

Rabbit Island Hospital for the Insane

1910 – 1917?

Details

Rabbit Island Hospital for the Insane was a government run institution established in 1910 and the first male patients were transferred there on 24 March 1911, “initially in order to provide temporary residences for male patients of the ‘chronic’ class” (State Records Authority of New South Wales). The patients admitted to Rabbit Island came from Parramatta Hospital for the Insane and Newcastle Asylum for Imbeciles and Idiots. In around 1917 it became known as the Rabbit Island Mental Hospital.

Dr Milson Creed, a doctor specialising in the treatment of alcoholism, selected Rabbit and Mud Island on behalf of the NSW Government in 1901, as places that could be used to securely detain patients without needing bars or walls.

Construction of the first of two intended asylums, for women on Rabbit Island, began in 1902. It was intended that future male patients would construct their own asylum buildings, on Milson Island, but changes of State Government meant the site was abandoned in 1907.

The first patients were transferred to the Rabbit Island Hospital for the Insane on 24 March 1911, largely from the Wyatt Street Asylum in Newcastle but also from the Parramatta Hospital for the Insane (Cumberland Hospital). One of their first tasks was to themselves construct their facilities. One of the attendants, quoted in Laila Ellmoos' *Our Island Home*, said:

concrete verandah floors, paths, airing courts, lawns and flower gardens all had to be picked out of solid earth and stone.

Gallery



Institution for inebriates, Rabbit Island, Hawkesbury River

Description: This photograph shows part of the mental health institution at Peat Island/Rabbit Island. It shows two large brick buildings and a small rotunda at the top of a steep bank leading down to the Hawkesbury River. Four people stand on a path in front of the buildings. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.

More info

Chronology

- **Rabbit Island Hospital for the Insane (1910 – 1917?)**
 - Rabbit Island Mental Hospital (1917? - 1936)
 - Peat and Milson Islands Mental Hospital (1936 - 1973)
 - Peat Island Hospital (1973 - 1989)
 - Peat Island Centre (1989 - 2010)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Inspector General of the Insane \(1876 - 1917\)](#)

Resources

- Sutton, Candace, [Haunting pictures from inside the secret island asylum that was Australia's 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest' where naked young patients were once kept caged and spent their whole lives banished from society](#), 29 October 2014

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records

- [Rabbit, Peat and Milson Island Mental Hospital records, State Archives NSW \(1910 - 1980\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/rabbit-island-hospital-for-the-insane/>