", and "that in view of the jobs that that the boys were doing on the farm they were not receiving any real training".<sup>56</sup> Other Committee members raised issues relating to resourcing the farm and supervising the boys during holiday periods. In short, the boys who worked on the farms did not receive the same holidays as other children, and required supervision while they stayed.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Author Unknown, Date Unknown, "History of the Ballarat Children's Home Farm". Cafs Collection.

<sup>53</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Committee of Management Notes", (23 October, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>54</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Minutes of the Farm Sub-Committee" (15 October, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>55</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Committee of Management Notes", (23 October, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection. Cafs Collection. Note the discrepancy between this wage, \$1.00 per week, and the average male weekly wage in 1969 of \$69.50. See Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 4 June 1969, "Average Weekly Earnings, March Quarter 1969". Published on Australian Bureau of Statistics, "6302.0 - Average Weekly Earnings, Mar 1969". <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6302.0Mar%201969?OpenDocument>. Accessed 29 August 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, "Committee of Management Notes", (23 October, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection..

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

As a result the decision was made that after 19 December 1968, “no schoolboys [will] be required at the farm”,<sup>58</sup> although the “one or two boys really interested and keen about helping could still go up and help”.<sup>59</sup> It was decided also that “[s]o long as there was agreement, the boys could be taken from the farm without this being laid down as a policy by a Board motion”. That is to say, the decision made in 1969 to discontinue the supply of children to work on the farm was treated as an administrative matter, rather than a fundamental change to the way in which the Ballarat Children’s Home operated.

The farm lived on, but without the labour of children at the Ballarat Children’s Home to sustain it, as it had over the previous century. Over the next seven years the viability the institution's farming operations were discussed and debated regularly by the “Farm Sub-Committee”, in which the agricultural, business and service practices of farming in and for the Children’s Home were analysed. The Farm Committee received regular input and representation from the Victorian Department of Agriculture, including a written a report in 1969 that suggested a range of tough recommendations in order to make the farm viable.<sup>60</sup>

Eventually, in 1976, farming operations were discontinued. “[I]ncreasing overhead costs and a depressed market” were given as the official reasons for the farm's demise,<sup>61</sup> and no doubt these were among the main drivers of the closure. Debate was heated at the various committees and official forums leading up to the farm’s closure in 1976 however, that were not limited to questions of finance. It appears that in some ways the fight over the fate of the farm became a de facto fight over the fundamental philosophies of the Children’s Home itself. With its demise, another brick in the wall of total institutionalisation was removed, helping to clear the path to reform that would emerge in the coming years.

### State School No. 1256: From the 1860s to 1976

Another important practical and symbolic shift in Ballarat Children's Home's service model, away from “total institution” and towards Community Sector Organisation, was the end of the direct provision of schooling at the Victoria St campus. A school at the institution was established in the 1860s, even before the introduction of “free, compulsory and secular” schooling for all Victorians with the passing of the *Education Act 1872*.<sup>62</sup> Known as either the Ballarat Orphanage School, or Ballarat Children's Home School, State School No. 1256 was attended by residents of the children's institution

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<sup>58</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Committee of Management Notes”, (23 October, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> There is no copy available of the Agriculture Department Report, and it is only referred to in surviving Ballarat Children's Home records, so exactly what these recommendations were is not known. Ballarat Children’s Home, “Minutes of Special Board of Management Meeting” (15 October, 1969). Cafs Collection.

<sup>61</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, *One hundred and eleventh Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1976) 7. Cafs Collection.

<sup>62</sup> Craig Campbell, “Free, Compulsory and Secular Education Acts, Australia 1850-1910,” in *Dictionary of Educational History in Australia and New Zealand* (Australia and New Zealand History of Education Society (ANZHES), 2014).

until they reached the end of primary school. After that, children either moved into a local secondary school, or stopped going to school altogether. As a Government School, it operated separately from the children's institution, funded and managed by the Victorian Department of Education.

Regular reports were kept by government appointed inspectors, providing an overview of the school's operation and performance.<sup>63</sup> Facilities, equipment, teaching standards and students' achievements at the school were generally considered to be "satisfactory".<sup>64</sup> The school was characterised by "earnest" and "conscientious" children;<sup>65</sup> and industrious, attentive and "sympathetic"<sup>66</sup> teachers.

These assessments, however, were very often given within a context of the perceived constraints experienced by many children in the institution. The measure of progress that was of most importance to School Inspectors was what was known as "promotion" and "retardation". That is, if a student moved from one grade level to the next they were considered "promoted", and if they did not progress to the next grade level, they were considered "retarded".<sup>67</sup> Although comprehensive data on progression and retardation for School 1256 could not be found, figures were often mentioned by School Inspectors. During the early twentieth century retardation rates at the Ballarat Orphanage School were around ten per cent of all students,<sup>68</sup> which was considered relatively high at the time.

When results like these did not meet community-wide standards, this was often attributed to the particular circumstances and difficulties experienced by the children in their lives. "*As might be expected in such a school*", wrote the State School inspector in 1930, "the number of 'average for grade' pupils in the middle and upper departments of the school is great."<sup>69</sup> The students from School 1256 were not always expected to achieve at a similar level to students from other schools.

That is to say, it was no surprise to the inspector that, regardless of the "satisfactory" resourcing and facilities often described in the reports, progress at this school was lower than elsewhere. Not only this, but the expectations invested in the children were often lower, not only

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<sup>63</sup> PROV Series VPRS 640/P/000 Unit 835 contains Correspondence from School No. 1256 and the Department of Education, 1882-1888. Series VPRS 9899/P/0001/1 contains School Inspector's Reports for School No. 1256.

<sup>64</sup> See for instance: "The... exam is fully recorded, commented on, and [results are ] satisfactory considering the number of changes among the pupils continually going on." Department of Education, Inspector's Report, 4th and 5th May 1914. "Instruction is effective and imparted with vigor. There were some fine instances of pupils being able to give an account of their world orally in narrative form." Department of Education, "Inspector's Report" (2-3 June, 1915). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>65</sup> "Tests given show that very earnest and conscientious work has been done during the year." Department of Education, "Inspector's Report" (29-30 July, 1931). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>66</sup> "The head-teacher possesses the sympathy and vision which are needed to administer a school of this type". Department of Education, "Inspector's Report" (2 June, 1926). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>67</sup> There is no correlation to later meanings of this word "retarded" to indicate learning or intellectual disabilities, in either a clinical or pejorative sense.

<sup>68</sup> In 1916 for instance the inspector noted that promotions at School 1256 were at 90.8 per cent. VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>69</sup> Department of Education, "Inspector's Report" (27 February, 1930). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1. Emphasis added.

because of “pupils’ past history” and their perceived “low mentality”, as at least one of the State Inspectors reported,<sup>70</sup>

These lower expectations no doubt filtered through to many other aspects of those children’s lives. As we have seen in the discussion above, for boys, farming careers were often promoted and preferred in order to fulfil a dual function of institutional viability and vocational development. So too for girls, who were routinely expected to develop skills and perform labour in areas related to housekeeping, child caring, and other seemingly “domestic” duties. Indeed, so deep were the assumptions about the capability and future prospects of many of the children, that inadequate progress at school would be explained and excused by the requirement that they perform the kind of labour required of them to sustain the institution.

Writing to the Department of Education in 1882, the Orphan Asylum School's Head Teacher, Edward Date, was responding to a request from State officials to explain why student attendance had been “irregular”. “I have the honour to state in reply that eight girls of the fifth class are kept out every afternoon for housework in the Orphanage.” In recognition of the difficulty that this presented to the students, the Head Teacher went on to clarify: “I may state that the same girls are not out continuously. The girls alternate weekly.”<sup>71</sup> That is to say, the systemic disadvantage faced by these girls was understood and recognised by the school, the Orphan Asylum and the State, but strategies were employed not to fix the problem, but to work around it.

Students experienced similar difficulties throughout the life of School 1256. In 1914 the State Inspector noted that “No home lessons are given, so that the progress is dependent solely on the class work and compares favourably with that of very good schools.”<sup>72</sup> In 1916 the Inspector reported that “[s]atisfactory attention is given to the grading of the pupils thro'out ... but with the absence of home lessons and the necessity for the punctual dismissal of all pupils to meet the requirements of the institution beyond the school rooms there is little opportunity of forcing progress.”<sup>73</sup> In 1923, a “weak spot in the school” was identified by the inspector, in Grade IV. “The weak spelling of this grade retards general progress”, he noted. “Spelling evidently suffers from lack of self-effort, thro' there being no facilities for Home Lessons. Tables and spelling must be clinched in class work.”<sup>74</sup> In the same report the inspector noted that while “Oral reading is of good average quality” and “Composition is fairly good”, “Ideas are somewhat cramped owing to pupils' environment.”<sup>75</sup> In 1924 the Inspector noted that “The working spirit generally is good, very good in places ... The teachers show a nice sympathetic

<sup>70</sup> “The past history of the pupils and, in some cases, low mentality are the main reasons for the 'retardation'.” Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Correspondence between Edward Date, Head Teacher of the Orphanage School and Department of Education, (20 September, 1882). VPRS 640/P/000 Unit 835. Emphasis in original.

<sup>72</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (1st and 2nd October, 1914). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>73</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (2nd and 3rd August 1916). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>74</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (6-7 August, 1923). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

interest in their work here. They can cultivate oral answering in narrative form to a larger extent, especially as this particular type of pupil gets little opportunity of conversing with other than their mates.”<sup>76</sup>

“Considering that the parental interest which plays an important part in the progress of most pupils is altogether absent here,” noted the State Department of Education’s Schools Inspector in 1915, “the work done is considered very satisfactory and effective.”<sup>77</sup> In 1916 the Inspector reported that “[o]wing to circumstances beyond the control of the teachers the Retardation Graph shows rather a high percentage of retardants, but the progress of the pupils while in this school is very good.”<sup>78</sup> In 1926, the Inspector concluded that “[a]s a big number of neglected children are enrolled at this school the number of retardates [sic] is comparatively high”.<sup>79</sup>

The school teachers and leaders were often given credit for their work in these difficult circumstances. In 1926 the School Inspector reported that “the head-teacher and members of the staff are aware of the shortcomings in ... respect [to students’ progress], and judgment is being shown in individual cases... The head-teacher is always on the alert to do his best to give bright pupils the opportunity for higher education.”<sup>80</sup> This no doubt described a worthy endeavour by the staff at School 1256, but it is unlikely that at many other schools in Victoria that the head-teacher’s alertness to giving bright students opportunities would be worthy of comment, much less specific praise.

These were barriers to learning and progressing in education generated by the expectations and institutional conditions within which the students lived – despite the effort and commitment shown by students and teachers alike. Specifically, the requirement for them to work in the institution, in the gardens, farms and dormitories, and the limited exposure that the students got to outside influences. Indeed, the pleasant state of the institution’s gardens is routinely noted by School Inspectors, as well as the students’ role in maintaining them. In 1917, for instance he notes that “[t]he elder boys are trained by the manager in horticultural and agricultural work and they assist in keeping the extensive grounds in commendable order”.<sup>81</sup> In 1924 the Inspector noted that “[t]he school is built on Orphanage property on which ample scope is afforded the elder boys for horticultural, agriculture and general farm work.”<sup>82</sup>

Notwithstanding the vocational experience gained by many young people at the institution through participating in work such as this, it is instructive that the School Inspectors – whose role was to maintain the integrity of the schooling system – would observe and endorse practices that inhibited

<sup>76</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (22 May, 1924). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>77</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (23 and 24 March, 1915). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>78</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (22-23 May, 1916). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>79</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (19-20 August, 1926). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (28 July, 1917). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>82</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector’s Report” (22 May, 1924). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

the school's ability to operate effectively. In general, students and teachers achieved “satisfactory” results, sometimes “good” and “very good” results, despite the environment in which they are placed. Also, in general, these circumstances were acknowledged, understood, but not changed, either by the State or the institution.

As the twentieth century progressed, these problems became larger, and were seen to be intractable. In 1963 the Inspector reported that “[h]alf of the pupils are retardants, *a problem without solution* because approximately one third of the pupils change to and from similar institutions each year”.<sup>83</sup> Note also the major increase in the rate of “retardation” – from around ten per cent in the 1920s, to around fifty per cent in the 1960s. The attitude, however, remained similar.

The following year, 1964, a similar observation was made. “The retardation of 50% is due to the type that populates this school and is in no sense a reflection on the school: due attention is paid to retardants.” Again in 1966: “In such a school as this, high retardation is to be expected (51%). Teachers were commended for the way in which they cater for the ability groups within their classes.”<sup>84</sup> This appears typical of an attitude that pervaded State and institutional approaches to achievement in education at Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and later at Ballarat Children's Home. As in the earlier periods described, dating back to the nineteenth century, and through the twentieth century, all were aware that a problem existed, but none – despite their diligent, careful efforts – were aware of a solution.

In 1969, just after the Ballarat Orphanage had changed names and service model to become the Ballarat Children's Home, School 1256 was declared a “Special School” which enabled it to increase staffing, reduce class sizes, and enhance capacity for one-on-one support.<sup>85</sup> While this provided resources and encouragement to change, and teachers were pro-active in adjusting their approaches in the interests of the children,<sup>86</sup> it seems that substantive improvements were elusive.

By the mid-1970s State Inspectors were no longer merely observing the problems that had already been observed for generations, but were now directing the school towards definitive and comprehensive reform. “The children from this school,” wrote the State Schools Inspector in 1974, “...have the same range of social, physical, emotional and educational needs as ordinary children.”<sup>87</sup> As well as having the “same range” of needs as other children, as the Inspectors of the mid-1970s also acknowledged, they were “also subject to the pressures of living in an institution. They are institutionalized children.”

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<sup>83</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report” (22 July, 1963). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1. Emphasis added.

