

Point Puer

1834 – 1849

Details

Point Puer, run by the government, opened in 1834. It was at Oppossum Bay on the Tasman Peninsula. Point Puer was a reformatory for boys who had been transported from Britain. It closed in 1849.

Point Puer was established by Governor Arthur to accommodate boys aged between 10 and 14. During the convict era, they made up between 10 and 20 percent of the arrivals on each ship. 68 boys arrived at Point Puer on 10 January 1834 bringing their own supplies and necessities. They were to build the barracks for the institution themselves, using the handmade bricks made by boys at Port Arthur.

Point Puer was the first ever British institution designed to reform boys who had committed a criminal offence. The idea had already been practiced at Carters' Barracks, Boys Dormitory in NSW, with the reform program including separation from the adult convicts, basic schooling, and religious instruction. Boys who were considered to be well behaved learned shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry, stonemasonry, bookbinding or boat building. The rest cleared and worked the land. The Commandant imposed a hierarchical system of punishment.

By the end of the 1830s, 500 boys lived at Point Puer. Between 1842 and 1844, the numbers grew to 700. By 1844 many of the buildings were damaged beyond repair and required demolition. After Parkhurst Reformatory was built on the Isle of Wight off the south coast of England, fewer boys were transported to Australia. Numbers at Point Puer declined. It closed in 1849.

Gallery



Underground Cells at Point Puer

Description: The photograph is part of EW (Edward William) Searle's collection of photographs taken between about 1900 and 1955.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Convict Department \(1818 - 1877\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Carters' Barracks, Boys Dormitory \(1820 - c. 1848\)](#)

- [Cascades Probation Station \(1848 - 1855\)](#)

After Point Puer closed, boys were sent to the Cascades Probation Station.

Resources

- Atkinson, Lynn, [An overview of juvenile detention in Australia](#), National Conference on Juvenile Detention: Proceedings of a conference held 10-13 August 1993, 1994
- Australian Heritage Council, [A thematic heritage study on Australia's benevolent and other care institutions](#), 2016

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/point-puer/>