

# Aborigines Inland Mission

1905 – 1998

**Other Names:** • AIM

## Details

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The Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM) was an Evangelical Baptist missionary organisation established by Retta Dixon in 1905. The AIM and its staff ran the St Clair Mission, the Singleton Home, the Native Workers' Training College and the Singleton Bible Training Institute in New South Wales, as well as the Phillip Creek Mission and the Retta Dixon Home in the Northern Territory. AIM also had administration agencies in Queensland, South Australia, and briefly in Western Australia, which approved the placement of AIM missionaries in those states. Aboriginal assistants to AIM missionaries were employed where possible. The AIM had two periodical publications, *Our AIM* and *The Australian Evangel*. In 1998 the Aborigines Inland Mission changed its name to Australian Indigenous Ministries.

Prior to founding the Aborigines Inland Mission in 1905, Retta Dixon had been associated with the Christian Endeavourer Fellowship and New South Wales Aborigines Mission (which later became the Australian Aborigines' Mission) at La Perouse, Sydney. In around 1893 she moved to St Clair Mission and later, with the support of her Singleton Committee, took over the Mission and set up the Singleton Home in 'Glasgow Place', George Street. Retta Dixon and her husband were superintendent and matron of the Singleton Home until 1910, when they returned to Sydney.

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* (1994), AIM missionaries commenced their activities in New South Wales at St Clair and Redbournebury (near Singleton) and Karuah (Port Stephens). The first annual AIM convention and first publication of the journal *Our AIM* occurred in 1907. By this time the organisation had missionaries in New South Wales at Yass, Brungle, Warangesda, Moonahcullah, Cummeragunja and Walcha.

From its beginnings in New South Wales the Aborigines Inland Mission spread across the country. In 1907 the decision was made to expand the AIM's work into Western Australia, and in 1908 the AIM took over the running of Welshpool Reserve (also known as Maamba or Cannington Reserve), which had been established by the government in 1902. Although the AIM planned to set up a Home for Aboriginal children on the reserve, this did not occur, and AIM withdrew from Western Australia in 1909. The AIM continued its expansion across New South Wales and, from 1911, into Queensland, where they established a base at Herberton. Over the next three decades the AIM extended work to almost every Aboriginal settlement in NSW as well as to Gayndah, Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island, Normanton, Stradbroke Island, Ravenshoe and Cooktown in Queensland, and at Port Augusta and Tarcoola in South Australia. The AIM began work in the Northern Territory in the 1930s, establishing mission premises in Darwin and Tennant Creek. From the mid-1940s it ran the Retta Dixon Home at Bagot Reserve, and had missionaries staffing the Phillip Creek Native Settlement until 1952.

In 1998 the name of the Aborigines inland Mission was changed to Australian Indigenous Ministries.

## Gallery



**Bible Training Institute, Singleton, 1950?**



**Bible Training Institute, Singleton, late 1960s**



**[BTI] Singleton, interior [showing two students cleaning the banister]**

**Description:** This image shows two students cleaning inside the Aborigines Inland Mission Bible Training College. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



**Sunday school scholars, teachers, missionaries. Cherbourg AIM Church [Singleton Home]**

**Description:** This image from the Australian Indigenous Ministries pictorial collection 1908 to circa 1960s is described by *History of Aboriginal Sydney* as being of the Singleton Aboriginal Girls' Home.



**21. Group of St Clair Aborigines, near Singleton NSW. First AIM station. c. 1903.**

**Description:** This image is included within the series 'Series 03 Box 6: Australian Indigenous Ministries pictorial material : various historical photographs, ca. 1860-1909'.

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **Aborigines Inland Mission (1905 – 1998)**
  - Australian Indigenous Ministries (1998 - current)

### Related Entries

#### Ran

- [St Clair Aboriginal Mission \(1893 - 1923\)](#)
- [Rehoboth \(1924 - 1925?\)](#)
- [Retta Dixon Home \(1946 - 1982\)](#)

- [Native Workers' Training College \(1938 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aborigines Inland Mission Bible Training College \(1953 - 1973\)](#)
- [Singleton Home \(1905 - 1910\)](#)
- [Singleton Aboriginal Children's Home \(1910 - 1920\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Warangesda Dormitory \(1893 - 1912\)](#)  
The AIM ministered to Warangesda Mission
- [Phillip Creek Native Settlement \(1945 - 1956\)](#)  
Missionaries from the Aborigines Inland Mission staffed the Phillip Creek Native Settlement  
Date: 1945 - 1952
- [Australian Aborigines' Mission \(c. 1894 - 1929\)](#)  
The Australian Aborigines' Mission and the Aborigines' Inland Mission made an unsuccessful attempt to merge.
- [Brewarrina Aboriginal Station Dormitory \(c. 1897 - c. 1940\)](#)  
The AIM ministered to Brewarrina

## Resources

- Aborigines Inland Mission, [The Australian Evangel](#), 1929 - 1961
- 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
- Miller, James, [Koori, a will to win](#), 1985
- Djenidi, Valerie, [State and Church Involvement in Aboriginal Reserves, Missions and Stations in New South Wales, 1900-1975 and a translation into French of Custodians of the Soil](#), 2008
- [Long, Retta Jane \(1878 - 1956\)](#), The Australian Women's Register, 2012

## Records

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### Records

- [Collection 01: Australian Indigenous Ministries papers and pictorial material, 1903-1998 \(1903 - 1998\)](#)
  - [Bartrop family slides relating to the Aborigines Inland Mission, 1909-1930s, 1945-1950, 1971 \(1909 - 1971\)](#)
  - [Australian Indigenous Ministries Aggregated Collection of Records and Pictorial Material, 1903-2003 \(1903 - 2003\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/aborigines-inland-mission/>