<sup>84</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report” (28 July, 1966). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>85</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report”, (24 March, 1969). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>86</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report” (18 November-5 December, 1974). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

Instead of accepting these limitations as the natural fate of “institutionalized children”, however, the Inspectors this time suggested that “[p]erhaps it would be more in the children's interests if they were to attend other nearby primary schools”,<sup>88</sup> pointing out that “the [education] program itself – organization, curricula, & teaching methods – is not at all relevant to meeting the immediate needs of the children.”<sup>89</sup> A year earlier, a different School Inspector had observed that

[t]remendous challenges emerge – for in the education environment provided at the school falls far short in providing the positive, functional & stimulating setting so vital to these children, and one wonders whether the existing set up with the school attached to the home is really in the best interests of the pupils.<sup>90</sup>

This question had been raised at least six years earlier by the Ballarat Children's Home Board of Management, in 1968.

Mr Farley raised the question of whether it would not be better for the children here to attend State Schools beyond the Home and thus mix with other children in the Community in a normal way. The Superintendent pointed out that generally speaking this was considered very wise, but in our case we had a particularly good school ...and the attendance of our children at other State Schools would certainly create many practical problems in view of children cared for here.<sup>91</sup>

The Ballarat Children's Home Staff Newsletter for November 1973 held out hope that a new school would be constructed on the Ballarat Children's Home's grounds, acknowledging the “very inadequate facilities that exist at present”.<sup>92</sup> The 1974 Inspector's report for school 1256, however, is the last one on record, as the old school closed its eyes, in the poetic words of one of its students, and went to sleep.<sup>93</sup> From 1975 onwards, students from the Ballarat Children's Home would attend schools in the community, rather than their own institutional school.

## Conclusion - From 'care and protection' to 'corrective treatment'

At the same time as some of the distinctive markers of self-contained institutional life at Victoria Street campus were slipping away – the farm, the school, Queenscliffe holidays – an important sign towards the way in which services would be delivered into the future was emerging. In 1976 “[t]he first stage of the family group home development program” saw the purchase and setting up of three residential properties outside the Victoria Street Campus.<sup>94</sup> Family Group Homes. This was to develop

<sup>88</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report” (19-24 October, 1973). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>89</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report” (18 November-5 December, 1974). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1.

<sup>90</sup> Department of Education, “Inspector's Report” (19-24 October, 1973). VPRS 9899/P/0001/1. Emphasis in original.

<sup>91</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Board of Management Minutes” (28 August, 1968), s.1, v.12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>92</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Staff Newsletter” (November, 1973), 2. Cafs Collection.

<sup>93</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, “Look Around - Annual Residents' Newsletter, (Ballarat, 1975), 5. Cafs Collection.

<sup>94</sup> Ballarat Children's Home, *One hundred and eleventh Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1976), 7. Cafs Collection.

into a significant line of service delivery that would herald the transition from “total institution” to dispersed community-based service delivery in the decades to come.

As well as this move away from institutional care towards community- based accommodation, the late 1970s saw the beginning of a fundamental shift in policy and service model. Once again, the State was instrumental in shaping and driving this change. In 1979 the Ballarat Children's Home's “Forward Planning Committee” received a visit from Mr Vic Coull of the Social Welfare Department. Here he “outlined the need for an adolescent hostel in Ballarat”, which would “cater...for offending youths rather than on a care and protection basis”.<sup>95</sup>

Mr Coull emphasised that this would be paid for mostly by the State, and that it favoured the Ballarat Children's Home to provide the service over a neighbouring Ballarat service provider, Lisa Lodge.<sup>96</sup> “Although the Lisa Lodge Committee were the most experienced in Ballarat in terms of this type of care, [Mr Coull] also thought that they lacked the financial and organizational resources to be able to contemplate a venture of this kind.” The Forward Planning Committee at this point committed only to “give some thought” to implementing such a facility<sup>97</sup>. The seed was planted, however, and within a few years the Ballarat Children's Home's operating model would be transformed. The number of children in Care was reducing significantly at this time, due to the increase in Family Support style programs being funded by a more regionalised Social Welfare Department.<sup>98</sup>

The responsibility for social services in Ballarat was becoming increasingly blurred, from single focus organisations with complementary service offerings, to overlapping services, essentially competing for business on the same turf. This model was to reach its peak from the 1990s onward with the growth of competitive tendering in the Kennett years, but its origins lie here in the late 1970s, with the State identifying Ballarat Children's Home as having the necessary infrastructure and economies of scale, rather than the expertise necessarily to deliver a particular service.

We can see in these examples the competing impulses of reform and tradition, progress and constraint that have been emphasised throughout this thesis. As the institutional history of the organisation now known as Cafs shows, it is difficult to recognise the moment for reform at the precise instant it could or should happen. Rather, change happened in a piecemeal manner, as institutional cultures and practices changed gradually, alongside the reforming impulses of the State. In the later School Inspectors’ reports from the 1970s, in which the educational needs of children were seen as of primary importance to the school’s future direction, and in Superintendent Jenkins’s representation

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<sup>95</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “Forward Planning Committee Notes” (13 February, 1978), s.1, v.15. Cafs Collection.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home, “One Hundred and Twelfth Annual General Meeting of Life Governors and Contributors” (12 October, 1977), s.1, v.15. Cafs Collection.

of the needs and preferences of children in his advocacy for the farm's closure, we can also see a growing consideration of the needs and rights of children that informed fundamental change.

## Chapter 7. Institutional Legacies / Legacies of Institutionalisation: History, Heritage and the modern community sector organisation

This chapter describes and demonstrates both the operational legacies of the institutional periods described above, specifically in the ways in which the modern Community Sector Organisation Cafs has developed since the end of consolidated residential institutionalisation at its predecessor institutions, the Ballarat Children's Home, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat District Orphan Asylum; and the individual and social legacies, particularly in relation to difficult experiences of trauma and abuse. This provides a platform to explore the ways in which history has been used by Cafs, and the ways in which it could understand its history now and into the future.

### 7a) Institutional legacies: 1983 to 2019

1983 marks the transition point from "total institution" to multi-service Community Sector Organisation. In the institution's Annual Report for 1982/'83, a wistful Geoff Russell, Acting Director of Ballarat Children's Homes (note the subtle change of name),<sup>1</sup> observed a new pattern of life at its Victoria Street Headquarters. "No longer the yells and laughter of children playing in the grounds or coming up to say "Hello" as we walked from cottage to cottage. No longer the football landing on the Office roof and the patter of feet a few moments later to retrieve it."<sup>2</sup> In 1983 "the last family of four children moved from the campus to their "own" home,"<sup>3</sup> completing a service model transformation. Children would now be accommodated in houses within the broader Ballarat and District communities, rather than all together at Victoria Street. "So ends the final chapter in the book of congregate care and campus facilities provided by Ballarat Children's Home", wrote Director Russell.<sup>4</sup> While the process of change had been long, in the end this decisive shift came relatively quickly. "[I]t would have been impossible to imagine even 20 years ago, much less 118 years, that child caring methods would have altered to the degree which has eventuated."<sup>5</sup>

### The Development of Out-of-Home Care

Residential services were not completely confined to the organisation's past, however. A network of Family Group Homes was established mainly in the 1970s and 1980s as described above in Chapter Four continued to grow into the 1990s. Up to the turn of the century CAFS managed a total of nineteen Family Group Home properties around Ballarat and surrounding areas, including

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<sup>1</sup> Ballarat Children's *Home* had become Ballarat Children's *Homes*, indicating the more dispersed accommodation models now being provided by the institution.

<sup>2</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *118th Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1983), 12. Cafs Collection.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Daylesford, though only a handful were in operation at any one time.<sup>6</sup> In 1991 there were 25 children at Family Group Homes,<sup>7</sup> 22 in 1992.<sup>8</sup> In 1994, BCHFS assumed responsibility as the agency responsible for Foster Care placements in Ballarat and its region,<sup>9</sup> which quickly took over as the largest form of “Out-of-Home-Care” - as residential services were now known - provided by the organisation. By the end of the century, the “Home Based Care and Case Managed Services” program, which managed the organisation’s Out-of-Home-Care services, provided residential services to “on average, 80 children and young people ... each night” in Ballarat, Ararat, Bacchus Marsh and Daylesford.<sup>10</sup> The majority of these were with volunteer foster carers, “providing accommodation and support on a full-time basis.”<sup>11</sup> By the mid-2010s up to 180 children per night were supported in CAFS’ “Placement and Support Services”.<sup>12</sup> This included 141 children being cared for by 80 foster carers throughout 2014-15, ninety families supported through Kinship Care (which had become part of CAFS’ programs in 2010), and nineteen children and young people in residential Care.<sup>13</sup> This included a disproportionately high number of Aboriginal children and young people.<sup>14</sup>

In the wake of its long institutional Care period, residential services continued to be part of what CAFS described as “the long tradition ... of providing the best care and accommodation possible for children and young people who cannot live with their immediate family”.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to an earlier period of significant change in the 1970s, however, the modern organisation has been able to shed many of the expectations and cultural markers of institutionalisation to become a predominantly multi-service and flexible agency, pragmatically adapting to prevailing service and policy environments.

### The development of a multi-service Community Sector Organisation

By the mid-1980s the operations of Ballarat Children's Homes were divided into three distinct areas:

- “Child and Family Services”, which included three different programs: Budget Advisory Service, Family Aide Program, and Family Group Homes;<sup>16</sup>

<sup>6</sup> James Jenkinson, "Guide to out-of-Home Care Services, 1940-2000. Volume Two: Data Base," (North Melbourne: James Jenkinson Consulting, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home and Family Services, *126<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1990-91), 21. Cafs Collection.

<sup>8</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home and Family Services, *127<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1991-92), 26. Cafs Collection.

<sup>9</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home and Family Services, *129<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1993-94), 21. Cafs Collection.

<sup>10</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, *Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1999-2000), 11. Cafs Collection.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, *Annual Report* (Ballarat, 2014-15), 25. Cafs Collection.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>14</sup> In 2014-15 29 Aboriginal Children and Young people were cared for by CAFS services. Ibid., 25.

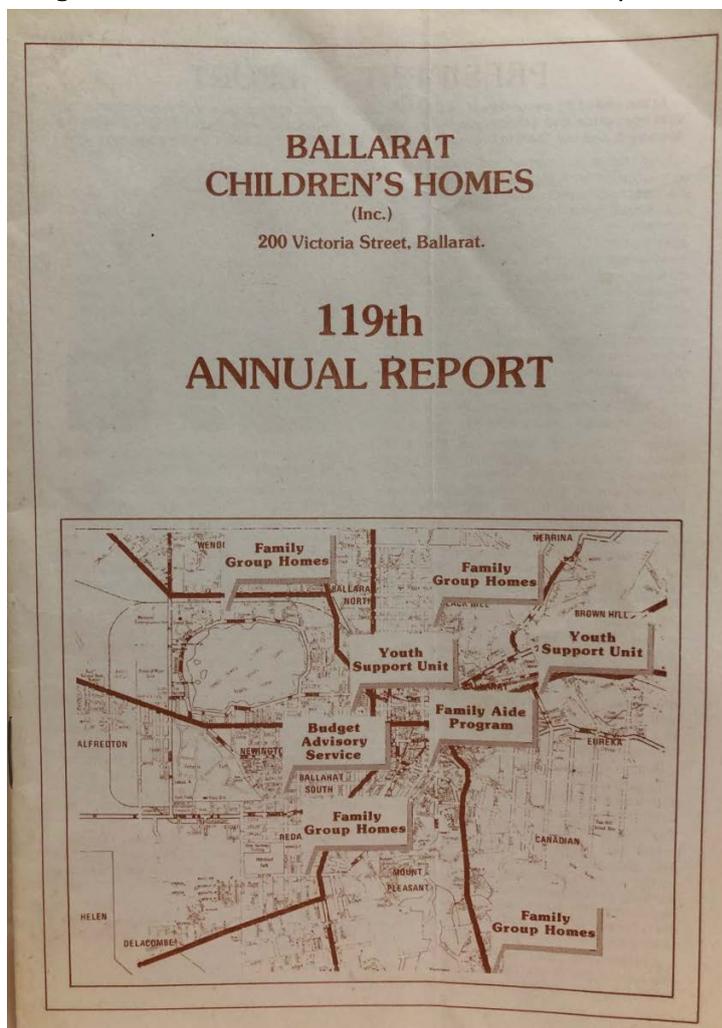
<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *119<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1984), 8-11. Cafs Collection.

- Youth Services, which included five programs: Community Supervision Program, School Extension Program, Options Program, the Youth Attendance Project, and the Raglan House Hostel;<sup>17</sup> and
- Administration, which included management, reporting and accounting.<sup>18</sup>

This represented a significant expansion in the number of services offered, occurring almost exclusively outside of the traditional home base at Victoria Street, which was retained as the organisation's administrative headquarters. As if to emphasise the now-dispersed operation of Ballarat Children's Homes, a map of Ballarat adorns the cover of the Annual Report for 1982/'83 and 1983/'84, showing the general locations of each of these services.<sup>19</sup>

Image 7.1: Ballarat Children's Homes, Annual Report 1983/'84 Cover



<sup>17</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *120th Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1985), 15. Cafs Collection.

<sup>18</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *119th Annual Report*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> The Administration function, which had stayed at the Victoria Street premises, was not indicated on the map. Ballarat Children's Homes, *118th Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1983), 1. Cafs Collection.

Indeed, the very first thing that Russell highlighted in his “Director's Report” for 1984 was that “[i]n this past year we have continued with our Public Relations program in terms of grasping every opportunity to inform the community that although we may move from the Victoria Street property, we are very much alive in our work and certainly not closing down.”<sup>20</sup> It is an indication of how difficult the situation was, and how different the institution had become, when the main communication objective for the year was to reassure the public that the organisation still existed.

