

# in *living* memory



**EXHIBITION CATALOGUE**  
STATE RECORDS GALLERY + NSW TOUR

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## State Records Gallery

*In Living Memory* features images from a series of 1000 black and white photographs from the official records of the former NSW Aborigines Welfare Board, from 1919 to 1966. Most of the photographs were taken to document the work of the Board and to promote its policies. *In Living Memory* also includes contemporary images taken by Indigenous photographer Mervyn Bishop during the exhibition consultation process.

A special touring version of the exhibition is travelling to 17 venues around New South Wales, until October 2010. The exhibition has been invited to towns and cities throughout the state for display in Aboriginal cultural and community centres and regional art galleries, museums and libraries.

Some Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities may be distressed by seeing the name or image of a community member who has passed away

**Cover images:** **top left:** Dawn Whaddy (Brown), Summercloud Bay, 2007; Photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission **bottom left:** AWB photograph, original caption: 'Ration Store — Jervis Bay'; Reproduced in consultation with the Wreck Bay community **centre:** AWB wedding photograph of Emma Downey & Billy Richardson, with flower girls Dorrie & Lulu Simpson, New Angledool, 1925; Reproduced with permission of Mervyn Bishop, Sydney; Rita Gibbs, Kelso; Marjorie R Little, Sydney; Iris Scanlan, Cooroy **top right:** AWB photograph, Pilliga Mission, 1933; Reproduced with permission of members of the Pilliga community **bottom right:** David Nicholls, Noel Hames & Lionel Adams, Pilliga Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2006; Photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission

**State Records Gallery  
Sydney Records Centre  
2 Globe Street (off George Street)  
The Rocks**

**FREE ENTRY**

**9am – 5pm, Mon – Fri  
10am – 4pm, Sat  
Closed public holidays**

**Exhibition Talks & Tours are available  
for small groups of 5 to 20 people.  
Call (02) 8247 8660 for enquiries  
and bookings**

[www.records.nsw.gov.au](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au)

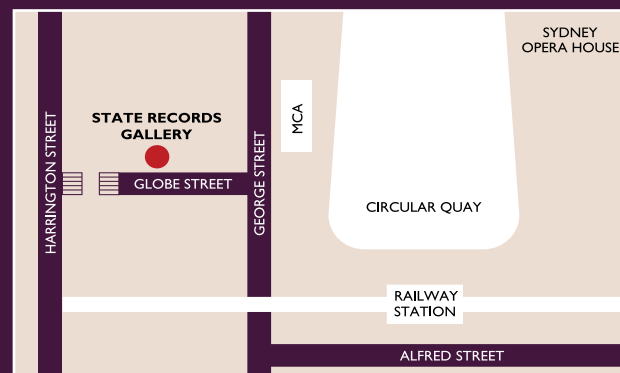


PHOTO: BRETT BOARDMAN



↑ View of exhibition at  
State Records Gallery  
in The Rocks

# in *living* memory

## NSW tour

Surviving Photographs from the Records of the NSW  
Aborigines Welfare Board, from 1919 to 1966

Contemporary photographs of Elders, families  
& communities by Mervyn Bishop

**Nowra** Shoalhaven City Arts Centre  
16 May – 11 June 2008

**Moree** Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre  
Moree Community Library  
26 June – 31 July 2008

**Walgett** Dharriwaa Elders Group Centre  
9-28 August 2008

**Brewarrina** Brewarrina Aboriginal & Cultural Museum  
4 September – 4 October 2008

**Quirindi** Social & Emotional Wellbeing Centre  
14 October – 14 November 2008

**Armidale** Armidale Aboriginal Cultural Centre  
& Keeping Place  
22 November 2008 – 30 January 2009

**Ballina** Northern Rivers Community Gallery  
5 February – 1 March 2009

**Kempsey** Kempsey Shire Library  
12 March – 2 April 2009

**Penrith** Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest  
11 April – 28 June 2009

**Hurstville** St George Regional Museum  
9 July – 24 September 2009

**Newcastle** University Gallery, University of Newcastle  
30 September – 7 November 2009

**Moruya** Mechanics Institute  
1-16 December 2009

**Bega** Bega Valley Regional Gallery  
15 January – 13 February 2010

**Wagga Wagga** Museum of the Riverina  
6 March – 18 April 2010

**Cootamundra** Cootamundra Library  
22 April – 6 May 2010

**Dubbo** Western Plains Cultural Centre  
15 May – 25 July 2010

**Broken Hill** Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery-  
10 September – 17 October 2010

Check [www.records.nsw.gov.au](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au)  
for most up-to-date tour information

