

Aborigines Protection Board, State Government of New South Wales

1883 – 1940

Other Names:

- Protection Board
- Board for the Protection of Aborigines

Details

The Aborigines Protection Board was established to manage reserves and the welfare of the estimated 9000 Aboriginal people living in New South Wales in the 1880s. It was part of the Department of Police and was chaired by the Commissioner of Police. It met weekly in Phillip Street in Sydney.

The Board operated without legislative authority until 1909 and the passage of the [Aborigines Protection Act](#). This act and subsequent legislation restricted the capacity of Aboriginal people to choose where they lived, enjoy education at the same standard offered to the rest of the community, set their own employment contracts, drink alcohol or receive family endowment in cash.

Growing increasingly ambitious, the Board began to seek greater control over the lives of Indigenous people. It achieved this with the 1909 Act, which provided for all reserves and stations and all buildings to be vested in the Board.

The Board had the power to: move Aboriginal people out of towns; set up managers, local committees and local guardians (police) for the reserves; control reserves; prevent liquor being sold to Aboriginals; and to stop whites from associating with Aboriginals or entering the reserves. It even retained ownership of the blankets it distributed.

The Board had sought the power to remove children, but the 1909 Act only gave it the same powers that applied to neglected white children. The 1915 amendments gave it the power to remove any child at any time and for any reason (National Museum of Australia).

William 'Bill' Ferguson of the Aboriginal Progressive Association criticised the Board in 1939. He wrote:

Let the Government free us of our bondage (the Aboriginal Protection Board) and that will relieve the Government of a very heavy and useless expense. The greater part of the £55,000 allowed yearly for the upkeep of aborigines is mainly used in the upkeep of the A.P. Board by way of salaries to members of the Board, manager's salaries, and the upkeep of managers' wives and families, also a large office staff and Inspectors; and what is left is used to feed and clothe the aborigines. It is no wonder the Board refuses to allow the mothers to handle their child endowment, because there is revenue in the endowment for the Board (The Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser, 26 May 1939).

The Aborigines Protection Board was replaced by the Aborigines Welfare Board in 1940. Its purpose was assimilation, rather than protection, however the new organisation carried on many of the previous policies towards Aboriginal children and families.

Gallery



The northern side of the former girls' dormitory [former Warangesda Station]



Kinchela Home for Boys 1955, where many Koori boys were ill treated

Description: This is a scan of an image that has been reproduced on *A history of Aboriginal Sydney*.



One of the original front gates from the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home.

Description: This is an image from the National Museum of Australia's Collections pages.

More info

Chronology

- **Aborigines Protection Board, State Government of New South Wales (1883 – 1940)**
 - Aborigines Welfare Board, State Government of New South Wales (1940 - 1969)
 - Aborigines Welfare Directorate, State Government of New South Wales (1969 - 1975)

Related Entries

Ran

- [St Clair Aboriginal Mission \(1893 - 1923\)](#)
The Aborigines Protection Board ran St Clair Mission from 1920-1923
Date: 1920 - 1923
- [Singleton Boys' Home \(1920 - 1923\)](#)
- [Brewarrina Aboriginal Station Dormitory \(c. 1897 - c. 1940\)](#)
- [Warangesda Dormitory \(1893 - 1912\)](#)
Date: 1897 - 1912
- [Cootamundra Training Home \(1911 - 1969\)](#)
- [Kinchela Training Home for Aboriginal Boys \(1923 - 1970\)](#)
Date: 1923 - 1940