While the number of children and families assisted through direct accommodation services had steadily dwindled during the later 1970s and early 1980s, as outlined in Chapter Four above, by 1984 with its new line up of services, the institution was again focussed on its volume of service delivery. Ballarat Children's Home Financial Counsellor Catherine Laffey, for instance, pointed out in the Annual Report for 1984, that the new arrangements had enabled Ballarat Children's Home to expand the reach of its services. “In the past year the Budget Advisory Service alone has worked with 243 families, which include 414 children.”<sup>21</sup> The Budget Advisory Service focussed on families experiencing financial difficulties, including those on low incomes, and those in significant debt. It issued small “No-Interest” loans to families, and ran a loans guarantee scheme, along with education and advocacy services.<sup>22</sup>

The Family Aide Program delivered training and information sessions with families in group settings, teaching practical and social skills. In 1984, for instance, they conducted sessions with 113 families, including basic cookery courses, courses aimed specifically at men, several sessions called “Growing Together”, two social support groups, a child-minding exchange, and a teenage mothers’ group.<sup>23</sup>

The Youth Services program grew out of “the growing awareness within the community of the social and personal problems many of our youth are confronted with”.<sup>24</sup> Based predominantly at Raglan House in central Ballarat, it was focussed in particular on young people who were at risk of entering the youth justice system, with a focus on education (School Extension Program), employment (Raglan House Hostel), justice systems (Community Supervision Program, Youth Attendance Project), and alternative community-based residential facilities (Options, Raglan House). As can be seen, the emphasis had shifted towards multiple services in multiple locations, with a renewed focus on the volume of children and families served.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *119th Annual Report*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *119th Annual Report*, 9. *120th Annual Report*, 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ballarat Children's Homes, 120th Annual Report*, 15.

## An emerging Rights-based approach to service delivery

Change in service models accelerated from 1985. The “Options” program, for instance, was established in the belief that there was a need to “increas[e]... deinstitutionalisation of accommodation services”<sup>25</sup> even further, so that children and young people were supported to live in the broader community, rather than isolated in “dependent” settings, such as Family Group Homes.

This program typified the diversification of services at BCHFS in this era, and the shifting rationale for providing services. It was framed within a context of a global Human Rights approach to social services, rather than a welfare approach. In the introduction to the program summary, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights was cited as the basis for developing the program.<sup>26</sup> “Every person”, stated the introduction, has:

the right to live within the community in an environment where conditions are of the same standard applicable to elsewhere in the community; the right to make informed choices between available accommodation facilities; the right to supports, necessary to foster community living; and no person should be placed into a restrictive environment, if that person’s needs can be adequately met in a less restrictive environment.<sup>27</sup>

The Options Program demonstrated the ways in which the organisation's reach and influence had extended further beyond the direct delivery of accommodation services, into broader needs identification and coordination between community sector and government agencies. The organisation was picking up on the principles and philosophies outlined in the Victorian Government's recently released “Carney Report”, a review into social services.<sup>28</sup> For instance, in developing the Options program, BCHFS had identified youth homelessness as a growing reality in Ballarat, citing data gathered through the Central Highlands Youth Accommodation Coalition.<sup>29</sup> This indicated the way in which BCHFS was increasingly focussed on issues beyond the delivery of its own services, and the way in which it was increasingly engaging in regional collaboration, explicitly operating as part of a network

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<sup>25</sup> Prue Capell, Rob Sheridan, and Lynden Baxter, *Options: Developing Accommodation in Our Community, Youth Accommodation Structure* (Ballarat: Youth Services, Ballarat Children's Homes, 1985), 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* These Rights were drawn directly from existing UN Conventions.

<sup>28</sup> The Carney Report outlined seven “Philosophies” that should guide future development of the social service sector:

1. A Commitment to Social Justice and Equity
2. A commitment to support families
3. A commitment to increasing the resourcefulness, independence and self-sufficiency of individuals and families
4. Maximum accountability to children and their families, as well as to the broader community
5. Protect cultural differences
6. Voluntary participation in the use of services
7. Foster and promote the development of communities

Taken from Draft notes, Department of Community Welfare Services, “Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review (Carney Report)” (1982). VPRS 6613-P2

<sup>29</sup> Capell, Sheridan, and Baxter, *Options: Developing Accommodation in Our Community, Youth Accommodation Structure*, 4.

of agencies with shared goals and a broad remit around furthering holistic service delivery, rather than as a cog in a State-led network of accommodation providers.

The Options Program involved the establishment of a new governance structure that formally connected other service providers (such as Lisa Lodge, Raglan House, the Salvation Army, the Uniting Church and Sebastopol Community Health), and local, State and Commonwealth government agencies (including Community Welfare Services at the City of Ballarat, the Victorian State Departments of Community Welfare Services, Education, Housing, and the Health Commission, and the Commonwealth Department of Social Security) into shared local and regional responsibility for the young people they were serving.<sup>30</sup> It also included input from young people themselves into program development and design, through the “Options Program Development Committee”.<sup>31</sup>

In this way, through encouraging collaboration and interdependence at the service level, the Options program represented a shift in the way governments sought to influence strategic development and innovation in service delivery. Even so, the program was funded predominantly by government: two placement workers funded 90 per cent by the State Government's Department of Community Welfare Services, and an additional worker focussed on finding suitable accommodation and paid by the Commonwealth Government's Employment Grant, managed by the Coordinator of Youth Services at BCHFS.<sup>32</sup>

The new range of program streams provided a broader span of supports than the limited residential and vocational aims of the institution's previous incarnations. The organisation was now committed to finding “effective and humane alternatives to institutional life”,<sup>33</sup> as Director Andrew Davis wrote in 1985. BCHFS provided less-intensive support services to a larger number of young people and their families, rather than co-opting children into the totalising logic of an institutional setting.

In 1988 BCHFS moved into new premises in the centre of Ballarat, in the newly named “Ludbrook House” at 115 Lydiard St North, previously the site of St Paul’s Technical School, in a “complicated array of moves and counter-moves” that saw an exchange of properties take place.<sup>34</sup> It meant for BCHFS that “the last of our ties with [200 Victoria St] were broken”,<sup>35</sup> ending 122 years of occupation at the site. In its place, a newly created Catholic Secondary School, Damascus College, was established.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 11-12 & 17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes, *120th Annual Report*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1986/87), 2. Cafs Collection.

<sup>35</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *123<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1987/88), 3. Cafs Collection.

## Financial challenges in the 1990s – echoes of earlier service reform efforts

Like other community sector organisations in the early 1990s, BCHFS found itself trying to implement major strategic and operational changes while facing significant financial challenges. An economic recession was causing havoc across Australia. As Director Harris put it in 1992, “the economic situation ... places greater demands upon us in terms of meeting the needs of distressed families in the community. Many families who have managed to cope in the past find it impossible to survive within the present situation.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, wrote BCHFS Treasurer John Mayne, “as the community moves deeper into recession...it is highly probable that major funding cuts to this agency will be experienced in the new financial year.”<sup>37</sup>

Treasurer Mayne's predictions proved only partially correct – State funding actually increased slightly in the early 1990s<sup>38</sup> – but the organisation's financial position deteriorated significantly, as anticipated. In 1990-91, the institution ran a “satisfactory” operating deficit of \$23,290.<sup>39</sup> The following year, 1991-92, that deficit had blown out to \$185,552.50, “the largest [deficit that the organisation] had suffered for many years.”<sup>40</sup> A number of factors contributed to this deficit: the expansion of services into Daylesford, system upgrades and the “purchase ... [of] several new computer terminals”, and excess from a major flooding incident on New Year's Eve.<sup>41</sup> However, underpinning the significant increase in expenditure was the growing demand for BCHFS's services.

Echoes of earlier eras in the organisation's history can be observed in this period, as economic crisis acted as both a catalyst and constraint on significant service reform. As described in Chapter Three, the Great Depression in the 1930s prompted a shift towards accommodating State wards and away from retrograde Colonial attitudes of “deserving” and “undeserving” children. As described in Chapter Four, the introduction of award rates in the late 1960s led to the professionalisation of the workforce alongside increased operational costs that threatened the viability of the institution, at the same time as “deinstitutionalisation” and the rising cost of large-scale accommodation encouraged the shift from large-scale dormitory accommodation to smaller Family Group Home units. The financial crisis of the early 1990s reinforced the need for service reforms introduced in the 1980s,

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<sup>36</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *127<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1991/92), 16. Cafs Collection.

<sup>37</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *126<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1990/91), 5. Cafs Collection.

<sup>38</sup> Government Grants in 1990-1991: \$1,515,397

Government Grants in 1991-1992: \$1,623,752

Government Grants in 1992-1993: \$1,699,031

Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, “Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 30th June, 1992”, *127<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 6. Ballarat Children's Home and Family Services, “Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 30th June, 1993”, *128<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1992/93), 5. Cafs Collection. Includes “Health and Community Services Grants”, “Other State Government Grants”, and “Commonwealth Government Grants”.

<sup>39</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *126<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *127<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

drove BCHFS further into the areas of prevention, early intervention and “developmental” services, and prompted the development of alternative revenue models.

Carrying on from the major expansion in the number and type of services delivered by BCHFS in the 1980s, the 1990s saw further service proliferation, as the organisation settled into its role as a broad-based entity with a focus on prevention and early intervention, as well as direct service provision. The decade opened with an address at the 1990 Annual General Meeting by Patricia Fellman, CEO of the Ian Potter Foundation, who “urged [BCHFS] to aim at long-term solutions ... and concentrate on preventative programs”.<sup>42</sup> It was followed by a workshop delivered by the influential Professor Connie Benn, head of the University of Melbourne's Social Work program, and former Director of the Social Development Division in the Department of Premier and Cabinet,<sup>43</sup> which “helped [BCHFS] to clarify the ever-changing nature of society and ensure that the services [it] deliver[s] accurately reflect the needs of the community”.<sup>44</sup>

These visits typify the organisation's changing strategic focus, with a growing emphasis on delivering services “along developmental lines”, and a commitment to “involve clients much more closely in the planning, development and evaluation of ... services”.<sup>45</sup> This developmental approach led the organisation further into the realms of advocacy and leading change to “social structures and attitudes that are detrimental to family functioning”,<sup>46</sup> as Director Maurie Harris expressed it. For example, BCHFS took an early leadership role in advocating for the importance of addressing domestic and family violence as an issue of public importance, twenty-five years before a Royal Commission into Family Violence would finally thrust this issue into the frontlines of family service delivery. Writes Director Maurie Harris, again, in 1992:

Already we read and hear reports of violence and crime on our streets and within the community. This is not likely to be reduced by increasing control measures such as law enforcement. It will be reduced when young people have a constructive part to play within our society. Interestingly enough the amount of violence and social disorder brought about by young people pales into insignificance when compared to the violence and disorder that occurs within our homes and domestic situations.<sup>47</sup>

Less than two years later, though, in 1994, Harris reported with regret “we have not been able to continue funding our domestic violence program”, due to increased financial pressures.<sup>48</sup> This

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<sup>42</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *126th Annual Report*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Connie Benn, “Fiftieth Anniversary Oral History Project,” Australian Association of Social Workers - Victorian Branch, <https://www.aasw.asn.au/victoria/spoken-memories/connie-benn>. Accessed 28 November, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Ballarat Children's Home and Family Services, *126th Annual Report*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *129th Annual Report* (Ballarat, 1993/94), 10. Cafs Collection.

simultaneous hope and disappointment typifies the developmental community sector environment of the early 1990s, as new thinking and ideas continued to emerge alongside the significant pressures of a recession that was gripping Australian economies and communities.

In 1992 the Victorian Government legalised poker machines as a means of alleviating economic pressures experienced by the State during the recession.<sup>49</sup> In 1995, Director Harris observed that:

[BCHFS] workers are seeing increasing numbers of people (children and families) who are suffering because of gambling addictions ... Family disintegration can, does and is occurring. If we are to have a huge gambling industry as a way of raising government revenue, then much needs to be done to ensure that the social well-being and quality of life of our vulnerable people are not damaged.<sup>50</sup>

This is another example of the shifting approach being taken by the institution at this time, taking the platform afforded to it as a multi-focussed social service provider to identify and highlight emerging social issues as they apply locally in the Ballarat and Central Highlands region, and develop programs and advocacy to address them. Addressing the economic and social pressures of gambling would emerge as a key program response for BCHFS and its successor organisation, Cafs, through community education programs, and involvement in regulating gambling vendors through the region. This is a long distance from the direct provision of accommodation in an institutional setting.

BCHFS's structure changed often and rapidly during the 1990s, as new programs were introduced, moved, altered, removed and re-introduced. This suggests a level of necessary flexibility in the face of financial uncertainty and operational upheaval, rather than what might seem a lack of strategic clarity. By midway through the 1990s, the organisation was delivering sixteen distinct programs, under three main services streams:<sup>51</sup>

- The “Family Services” stream included Day Stay, Family Counselling Unit, Family Support Unit, Family Mediation, Family Violence Prevention Program (back on the roster after being dropped a few years earlier, as described above), Intensive Family Service / Aftercare, Parenting Plus Program, Placement Support, Placement Support, and “Stepping Out”
- The “Accommodation Services” stream included Adolescent Community Placement, Family Group Homes, Foster Care,<sup>52</sup> Permanent Care Program, Supported Adolescent Accommodation Program

<sup>49</sup> Australian Institute for Gambling Research, *Australian Gambling Comparative History and Analysis: Project Report*, ed. Australian Institute for Gambling Research (Melbourne: Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *130th Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1994/95), 11. Cafs Collection.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> BCHFS became the auspicing agent for Foster Care in the Central Highlands region in 1993. See Ballarat Children's Home and Family Services, “Board of Management Minutes” (25 August, 1993), s.1, v.18. Cafs Collection.

- The “Consumer Services” stream covered Financial Counselling, Tenancy Advice, and Consumer Advice to people in the community who needed support and information to “gain power in the management of their financial and consumer rights and responsibilities”.<sup>53</sup>

A “Community Liaison” team took care of fundraising, donations and bequests, relationships within the community. The need to diversify funding sources, reducing dependence on government funding and citizen generosity, led BCHFS to develop an Op Shop called Wozzle's Wearhouse.

