

Gosford Training School

1923 – 1945

- Other Names:**
- Mt Penang
 - Mount Penang
 - Gosford Reformatory
 - Gosford Training School for Boys
 - Child Welfare Farm Home for Boys

Details

Gosford Training School was the new name given in 1923 to the Gosford Farm Home for Boys. It was an industrial school for boys aged 13 to 18 who were committed for 'serious offences' or had been deemed 'unsuitable for training under the conditions of the Mittagong Farm Home'. It was run by the Child Welfare Department. Gosford Training School became Mount Penang Training School for Boys in 1946.

The change of name from Gosford Farm Home for Boys to Gosford Training School followed the introduction of the *Child Welfare Act 1923*. When the new Act was introduced the Gosford facility was transferred from the Department of Public Instruction to the Child Welfare Department.

The Annual Report of the Child Welfare Department in 1930 set out the principles behind the Gosford Training School

... the elder boys are admitted, and by a process of character-building consisting of drill and individual training based on each boy's psychological peculiarities, pass through successive grades or classifications in the institution until it is thought they are once more fit for a trial on conditional discharge ...

As regards the future, it is intended to develop the training of the boys to a greater degree in manual work, particularly in regard to working in wood and metal – also, to make some training possible for wards over 14 years of age before apprenticing them to employers.

It also described some of the routine and the work the boys did:

On admission a lad is allotted to No. 1 company, which occupies No. 1 dormitory, and he has to earn his transfer from there up to No. 4 company and dormitory before he is considered as ready for release on probation ...

The training consists of orchard, farm and dairy work, roadmaking, levelling, clearing, tree felling, and other work incidental to a farm. A manual training class is in operation, and each lad must take part in organised physical training and sport and learn to swim.

The 1932 Annual Report made special note of the effects of the Depression on the boys entering the training school; admitting that the cause of the 'failure' of most of the 'recidivist' boys was their 'bad home conditions'. It described the bodily effects of the Depression:

It has been noted that many of the lads admitted during these years were in a poor physical condition, many of them suffering from malnutrition, and steps had to be taken to build them up to the standard of health maintained by the Department. Many of them had been roaming the country looking for work and had endured severe privation. As a result, on admission they were weakened in physique.

The regime at Gosford was condemned by an inquiry held in 1934 by JE McCulloch. McCulloch reported that the punishment regime at Gosford included allowing the older boys to administer corporal punishment to younger boys, without supervision by staff. This included older boys forming a gauntlet, through which boys under punishment were obliged to run while the older boys hit them. The staff were untrained, and some McCulloch considered were mentally unstable. McCulloch also observed the staff allowed boys to work in unsafe situations, such as standing on the edge of giant coppers to boil laundry. The regime does appear to have changed after McCulloch's report, but the discipline practices he wanted stopped at Gosford were allowed to continue at Gosford's annexe, Riverina Welfare Farm for Boys at Yanco.

The site of Gosford Training School is, in 2014, part of Mt Penang Parklands.

Gallery



Community Singing: Gosford Boys Home



Dormitory: Gosford Boys Home

Description: This is a photograph of the boys dormitory at Gosford Training School. It shows three rows of steel-framed beds and bed-side dressers in a long, high-ceilinged hall.



Child Welfare Farm Home for Boys, Gosford - the home

Description: This is a photograph of Gosford Training School. It shows the farmyard and farm buildings in the foreground, with training school buildings behind them. The school is surrounded by bushland.

More info

Chronology

- Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys (1894 - c. 1908)
 - Brush Farm Reformatory (1908 - 1912)
 - Gosford Farm Home for Boys (1911 - 1923)

- **Gosford Training School (1923 – 1945)**
 - Mount Penang Training School for Boys (1946 - 1987)
 - Mount Penang Detention Centre (1988 - 1991)
 - Mt Penang Juvenile Justice Centre (1991 - 1999)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)
Date: 1923 - 1945

Related Glossary Terms

- [Juvenile Delinquency \(1850s - 1990s\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Mittagong Farm Home for Boys \(1906 - 1947\)](#)
Boys were sometimes transferred from Mittagong Farm Home to Gosford Training School if they offended at the Farm Home, or the Farm Home was overcrowded.
- [Riverina Welfare Farm for Boys, Yanco \(1928 - 1942\)](#)
Boys from Gosford Training School were sent to Yanco, and staff also transferred between the two institutions.
- [Farm Home for Boys, Narara \(1927 - 1934\)](#)
Farm Home for Boys, Narara was an annexe of Gosford Training School.
Date: 1927 - 1934

Resources

- Central Coast Regional Development Corporation, [History of Mt Penang Parklands](#), No date
- [No More Yancos](#), Truth, 29 April 1934
- Tenison Woods, Mary, *State and the Child*, Sydney Morning Herald, 2 February 1944

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/gosford-training-school/>