

# Gnowangerup Mission

1926 – 1973

**Other Names:** • United Aborigines Mission, Gnowangerup

## Details

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Gnowangerup Mission was established in 1926 by Hope and Hedley Wright on behalf of the Australian Aborigines' Mission, on a 6.5 acre Government Reserve just outside Gnowangerup, in the Great Southern region of Western Australia. In 1929 the Australian Aborigines' Mission became the United Aborigines Mission and the Wrights continued to run Gnowangerup on its behalf. The Mission moved two miles out of the town of Gnowangerup to a 190 acre plot in 1935. Gnowangerup Mission closed in 1973.

The land for the original Gnowangerup Mission was provided by Gnowangerup Shire Council, one mile southwest of Gnowangerup on Tambellup Road. The Mission included a school.

During the early 1930s there was much concern about the location of the Mission and in 1935 a new Mission Station was opened two miles north-east of Gnowangerup. The official opening happened in November 1935. The buildings were transferred to the new location and the school continued.

Gnowangerup Mission was gazetted as a Native Institution on 29 March 1940 and its status as a Native Institution under s.4 of the *Native Welfare Act 1963* was cancelled on 04/02/1970.

Gnowangerup Mission is mentioned in multiple sources as an institution that housed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families. The December 1948 issue of the United Aborigines *Messenger* mentions a changed policy for the work at Gnowangerup with eight children under the care of the missionaries.

In the 1960s Gnowangerup Agriculture School was opened on the Mission's land.

Gnowangerup Mission closed in 1973.

In November 2017 seventeen members of the Stolen Generations returned to Gnowangerup Mission to undertake healing activities.

## 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



### Gnowangerup Mission, January 1958. Nursery dormitory

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a slide and is part of the group of six images titled 'Gnowangerup Mission run by the United Aboriginal Mission, January 1958 [picture]'. The image shows young children outside at Gnowangerup Mission.



### Gnowangerup Mission run by the United Aboriginal Mission, January 1958

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a slide and is part of the group of six images titled 'Gnowangerup Mission run by the United Aboriginal Mission, January 1958 [picture]'. The image shows some of the buildings on the Gnowangerup Mission.



### Gnowangerup Mission, the whole camp, Christmas, 1941

**Description:** This image shows people posed for a photograph at Gnowangerup Mission. It is part of the Preston Walker collection of photographs. The title was provided by the donor.

## More info

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [United Aborigines Mission \(1929 - 2020\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Gnowangerup Agricultural College \(1966 - 2005\)](#)  
Gnowangerup Agricultural College was established on the same site as Gnowangerup Mission

### Resources

- [Interview with Lois Quadesmith, by Yvonne Choules](#), May 2001
- State Records Taskforce, Government of Western Australia, [Looking West: A Guide to Aboriginal Sources in Western Australia](#), 2004. *Relevance:* p.41
- [Records of the Gnowangerup Mission](#), State Library of Western Australia website, 2004
- Valadian, Margaret, *Report by Margaret Valadian*, 1968
- Heritage Council, [Gnowangerup Agricultural School](#), inHerit: our heritage places, 1 June 2018

## Records

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

### Records held by other organisations

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
- [Gnowangerup Mission records, 1927-1962 \[microform\] \(1927 - 1962\)](#)
- [Alma Smith and Alva Atkins \(nee Smith\) papers and photographs relating to missionary work in New South Wales and Western Australia, 1909-2006](#)

- [Sister Edie Owens Diary, 1940-1941 \(1940 - 1941\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)  
Item B302 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Gnowangerup Mission
  - [Files - Aborigines Departments \(1 January 1926 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
  - [Administration Files - South West District Office \[S.D. Sequence\] \(1949 - 1976\)](#)
  - [Files - General \[Health Department\] \(1899 - 1987\)](#)
  - [Files - Departmental \[Education Department\] \(1 January 1885 - 31 December 2000\)](#)
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