Ring (02) 8247 8660 for enquiries



PHOTO: MERVYN BISHOP



This project has been assisted by the Australian  
Government through the Australia Council for  
the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body

← In Living Memory exhibition team:  
Mervyn Bishop, Richard Aldridge, Susan Charlton,  
Sue Newman & Kirsten Thorpe, In Living Memory  
NSW Tour, Nowra, 2008





← AWB studio portrait of Linda Fernando, 1920s;  
Reproduced with permission of George Rose, Walgett

In June 1977, the official records of the former New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board were transferred to the care of State Records, the NSW Government archives institution. Along with the Board's correspondence, reports and ledgers, there were approximately 1000 loosely stored black and white photographs of Aboriginal people taken between 1919 and 1966. These images are the surviving photographic records of the NSW Aborigines Welfare Board

# Official Records / Personal Lives

The Aborigines Welfare Board photographs do not provide a complete picture of Indigenous life from the 1920s to the 1960s. Some people and places are represented by many photographs; others by a few or none at all. However, the process of meeting with Indigenous communities to research, develop and present the exhibition has begun to bring new life to those historical records that have survived.

Although little contextual information accompanied the photographs on their arrival at State Records in 1977, it is clear that most were taken to document the work of the Aborigines Welfare Board and to promote its policies. The collection includes images of children from the bush visiting Sydney for annual summer camps; wedding photos of couples getting married on reserves and stations throughout Western NSW; and studio portraits of young Aboriginal women.

Knowing today that most of these women were taken as girls from their families and trained at Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Home as domestic servants leads us to wonder about the true personal experience of all the people captured in the official public images. Other photographs more clearly reveal the poverty and hardship of children's homes; the bleakness of official housing and education; and the hard labour for men and boys working on the land.

And yet, there is also evidence of pride, resilience and joy, despite the intrusion of the authorities in every aspect of Aboriginal people's lives. Some photographs with personal inscriptions were sent by young women back to the matrons of homes they had grown up in. Other photos were submitted by the readers of *Dawn* magazine (published by the Board between 1952 and 1969), with hope they might be published and seen by lost relatives.

## Family, Community, Culture

Much of the detail we do know about the images comes from personal and official inscriptions which appear on the reverse sides of about half of the photos; and from links that have been made since with other Aborigines Welfare Board records. Important information is also coming from the memories and experiences of people pictured in the photos or from the confirmation of their families and communities. All of this valuable detail is going into a photographic database, which enables visitors to the exhibition to search for individuals, places and institutions pictured in the images.

Though the policies of successive governments aimed to dismantle Aboriginal culture, Indigenous people have always found ways to reunite with family and community and to create contemporary links to their culture. Today the Board's written records and photographs are valuable for the leads and clues they may provide to help in this process.



↑ Aboriginal Affairs NSW Archives Officer Richard Aldridge and Pilliga Elder Noel Hames, Pilliga, 2006, photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission

## Consent, Advice, Support

Decades after the photographs were taken, they still produce mixed emotions for Indigenous viewers — from the delight of seeing rare evidence of community and culture to the sad reminder of loss and separation. Because of these sensitivities, the entire exhibition process involves the consent, advice and support of many strands of the Indigenous community, including Aboriginal Affairs NSW for guidance and protocols; an advisory group for ongoing input and support; and the approval and contribution of individuals and communities represented in the Board's photos.

Whilst all of the photographs are open to the public, permission is required to tell individual stories or to highlight the photos in promotional materials and the media. The exhibition team has met with Elders, families and communities around NSW to gain approvals from people pictured in the photos, their oldest surviving relative or representatives of their community.

The exhibition team has included Kirsten Thorpe, a Worimi woman and former Archivist – Aboriginal Liaison at State Records; Sue Newman, Project Officer – Aboriginal Liaison, a Dungatti woman who assists Indigenous people to research their family records; Rose Bishop, Researcher — Aboriginal Liaison, who works for the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme; and Creative Producer Susan Charlton, who curates State Records' exhibition program.

Indigenous photographer Mervyn Bishop, who was part of the original exhibition team, continues to be involved in the travelling version. Merv's photos of Elders and community members have been an important element of the exhibition, providing an interesting counterpoint to the Board's official photos.