### Changing business models, contestability, and service innovation

This growing emphasis on diverse service offerings came amid ongoing concern about the emerging business model often referred to as “Contestable Competitive Tendering”, whereby the State commissioned individual community service organisations to deliver particular services, while “periodically opening their delivery to competition from external suppliers”,<sup>54</sup> as a 1996 Commonwealth Industry Commission report characterised it.

Director Maurie Harris publicly acknowledged the difficulties of competitive tendering in the 1998 Annual Report, advocating against its full-scale adoption as public policy. “Fundamental to my concern”, he wrote in the 1998 Child and Family Services Annual Report, “is the damage that can be done to a community’s social capital by a slavish adherence to economic rationalist principles expressed through competitive tendering for services.” He was particularly concerned because “Ballarat Children’s Home and Family Services Inc. has over 134 years of dedicated service, built an enormous reserve of social capital through volunteerism, community support and goodwill. It must not be damaged.”<sup>55</sup> Behind closed doors, that resistance to competitive tendering was even fiercer, with multiple Director’s Reports to the Board in 1997 and 1998 dedicated to outlining the pitfalls of contestability,<sup>56</sup> eventually committing the organisation to lobbying against the State’s policy direction, alongside a collection of other rural and regional community service organisations.<sup>57</sup> The organisation was actively opposing and lobbying against State policy, while also holding out for further

<sup>53</sup> Ballarat Children's Homes and Family Services, *130th Annual Report*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Industry Commission, “Competitive Tendering and Contracting by Public Sector Agencies,” ed. Australian Government Publishing Service (Melbourne: Industry Commission, 1996), 2.

<sup>55</sup> Child and Family Services, *Child and Family Services Inc. Annual Report 1998*, (Ballarat, 1998), 5. Cafs Collection.

<sup>56</sup> See for instance “Director’s Report to Board September 1997”, in “Board of Management Minutes, 17 September 1997”; “Director’s Report to Board February 1998”, in “Board of Management Minutes, 25 February 1998”; “Director’s Report to Board April 1998”, in “Board of Management Minutes”, 29 April 1998; Director’s Report to Board May 1998”; “Director’s Report May 1998”, in “Board of Management Minutes, 27 May 1998”; “Director’s Report to Board June 1998”, in “Board of Management Minutes”, 22 July 1998. Cafs Collection.

<sup>57</sup> See for instance Item 5.3 A) “Tendering / Contestability... the Board of Management support the directions of the rural organisations ... in respects to redeveloping the tendering / contestability process and that sufficient funding be made to expedite this process”. Ballarat Children’s Homes and Family Services, “Board of Management Minutes”, 29 April 1998. In June 1998 Harris reported on the development of an additional Appendix to the report that had been commissioned through this process titled “Victims of Ideology”, giving an indication of the politically activist nature of his opposition. “Director’s Report to Board June 1998”, in “Board of Management Minutes”, 22 July 1998. Cafs Collection.

State support. It was a difficult position to occupy, ultimately addressed through pragmatic compromise, and the sudden departure of Director Harris in August 1998.<sup>58</sup>

While Committee President Neil Jens held similar concerns to those of Harris, he instead emphasised that “given the current resolve of the State Government it is my firm belief we must learn to live within these new rules ... and as an opportunity to do more for the people who need help rather than as an impediment to it.”<sup>59</sup>

This pragmatic yet principled approach to service and business models that seems to characterise the organisation at the millennium was demonstrated in 1997, when senior managers from BCHFS and the Department of Human Services, “the Minister”<sup>60</sup> Dennis Napthine, and local Ballarat State Member of Parliament, Richard de Fegely, met in July 1997. BCHFS pointed out the incongruity of being funded to provide Foster Care placements while the organisation’s purpose was to prevent people being placed into Care.

Reporting on the meeting to the assembled Board of Management, Director Maurie Harris reiterated the organisation’s relatively new way of operating, in that “we offer families a whole range of services, rather than an individual service that can be supplied by a particular program.” This, however, was at odds with how services were funded by the State.

For example, we are funded for Foster Care according to the number of bed days we supply for children needing Foster Care. A multi service team approach to Foster Care referrals could well reduce the need to place children in care. This would then reduce the funding base, as funding is based upon bed days used by Foster Care referrals.”<sup>61</sup>

In 1997 the organisation decided to change its name, dropping any reference to “Children’s Homes” to become simply “Child & Family Services – Ballarat”, with adaptations in each of the Daylesford, Ararat and Bacchus Marsh regional offices, though the actual name change would not come into effect until 1998.<sup>62</sup>

An alternately expanding, contracting, shifting and changing range of early intervention and support services for families has continued through the 2000s. For instance, in February 2001 there were no less than six live funding submissions pending, and twenty-three staffing changes reported

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<sup>58</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home and Family Services,, “Board of Management Minutes”, 18 August 1998. Cafs Collection.

<sup>59</sup> Child and Family Services, *Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 1998), 2. Cafs Collection.

<sup>60</sup> In BCHFS’s record of the meeting, nowhere is the Minister’s name or even portfolio mentioned. Dennis Napthine was Minister of Youth and Community Services at this time, under the Liberal Kennett Government. “Director’s Report July 1997”, Ballarat Children’s Homes and Family Services Board of Management Minutes”, (23 July, 1997). Cafs Collection.

<sup>61</sup> “Director’s Report July 1997”, Ballarat Children’s Homes and Family Services Board of Management Minutes”, (23 July, 1997). Cafs Collection.

<sup>62</sup> Ballarat Children’s Homes and Family Services, “Board of Management Minutes”, 23 April, 1997. Cafs Collection.

for the previous month.<sup>63</sup> In an uncertain environment, the CEO was moved to “alert ... Board Members to the limited future of some agency programs”,<sup>64</sup> admitting that he “really can’t say with any certainty that we will retain all ... services”,<sup>65</sup> and that “the uncertainty will become more worrying as time goes on”.<sup>66</sup>

Competitive tendering for service delivery continues to this day, which has created challenges in providing reliable, ongoing services that can be implemented independently of the restrictions placed on service delivery by the State. From 2015 onwards, led by new CEO Allan Joy, the organisation has embarked on a significant strategic re-alignment and re-branding initiative, aimed at breaking generations of organisational dependence on State funding. In 2015, 90 per cent of CAFS’ revenue came from Government sources: 70 per cent from the Department of Human Services, 14 per cent from other State Government Departments, and 6 per cent from Commonwealth Government.<sup>67</sup> While not an unfamiliar position for the organisation to be in – it has experienced similar Government revenue levels since at least the mid-1970s – it has provided an impetus to enhance independent funding sources that would enable more innovative and experimental service responses. Since 2014, for instance, it has used non-government money from a designated “innovation fund” to operate the Equine Assisted Learning program.

Independent market research commissioned by CAFS in 2017 indicated that “[m]any people thought CAFS was a government department.”<sup>68</sup> In 2018 the organisation re-named itself as simply “Cafs”, and embarked on an ambitious project to develop the “Cafs Care Farm”, seeking up to \$2.6 million of private investment to provide flexible therapeutic services for families, children and young people, relatively independently of prescribed government service outputs.<sup>69</sup> Here can be seen renewed efforts to break established funding and service models, with a commitment to service innovation in design and resourcing.

## Heritage Programs

There had been a regular focus on CAFS’ history and heritage since 2000, when, in his regular report to the Board of Management, CEO Kevin Zibell laid out the challenges that its institutional past

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<sup>63</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Chief Executive Officer’s Report to the Board” (22 February 2001). Cafs Collection. This was an unusually high number of staffing changes, though typically there were more than five staff changes each month in this period of the early 2000s.

<sup>64</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Board of Management Minutes” (27 February, 2002). Cafs Collection.

<sup>65</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Chief Executive Officer’s Report to the Board” (21 March, 2002). Cafs Collection.

<sup>66</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Chief Executive Officer’s Report to the Board” (18 April, 2002). Cafs Collection.

<sup>67</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, *Annual Report (2014/15)*, 64.

<sup>68</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, Presentation to All-Staff, “Brand Staff Presentation July 2018” (July, 2018), slide 3. Cafs Collection.

<sup>69</sup> Including: \$1.5-\$2 million for “Therapeutic Accommodation Program”; \$250,000 for “agricultural programs”; \$50,000 for an “Art Therapy Space”; \$100,000 for an “Indoor Sensory Playground”; \$150,000 for a “Sensory Forest and Garden”; \$50,000 for a “Dad’s Shed”; \$100,000 for an “Animal Interaction Area”. Cafs, *Cafs Care Farm Investor Prospectus (2018)*, 12-13. Cafs Collection.

confronted it with. “At some stage, sooner rather than later,” he wrote, “Child and Family Services Ballarat must begin to deal more appropriately with our past role in relation to both aboriginal and non-aboriginal children who have been in our care.” This came in response to “a newspaper report ... re “the Stolen Generation”, and the organisation’s newly identified need to “work more closely with the Koori community”. According to his estimation at that point, they were receiving “at least one enquiry per week from people wishing to obtain information on their history in the Orphanage and Children’s Home”, for whom CAFS could only “provide some basic information and little more”. He believed that “we can be more proactive than this and take some responsibility for assisting people to discover and understand their past in our care”.<sup>70</sup>

Over the coming years CAFS created a part-time position dedicated to resourcing heritage queries and developed a Heritage Policy, relating to storage of and access to records and artefacts.<sup>71</sup> One of the activities that was developed during this time was the revival of regular ex-resident reunions, kicking off in 2006 with what has been described as the “big reunion”, and which in 2019 is still spoken about with great fondness by those who attended.<sup>72</sup> Heritage Support Worker Sharon Guy wrote about the reunion in the CAFS 2005/6 Annual Report:

350+ people travelled from across Australia to meet up with childhood friends and acquaintances... Memories were a mixture of happy and sad but most importantly ex residents were able to share their memories with people who remembered them.<sup>73</sup>

The CAFS Heritage Centre, led by Sharon Guy, was opened in 2008 over the road from the main Ludbrook House premises in Market St, Ballarat.<sup>74</sup> It was, noted Sharon, focussed on “working with people to find their heritage”.<sup>75</sup> For the first time, the Annual Report of 2008/09 contained a significant reflection on the historical experiences of Care from ex-residents’ point-of-view, with a feature story outlining the experiences of former Ballarat Orphanage resident Peggy Warren (nee Aubrey), and her life since leaving the institution. The growing demand and high esteem for Heritage Service is reflected in the bulging pile of “Thank You” cards and letters from former institutional residents addressed to Sharon Guy from the mid-2000s onwards.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Chief Executive Officer’s Report to the Board” (25 July, 2000). Cafs Collection. “Heritage issues – to be developed now that we have a Heritage position.” A copy of the original Heritage Policy has not been obtained by the researcher.

<sup>71</sup> Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Chief Executive Officer’s Report to the Board” (19 April, 2000). Cafs Collection.

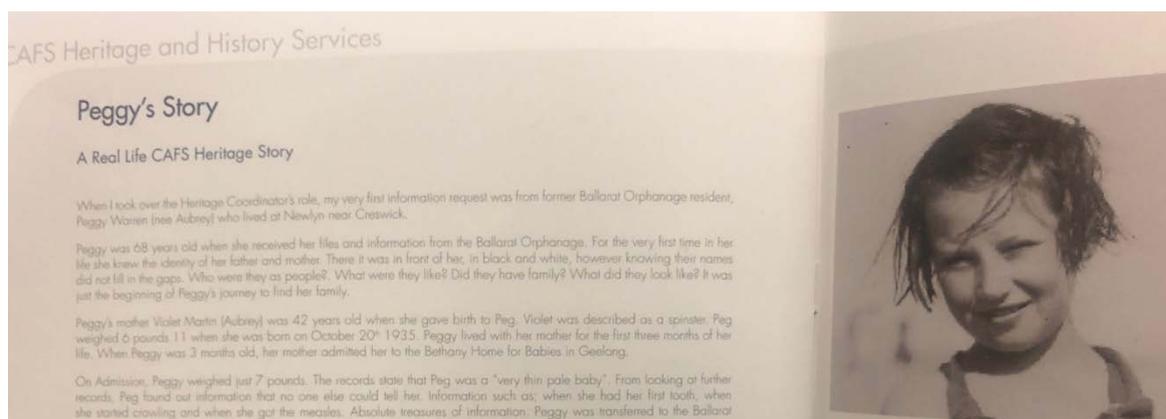
<sup>72</sup> Researcher’s informal discussions with ex-residents.

<sup>73</sup> Child and Family Services, *Annual Report* (Ballarat, 2005/06), 10. Cafs Collection.

<sup>74</sup> Child and Family Services, *Annual Report*, (Ballarat, 2008/09), 26. Cafs Collection.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>76</sup> Cards and Correspondence between Former Residents and CAFS Heritage Service, 2000s. Cafs Collection.

**Image 7.1. Extract from Peggy's Story, CAFS Annual Report 2008/'09**

CAFS' heritage activities culminated in 2015, with a year-long celebration of the organisation's official 150-year Anniversary. A full year of activities and unveilings were carried out, including the replanting of the "Arthur Kenny Avenue of Honour", including the publication of a comprehensive collection of biographies, photographs and other details of former Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and Ballarat Orphanage residents who served in World War I<sup>77</sup> and the establishment of the CAFS Legacy and Research Centre, including a modern Exhibition Space displaying stories and artefacts from the organisation's institutional pasts. These initiatives have represented an impressive and highly significant investment by CAFS into the representation of the institution's history.

The legacies of institutionalisation carry on into the lives of children and the adults they have become. The difficult aspects of institutional legacies, of which CEO Kevin Zibell was acutely aware when he made the first tentative steps into Heritage services in 2000, will need constant attention and addressing. They can never be fully resolved, whether through the legal justice system or through attempts at historical justice as demonstrated in this thesis. It is to these more difficult aspects of the institutions' legacy that this Chapter now turns.

