

Wandering Mission

1944 – 1979

Other Names:

- St Francis Xavier Mission
- St Xavier Native Mission
- St Francis Xavier Community Centre
- St Xavier Mission

Details

Wandering Mission was established by the Catholic Archbishop of Perth in 1944, as a day school with a dormitory for Aboriginal girls, run by the Pallottines (Society of the Catholic Apostolates). Boys were admitted from 1951. Children aged 4-15 years were accommodated at Wandering, at the request of parents or government authorities. The head of the government departments responsible for Aboriginal welfare was the guardian of all children until 1963 those who were wards of the State or 'native wards' until 1972. The mission closed in 1979 and some children were transferred to Centrecare Children's Cottages at Beverley, Brookton and Northam.

Wandering Mission was established by the Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Archbishop Prendiville, in 1944. It was run the by Pallottine fathers and brothers, possibly with involvement from the Schoenstatt Sisters.

Starting as a school for Aboriginal girls from the Reserves in Boddington, Narrogin, Williams, Pingelly and Brookton, Wandering Mission also had boarding facilities for children who couldn't attend on a daily basis.

From 1951, boys were also admitted to Wandering, beginning with boys whose sisters were at the mission.

In 1951, when the Moore River and Carrolup 'native settlements' closed, some of those children were sent to Wandering.

By 1960, children were going out to government primary schools and Boddington Junior High School. Some farm skills training was provided for older youth at the mission. By 1968, some children were housed in cottages rather than dormitories.

The process of closing Wandering mission began around 1978 and discussions about alternative accommodation for the children was discussed by the mission's manager and the newly-appointed head of Catholic welfare in Perth, Father (later, Archbishop) Hickey who was at that time planning to develop 'scatter cottages' to accommodate children family-size homes in towns rather than in dormitories on missions. Thus, Centrecare Children's Cottages were established and, in 1979, children from Wandering were transferred to Centrecare Children's Cottages at Beverley, Brookton and Northam.

In 2017 three men (two former teachers and a Catholic Priest) were charged with a number of sexual offences committed against children at Wandering Mission. The investigation was launched as a result of the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Gallery



Wandering Mission

Description: This is a copy of an image that accompanied a news article in January 2019 about the conviction of a former superintendent of Wandering Mission for sexual offences against a girl living in the Home.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Pallottines \(Society of the Catholic Apostolates\) \(1901 - current\)](#)

Related Glossary Terms

- [Commissioner for Native Affairs \(WA\) \(1936 - 1954\)](#)
The Commissioner of Native Affairs was the guardian of all 'native' children at Wandering Mission.
Date: 1944 - 1954
- [Commissioner of Native Welfare \(WA\) \(1954 - 1972\)](#)
The Commissioner of Native Welfare was the guardian of all 'native' children at Wandering Mission until 1963 when he could regulate the 'care' of those Aboriginal children.
Date: 1954 - 1972

Related Organisations

- [Centrecare Children's Cottages \(1978 - 1992\)](#)
When Wandering Mission closed, some children were sent to Centrecare Children's Cottages.
Date: 1979 -
- [Roelands Village \(1975 - 1984\)](#)
Children whose parents were participating in rehabilitation programs at Wandering Mission were sometimes sent to Roelands Village.
Date: 1975? - 1977?
- [Department for Community Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1972 - 1985\)](#)
The Chief Executive Officer for the Department for Community Welfare, was the guardian of any children at Wandering Mission who were deemed to be 'native wards' or 'wards of the State'.
- [Moore River Native Settlement \(1918 - 1951\)](#)
When the Moore River Native Settlement closed, some children were sent to Wandering Mission.
Date: 1951 -
- [Carrolup Native Settlement \(1939 - 1951\)](#)
When Carrolup was discontinued as a 'native settlement', some children were sent to Wandering Mission.
Date: 1951 -
- [Catholic Archdiocese of Perth \(1913 - current\)](#)
Wandering Mission was established by the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth.
Date: 1944 -

Resources

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, [Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families](#), 1997
- Stolen Generations' Testimonies Foundation, [Stolen Generations' Testimonies](#), 2009. *Relevance:* See testimonies of Paul Parfitt, Melbourne Hart, Glenys Ward and Athol Mourish
- [Catholic Church schools and homes with the most child abuse claims revealed](#), ABC News, 17 February 2017
- Information Services, Department for Community Development, [Signposts: A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920](#), 2004. *Relevance:* Table 61: Children and Young People at Wandering Mission, 1963 - 1970

- Wilson, Katrin and Michael V. Robinson., *Aboriginal Hostels in Perth : A Comparative Survey*, 1971
- State Records Taskforce, Government of Western Australia, [Looking West: A Guide to Aboriginal Sources in Western Australia](#), 2004
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, *A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families*, November 1999
- [Society of the Catholic Apostolate \(Pallottine Fathers and Brothers\)](#), No date
- Butcher, Petrina, *Djooraminda*, West Australian social worker, 1997
- Khan-White, Sima, [Wandering Mission: Sima's Story](#), 2013
- Ward, Glenyse, *Wandering Girl*, 1988
- Heather Mcneill, [Priest and teachers 'abused girls' at Aboriginal mission](#), WA Today, 10 May 2017
- [Former Catholic priest Allen Mithen avoids jail over Wandering mission 1960s sex assault](#), ABC News online, 15 January 2019

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
 - [Records of Wandering Mission School \(1959 - 1977\)](#)
 - [Wandering Mission Sacramental Registers \(December 1948 - July 1981\)](#)
 - [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
 - [Files - Aborigines Departments \(1 January 1926 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
 - [Administration Files - South West District Office \[S.D. Sequence\] \(1949 - 1976\)](#)
 - [Files - Departmental \[Education Department\] \(1 January 1885 - 31 December 2000\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
- Item B301 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Wandering/Xavier Mission
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/wandering-mission-2/>