

Wongutha Mission Training Farm

1954 – 1993

Other Names:

- Wongutha Mission Training School
- Wongutha Mission Farm
- Wongutha Training Farm
- Wongutha
- Esperance Farm Training Mission School

Details

Wongutha Mission Training Farm, near Esperance, was established in 1954 by RW (Rod) Schenk. It was for Aboriginal boys aged over 14 and, by the 1960s, girls. There was training in farming and Christian leadership. Wongutha was run by a local board of management. In 1990, the Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School Inc (CAPS) from Coolgardie took over the program and in 1993 all the land and assets at Wongutha were deeded to CAPS.

On 24 December 1954, a permit to establish the Wongutha Farm Training Mission School at Esperance was granted to RW (Rod) Schenk, who was the son of RM Schenk, the founder of [Mount Margaret Mission](#). In his 1959 Annual Report (p.9), the Commissioner of Native Welfare noted that the 'junior' Mr Schenk was a graduate of the Victorian Agricultural College.

Wongutha was governed by a local Board which included farmers, business people, church and Aboriginal leaders, mostly from the Esperance area.

The Training Farm was for boys over 14 years of age. In 1958, it was reported in *Dawn* magazine that ten boys were "doing practical work with sheep, poultry, pigs and cattle, as well as English and arithmetic to bring them up to standard" and that three boys were going to High School to study for their intermediate certificates.

Until 1963, all the young people at Wongutha were under the guardianship of the heads of the department responsible for Aboriginal welfare, and in the late 1960s, the Annual Reports of the Child Welfare Department show that Wongutha admitted some boys and girls who were classified as 'native wards'.

The curriculum at Wongutha included training students in Christian principles and leadership.

In 1972, the Department for Community Welfare took over the child welfare responsibilities of the Department of Native Welfare and Wongutha was one of the institutions where children may have been placed.

In 1990, the Wongutha Board invited the Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School Inc (CAPS) which had formed in Coolgardie in 1981, to become involved in the operation of Wongutha. In 1993, all the land and assets at Wongutha were deeded to CAPS and the Board was disbanded.

In 2013, Wongutha continued as Wongutha CAPS, a secondary school and hostel.

National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

The Western Australian government has agreed to be a funder of last resort for this institution. This means that although the institution is now defunct, it is participating in the National Redress Scheme, and the government has agreed to pay the institution's share of costs of providing redress to a person (as long as the government is found to be equally responsible for the abuse a person experienced).

Gallery



Wongutha Mission Training Farm near Esperance, dormitory block, January 1957

Description: This is a photograph of a dormitory block at Wongutha Mission Training Farm. It shows a single-storey fibro and weather-board house situated on farmland, with a water tower and shed nearby. The photograph was taken by Robert McKeich in 1957.

More info

Related Entries

Related Organisations

- [Condingup Hostel \(1967? - 1976\)](#)
Condingup Hostel accommodated some boys from Wongutha Mission Training Farm when they went out to work in the Esperance area.
- [Mount Margaret Mission \(1921 - 1975\)](#)
Wongutha Mission Training Farm was established by RW (Ron) Schenk, the son of RM Schenk, who founded Mount Margaret Mission.
Date: 1955 - 1975

Resources

- State Records Taskforce, Government of Western Australia, [Looking West: A Guide to Aboriginal Sources in Western Australia](#), 2004

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
- [Tuart Place Historical Photos Collection](#)
- [Administration Files - Eastern District Office \[E.D.G. Sequence\] \(1945 - 1975\)](#)
- [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 \[Education Department\] \(1 January 1885 - 31 December 2000\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/wongutha-mission-training-farm/>