## 7b) The difficult legacies of institutionalisation

The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and the Ballarat Children's Home, were the childhood homes for thousands of children. It is difficult not to view those childhoods through a lens of regret. Institutional life is not something to be taken lightly. Separating these difficult experiences into this section is not to suggest that these experiences are somehow separate from others' experiences, or isolated to the instances described. Different kinds of memories, ambivalent in nature, permeate all aspects of the institution's pasts.

<sup>77</sup> See Child and Family Services, *Arthur Kenny Avenue of Honour Re-creation* (booklet), (Ballarat, 2015). Cafs Collection. An Avenue of Honour of Elm Trees was originally planted in 1917, near the Orphanage's Experimental Farm in neighbouring Mt Xavier, Ballarat East, to recognise the 101 former Ballarat District Orphan Asylum and Ballarat Orphanage residents who had enlisted to fight in World War I. In 2012 the Avenue was "Re-Discovered" after generations of neglect, and a ceremony held in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia to unveil new commemorative plaques. In 2015, a whole new Avenue of Honour was re-planted in the more accessible location of Fussell St.

The legacies of children's institutions such as these are difficult to approach, as they encompass both the best and worst aspects of our societies. The abiding sense is of something like *ambiguity* and *ambivalence* – incorporating extreme and opposite poles of the same issue. The history of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, as we have seen, was a story of community support and generosity to help those in need, alongside moral equivocation and prejudice about who deserved to receive support and who did not. In the Ballarat Orphanage era through the early- to mid-twentieth century, the institution was committed to helping the most vulnerable children in Victoria regardless of background, in order to access more reliable funding streams. The Ballarat Children's Home in the mid- to late-twentieth century oversaw the accelerating shift away from consolidated residential Care and into community-based settings, but did not adequately anticipate the difficulties of de-institutionalisation. Overlaying all of this, as multiple State, National and international reports and inquiries have made clear, is the ominous spectre of institutional abuse, and the trauma experienced by many people who grew up in Care.<sup>78</sup> It would be naïve and disingenuous to believe that, in the absence of formal criminal convictions, abuse of children in multiple forms did not happen at Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home.

Abuse is a broad concept, encompassing multiple elements: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect.<sup>79</sup> There are endless forms in which abuse could manifest. This thesis is not an exercise in uncovering evidence to support criminal convictions or civil cases, nor is it a defence of the institution or individuals within it. That is the job of courts of law, not historians. It *is* the role of this thesis, however, to examine the cultural context within which abuse occurred at these institutions, using the accounts provided publicly by those individuals who experienced Care there, and other available administrative records.

There appear to be four main perspectives on the existing records that address abuse at the institution: Those who do not believe that abuse occurred at all; those who believe that abuse occurred, but they never saw it directly; those who experienced or witnessed abuse but do not know if it was more widespread; and those who experienced or witnessed abuse and believe it was widespread and systemic.

These are the personal perspectives of individuals, each with their own experiences and beliefs that shape the way in which they remember their own pasts. Beliefs are not evidence, but they

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<sup>78</sup> A body of research now regards it as more useful and meaningful to refer to "maltreatment" rather than abuse. See David D. Vachon et al., "Assessment of the Harmful Psychiatric and Behavioral Effects of Different Forms of Child Maltreatment," *JAMA Psychiatry* 72, no. 11 (2015). However given the wide acceptance of the term "abuse" in the context of recent Inquiries and Commissions, this term has been used throughout this thesis.

<sup>79</sup> Alexander Butchart et al., "Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence," ed. World Health Organization (Geneva 2006).

are powerful indicators of culture and identity, which is what this history attempts to address. As Dominick Lacapra says, while “[h]istorical research based on ... documentary sources may contest ... individual or collective memory ... the opposite may also be the case”.<sup>80</sup> Sue McKemmish also examines the roles of history and memory in archival practice, theorising a perspective known as the “Records Continuum” that enables archivists and historians to acknowledge that “Memory” and “Evidence” can coexist alongside each other.<sup>81</sup> History and Memory, in this case, should not be placed in binary opposition to each other, but rather seen as overlapping and, as discussed above, ambivalent.

The institutions studied in this project – Ballarat Children's Home, Ballarat Orphanage, and Ballarat District Orphan Asylum – were places where some children came to escape abuse, possibly at their family home, at foster care placements, or elsewhere. These institutions sought to provide a positive function in society, and in many ways they did. Moreover, abuse can have lasting effects whether it was considered abuse at the time or not. Applying modern standards to historical moments is not always helpful. This has proven problematic across countries and jurisdictions that seek to address historical child abuse. As Johanna Sköld et al. have pointed out in relation to the use of documentary evidence to corroborate or prove historical abuse around the world, “[s]ources that represent different perspectives cannot be expected to coincide in one unified narrative”, particularly when attempting to “verify an individual’s story of abuse against historical documents which are mainly produced by authorities who failed to acknowledge or prevent such abuse”.<sup>82</sup> This thesis is not an exercise in retrospective justice. Again, it seeks to understand the historical institutional cultures that enabled what is now understood as unacceptable to occur.

Abuse in children’s institutions through the twentieth century was pervasive, in Australia and around the world. This has been made plain by the litany of reports, inquiries and investigations into institutional care in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries,<sup>83</sup> including the Australia Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which reported in 2017,<sup>84</sup> and the Victorian Government’s Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-

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<sup>80</sup> Dominick Lacapra, "Trauma, History, Memory, Identity: What Remains?," *History and Theory* 55, no. 3 (2016): 376.

<sup>81</sup> Sue McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," *International Journal on Recorded Information - incorporating 'Archives and Museum Informatics'* 1, no. 4 (2001).

<sup>82</sup> Johanna Sköld, Emma Foberg, and Johanna Hedström, "Conflicting or Complementing Narratives? Interviewees' Stories Compared to Their Documentary Records in the Swedish Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and Neglect in Institutions and Foster Homes," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 1 (2012): 17.

<sup>83</sup> At least 76 inquiries and reports from around the world into institutional Care of children that address issues relating to abuse have been identified by researchers Katie Wright, Shurlee Swain, Johanna Sköld, and Sari Braithwaite as part of “The Age of Inquiry: A global mapping of institutional abuse inquiries” project. These include inquiries and reports conducted in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland. K Wright, Shurlee Swain, and Johanna Sköld, "The Age of Inquiry: A Global Mapping of Institutional Abuse Inquiries," <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/research/ageofinquiry/>. Accessed 2 August 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, "Final Report," (Sydney: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017).

Government Organisations”, known as the “Betrayal of Trust” report, in 2013.<sup>85</sup> Institutional child abuse is a somewhat new term. Criminologist Kathleen Daly notes that the concept of institutional abuse of children as a named social problem did not exist until the late 1970s, when a United States Senate Hearing introduced the term, followed by a range of official enquiries from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s in the United Kingdom, Canada, in European and Scandinavian countries, and Australia and New Zealand.<sup>86</sup> In recent years the growing presence of testimony, oral histories and inquiries has built a growing awareness of the grim reality of life in a total institution. It is in this modern context, in which platforms for victims and survivors of institutional abuse to speak, be heard and believed have been central, rather than peripheral, to developing notions of children’s Care, that considerations of the legacies of institutional Care are now inevitably drawn.

### Perspectives on abuse

Memories and perspectives on abuse at the institutions vary greatly. As is natural, memories and opinions of and about institutional childhoods in these Ballarat institutions differ substantially between individuals, and within individuals themselves. Many who grew up in these institutions remember them and their people fondly, and with affection for the care and support provided to them. Some remember kindness they experienced, and the fun they had, amongst the grief of separation and institutionalisation. Others have unrelentingly grievous memories of their time in Care at these institutions. It is my position as a researcher that all of these memories and impressions are valid, and truthful. None of them are wrong. They embody the inherently personal nature of institutional histories and serve as vivid reminders of the partiality and intensity of meaning that attach to places like these children’s institutions.

The next part of this chapter will focus on historical research relating to abuse, and the way in which this understanding of life in the institutions and their legacies for individuals could form salutary lessons for the modern institution known as Cafs.

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In her role with the Children's Welfare Department, former Charities Inspector Donella Jaggs visited children's institutions all over Victoria in the 1960s. She remembers that Children's Homes managed by “major charities” were “on the whole” run “in a very authoritarian and quite almost militaristic method”.<sup>87</sup> The Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home were no exception.

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<sup>85</sup> "Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations."

<sup>86</sup> Kathleen Daly, "Conceptualising Responses to Institutional Abuse of Children," *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 26, no. 1 (2014): 5-6.

<sup>87</sup> *Donella Jaggs Interviewed by Jill Barnard in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*. Transcript, 38

Some of the clearest memories that former residents of the institution have retained into their adult lives relate to the punishments and discipline received. "I don't remember much of my earlier years," remembers Nancy Peart, "but I do remember the floggings I copped as a young girl and the work we were made to do, like scrub and polish the dormitory floors, that's how I done my knee. They worked us hard that orphanage did."<sup>88</sup>

When asked what memory of the Ballarat Children's Home "stands out most in your mind", Karen Atkinson declares that it is "[t]he punishments and the regimentation of everything, you had to ask permission to do anything."<sup>89</sup> This hindered her and others' ability to express individuality. "[Y]ou weren't allowed to just be yourself and if you were you got into trouble."<sup>90</sup> After cutting open her leg once, Karen was "scared shitless" that one of the cottage parents who was particularly harsh would punish her for it.<sup>91</sup> Punishment could be administered disproportionately, in response to seemingly innocuous offences. Lorraine Rodgers, for instance, remembers that she and her friends would "get a belting" for normal everyday childhood activities, such as talking.<sup>92</sup> Karen's, Nancy's and Lorraine's reflections help highlight the dehumanising effects that punitive approaches to work and discipline have had on individuals, eroding confidence and self-expression, and how those experiences have come to define their memories of childhood. This was typical of children's experience of care in institutions, not just in Ballarat. Joanna Penglase has written extensively about her experience of growing up in an orphanage in New South Wales. "The destruction of a sense of self began as soon as children stepped over the threshold of the Home."<sup>93</sup> Penglase, like many others in the broader children's welfare systems, "was sabotaged daily by the question, 'Who do you think you are?'... the answer for us as children was: nobody, nothing."<sup>94</sup>

It is worth emphasising at this point that many former Ballarat Children's Home and Ballarat Orphanage residents do not consider punishment and discipline in and of itself a bad thing for them or their childhood development. Indeed, punishments are often recalled with laughter, and a sense that they believed they were getting what they deserved.<sup>95</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, for instance, believes that "if we got caught, we were punished for it ... I felt we needed that."<sup>96</sup> That is to say, there is not a suggestion that children should not have received any discipline and punishment.

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<sup>88</sup> Nancy Peart in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>90</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Karen Atkinson in *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, "Submission 103", Committee, *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*.

<sup>93</sup> Penglase, *Orphans of the Living : Growing up in Care in Twentieth-Century Australia*, 107.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>95</sup> See for instance Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>96</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, "Submission 103", *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*.

Rather, it was when punishment received was disproportionate and excessive that ex-residents have felt negative effects, and when it curtailed the normal and reasonable expression of childhood emotions and experiences – chattiness and play, and the kind of fear, anxiety and reluctance to work that is common in young children. Lorraine Rodgers, for instance, even though she knew that some punishment was needed, felt that the punishment was not always fair “for little things, like talking in a low key... [T]here was a few staff, that did not like us talking at all, so we would get a belting for that.”<sup>97</sup>

Bob Golding recalls with a laugh being attacked with the end of a feather duster as he tried to get to sleep one night. “I used to be very afraid of bogeymen ... that sort of thing”. The children would tell tales at night in bed, about “the Phantom Drummer and ... Jack the Ripper ... and Spring-heeled Jack”. There was a “big cupboard next to me, empty ... and no doors on it.” Like any other child might be, Bob was terrified, and sleep was not easy. He recalls, that he “got a hiding for pretending to be asleep”, and, “you were frightened to go to sleep [but] if you didn't, you know ... you're frightened you're going to get hit again ... I'll never forget that hiding I got... Never. Never forget that.”<sup>98</sup>

Dianne Clarke “used to get barred from a lot of those activities” at the Ballarat Children's Home, like swimming and using the trampoline, for “being naughty... speak[ing] up a lot”. Dianne remembers that when she “spoke my mind ... they didn't like it so they would punish me for it”. In particular she would “stick up for my little sister ... because I was her mum while we were in the Home”.<sup>99</sup> Here is an example of how institutional discipline hindered not only the development of individuals and their ability to enjoy the merest happinesses of childhood, but also disrupted attempts to provide comfort and support to others, including family.

Bob Golding was instructed to pick up cow and horse droppings on his first day at the Orphanage in 1943. “I got a bit upset, so I was shown how to not get upset – I got a crack.”<sup>100</sup> The disciplinary regime here worked again to suppress the display of individual reaction and responses to the unpleasantness of menial labour.

Some staff were harsher than others and children learnt to behave according to individual staff personalities, and circumstances. Eunice Wright and her friends knew when “sometimes you'd get one that was a bit soft and we knew how to con her and that, let us stay up a little bit later and things like that.”<sup>101</sup> She remembers that there were particular times when the children were more vulnerable to punishment. “[A]t mealtime you wasn't allowed to talk. There used to be a bloke walking

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*. Transcript, 232-3.

<sup>99</sup> Dianne Clarke in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 54.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Golding, “Public Hearing – Melbourne” (11 November, 2003), *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*, CA 17.

<sup>101</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*. Transcript, 35.

around with a stick and if you got caught talking, kept talking, he'd whack you with it.”<sup>102</sup> Also in the dormitories: “[U]s girls, we liked to talk... You'd get your name screamed at, you know, but we were careful to see where he was before we start whispering.”<sup>103</sup> Lorraine Rodgers emphasises that excessive discipline was not universal, and that it was only “a few staff” who would do so.<sup>104</sup> In recognising that it was only particular circumstances and staff that would prompt such disproportionate discipline, Lorraine and Eunice highlight the fact that children could strategically navigate their way through institutional life by being smart and selective in the ways they behaved.

