

## In the Luggage Room - St Margaret's

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*Picture: "The luggage room, St Margaret's hostel for women students of the University of Otago", 1949. Courtesy of the Hocken Collections.*

Sixty-five years later, some things haven't changed. Luggage is still stored in the same basement space under Ross Wing. The Student Executive still organises social events at the start of the year to help new residents settle in and get to know each other. The College still hosts a weekly formal dinner on Sunday evenings and an annual ball. Other things have changed dramatically. Female and male students live at St Margaret's. Students have keys to the front door - a notion unheard of in the mid-twentieth century, when all residents had to be home and accounted for by 10pm.

In the 1950s St Margaret's was home to mostly Teachers' Training College students and Arts students, with smaller numbers studying Science, Medicine, Home Science and other courses. In the twenty-first century most of the first year residents are Health Science students, with smaller numbers doing other courses.

In 1949 approximately 140 students lived at St Margaret's hostel for women. Each year the College received far more applications than could be accommodated. In the early 1950s the Council considered expanding, but decided St Margaret's had "probably reached the optimum size for a residential College in New Zealand". The rising cost of living and difficulty finding staff also put a damper on "imaginative venturing". But demand for student accommodation continued, and St Margaret's eventually expanded, opening Clyde Wing in 1967 and Wilson Wing in 1999. This year the College is home to 225 students.

Though the College has grown, rules have evolved, and the composition of the student body changed, St Margaret's is still very much a special-character college, committed to providing students with a nurturing environment in which to achieve their academic ambitions and develop as well-rounded individuals who will contribute to their communities.