

La Grange Mission

1955 – 1984

Details

La Grange Mission, at La Grange Bay south of Broome, was established in 1955 when the La Grange Bay Ration Depot was transferred to the Pious Society of Missions (Pallottines). A school was established by the Pallottines in 1957, and until 1963 children at La Grange remained guardians of the Commissioner of Native Welfare. In 1968 there were more than 100 children under 16 years old. In 1984 La Grange Mission became the Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community La Grange Inc and its role in institutional out-of-home care ceased.

La Grange Mission, 200 kilometres south of Broome, was established on 1 January 1955 when the La Grange Bay Ration Depot was transferred from the Department of Native Welfare to the Pious Society of Missions (Pallottines) for a mission. It was intended to train and employ Aboriginal youth and adults on a self-sustaining station.

In 1957, the Sisters of St John of God came to La Grange to teach at the school and from 1959, lay missionaries also helped in the school, hospital and on the mission generally. In 1960 the school was handed over to the Education Department.

Children at La Grange were under the guardianship of the Commissioner of Native Welfare until 1963.

In 1968 there were 250 people at the mission, with around half of them under 16 years old.

The Department for Community Welfare (DCW) took over the child welfare responsibilities of the Department of Native Welfare in 1972 and the Annual Reports of the DCW show that a boys' hostel was built in 1974, and there were renovations to the recreation centre, water supply and other facilities in the following years.

By 1982, the La Grange Aboriginal community was moving towards independence and in 1984 the Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community Inc took control.

Gallery



La Grange Mission, W.A. October 1979 [picture]

Description: National Library of Australia summary: "Inappropriate housing and metal play equipment which became hot in the sun and unsuitable for use at La Grange Mission."



La Grange Mission, Bidyadanga Aboriginal community, W.A. October 1979 [picture]



A big photo album: the archive of the Sisters of St John of God

Description: 'A big photo album: the archive of the Sisters of St John of God' is an online news item from *ABC Kimberley*. It shows pictures of Aboriginal children and adults at communities in the Kimberley, and is about the collection of 34,000 photographs held by the Sisters of St John of God at the Heritage Centre in Broome, Western Australia.

More info

Chronology

- La Grange Bay Relief Station (1912 - 1918)
 - La Grange Bay Feeding Depot (1918 - 1949)
 - La Grange Bay Ration Depot (1950 - 1954)
- **La Grange Mission (1955 – 1984)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Pallottines \(Society of the Catholic Apostolates\) \(1901 - current\)](#)

Related Glossary Terms

- [Commissioner of Native Welfare \(WA\) \(1954 - 1972\)](#)

The Commissioner of Native Welfare was the legal guardian of children at La Grange Mission until 1963 when he could regulate the 'care' of Aboriginal children.

Date: 1954 - 1972

Related Organisations

- [Pallottine Mission Centre \(1955 - 1991\)](#)
Children were sent from La Grange Mission to the Pallottine Mission Centre.
Date: 1976 - 1984
- [Sisters of St John of God \(1895 - current\)](#)
The Sisters of St John of God worked at La Grange Mission.
Date: 1957 - 1960?
- [Department for Community Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1972 - 1985\)](#)

Resources

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, [Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families](#), 1997
- [Society of the Catholic Apostolate \(Pallottine Fathers and Brothers\)](#), No date
- Heritage Council of Western Australia, [St John of God Convent \(fmr\), Broome](#), inHerit: our heritage places, 8 February 2015. *Relevance:* There is some history of the Sisters of St John of God's activities in the Kimberleys in the 'Register of Heritage Places' (pp.4-10) including work at Beagle Bay, Bidyadanga and Wirrumanu Missions and the Holy Child Orphanage

Records

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

Records

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
 - [Pallottines, Records \(1895? - 1993?\)](#)
 - [Sisters of St John of God, Kimberley, Records \(1895 - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
 - [Administration Files - Northern District Office \[N.D.G Sequence\] \(1950 - 1974\)](#)
 - [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
 - [Files - Aborigines Departments \(1 January 1926 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
 - [Files - Departmental \[Education Department\] \(1 January 1885 - 31 December 2000\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/la-grange-mission/>