

# Wave Hill Welfare Settlement

1970 – 1975

## Details

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The Wave Hill Welfare Settlement was established by the government in 1970 on land previously part of the Wave Hill Cattle Station. Baptist missionaries took up residence in 1970 and operated a school. No dormitories are known to have operated at Wave Hill. The lease of 1,200 square miles of the Wave Hill Cattle Station was returned to the Gurindji people by the government in 1975. By 1976 the Wave Hill Welfare Settlement had become known as the township of Kalkarindji.

The Wave Hill Welfare Settlement was established by the government in 1970 on land previously part of the Wave Hill Cattle Station. The Wave Hill Cattle Station was owned and operated by a meat processing company, Vestey's, on land which was known to the local Aboriginal population as Kalkarindji. The Wave Hill Cattle Station is well known as the site of a historic walk off by Aboriginal pastoral workers in August 1966 that helped to bring changes in government policies regarding Aboriginal workers' rights and Land rights in the Northern Territory.

Many Aboriginal people, including the families of workers on the Cattle Station, camped at Wattie Creek after the Wave Hill Walk-off. When Vestey's decided that they did not want people living at Wattie Creek the government excised a portion of land from the Cattle Station, five miles from Wattie Creek, and set up the Wave Hill Welfare Settlement at the site of a former ration depot adjacent to the Wave Hill Police Station. Baptist missionaries, who had been visiting the Station since the mid 1960s, took up residence at Wave Hill Welfare Settlement in 1970. A school and a Welfare centre operated at the settlement. No dormitories are known to have operated at Wave Hill.

Many Aboriginal people who had established themselves at Wattie Creek refused to move into the Government Settlement at Wave Hill and built their own houses at the Wattie Creek site.

In 1972 the Vestey company offered 35 square miles of land near Wattie Creek to the government which included 10 square miles that the local Gurindji people had requested permission to lease.

Prime Minister McMahon was quoted in newspapers of the time saying:

*The area of Crown Land on which the Government welfare centre is located will be extended to include land at Wattie Creek which has been the site of a camping area for Aborigines for some time.*

In 1975 the Whitlam Government passed the lease of 1,200 square miles of the Wave Hill Cattle Station to the Gurindji people. The township at Wattie Creek became known as Daguragu. By 1976 Wave Hill Welfare Settlement was designated as an 'open town' and was known as Kalkarindji.

## Gallery



## Wave Hill Settlement School Complex

**Description:** The description states: A general view of the Wave Hill Settlement School Complex. Plans are in hand for the complete rebuilding of the school. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.

# More info

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Welfare Division, Northern Territory Administration, Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)
- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Territory Division, Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Australian Baptist Home Mission \(c. 1945 - 1978\)](#)

Missionaries from the Australian Baptist Home Mission operated at the Wave Hill Welfare Settlement

# Records

## Records held by other organisations

- [Records of Baptist Church Missions, Central Australia \(1947 - 1970s\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/wave-hill-welfare-settlement/>