

# Warangesda Dormitory

1893 – 1912

**Other Names:** • Warangesda Aboriginal School for Girls

## Details

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Warangesda Dormitory was established on an Aborigines Protection Association station at Warangesda, near Darlington Point, in 1893. It trained Aboriginal girls for domestic service and served as a welfare depot for younger children from other reserves and stations. In 1897 the Aborigines Protection Board took over managing Warangesda Mission and the Dormitory. Girls from Warangesda were sent into domestic service 'apprenticeship' by the Board. Warangesda Dormitory closed in 1912 and girls were transferred to Cootamundra Training Home. The Mission was sold in 1926. The site and surviving buildings were listed on the State Heritage Register in 2013. The Dormitory ruins were still visible in March 2014.

Warangesda Station was established at Darlington Point by the Reverend JB Gribble in 1880 as a refuge for Aboriginal people. Gribble's aims were to Christianise the Aboriginal people, as well as shield them from the influences of white people, such as tobacco, alcohol, prostitution and gambling.

The Aborigines Protection Association formed in 1881, incorporating Warangesda, Maloga (run by another missionary, David Matthews) and Cumeragunja Stations. In 1881 two representatives of the New South Wales Government visited Warangesda. From 1886 the Aborigines Protection Board sent Aboriginal children who were orphaned, destitute or homeless to Warangesda, along with adults in need of welfare support.

Warangesda Dormitory was developed in 1893 to isolate girls and young women from other members of their community and concentrate on 'training' them to work in domestic service. It was the base for the beginnings of the Aborigines' Protection Board's 'apprenticeship' policies. These policies were pioneered by George Edward Ardill, who was a member of the Association. He placed girls from Warangesda Dormitory in apprenticeships in Sydney.

In 1897, when the Protection Association's finances collapsed, the Aborigines Protection Board took over the management of Warangesda, along with Cumeragunja and Maloga. The Board continued to use the Dormitory to receive girls who were thought to be ready for employment, taking them from all over New South Wales. In 1909 the *Aborigines Protection Act* gave the Board the power to apprentice children, and girls who had reached the school-leaving age were then sent to domestic service.

In 1911 the Aborigines Protection Board opened the Cootamundra Home as a training home for girls and Warangesda Dormitory was closed. A number of girls were transferred to Cootamundra from there.

The whole of Warangesda Station was sold by the Aborigines Protection Board in 1926 and it has been in private ownership since then.

## Gallery



The northern side of the former girls' dormitory [former Warangesda Station]



### Warangesda Aboriginal Mission and Station

**Description:** "Circa 1897 (the teacher's cottage and slab kitchen on the right burned down in 1897). Taken from around the church area, with possible original Gribble cottage (later manager's cottage) on the left. Provides good detail of Aboriginal housing and fencing." [Description provided by NSW Office of Environment & Heritage]

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Aborigines Protection Board, State Government of New South Wales \(1883 - 1940\)](#)  
Date: 1897 - 1912
- [Aborigines Protection Association \(1881 - c. 1897\)](#)  
Date: 1893 - 1897

#### Related Legislation

- [Aborigines Protection Act 1909, New South Wales \(1909 - 1969\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Cootamundra Training Home \(1911 - 1969\)](#)  
When Warangesda Dormitory was closed, girls were transferred to Cootamundra Training Home.  
Date: 1911 - 1912
- [Aborigines Inland Mission \(1905 - 1998\)](#)  
The AIM ministered to Warangesda Mission
- [Brewarrina Aboriginal Station Dormitory \(c. 1897 - c. 1940\)](#)  
Girls were transferred between the Brewarrina and Warangesda dormitories

#### Amends

- [School Files \(1876 - 1979\)](#)

## Resources

- Elphick, Beverley (Gulumbali) and Don, [The Camp of Mercy: An historical and biographical record of the Warangesda Aboriginal Mission/Station at Darlington Point NSW](#), 2003
  - University of Sydney, [A history of Aboriginal Sydney](#), 2020
  - Horton, David, *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture*, 1994
  - [Living on Aboriginal reserves and stations](#), NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, No date
  - Scarlett, Philippa, [Warangesda: daily life and events 1880-1924](#), Indigenous Histories, 1994
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/warangesda-dormitory/>