

Woorabinda

c. 1927 – 1986

Details

Woorabinda, 170 kilometres south-west of Rockhampton, Queensland, was gazetted as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1927; the reserve status remained in place until 1986. Additionally, in 1951 Woorabinda was gazetted as an Industrial School institution for the maintenance of State Children under the Children Services Act. Consequently the Woorabinda dormitories housed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were considered State Wards under the then Children's Services Act and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were controlled under the Queensland Protection Acts.

Woorabinda was established in 1926 when the Queensland government closed the Aboriginal settlement of Taroom. Residents from Taroom were removed to Woorabinda.

By the early 1930s, there were children's dormitories at Woorabinda. Overcrowding was a constant problem in the dormitories.

In 1942, because of World War Two, approximately 300 people living at the Hope Vale Mission were removed to Woorabinda, over 1,000 kilometres away. This group, which became known at Woorabinda as the 'Cape Bedford people', suffered greatly as a result of this removal and there was a high death rate among former Hope Vale residents (Forde, 1990).

An article from 1951 describes education for children at Woorabinda. It stated that students were educated until 'fourth standard' (fourth grade). Once boys reached the age of 12, 'they began vocational training to equip them to do useful and gainful work on the settlement and in the outside world. They are trained in woodwork, tinsmithing and leather work' (Brisbane Telegraph, 13 June 1951).

After the Woorabinda dormitory closed at the end of 1976 the Woorabinda Council (and later, the Woorabinda Child Care Committee set up by the Department of Children's Services) could arrange temporary placements within the community for children deemed to be neglected or abandoned (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, file note, 2019).

On 30 March 1985, the Woorabinda community elected 5 councillors to constitute an autonomous Woorabinda Aboriginal Council established under the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984. The council area, previously an Aboriginal reserve held by the Queensland Government, was transferred on 28 October 1986 to the trusteeship of the council under a Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT).

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Aboriginal and Island Affairs Department, State Government of Queensland \(28 April 1966 - 16 January 1975\)](#)

- [Director Of Native Affairs Office, State Government of Queensland \(12 October 1939 - 28 April 1966\)](#)
- [Chief Protector of Aboriginals Office, State Government of Queensland \(25 March 1904 - 12 October 1939\)](#)
- [Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement Department, State Government of Queensland \(1975 - 1984\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Hope Vale Mission \(c. 1950 - 1986\)](#)
During World War Two, residents of Hope Vale Mission were removed to Woorabinda.

Resources

- Forde, Therese, [Confinement and Control: a history of Woorabinda Aboriginal Community 1927-1990](#), 1990

Records

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

Records

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Records \(1880s - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files \[Offices of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals and Director of Native Affairs\] \(1901 - 1944\)](#)
 - [Miscellaneous Items and Correspondence - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander files \(1859 - 1997\)](#)
 - [Correspondence - Alphanumeric Prefix - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs \(1909 - 1992\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs \(1916 - 1999\)](#)
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