

Industrial School, Mapoon Mission Station

1901 – 1963

Details

The Industrial School at the Mapoon Mission Station on western Cape York in Far North Queensland, was operated by the Presbyterian Church. In October 1901, Mapoon was gazetted as an industrial school under the Queensland *Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act* 1865 and then licensed in 1937 under the *State Children Act* 1911. It had closed by the 1960s.

The Mapoon Presbyterian Mission, situated on the traditional lands of the Tjungundji people, was established in 1891. Originally established under the name Batavia River Mission, by Moravian missionaries on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, it soon became known as Mapoon or Marpuna Mission.

At a conference of church and government officials held at Mapoon in April 1954 a policy decision was made to close Mapoon. The Government commenced building a replacement community at Hidden Valley near Bamaga in 1961 and by mid-1962 nearly 100 people had moved to the community which became known as New Mapoon. On 14 November 1963, the Officer-in-Charge of Police at Thursday Island received official instructions from the Director of Native Affairs, Pat Killoran, to remove the remaining twenty-three Aboriginal residents from Mapoon to Bamaga. All but two buildings were then burned to prevent the residents returning to the mission.

Records

According to the *Missing Pieces* publication (2001), no records in relation to this Industrial School have been located.

Gallery



Aboriginal children at Mapoon Mission, waiting for their meal, 1935

Description: This is a photograph of children and adults at the Mapoon Mission in 1935. It shows approximately 50 children, two Aboriginal women, and five staff members lined up in front of the J.G. Ward Memorial church and other Mission buildings, while waiting for a meal. The children all have their arms folded, and appear to range in age from about 3 to 12 years old. This photograph is one of eight in the State Library of Queensland's collection 'APE-74 Torres Strait Islands Photograph Album 1935' that show Mapoon Mission station. The other seven images show various scenes of children and other residents at Mapoon Mission in 1935. They can be accessed through the link on this page.



Girls' dormitory at Mapoon Presbyterian Mission, North Queensland, 1919

Description: This photograph shows approximately 15 girls and young women standing on the front steps and verandah of the Girls' dormitory at Mapoon Mission Station. The dormitory is a raised building made of rough-cut timber and corrugated metal sheeting, and is surrounded by palm trees. The description of this image provided by the State Library of Queensland states that the building was later used as the mission store.



Children at play Mapoon ca. 1910

Description: This photograph shows approximately 40 Aboriginal people, mostly children, standing and playing in front of buildings (possibly dormitories) at Mapoon Mission Station. Several of the children are climbing on the frame of a swingset. The buildings appear to be built on or near the beach, and are all raised on stilts. This photograph was originally published in the Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for the year 1910.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Presbyterian Church of Queensland \(1849 - current\)](#)
Date: 1901 - 1963

Related Legislation

- [State Children Act 1911, Queensland \(1911 - 1966\)](#)
- [Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act 1865, Queensland \(1865 - 1911\)](#)

Resources

- Wharton, Geoff, *The Day They Burned Mapoon: A Study of the Closure of a Queensland Presbyterian Mission*, 1996
- Ganter, Regina, [German Missionaries in Queensland - Mapoon \(1891-1919\)](#), 2009

Records

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

Records

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Records \(1880s - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
 - [General Correspondence - Torres Strait Islands \(1922 - 1994\)](#)
 - [Miscellaneous Items and Correspondence - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander files \(1859 - 1997\)](#)
 - [Health & Home Affairs/Education Department Batch Files \[Correspondence\] - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander files \(1884 - 1970\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files \[Offices of the Chief Protector of Aborigines and Director of Native Affairs\] \(1901 - 1944\)](#)
 - [Correspondence - Alphanumeric Prefix - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs \(1909 - 1992\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/industrial-school-mapoon-mission-station/>