Punishment would often come in the form of extra work. “You'd have to scrub [the floor]...,” remembers Eunice Wright. “I mean scrub it with soap and water on your hands and knees, then get down and put this polish on it and then get down again and take all that polish off with a scrubbing brush ... a nice beautiful shiny floor.”<sup>105</sup> This is a typical punishment in Children’s Homes and Orphanages, to the extent that it has become a popular trope in cultural representations of the harsh excesses of institutional life for children.<sup>106</sup>

Others were unable to conform to the rigidity and at times unfair punishments. *Adrian Peters* recalls that he was removed from the institution as punishment for misdeeds, perceived and actual. “I went in in [19]53, they got rid of me in '58 as the boys might tell you, because I was too rebellious for them.”<sup>107</sup> Howard Edwards believes he and his brother were sent away to Turana, the Youth Justice facility in Royal Park, Melbourne, because “we were getting into so much trouble... they said 'we think the Edwards family should be sent back to Torano [Turana].”<sup>108</sup> His brother Kennedy says that he was accused of stealing in a case of mistaken identity – “*Richard* and I looked like twins”, he explains. Kennedy and *Richard* were both Aboriginal boys. Kennedy was marched “for half an hour, up and back, up and back, up and back” by the son of a shopkeeper who also happened to run the “citizen's military force” sessions Kennedy had been forced to attend. Kennedy had had enough. “I carried the stuff home, all my uniform and whatever, and knapsacks and whatever. And I didn't go back... That was the straw that broke the camel's back.” The shopkeeper's son-cum-military officer reported Kennedy to Superintendent Morton, “who didn't like me anyway”, and soon after that “they took me down to

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>104</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, “Submission 103”, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*.

<sup>105</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*. Transcript, 45.

<sup>106</sup> For instance, the “Hard Knock Life” that the famous fictional orphan, Annie, and her fellow inmates sing about in the movie *Annie* is set to scenes of intense floor scrubbing and other domestic tasks. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wls-BNx8ls>, accessed 1 August 2019.

<sup>107</sup> “Digital Stories” (Ballarat, 2018), Cafs Collection.

<sup>108</sup> Howard Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations' Testimonies”, 2009, transcript, Reverb Films. <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/howard-edwards.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

Royal Park ... [and] locked me up with the young offenders there.”<sup>109</sup> In Kennedy’s example we see overlapping themes of punishment – militaristic and punitive discipline – to instil fear and conformity.

Perhaps Eunice Wright puts it best in articulating the sense of vivid unjustness that was attached to many punishments received. “Well, I thought it was wrong. We were only kids, only playing, you know. I bet they were never early for their teas, and their kids were always late, I bet, you know, to the tea table. I wonder what kind of punishment they got, you know.”<sup>110</sup> It is the de-personalised and disproportionate nature of the punishment administered, and the sense that children outside the institutions did not themselves have to adhere to such harsh regimes, that has made experiences and memories of punishment so vivid and important in the minds of many ex-residents.

A common theme when discussing punishments at the institutions is the fear and anxiety caused by responses to bedwetting. Nancy Peart describes a friend of hers in the Ballarat Orphanage who often wet her bed. “The matron would make her strip down so she was naked and walk across the quadrangle in the freezing cold and hit her.”<sup>111</sup> Bedwetting children would sometimes be put into their own sleeping dormitory, known officially as the “Floral Room”<sup>112</sup>, but to the children as the “piss-the-bed lot”.<sup>113</sup> “Whatever you did you didn't want to wet your bed and end up in the wet beds section”,<sup>114</sup> remembers *Natasha Langslow*. Robert Golding was in there once “and it was absolutely vile.... You could smell it.”<sup>115</sup>

If any of the children in the Floral Room wet their bed again “they were in dire straits, mate, they were punished ... screamed and yelled at and abused, abused you know, physical too, slapping.”<sup>116</sup> Bedwetting provoked some of the worst punishments that children endured. Cold showers in winter, “and a range of humiliations so traumatic and severe to a young child that the condition was exacerbated.”<sup>117</sup> Sometimes “you'd get your nose rubbed in it” by one of the staff members.<sup>118</sup> Other children would try to help the others out, at great risk to themselves, by secretly changing bedsheets, to prevent them being detected and “flogged”.<sup>119</sup> When punishment did not

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<sup>109</sup> Kennedy Edwards, interviewed by Melanie Hogan, “Stolen Generations' Testimonies”, 2009, transcript, Reverb Films. <http://www.stolengenerationstestimonies.com/kennedy-edwards.html>. Accessed 8 January 2019.

<sup>110</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*. Transcript, 44.

<sup>111</sup> Nancy Peart in Peart, *Faded Footprints: Walking the Past*, 39.

<sup>112</sup> Wright, *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*. Transcript, 42.

<sup>113</sup> *Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>114</sup> “Digital Stories” (2018). Cafs Collection

<sup>115</sup> *Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>116</sup> *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*. Transcript, 43.

<sup>117</sup> Phyllis Cremona, “Submission to the Inquiry into Handling of Child Abuse”.

<sup>118</sup> *Bob Golding Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*.

<sup>119</sup> *Eunice Wright Interviewed by Roderic Lacey in the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project*. Transcript p.43.

work, other attempts were made to prevent bedwetting. Some boys were sent to be circumcised,<sup>120</sup> some children got a machine that administered electric shocks, the idea being that it would wake the child and prompt them to go to the toilet themselves.<sup>121</sup>

Overly harsh punishments and treatments for bedwetting have been a common theme in many survivor testimonies from all over Australia given to the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, helping to expand understanding of the role these kinds of disproportionate responses have played in providing an environment where further abuse can occur.<sup>122</sup> Social theorist Harold Garfinkel expanded on the notion of total institutionalisation by highlighting the role of “status degradation ceremonies” in institutional settings. These are often informal rituals designed by inmates and / or staff “to transform ... an individual’s total identity into an identity lower in the group’s scheme of social types.”<sup>123</sup> The ritualised identification and isolation of children who wet their beds in the manner described by ex-residents could be understood within this context of an attempt to degrade the status of individuals within the group. As shown above, the experience of punishment and disproportionate discipline had come to define, at least in part, the memories of life at these institutions for many.

The effects of institutionalisation, whether abusive or not, have been lifelong for many former inmates, and memoirs abound with them. “The whole experience has left me angry,” says Bob Golding. “Angry with authority and angry with the institution. I just cannot hack it. I have never, ever told my own children that I love them. I still cannot.”<sup>124</sup>

*Mavis Hatfield* lived at the Ballarat Orphanage in the 1940s. “When I was there,” she says, “there was no sexual abuse. There was nothing.” *Mavis* goes on to discuss alleged cruelty at the institution. “[O]thers have hinted at it” she says, “[but] I don’t believe it. I do not believe it.” If abuse was occurring, says *Mavis*, “I would know about it. Everybody would know about it.”<sup>125</sup>

Marge Crawford, meanwhile, is certain that abuse occurred, but not in a widespread manner. “People were physically and mentally abused, to an extent ... those things happened. But they were few and far apart. But little kids that wet the bed and things like this, that’s not necessary.”<sup>126</sup> Marge

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<sup>120</sup>Robert Golding, “Public Hearing – Melbourne” (11 November, 2003), *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*, CA 22.

<sup>121</sup>Lorraine Rodgers, “Submission 103”, *ibid*.

<sup>122</sup>See for instance, “Lionel’s story”, Eamonn’s story”, James John’s story”, Ally’s story”, Mark David’s story”, Phillipa’s story”, Ridley’s story”, Tammy’s story”, “Agnes Regina’s story”, and others highlighted in the Royal Commission. Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, “Private Sessions - Narratives”. [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/narratives](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/narratives). Accessed 17 September 2019.

<sup>123</sup>Harold Garfinkel, “Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies,” *American Journal of Sociology* 61, no. 5 (1956): 420.

<sup>1018</sup>Robert Golding, “Public Hearing – Melbourne” (11 November, 2003), *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*, CA 22.

<sup>125</sup>“CAFS Digital Stories”, (Ballarat, 2018), 12:14. Cafs Collection.

<sup>126</sup>Crawford, *Marge Crawford Interviewed by Rob Linn in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*. 1:06:25

goes on to describe how the routine, everyday punishments amounted to a form of abuse, at best “unnecessary” and disproportionate.

Police would at times become involved with complaints made by inmates. In 1920, for instance, the Superintendent reported that a staff member “had punished one of the younger boys, who made an accusation to the Police against [him]”.<sup>127</sup> The content of the younger boy’s report is not known, nor has a description of the punishment survived, but the involvement of police at the institution was recorded.

Lorraine Rodgers, who lived at the Ballarat Orphanage, remembers a range of traumatic abuses. “Things like you were told [sic], that you were put in here, because your parents did not love you and you are not WANTED by anyone.” This had lasting effects on her and, she believes, others. “You start to think that you are no good ... that is still with me, and it will be with me until I die.”<sup>128</sup> It was not just verbal. “[T]he children who had parents, that came on Sundays, they would be told that they could not see them, that was one of the punishments.”<sup>129</sup> In Lorraine’s case her father was denied access to her out of an entirely necessary and reasonable need to protect her from abuse within her own family. As Lorraine tells it, she was abducted by her father on a visit to the Orphanage, taken interstate and sexually abused by him. After police intervention she was sent back to the Ballarat Orphanage. The Superintendent, Eric Morton, while visiting Melbourne “had a lengthy interview with the Secretary of the Children’s Welfare Department,” Mr Pittard, about Lorraine’s case, and found the Department Head “very perturbed” to hear about it.<sup>130</sup> “All was told by Mr Morton, that my FATHER was never to set foot on these grounds, as long as he was in charge.”<sup>131</sup> Morton’s protective instincts were worthy, as Lorraine recalls, but, in retrospect, protection from an abusive father was the least of Morton’s duties. “[T]hat is when I needed someone to help me, but no one wanted to help... so where were the welfare then, when I needed someone?”<sup>132</sup> As Lorraine describes it, the trauma she feels was in being denied a family, and that was not addressed by the institution. “After all these years”, she writes, “I still got this terrible FEAR in me, I can not explain it in any other way”.<sup>133</sup> Lorraine’s experience of life at the Ballarat Children’s Home was protective, and essential. The alternative to institutional care in her case is unthinkable. This, however, did not end the institution’s responsibility to her. Indeed, in cases of multiple trauma such as hers, the institution’s responsibility is multiplied.

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<sup>127</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Committee of Management Meeting Notes” (14 December, 1920), s.1, v.3. Cafs Collection.

<sup>128</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, “Submission 103”, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*. Emphasis in original.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, “Superintendent’s Report” (September to October, 1952), s., v.8. CAFS Collection.

<sup>131</sup> Lorraine Rodgers, “Submission 103”, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*. Emphasis in original.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

In a submission to the Forgotten Australians Senate Inquiry in 2004, Susan Connolly, whose family is discussed in Chapter Four above, wrote about her time at the Ballarat Children's Home. Her memories are characterised by memories of abuse and suffering, inside Ballarat Children's Home, and beyond. "I felt like I had gone to hell", she recalls, describing instances of violence, fear, deprivation, sexual assault by inmates, staff and visitors.<sup>134</sup> However, "the most significant issue of neglect and abuse", Susan recounts, occurred during visits to her mother when she was aged fifteen or sixteen, where she experienced rape and abuse. This was in the 1970s, as the children's welfare system moved rapidly towards de-institutionalisation and family reunification. In Susan's case, and many others, neither living in the institution, nor with her family were acceptable or viable options. The Ballarat Children's Home had responded to Susan's and her family's need for protection, which as highlighted earlier in Chapter Four, spanned a period of fourteen years. In relation to taking responsibility for Susan's wellbeing and protection both within the institution and beyond it, however, as with Lorraine Rodgers, Ballarat Children's Home failed.

It is a harsh truth for the institutions' leaders and its successors to confront: That in responding to the need to protect children, it also took on a responsibility to avoid further harm. That despite the achievements of the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home in protecting children from devastation, and in providing positive, constructive and, often, fun environments within which children could grow up, it also provided the conditions under which severe damage was done.

### Superintendent Hylton Sedgman: 1963-1964

By way of example, Superintendent Hylton Sedgman's short reign over the Orphanage, from 1963 to 1964, was calamitous, leaving children damaged and scarred. In 2014 he was charged with over 30 counts relating to the sexual abuse of children, laid by seven people who survived their time with him at Ballarat Orphanage.<sup>135</sup>

Of course, there was no sign of his abuse in the public face of the Orphanage at the time. The 1963 and 1964 Annual Reports appeared much as any did before them or since – sober, hopeful analyses of the current and future prospects of the Orphanage. In 1965 a history of the Ballarat Orphanage was released, *A Century of Childcare: The Story of the Ballarat Orphanage*, written by Ethel Morris.<sup>136</sup> It tells a tale of the Orphan Asylum and its founding, successes and triumphs. It positions

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<sup>134</sup> Susan Connolly, Submission 473" (17 March, 2005), Committee, *Forgotten Australians : A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or out-of-Home Care as Children*.

<sup>135</sup> Charlotte King, "Ballarat Orphanage abuse victim devastated by decision not to lay charges against former superintendent", *ABC News*, December 9, 2017. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-10/ballarat-abuse-victim-devastated-by-decision-not-to-lay-charges/9240048>. Accessed 8 September 2019.

<sup>136</sup> Morris, *A Century of Childcare: The Story of Ballarat Orphanage 1865-1965*.

the institution favourably, and sets the scene for the major changes that were approaching with the transformation of the organisation's service model, described above in Chapter Three.

