

THE STORY OF BLUE MOUNTAINS YHA

YHA has a long and rich history in the Blue Mountains, from humble beginnings to its current grand art-deco building.



YHA on Wellington St



YHA at 39 Waratah St



YHA at 66 Waratah St

1960

YHA built its first hostel in Katoomba in 1961. Set amidst peaceful bushlands on Wellington Street, the original hostel was built by a group of enthusiastic volunteers, as YHA is a not-for-profit organisation. NSW Governor Sir Eric Woodward was on hand for the opening ceremony of the Katoomba YHA on 4 March 1961.

1980

As tourism and the popularity of the Blue Mountains began to grow, however, the 24-bed hostel proved inadequate to accommodate the increasing number of guests. In June 1988, YHA opened a second hostel at 39 Waratah Street. YHA refurbished the former guest house and used it as an annex which could house 21 additional guests.

1990

In 1990 YHA purchased a single, centrally located property - a cosy former guest house, Raynton House, at 66 Waratah Street - that became the Blue Mountains-Katoomba YHA. At the end of the Twentieth Century, YHA had outgrown this building too, so expanded yet again. In June 1999, YHA purchased the current building, called "Homesdale", which has quite a story itself.

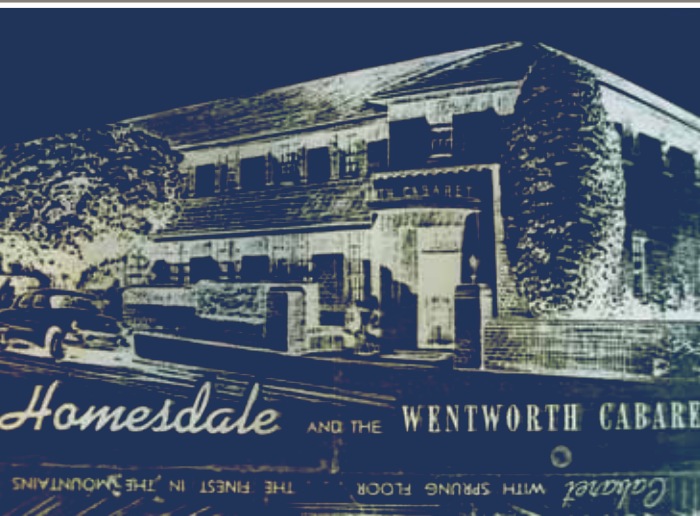


This YHA is part of the world's largest budget accommodation network, Hostelling International, which provides more than 4,000 YHA/Hi hostels in over 60 countries. YHA is a not-for-profit membership organisation providing travellers with quality accommodation and services.

HISTORY OF HOMESDALE Wentworth Cabaret

"I have been to many a dance at the Wentworth Cabaret and met my wife of 40 years there. Lived on the sprung floor; great times"
- Don McRae

When you stay here, remember the rooms that speak of a rich history of high entertainment, thrilling parties, and lifetime loves born!



1910

Between World War I & World War II, guesthouses in Australia grew in popularity as tourism developed. They were often run by single women or widows, who opened their own homes to travellers. One such woman had the first guesthouse on this property, built in 1918, and called it Homesdale. It could cater to 56 guests.

1920

By 1923, Horrie Gates, an important local figure for tourism, acquired management of the house. He made several additions, including more guest rooms and the ballroom with a sprung timber dance floor in 1934. This room became the famous Wentworth Cabaret, a popular spot for dances, parties, and concerts. The Cabaret even had its own band for guests to enjoy nightly entertainment.

1960

By the 1960s, tourism was suffering in the Blue Mountains due to the ease of travelling to further distances. Mr Gates closed down the Wentworth Cabaret and leased Homesdale to Illawarra Bible College in 1969. In 1977 the Assemblies of God purchased the building, and the ballroom was used by Commonwealth Bible College as a chapel.

2000

After a year of restoration, the new Blue Mountains YHA opened in April 2001. The building was diligently restored to maintain its art-deco style, showing its inter-war, functionalist beauty. Many of the entryways retain their 1920s and 1930s character, and much of the original joinery survives. The ballroom is important as one of only a few surviving in the Blue Mountains.