

Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, State Government of Victoria

1901 – 1957

Other Names:

- Board for the Protection of Aborigines
- BPA

Details

The Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines was established in 1869, under the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act 1869. Previously, the Central Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines had been operating in Victoria since 1860. The Board, which ran missions and reserve stations in Victoria, had significant statutory power over the lives and affairs of Indigenous people, until it was abolished in 1957.

The powers of the Protection Board were further strengthened with the passage of regulations in 1871. From this time, the Board had the power to dictate where Aboriginal people could live, the jobs they could perform and the distribution of their earnings. Perhaps most significantly, the 1871 regulations formalised the Board's responsibility for the care, custody and education of Aboriginal children.

The story of the Board is in some ways the story of the Stolen Generations in Victoria, and the way governments have impacted on the lives of Aboriginal children, families, and communities.

The policies of 'protection' arose out of concern for the plight of Indigenous people in Victoria, following colonisation and the extreme impacts of the gold rushes from the 1850s. The actions and philosophy of the Board were based on a view of Aboriginal people as a 'dying race', not able to provide for themselves. The only hope for their 'civilisation' lay with the education of their children.

Acts passed in 1886 and 1890 created divisions within families by distinguishing between 'full-bloods' and 'half-castes': those people considered to be Aboriginal could receive support and remain on reserves, while 'half-castes' were asked to leave reserves and fend for themselves.

The Victorian Government passed legislation in 1910 that has been seen as a small step away from the extreme control over Aboriginal people's lives that previous acts conferred upon the Board. The Aborigines Act 1910

The 1915 Aborigines Act provided that only people categorised as 'full-blood Aborigines' could live on Victorian mission stations. This legislation placed severe restrictions on contact between people on the mission and 'half-castes'. Flagg and Gurciullo point out that the 1915 Act further contributed to family and community fragmentation in Victoria. It also excluded Aboriginal people, deemed to be 'half-castes', from government assistance, leading to severe disadvantage and hardship.

The Board was abolished by the Aborigines Act 1957.

More info

Chronology

- Central Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines (1860 - 1869)
 - Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, Colony of Victoria (1869 - 1900)

- **Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, State Government of Victoria (1901 – 1957)**
 - Aborigines Welfare Board (1957 - 1968)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Coranderrk Children's Asylum and Dormitory \(1863 - 1924\)](#)
Date: 1900 - 1924
- [Ebenezer Mission \(1859 - 1904\)](#)
- [Ramahyuck Aboriginal Mission \(1863 - 1908\)](#)
Date: 1900 - 1908
- [Lake Tyers Mission Station \(1861 - 1971\)](#)
Date: 1900 - 1957
- [Lake Condah Mission Station \(1867 - 1919\)](#)
Date: 1900 - 1919

Resources

- [Ebenezer](#), Mission Voices: Missions and Reserves., 2004
- Nelson, E., Swain, S. and Grimshaw, P., *Letters from Aboriginal women of Victoria 1867-1926*, 2002
- Haskins, Victoria, ["Give to us the People we would Love to be amongst us": The Aboriginal Campaign against Caroline Bulmer's Eviction from Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station, 1913-14](#), Provenance, September 2008
- [Where can I find records relating to Aboriginal women and children?](#), First Ladies: finding records about women in Public Record Office Victoria, 2004

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