Related Glossary Terms

- [Homefinder \(1890 - 1920s\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [Aborigines Protection Act 1909, New South Wales \(1909 - 1969\)](#)
- [Aborigines Protection Amending Act 1915, New South Wales \(1915 - 1969\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Act 1939, New South Wales \(1939 - 1987\)](#)
- [Child Welfare \(Amendment\) Act 1966, New South Wales \(1966 - 1987\)](#)
- [Aborigines Protection \(Amendment\) Act 1940, New South Wales \(1940 - 1969\)](#)
- [Aborigines Protection \(Amendment\) Act 1963, New South Wales \(1963 - 1969\)](#)
- [Aborigines Protection \(Amendment\) Act 1918, New South Wales \(1918 - 1969\)](#)
- [Aborigines Protection \(Amendment\) Act 1936, New South Wales \(1936 - 1969\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Sydney Female Refuge \(c. 1870 - 1926\)](#)
The annual reports and other records of the Aborigines Protection Board report that it sent some Aboriginal girls to the Sydney Female Refuge.
- [Singleton Home \(1905 - 1910\)](#)
The Aborigines Protection Board sent children to the Singleton Home
- [Singleton Aboriginal Children's Home \(1910 - 1920\)](#)
The Aborigines Protection Board placed children it had removed from Aboriginal stations and reserves in the Singleton Children's Home
- [Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation \(2001 - current\)](#)
- [Rehoboth \(1924 - 1925?\)](#)
- [Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home \(1908 - 1988\)](#)
The Aborigines Protection Board sent children to Bomaderry and received children from Bomaderry.
- [Australian Aborigines Progressive Association \(1924 - 1927\)](#)
- [Royal Far West \(1924 - current\)](#)
Aboriginal children were sent for holidays and hospital care to Royal Far West by the Aborigines Protection Board.
- [Aborigines Protection Association \(1881 - c. 1897\)](#)
The Aborigines Protection Board was set up just after the Aborigines Protection Association and in 1897 took over the property of the Association.
Date: 1881 - 1897
- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs, State Government of New South Wales \(1997 - current\)](#)
The Department of Aboriginal Affairs controls access to records of the Aborigines Protection Board.

Resources

- Museums of History NSW, [Aboriginal Resources: A Guide to NSW State archives](#), No date
- Read, Peter, [The Stolen Generations: The removal of Aboriginal children in New South Wales 1883 to 1969](#), 2007
- [Mr. A.W. Green: Cricket President's Death.](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 August 1935
- Museums of History NSW, [Aboriginal Resources: An Overview of Records](#), No date
- NSW Migration Heritage Centre, [A Changing Landscape and a People Return](#), At The Beach: Contact, Migration and Settlement in South East Sydney, La Perouse, New South Wales, 2011
- Department of Justice, [History](#), Children's Court of New South Wales, 2012
- [Warangesda Aboriginal Mission and Station](#), Facebook Group, 2013
- University of Sydney, [A history of Aboriginal Sydney](#), 2020
- [Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation Website](#), 2014
- National Museum of Australia, [Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Home Gate](#), 2022
- Russell, Lachlan, [The NSW Aborigines Protection / Welfare Board 1883 - 1969 Map](#), 2016
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, [Mapping NSW Aboriginal Missions, Stations, and Camps 1883-1969](#), 2016
- [Living on Aboriginal reserves and stations](#), NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, No date
- Parry, Naomi, [Stolen Childhoods. Reforming Aboriginal and Orphan Children through Removal and Labour in New South Wales \(Australia\), 1909-1917](#), RHEI: Revue d'histoire de l'enfance "irrégulière", 2012
- No date
- No date
- No date
- No date

- No date

Records

Records

- [Correspondence files, Aborigines Welfare Board \(1938 - 1969\)](#)
 - [Indexes to Ward Registers, Board for the Protection of Aborigines \(1 January 1916 - 31 December 1938\)](#)
 - [Minute Books, Aborigines Welfare Board \(25 September 1890 - 29 April 1969\)](#)
 - [Histories of Girls and Boys Unattached and for whom forms have not been prepared, Board for the Protection of Aborigines \(1931 - 1938\)](#)
 - [Aborigines Welfare Board Photographs \(c. 1916 - c. 1961\)](#)
 - [Applications for Certificates of Exemption, Board for the Protection of Aborigines \(1930 - 1964\)](#)
 - [Ledgers \(Trust Account\), Board for the Protection of Aborigines \(1897 - 1922\)](#)
 - [Salary Registers \(Trust Account\), Board for the Protection of Aborigines \(1921 - 1934\)](#)
 - [Special Bundles \(1920 - 1958\)](#)
 - [Ward Registers, Board for the Protection of Aborigines \(18 January 1916 - 7 December 1928\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/aborigines-protection-board/>