

Peirson Memorial Trust

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Chairman of Trustees
Hon. B H McPherson CBE

History

The Peirson Memorial Trust was established in 1947 when a sugar cane farm was given by two sisters to the Trustees of the Ann Street Presbyterian Church, Brisbane, so that male orphans could be trained to be sugar cane farmers. The farm is now producing sugar cane and avocados.

The first intake of children began at “Redcliff” home in August 1955. “Redcliff” was the first family group home in Queensland, that is, two children to a room instead of large dormitories, thus creating a family atmosphere instead of an institutional one. By mid 1960 it was found that the “Redcliff” home was not adequate in regard to accommodation, so plans were put into operation in 1967 for a second home some two hundred yards away. “Heytesbury” Family Group Home was officially opened on 21 April 1968. In 1979 the Trust Deed was amended to allow girls, as well as boys, to be cared for in the Peirson family group homes. “Redcliff” ceased to function as a family group home and as a base for other youth programs in the early 1990’s. Heytesbury family group home was closed in mid December 2011 after the Director General refused a licence to care.

In the early 90’s the Trust Deed was again amended to allow additional services to our residential care service, and over the years these services operated by the Trustees have expanded to cater for the needs within the community and complement our Family Group Home. From July 2001, a company, Peirson Services, was established to operate the intervention and residential care services in accordance with *The Child Protection Act 1999*. They consist of three counselling services – Peirson Support Services in Bundaberg, and Peirson Youth & Community Program in Hervey Bay, and the Waarvah Youth Program also in Bundaberg. All services operate in conjunction with the Queensland Government Department of Communities and Child Safety Services who provide substantial funds for the operations. Any shortfall on funding is met through proceeds from the cane/avocado farm.

The work on the Trust land is carried out as efficiently and effectively by all farm staff as they are conscious that the surplus made from the farm’s operations is used to fund the government financing shortfall for the Trust’s charitable services.

The Peirson Memorial Trust is governed by Trustees, who are also Trustees and members of the Ann Street Presbyterian Church, Brisbane – a congregation with over a 160-year history. The Trustees have considerable experience in supporting children and young people in care and in conjunction with the Department of Communities, see this as an opportunity to serve their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. in helping young people who are at risk of being taken into the department’s care, or who are already in care. The opportunity is taken also to involve the youth’s family where appropriate.

The Trustees regard the operations of the Peirson Memorial Trust as a Christian ministry.