

# Rabbit Island Mental Hospital

1917? – 1936

**Other Names:** • Mental Hospital, Rabbit Island

## Details

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Rabbit Island Mental Hospital was a government run institution established in around 1917. It was previously known as the Rabbit Island Hospital for the Insane. It was run by the Inspector General of Mental Hospitals. In 1936 it became known as the Peat and Milson Islands Mental Hospital.

Rabbit Island Mental Hospital was an institution for people considered to be 'mentally defective' or 'feeble-minded' to use the language used at the time.

By 1920 the facilities on Rabbit Island were vastly overcrowded. In August 1924, Milson Island was officially dedicated as part of the institution, which eventually became known as Peat and Milson Islands Hospital.

In this era there was no attempt to provide anything more for inmates than the basics of shelter and food. 'Treatment' involved cleanliness, but there was no physical or emotional support or therapy, or rehabilitation. Indeed, those who were able were expected to carry out heavy labour to maintain and improve the facility.

## Gallery

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### 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.

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## More info

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### 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 Mental Hospitals \(1917 - 1958\)](#)

## Resources

- State Records Authority of New South Wales, [Peat Island Centre](#), No date
- 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

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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-mental-hospital/>