

La Grange Bay Ration Depot

1950 – 1954

- Other Names:**
- La Grange Bay Native Depot
 - La Grange Bay Native Reserve
 - La Grange Bay Depot
 - La Grange Bay Native Settlement
 - La Grange Bay Native Ration Depot

Details

La Grange Bay Ration Depot was the new name given by the Chief Protector of Aborigines from 1950 to what had been known as the La Grange Bay Feeding Depot. From that time a more established camp was developed for over 100 Aboriginal people, including children. By 1951 a school for around 11 children had been established by a new superintendent and his wife, and by 1952 two huts were built to house school boys. In 1954 the La Grange Bay Ration Depot was taken over by the Pious Society of Missions (the Pallottines Order of the Roman Catholic Church) and became the La Grange Bay Mission.

There was an Acting Officer-in-Charge at the La Grange Bay Ration Depot by June 1950, according to the Chief Protector's annual report for that year (p.22). A 'native camp and kitchen' which were built from 'local timber' with a 'roof part iron and bush'. The report also mentions that the 'local natives' were moved from their camp 'near the Post Office to a site approximately two hundred yards west' of the officer's homestead, and 'a number of solidly built camps with bush roofs' were 'erected for their use'. Across the road, a 'similar camp' was being built for the Aboriginal people who were transferred from Udialla Station. There were reportedly no 'employable natives' at the depot. A total of 110 people described as 'aged, children and primitive natives' were resident at the depot in June 1950. The depot was referred to as the 'La Grange Native Depot' elsewhere (p.35) in the report.

The La Grange Bay Ration Depot was described in the annual report for 1951. A new Superintendent 'and his wife', Mr W. and Mrs de Grys arrived in November 1950. The de Grys' started a school for children and the Commissioner for Native Affairs reported (p.17) that 'eleven boys and two girls attend the school and are very keen'. The Commissioner said (p.36) that both Mr and Mrs de Grys taught in the school, which was 'for the children of the nomads'. Eighty-nine 'inmates' were reported (p.17) at the depot in June 1951, one baby was born there during the year and, according to the annual report, 'two children suffering from malnutrition were cared for' and had 'fully recovered'. More huts were built and the report (p.17) said that the depot, 'set up for the relief of desert natives, is gradually becoming a centre for health and education'. A nursing sister was also stationed at La Grange, reportedly (p.36) 'under the direction of the local District Medical Officer', communicating 'by means of pedal wireless and telephone'. The depot was referred to as the 'La Grange Bay Native Depot' elsewhere (p.41) in the report.

The first mention of separate quarters for children occurred in the June 1952 annual report of the Commissioner for Native Affairs (p.23) when two 'huts for the school boys' were included in a list of new buildings at the La Grange Bay Ration Depot. More signs of permanent settlement at the depot included a 'laundry and two shower rooms for the natives...a new sickroom' and the conversion of the 'old surgery' into 'a recreation and night class room'. The 'kindergarten school' had 18 pupils (five more than the previous year) and there were two babies born at the depot. The depot was referred to as the 'La Grange Bay Native Reserve' (p.6), the 'La Grange Bay Native Depot' (p.38) and the 'La Grange Native Ration Depot' (p.40) elsewhere in the report.

In the 1953 annual report (p.26), the Commissioner for Native Affairs recorded 12 children at the 'school conducted by Mrs. De Grys' at the 'La Grange Depot'. The depot was referred to as the 'La Grange Native Depot' elsewhere (p.30) in the report.

The 1954 annual report of the Commissioner for Native Affairs (p.35) gave a brief overview of the 'La Grange Native Settlement': the current population was around 80 'inmates', including 'about 20' children, and the school 'functioned at times during the year'. The settlement was referred to as the 'La Grange Native Depot' elsewhere (pp.4, 59) in the report.

According to the annual report of the Commissioner of Native Welfare in 1955 (p.50) the government ceased running the depot at La Grange when it was 'taken over by the Pallottine Order of the Roman Catholic Church'. From 1 January 1955, after the 'La Grange Ration Depot' was 'handed over' (p.52), it became known as La Grange Mission.

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

- [Department of Native Affairs, State of Western Australia \(1936 - 1954\)](#)

Related Concepts

- [Aboriginal Protection in Western Australia \(c. 1832 - c. 1972\)](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
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