However, a different tale was playing out within the Orphanage, and Sedgman's malign shadow hung ominously over the children. Phyllis Cremona remembers the Superintendent clearly, recalling a particular incident that seemed to typify his insidious presence. She recalls that she refused to return his smile after he had punished one of her friends:

Go to hell, you know. I didn't like him. Nobody liked him ... So he said right you can go ... and polish the passage. It's a very long passage! But I didn't mind that day, because he didn't get what he wanted... He was horrible. He wasn't strict, he was controlling. A real control freak. He wasn't there for long [but]...he wreaked havoc in that very short time <sup>137</sup>

Sedgman's legacy for these children was abusive, and was not restricted to sexual abuse. Phyllis was not aware at the time of the sexual abuse he was perpetrating, but has since found out. "From what I can gather it would've been about six girls that he had abused in the time that I was there."<sup>138</sup> According to Phyllis, he was not the only person who abused children. "[O]ne of the guys, was abused by one of the males. And it turned out ... he used to abuse a lot of the males and females. And yet this person, if you'd asked me who was one of the nicer, friendlier staff members there, I would've named this person."<sup>139</sup>

There is no corroborating "evidence" of this abuse in surviving records that the researcher has been able to find, either at Cafs or the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).<sup>140</sup> It has not been proven in a court of law whether abuse extended beyond the disgraced Superintendent Sedgman, nor, indeed, has Sedgman himself been convicted. In 2017 formal charges against him were dropped in due to his advanced age and poor health,<sup>141</sup> a controversial and, for many, unsatisfactory decision, as discussed further below. As noted above, it is not a historian's job to convict. However, it is the job of history to reflect and interpret the records. The records left in the memories of these children and the adults they have become have left a shameful record for the institution – Cafs, and its predecessors – to address.

This section is about the institutional history, and the cultures that enabled those histories to unfold. So, let us turn now to what the records tell us – or rather, how we can critically interpret the

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<sup>137</sup> Phyllis Exell, *Phyllis Exell Interviewed by Jill Barnard for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project [Sound Recording]*, *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project* (2012). 40:00.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> A reported letter from the Victorian Attorney-General to the Ballarat Orphanage Board of Management at the time of Sedgman's removal from office has not been found. The researcher has viewed inward Correspondence files to the Attorney-General's Department for the period in question, available at VPRS 7742/P1/ Units 1-11. Outward Correspondence from Attorney General's Office is not available, but may be accessible through Freedom of Information requests to the Attorney-General's Department.

<sup>141</sup> King, "Ballarat Orphanage abuse victim devastated by decision not to lay charges against former superintendent".

surviving records – about the institutional response in the 1960s to the tragedy that was Superintendent Hylton Sedgman.

It is not plausible that others were not aware of Sedgman's offending. As well as the lingering suspicion described by Phyllis Cremona, the trail of records leaves a series of gaps that direct the critical reader of them to consider what those gaps conceal. Sedgman departed his post as Superintendent abruptly in late 1964, sometime between 28 October, when he gave his regular update report to the Board with no indication of an imminent departure, and 25 November, when the Board first discussed applications received for his replacement. For the period between late 1964 and mid-1965, the Ballarat Orphanage turned to former Superintendent Eric Morton to fill the role in a temporary capacity, further suggesting the sudden and unplanned nature of Sedgman's departure. There are no surviving records – either at Cafs or the Public Record Office of Victoria – that outline the reasons for Sedgman's departure, and therefore, none that prove whether any accusations of abuse had been directed at him at the time.

Sedgman, like other Superintendents before and after him, would report regularly to the institution's Committee of Management. While each individual had his<sup>142</sup> own style, Sedgman's was particularly distinctive, and idiosyncratic. During his brief stewardship his reports were quite detailed, and preoccupied with the children's "morale". He would often report in more detail about individual children than other Superintendents. He seems to have been a man who prided himself on being across the details, particularly in relation to "Discipline" and "Attitudes"<sup>143</sup> of the children at the institution. Also at around this period, instances of "absconding" or escaping the institution appear to increase significantly, though it is possible that it is simply the reporting of absconding that increased. Eleven instances of absconding were recorded in the two years that Sedgman was Superintendent. By way of contrast during Eric Morton's thirteen-year appointment as Superintendent immediately preceding Sedgman, there were nine instances of Absconding reported.<sup>144</sup>

The handwritten "Rough Minutes" of the Committee of Management for this era – coincidentally the only era (December 1963 to November 1964) for which the original Rough Minutes have been kept – do not reveal any evidence or record of abuse that was occurring at this time, any more than the final typed up copies do. Among the routine business and correspondence typical of such an administrative record are signs of the waning authority of Superintendent Sedgman with the Committee. Even though he officially occupied the role of the Committee of Management's Secretary, he did not attend any of the meetings in this period, and was not even listed as an Apology. The

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<sup>142</sup> All Superintendents in the history of the institution were men.

<sup>143</sup> See Ballarat Orphanage, "Committee of Management Rough Minutes" (28 October, 1964), s.2, v.1. "[Girl's name]. Contact with mother now changing girls attitude". It is not clear from the report whether her attitude was changing for the better or the worse, according to Sedgman.

<sup>144</sup> See Cafs, "Board Minutes Index, 1919-1993", Cafs Collection.

Superintendent's Reports for this period, it seems, were submitted in writing, allowing the Committee to discuss them more freely. In the 23 September 1964 meeting, just a few months before his sudden departure, under the heading "Superintendent's Report" it is recorded that the "Board should not accept Supt's statement" regarding the serious illness of one of the boys in the institution.<sup>145</sup>

At the 28 October 1964 Committee of Management meeting – the last before Sedgman's departure – he was again not recorded as present in the Rough Minutes. In his report, however, the Superintendent made what was quite a radical suggestion about the institution's operations: that there should be more "Screening of children coming into the Home. Possible that we be more selective." This meant the Orphanage would "Take most of our children young & let grow up in Home." This reform is offered alongside his report on two more instances of children escaping from the Institution. Two boys had "absconded", having, according to Sedgman, "stole[n a] bicycle from school and & sold parts". At least one of these boys he wrote, should "be left in Melb" at Turana, the Youth Justice facility. Later he reported on another child who had escaped the institution, this time a girl who had "absconded for a week. Supt rec[omends] that she stay here."<sup>146</sup>

At the next meeting on 25 November, Sedgman's departure was announced rather unspectacularly. In the section regarding "Correspondence" is an item "acknowledging receipt" from the Hospitals and Charities Commission, "of applications for the position of the Home Secretary / Superintendent and the Board's recommendations."

The Hospitals and Charities Commission kept a close eye on the recruitment of Sedgman's replacement, even though they had no formal role in appointment decisions of independent agencies such as the Ballarat Orphanage. The Ballarat Orphanage Committee of Management held at least two special meetings – in December 1964 and January 1965 – to appoint a replacement for Sedgman, though no records or minutes from these meetings have been found.<sup>147</sup>

It is almost inconceivable – given the gravity of the offenses, the involvement of the Police in multiple incidents of absconding, and the mysterious haste in which they acted – that the reports of at least suspicious behaviour on the part of Sedgman would not have filtered in some form or another to the men who were responsible for managing the institution. The subsequent obfuscation performed by the Committee of Management do not appear to be the actions of a group committed to exposing truth and wrongdoing.

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<sup>145</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Committee of Management Rough Minutes" (23 September, 1964), s.2, v.1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>146</sup> Ballarat Orphanage, "Committee of Management Rough Minutes" (28 October, 1964), s.2, v.1. Cafs Collection.

<sup>147</sup> These meetings are referred to in the Ballarat Orphanage, "Committee of Management Rough Minutes" (25 January, 1965), s.2, v.1. CqafsCollection. Details about the recruitment process for Sedgman's replacement – Ray Jenkins – are available at Hospitals and Charities Commission, 1965. "Schedule of Appointment for Position of Ballarat Orphanage" PROV 4523 / P / 2 / 893 'Ballarat Children's Homes – Personnel'.

Suffice to say that Sedgman was not charged at the time of his abuse. Decades later, however, in 2014 the SANO Taskforce, established by Victoria Police to investigate historic and new allegations from the 2013 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into child sex abuse,<sup>148</sup> mounted a criminal prosecution for historical sex abuse against him, on behalf of seven individuals.<sup>149</sup> It is for this reason – that there was a live criminal prosecution underway – that criminal cases from the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home were not considered as part of the Royal Commission’s Case Study on Ballarat. Even so, Sedgman’s trial was delayed for years while the Royal Commission was conducted, until eventually in 2017 the case was discontinued, as Sedgman’s health had deteriorated to the point where he was no longer fit to stand trial.<sup>150</sup>

The perpetration of abuse at the institution was not confined to Hylton Sedgman. In the late 1990s there were multiple references at CAFS Board of Management Meetings to “Writs” being prepared against former Ballarat Children’s Home President Peter Guthrie,<sup>151</sup> in civil compensation cases. Multiple other “Writs” were also referred to, mediating between unnamed former residents, their lawyers and CAFS.<sup>152</sup> Cafs has participated in multiple settlement claims since then, and was among the first Victorian institutions to sign up as to the Commonwealth Government’s National Redress Scheme in 2018.<sup>153</sup>

As public awareness has grown about experiences of abuse and sexual abuse in children’s institutions across Australia in the wake of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and other public enquiries, Cafs has moved to respond publicly. At the entrance of its new “Legacy and Research Centre” is an apology to former residents. After the case against Hylton Sedgman collapsed in court, his name was nevertheless crossed off the CAFS Honour Board at its Ludbrook House headquarters. At the time of writing, preparations are being made to similarly mark Peter Guthrie’s name off the list of former Presidents. While Sedgman’s and Guthrie’s names remain in the institution’s history, those lines through them highlight rather than obscure the organisation’s shame.

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<sup>148</sup> Victoria Police, “Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Abuse”, <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/royal-commission-institutional-response-child-abuse>. Accessed 8 September 2019.

<sup>149</sup> King, “Ballarat Orphanage abuse victim devastated by decision not to lay charges against former superintendent”.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

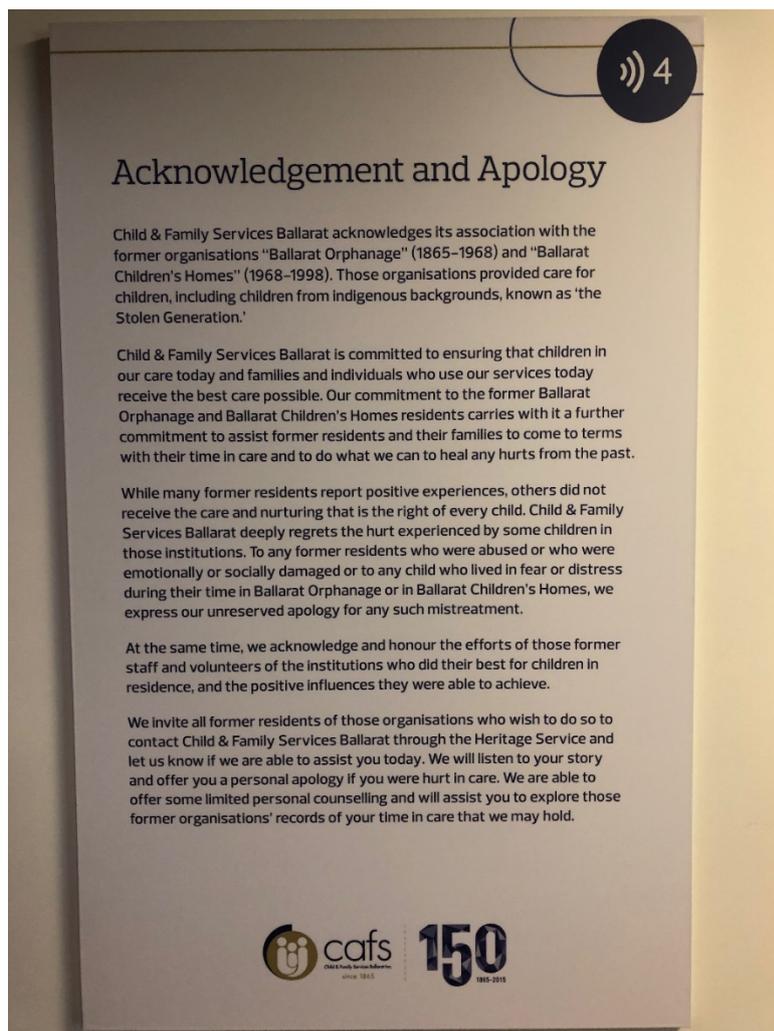
<sup>151</sup> Ballarat Children’s Home and Family Services, “Board of Management Minutes” (17 September, 1997). “4.8 WRIT – GUTHRIE. Guthrie has made an offer to settle. Solicitors would like to meet with us to discuss possible offer of settlement in conjunction with Guthrie”; “Board of Management Minutes” (22 October, 1997). “4.2 Writs: Letter received from Heinz & Partners re a Mediation Session to be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1997 in Melbourne. Offers of \$100,000 from Guthrie plus \$10,000 to \$20,000 from our organisation were rejected.” Cafs Collection.

<sup>152</sup> See for instance Child and Family Services Ballarat, “Board of Management Minutes” (24 May, 2000; 29 November 2000; 28 February 2001); “Chief Executive Officer’s Report”, (25 July 2000; 22 February 2001; 23 May 2001). Cafs Collection.

<sup>153</sup> National Redress Scheme, “Institutions that have joined the Scheme”.

<https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/institutions/joined-scheme/vic>. Accessed 8 November, 2019.

Image 7.2 “Acknowledgement and Apology”, Displayed in the Cafs Legacy and Research Centre



In May 2019, Glen Atkinson died aged 53 after a long fight with cancer. Glen was an Aboriginal man, sent to the Ballarat Children’s Home in November 1970, before leaving to the Bert Williams Hostel in 1979.<sup>154</sup> The day before he died, Glen was informed that he had been granted compensation under the National Redress Scheme for abuse experienced at the Ballarat Children’s Home. “They stole everything from me,” said Glen, of the institution.<sup>155</sup> Though Glen’s Redress Claim was prioritised and fast-tracked by Cafs as much as possible, for Glen, his family and his community, it was still too late.

