

United Aborigines Mission

1929 – 2020

Other Names:

- UAM
- UAM Ministries

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180316183146/http://www.uam.org.au/>

Details

The United Aborigines Mission (UAM) was established in 1929. Formerly, it was known as the Australian Aborigines Mission. Its missionaries were active in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, where the UAM established missions as well as institutions for children. All UAM children's Homes had been shut down by the early 1980s. The UAM was wound up at the end of 2020.

The UAM and its antecedents understood mission as the conversion to Christianity of Aboriginal people (Longworth, p.5). In the second half of the twentieth century, the shift in Australian government policy towards assimilation led to challenges for UAM and its institutions.

The United Aborigines Mission was mentioned in the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) as an institution that housed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families.

Winding up of the United Aborigines Mission

Note: The UAM webpage is no longer in operation. This URL is taken from the Wayback Machine and is dated 16 March 2018.

Even after the closure of the last of its children's institutions, the UAM continued to exist, the corporate body (also known as UAM Ministries) was based in the state of Victoria, as were its archives.

In October 2019, Sharrock Pitman Legal Pty Ltd, a legal firm based in Melbourne, advised the Find & Connect web resource that the United Aborigines Mission and UAM Ministries were in the process of being wound up.

According to the website of the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission, UAM Ministries' charity registration was voluntarily revoked on 31 December 2021.

Location of UAM Records

The Find & Connect web resource contains descriptions of records known to have been held by the United Aborigines Mission Archives. These descriptions have been compiled from publicly available sources, such as the publications *Finding your own way* (2005) and *Connecting Kin* (1998). The UAM provided access to the records to researchers during the Mullighan Inquiry in South Australia (2004-2008), who recorded details about the contents of UAM's collection.

In 2015 UAM Archives provided Find & Connect with the request form used by people wishing to access their personal records held by UAM. The form sets out the conditions for people accessing their information, which includes:

1. that UAM has no obligation to ensure that any information which it has in its records is found;
2. that you release UAM from any action, suit, claim or demand in respect of any act or omission of UAM and its servants and agents in respect of the subject of your inquiry.

The form can be accessed here: [Request for details of personal information held by United Aborigines Mission](#)

Former residents of institutions run by UAM have advised the Find & Connect web resource that since the end of 2018, it has not been possible to get access to UAM records.

In October 2019, Sharrock Pitman Legal Pty Ltd, a legal firm based in Melbourne, advised the Find & Connect web resource that the United Aborigines Mission and UAM Ministries were in the process of being wound up. These organisations' status as registered charities were voluntarily revoked in December 2021.

In late 2022, a collection of UAM records was deposited with the State Library of South Australia. This collection comprises some records from the United Aborigines Mission archives, relating to Colebrook, Tanderra and Oodnadatta Homes in South Australia, and the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home in New South Wales.

As at March 2023, research and consultation by the Find & Connect web resource team and other stakeholders has been unable to establish the current whereabouts of other records previously held by United Aborigines Mission Archives, last known to be located in Williamstown, Victoria.

This is a distressing situation for former residents of UAM institutions and for their family members. Support is available from organisations such as Link Up and the Find & Connect support services.

If you can provide any further information please contact the Find & Connect web resource. We will update this website should any new information come to light.

National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

In 2021, the New South Wales, South Australian and Western Australian governments agreed to be a funder of last resort for institutions run by United Aborigines Mission. This means that although the institution is now defunct, it is participating in the National Redress Scheme, and the government has agreed to pay the institution's share of costs of providing redress to a person (as long as the government is found to be equally responsible for the abuse a person experienced).

Gallery



The newsletter of the United Aborigines Mission March 1938

Description: This is a copy of an image in the Lapérouse Museum Collection.



View of four of the five cottages from the west. In the foreground is the site of the original cottage dormitories

Description: This image shows some of the cottages of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home.

More info

Chronology

- Australian Aborigines' Mission (c. 1894 - 1929)
 - **United Aborigines Mission (1929 – 2020)**

Related Entries

Ran

- [Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home \(1908 - 1988\)](#)
- [Nepabunna Mission \(1931 - 1977\)](#)
- [Fitzroy Crossing Mission \(1952 - 1987\)](#)
- [Mount Margaret Mission \(1921 - 1975\)](#)
- [Sunday Island Mission \(1899 - 1934\)](#)

Date: 1929 - 1934

- [Sunday Island Mission \(1937 - 1964\)](#)
- [United Aborigines Mission, Halls Creek \(1957 - 1967\)](#)
- [Warburton Mission \(1933 - 1977\)](#)
- [Wotjulum \(1934 - 1937\)](#)
- [Oodnadatta Children's Home \(1924 - 1974\)](#)
- [Gnowangerup Mission \(1926 - 1973\)](#)
- [Djurrayin Mission Children's Home \(1950 - 1954\)](#)
- [Ooldea Mission \(1933 - 1952\)](#)
- [Colebrook Home \(1927 - 1981\)](#)
- [Finniss Springs Mission \(1939 - c. 1961\)](#)
- [Gerard Mission \(1946 - 1974\)](#)
- [Kali Boys' Hostel \(1971 - 1972\)](#)

Kali Boys' Hostel was run by the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) under the control of the South Australian Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs and its successors.

- [Swan Reach Mission \(1926 - 1946\)](#)
- [Tanderra Girls' Home \(1952 - 1973\)](#)
- [Cosmo Newbery Mission \(1953 - 1973?\)](#)
- [Derby Hostel \(1956 - 1994\)](#)
- [Fitzroy Crossing Hostel \(1956? - 1976\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Cosmo Newbery Native Settlement \(1951 - 1953\)](#)

The United Aborigines Mission lent one of its missionaries to the Western Australian Department of Native Affairs to act as Officer-in-Charge of Cosmo Newbery Native Settlement.

Holds

- [Records of Colebrook Home, United Aborigines Mission Archives \(1920s - 1980s\)](#)
- [Records of Gerard Mission \(1940s - 1987\)](#)
- [United Aborigines Mission records \(1920s - 1980s\)](#)
- [United Aborigines Mission, Records of activities in Western Australia \(1929? - 1977?\)](#)

Resources

- United Aborigines Mission, *Challenging the almighty: 100 years of trusting God in the work of the United Aborigines Mission*, 1994
- [Bessie Ejai interviewed by Mary Anne Jebb in the Bringing Them Home after the Apology oral history project](#), 22 July 2010
- [Allan Rees interviewed by Colleen Hattersley in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 25 August 2000
- [Kathleen Mack interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)](#), 16 January 2001 - 18 January 2001
- [Interview with Lois Quadesmith, by Yvonne Choules](#), May 2001
- Longworth, Alison, [Was it worthwhile? An historical analysis of five women missionaries and their encounters with the Nyungar people of south-west Australia](#), 2005
- United Aborigines Mission, [The United Aborigines messenger](#), 1929 - 1987
- Morgan, Margaret R, *Mt Margaret: a drop in a bucket*, 2007

Records

Records

- [Schenk Family Papers \(1921 - 1999\)](#)
 - [Records of Warburton Mission: 1949-1967 \(incomplete\) \[manuscript\] \(1949 - 1967\)](#)
 - [Warburton Mission \(1958 - 1961\)](#)
 - [United Aborigines Mission, records deposited with State Library of South Australia \(c. 1908 - c. 1976\)](#)
 - [Annual Reports of the Aborigines Protection Board \[Aboriginal Affairs Board\] \(1939 - 1969\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/united-aborigines-mission/>