

Westbrook Reformatory for Boys

5 May 1900 – 30 October 1919

Details

The Westbrook Reformatory for Boys was established at Westbrook, 15 kilometres south west of Toowoomba. It was run by the government. Boys under the age of 18, who were confined by the Children's Court, were sent to the Westbrook Reformatory for Boys. Boys from the Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys were moved to Westbrook in 1900 and it was renamed the Westbrook Reformatory for Boys. In 1919 it became known as the Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook.

Industrial and reformatory schools were established for the purpose of segregating neglected and convicted juveniles from adult prisoners.

Boys under the age of 18 years were sentenced to a term of confinement at the reformatory by Children's Courts. It appears that some boys were transferred to orphanages before the expiration of their sentences. Parents of neglected and convicted inmates were required to contribute financially to the maintenance of their sons whilst in the reformatory.

The first Superintendent of the Westbrook Reformatory for Boys was Walter Richmond, a former school teacher. In 1910 Richmond wrote a report that describes life for the boys at Westbrook Reformatory. A copy of this document can be accessed under the 'Photos' heading at the bottom of this page.

In 1916 Thomas Jones replaced Walter Richmond as Superintendent of the reformatory. He came from the State Farm at Warren, near Rockhampton where he had spent the previous nine years. Within twelve months of Jones taking over the Westbrook Reformatory for Boys, the place was almost self-contained.

The boys carried out much of the work on the farm. This included producing the timberwork for fences, laying concrete and establishing gardens. Each boy had his own garden plot in which he was free to grow flowers and vegetables which he could sell. The money from these sales was credited to a bank account in the boy's name.

Other flower and vegetable plots were tended by the boys and sales of the produce helped support the institution. On a Saturday afternoon, the general public visited the farm in order to purchase any produce left after the weekly supply to the reformatory.

Jones also established an orchard and dairy. The cattle raised on the farm won many prizes at the yearly shows. Mr T R Macmillan succeeded Jones as Superintendent.

The farm practices undertaken at the Westbrook Reformatory continued to be carried out until its closure in 1994.

Management of the institution was transferred to the State Children Department following the passing of the *State Children Act* in 1911.

Gallery



Manager's residence surrounded by hedges at the Westbrook State Farm

Description: The library catalogue includes this description: Westbrook State Farm situated west of Toowoomba.



Ploughing at Westbrook State Farm, 1896

Description: This description was supplied with the photograph and included in the library catalogue: Westbrook State farm, Henry A. Tardent, was the founder and first manager. Around the turn of the century half of the State Farm was used for a boy's reformatory and in about 1910 - 1919, the State Farm became solely a reformatory for boys.



Boys exercising, Westbrook Reformatory for Boys



Exercise, Westbrook Reformatory for Boys



The Westbrook Home for Boys

Description: This photo was contributed to the article on abuse at Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook and Westbrook Reformatory for Boys. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.

More info

Chronology

- Reformatory School for Boys - Hulk Proserpine (15 March 1871 - 16 February 1881)
 - Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton (16 February 1881 - 1 October 1899)
 - Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys (1 October 1899 - 5 May 1900)
- **Westbrook Reformatory for Boys (5 May 1900 – 30 October 1919)**
 - Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook (30 October 1919 - 26 May 1966)
 - Westbrook Training Centre (26 May 1966 - 1987)
 - Westbrook Youth Centre (1987 - 1993)
 - Westbrook Youth Detention Centre (1993 - 30 June 1994)
 - Darling Downs Correctional Centre (1994 - 2012)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Home Secretary's Office, State Children Department, State Government of Queensland \(1 December 1911 - 5 December 1935\)](#)
Date: 1911 - 1919
- [Public Instruction Department, Orphanages Branch, State Government of Queensland \(2 October 1879 - 1 December 1911\)](#)
Date: 1900 - 1911

Related Legislation

- [Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act 1865, Queensland \(1865 - 1911\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Department of Justice and Attorney General \(2012 - current\)](#)
The Department of Justice and Attorney General controls access to the records of the Westbrook Reformatory for Boys.

Resources

- Matthews, Bernie, [Reap as you sow](#), Griffith Review: Unintended Consequences, May 2007
- Queensland. Dept of Children's Services, [Centenary of care for children 1879-1979](#), 1979
- Cummings, Pip, [Beaten but not bowed](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 2006
- Fletcher, Al, *Brutal: surviving Westbrook Boys' Home/ Al 'Crow' Fletcher's story as told to Cheryl Jorgensen*, 2006
- Fletcher, Alfred, *The 'brook/ Alfred (Crow) Fletcher's story as told to Cheryl Jorgensen*, 2004
- *Westbrook/ History of the centre*, Chronicle, 6 July 1994
- [Westbrook Reformatory](#), Brisbane Courier, 31 October 1919
- [The Westbrook Reformatory](#), Brisbane Courier, 17 October 1916
- [Jottings by the Way](#), Queenslander, 10 June 1899
- [Westbrook Reformatory for Boys](#), Warwick Examiner and Times, 8 January 1919
- [Turned Adrift: Superintendent of Westbrook Reformatory](#), Brisbane Courier, 15 July 1916
- [Research Guide to orphanage and children's home records at Queensland State Archives](#), Queensland State Archives website, February 2022

Other Resources

Title: General Report on Condition and Progress of the Westbrook Reformatory for Boys, 1910
Type: Image
Date: 1910
[Details](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Institution Files, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1871 - c. 2001\)](#)
- [Administrative Records, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1865 - 2001\)](#)
- [Visiting Justice's Minute Book, Reformatory School for Boys - 'Proserpine' Hulk and Reformatory Schools for Boys - Lytton, Diamantina, Westbrook \(16 September 1874 - 28 February 1916\)](#)
- [Discharge Register, Reformatory School for Boys - Hulk Proserpine, Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys and Westbrook Reformatory for Boys \(14 March 1872 - 6 September 1906\)](#)

- [Visiting Medical Officers' Journals - Westbrook \(18 February 1873 - 19 April 1990\)](#)
 - [Visitors' Books - Westbrook \(18 February 1873 - 9 July 1984\)](#)
 - [General Correspondence, Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys, Westbrook Reformatory for Boys and Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook \(26 June 1885 - 29 November 1941\)](#)
 - [History Papers - Westbrook \(22 February 1892 - 31 December 1992\)](#)
 - [Case History Cards \(Westbrook Reformatory\) \(5 May 1900 - 30 June 1994\)](#)
 - [Jones Family Cutting Book \(6 September 1916 - 10 July 1947\)](#)
 - [Admission Registers, Reformatory School for Boys - Hulk *Proserpine*, Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys and Westbrook Reformatory for Boys. \(16 March 1871 - 6 September 1906\)](#)
 - [School Inspectors' Reports \(1874 - 1991\)](#)
 - [Heritage photographs of Queensland children's homes, buildings and people \(1848 - 1979\)](#)
 - [Special Batches \[Correspondence Files of the Colonial Secretary's Office and Health Departments\] \(1852 - 1975\)](#)
 - [Case Files, Reformatory School for Boys - Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys, Westbrook Reformatory for Boys, and Farm Home for Boys \(1 March 1890 - 20 August 1953\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/westbrook-reformatory-for-boys/>