What the episodes about Sedgman and Guthrie tell us is not how thankful we should be that they were exposed and, in Sedgman’s case it seems, suddenly removed. Rather they should tell us about the consequences of what happens when leaders dodge responsibility. Lives are destroyed,

<sup>154</sup> See Ballarat Children’s Home, “Admission Book, Vol.3”, No.3517. Cafs Collection.

<sup>155</sup> Rachel Hocking, 29 May 2019, “Stolen generations survivor granted compensation hours before dying” NITV. <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2019/05/29/stolen-generations-survivor-granted-compensation-hours-dying>. Accessed 21 August 2019.

while reputations live on. This is a salutary period for Cafs. Its modern leadership has done well – done right – by refusing to erase Sedgman and Guthrie from their history, with those shameful red lines. It is now on their shoulders to make sure that those same mistakes from previous generations of leadership – of equivocation, of dealing with symptoms rather than causes – are not repeated again.

This chapter, like the ones before it, tells a number of simultaneous and contradictory stories about the organisation and its legacies since the end of institutionalisation in 1983. On one hand, it has developed into a leading community sector organisation in Ballarat and surrounds, fulfilling a critical and difficult role as a relatively small agency. Its efforts to innovate and adapt to difficult circumstances through the 1990s recession, and into an emerging era of entrepreneurialism and therapeutic approaches, show some of the qualities that tenacity and a deep local identity can bring. On the other hand, the modern organisation continues to grapple with the reality that it can never sufficiently overcome, address and make good on the betrayal of trust that leaders from earlier generations have perpetrated on its children. In this way, the legacies of these residential Care institutions and the modern organisation it has become are mixed, and require further active efforts on behalf of Cafs to continue on a path towards healing. In consolidating the themes, ideas and assertions of this thesis, the Concluding section below provides some suggestions for Cafs and organisations like it, so that the vast range of histories, cultures and perspectives from these institutions can better inform modern and future strategy and operations.

## Conclusion – New Historical Narratives to guide organisational identity

This thesis is focussed on developing a better understanding of the multiple cultures that shaped the development of institutional Care for children at the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum (1866-1909), Ballarat Orphanage (1909-1968) and Ballarat Children’s Home (1968-1983), in order to articulate ways of more effectively using institutional histories to inform contemporary change and reform in family services.

To do this it addresses two research questions. Firstly, the thesis asks, “In what ways have institutional cultures – including relationships between the institutions, government, communities and children and families – shaped the development and implementation of social services, change and reform for children and families at the Ballarat Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home?” Secondly it asks, “In what ways can contemporary social service agencies better understand and harness their historical legacies to inform effective change and reform?”

As outlined in the introduction, the thesis employs the techniques of “ethnographic history”, “thick description” and “empathic inference” to explore the behaviours and relationships that have formed institutional cultures, both in terms of policy development and the experience of children. It is informed by the theoretical concept of “Narrative Identity Formation”, as outlined in the Introduction above. Following Margaret Somers, it helps to “make sense of the social world” through the development of narratives that intersect both personal and social experiences of these institutions.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, this thesis provides a plethora of new historical narratives regarding the cultures of the institutions, summarised below, that can inform current and future self-identities at Cafs, thereby influencing future strategic directions. Following Paul Ricoeur’s analysis of collective memory and identity expanded on by David Leichter, and also outlined in the Introduction, these are intended to revive and establish productive dialogues between the key people and communities that the modern institution is responsible for, and responsive to, to “make sense of a shared past”.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, as outlined in the Introduction and throughout the thesis, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children’s Home can be characterised as “total institutions”, where children led “enclosed, formally administered” lives.<sup>3</sup> As well as that, however, the lives lived by children at these institutions were not only stories of confinement and containment. They also involved exchange, interaction, escape, relationships formed and extended from inside the institution and then outside. This history encourages its readers to regard those children – subject to total

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<sup>1</sup> Somers, *The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach*, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Leichter, "Collective Identity and Collective Memory in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur," 115. See page 6 of this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Goffman, *Asylums : Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, xiii.

institutionalisation and the limitations on their childhoods and future lives that that involved – as also the survivors and drivers of their own experiences. This is not, however, to suggest that those who experienced Care at these institutions should be in any way particularly or necessarily grateful for those experiences.

As outlined in Chapters One and Two, the institution was founded as the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum in 1866 by nine children: Robert and Henry Phillips, Mary Ann Watson, Catherine, Sophia and John King, James Challen, and Isaiah and Frances Bisgrove. The institution was also founded by a group of local men – business owners and philanthropists - who were responding to the prevailing policy environment of the 1860s. That is, the Colonial government would take care of those children deemed of “bad character” in its own institutions, and the newly formed Ballarat District Orphan Asylum would take care of those children deemed to be of “good character”. The quality or otherwise of a child’s character was judged by the men of the Orphan Asylum Committee and their supporters, based on the social standards of the time – marriage, hard work, and entrepreneurial spirit. Their efforts were prompted also by benevolent concern for the plight of children without parental support. They led the foundation of an extraordinary institution that accommodated thousands of children in institutional Care over the following 117 years. They also created what can be characterised as a “total institution” that curtailed the freedoms, identities and childhood experiences of those they sought to help.

Through the remainder of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum established itself as one of the largest children’s institutions in Victoria, with a localised governance structure that concentrated decision-making in the hands of influential local citizens. That is to say, decisions about who would enter the institution, how they would live while there, and whether, how, when and to where they would leave, were in the hands of the Committee and its Governors. Their authority went largely unchallenged by Colonial and State governments, with this key relationship often characterised by convoluted correspondence, chance meetings and personal interactions.

As outlined in Chapter Three, local financial contributions decreased through shifting patterns of subscription, donations and philanthropy, and the need for children’s welfare increased, each prompted in large part by the Great Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As a result local authority over the institution declined. From the 1930s onwards, the Ballarat Orphanage, as it was then called, was funded predominantly by government, mainly in the form of payments made by government on behalf of “wards of the State”. That is, the children who were the State’s responsibility were sent in much larger numbers to the notionally independent Ballarat Orphanage, thereby stabilising its revenue stream somewhat. In the late 1930s the Ballarat Orphanage had the largest

proportion of State wards in its Care of all major non-government children's institutions in Victoria. By the 1950s, almost all children at the Ballarat Orphanage were State wards. This shift effectively broke the Orphanage's long-standing policy of distinguishing between "deserving" and "undeserving" children, and led to a more comprehensive service offering within its communities, and across broader Victorian communities. Significantly, as outlined in Chapter Five, this led to an increase in the number of Aboriginal children who were sent to the Orphanage, as it participated in the attempted destruction of Aboriginal culture and identity as a key element of the State's emerging Assimilation policies.

As outlined in Chapter Four, at the Ballarat Children's Home the last phase of the institution's consolidated residential Care from the late 1960s onwards was characterised, along with the rest of the children's welfare sector, by a shift towards deinstitutionalisation. With the dismantling – literally – of the old Orphan Asylum and Orphanage building, children lived instead in smaller "cottages" on the same 200 Victoria Street site. In reality, however, though some more freedoms were both given to and taken by the children of the Ballarat Children's Home, this only dispersed the logic and experience of total institutionalisation across a number of smaller buildings.

Emerging industry standards in the 1960s and 1970s led to an increase in the professionalisation of staff in the social services sector, and to an increase in wages and costs. The Ballarat Children's Home nearly did not survive. But with direct State intervention and assertive communication and public relations within local communities, the institution emerged into a new future of multi-faceted service delivery rather than consolidated institutional Care. As the institution acquired small residential properties around Ballarat – known as Family Group Homes – it started to develop more flexible programs and services aimed at supporting children who left their Care, facilitating family reunification, and working with families to help prevent them from losing their children. With these developments the future of post-institutional Care and support was gradually emerging.

As outlined in Chapter Six, the significant, transformative change required was not possible at the Ballarat Children's Home until the last vestiges of total institutionalisation, both in practice and symbolically, had collapsed. In particular, the demise of onsite schooling in 1975 and farming operations in 1976, which over generations had supported children in the institution, but had also limited their expectations, ambitions and achievements, signalled significant cultural shifts for the institution, paving the way for the more comprehensive deinstitutionalisation that would be completed by 1983.

As outlined in Chapter Seven, the contemporary organisation now known as Cafs has developed since 1983 as a modern and progressive Community Sector Organisation, alongside a growing public awareness of the historical trauma and abuse perpetrated by children's institutions

such as the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home. Organisational attempts to reconcile and atone for these difficult histories in the twenty-first century have taken a number of forms, including direct support for former residents and families through the "Heritage Service" established in the early 2000s, and most recently in the development of a Legacy and Research Centre, including an Exhibition Space exploring certain aspects of institutional Care at its predecessor institutions, and an "Acknowledgement and Apology" to former residents. This significant investment in the exploration and presentation of history – including, it must be added, investing in the research and writing of this thesis – represents just the continuation of an ongoing reckoning with the past that can never be fully reconciled.

This focus on institutional history needs to increase the capacity for improved organisational decision-making based on access to new narratives, stories, metaphors and collective experiences. The interplay between institutionally-framed narratives of self-identity that emphasise the achievements of leaders and committees, and child and family-focussed narratives that emphasise the mixed legacies of institutionalisation, is a difficult dynamic to represent, particularly in the competitive environment that has developed in the Community Sector. This broader project then, of usefully understanding critical institutional histories, should be seen in a context of reform to the way in which organisational identities for former children's institutions, like Cafs, are represented.

The development of the institution can be understood as a very gradual process of de-institutionalisation, but not necessarily as inevitable or steady progress and improvement. For one thing, it cannot be said with outright confidence that outcomes for all children and their families have necessarily improved, even now. This is not to say that major, transformative progress has not been made. When comparing the Orphan Asylum and its conditions to modern-day Cafs, the difference is, plainly, vast.

This progressive change, however, did not always present itself as such at the time in which it happened. What we can now recognise as progress in fact would often manifest as crisis. In the 1880s when the Deakin government tried to reform children's institutionalisation, the Orphan Asylum Committee treated it as an existential threat. In the 1930s when new funding and business models enabled the abandonment of moralistic Victorian-era attitudes towards children's welfare, it was experienced by the Ballarat Orphanage as a social and financial crisis, which of course during the Great Depression, it was. In the 1960s when the professionalisation of the social services sector workforce led to higher standards of Care and responsibility, the Ballarat Children's Home was understandably preoccupied with maintaining its viability. In the 1970s and 1980s as de-institutionalisation led to more diverse service offerings and a greater focus on Rights, prevention and early intervention, the Ballarat

Children's Home and BCHFS, as it came to be known, was embarking on public relations campaigns to reassure the community that it still existed.

Like other efforts at reform over generations, as recounted through this thesis, current efforts at genuine dialogue about institutional histories of trauma and abuse and the formation of a progressive collective self-identity have been constrained by competing, or at least divergent, cultures of understanding children's Care. This deeper consideration of institutional histories, coming as it does in the context of the long "Age of Testimony",<sup>4</sup> with the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the *Bringing Them Home* Report (1997), the *Forgotten Australians* Report (2004), and the Victorian Government's *Betrayal of Trust Report* (2012) - presents more than an opportunity for Cafs, and more than a crisis to be overcome, but also a present responsibility to harness its histories productively, to continually advance the difficult dialogues that its position necessitates.

The new historical narratives outlined above provide a rich source of metaphors and examples, to help guide future directions for the institution, and to enable the productive dialogues required. For instance, by considering the nine children who entered the institution in 1866 as the founders of the organisation, a powerful message of child-centric practice can be reinforced internally.<sup>5</sup> Through the new historical narratives articulated above, Cafs can reinforce its identity as pragmatic, principled and strategic actors in the public realm, rather than simply "merciful and benevolent" humanitarians, in the Victorian-era traditions of its original benefactors.<sup>6</sup> By making a distinction in its historical development between the eras of total institutionalisation detailed in this thesis between 1866 and 1983,<sup>7</sup> and the modern era of multiple service delivery since then, Cafs has greater claim to being an experienced, modern, progressive and innovative organisation, than if it continues to claim and present a direct lineage between the practices of total institutionalisation and current practice. By emphasising the experiences of former residents and their families such as Mary-Anne Pope and her children, and Julia Clarke and her children,<sup>8</sup> valuable lessons can be learnt in how inflexibly bureaucratic, socially rigid and moralistic judgements have affected service users. Further examples abound in this thesis, and more will surely be found.

More specifically, the responsibility rests with Cafs to use institutional histories to enhance individual empowerment among current and former residents, clients and their families. Like other Community Sector Organisations, even though it has limited resources to make additional investment,

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<sup>4</sup> Bain Attwood, "In the Age of Testimony: The Stolen Generations Narrative, Distance, and Public History," *Public Culture* 20, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>5</sup> See pages 45-48 of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapters One, Two, Three and Four.

<sup>7</sup> In no way however is this to suggest that it should disavow or disown its pre-1983 history.

<sup>8</sup> See pages 55-58 of this thesis.

it does have considerable existing assets at its disposal, in its historical archives,<sup>9</sup> in its contemporary record making, storage and communication procedures, and in its community and public relations resources. As long as these new historical narratives are received and acted upon with genuine humility, remorse and integrity, these institutional histories can be directed towards the development of new service futures for the children and families of Ballarat and elsewhere.

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<sup>9</sup> For instance Cafs could better maximise the benefit that its archives hold for communities of ex-residents and their families by re-establishing effective policies, systems, processes and procedures that can be adequately resourced, to make historical items safe, available and accessible to individuals. The primary objective of such investment would be to reassert former residents and their families as the moral owners of the records, artefacts and other materials, with the ability to direct and enable access and use of materials as appropriate.

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