Members of the Exhibition Advisory Group have included Lola Edwards, representing Cootamundra Girls' Home; Cec Bowden and Ray Minniecon, representing Kinchela Boys' Home; Christine Blakeney and Bill Hipkin,



↑ Exhibition team meet with Moree community, launch of Indigenous Unit, Northern Regional Library, Moree, 2006, photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission

representing Bomaderry Children's Home; Glendra Stubbs from Link-Up; Keith Munro from the Museum of Contemporary Art; Melissa Jackson and Ronald Briggs from the State Library of NSW; and Richard Aldridge from the Aboriginal Affairs NSW. New members from 2010 include Lyall Dennison (Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme), Pauline Whitton (Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation, Koori Radio) and James Wilson-Miller (Powerhouse Museum).

## Welcome

*In Living Memory* is a respectful exhibition experience that honours the Aborigines Welfare Board photographs as a record of the past that is still very much alive today. State Records and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs welcome you all to visit *In Living Memory*.



State Records

The *In Living Memory* exhibition catalogue was originally published as part of *Vital Signs* magazine, issue #9, September 2009. This edition published March 2010

State Records is a statutory authority of the NSW State Government. The archives operations of State Records are principally funded by the State Government. *Vital Signs* and this exhibition catalogue are produced with the financial support of the Government Records Repository (State Records' commercial business unit)

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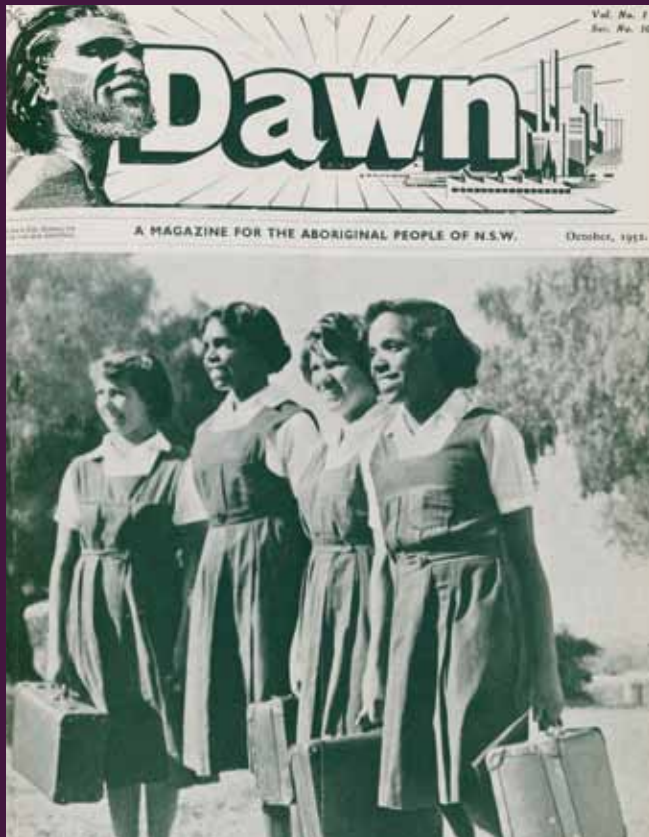
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Western Sydney Records Centre, 143 O'Connell Street, Kingswood  
Reading room opening hours:  
9.00 am – 5.00 pm Mon – Fri  
10.00 am – 4.00 pm Sat  
closed public holidays

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↑ Dawn, May 1960, front cover: Aborigines Welfare Board photograph of George Hart  
 ← Dawn, October 1952, front cover: Aborigines Welfare Board photograph of girls from Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Home  
 Dawn photographs reproduced with permission of State Library of NSW in consultation with Aboriginal Affairs NSW

## DAWN MAGAZINE

*Dawn* was the public face of the Aborigines Welfare Board from 1952 to 1969. Some of the photographs that were taken for the pages of the magazine have survived in the Board's records

*Dawn* magazine's editorials and articles argued the case for the Board's policies. And the photo pictorials and 'Handy Hints' columns conveyed an idealised view of how these policies affected everyday Aboriginal life.

Today, we can read the caption for the front cover image of the October 1952 issue and recognise the political purpose of the magazine's promotional copy:

'These happy Cootamundra girls, spick and span in their neat school uniforms, await the bus to take them into Cootamundra High School. These women of tomorrow are being given a training that will make life easier and sweeter for them and help their eventual assimilation into the white community.'

Aboriginal people also found ways of making *Dawn* work for them, as a kind of underground communication system. Many people remember submitting their photo to the 'Roving Cameraman'

pages, so that their family and community could find out where they were, as the Board moved them from town to town and suburb to suburb.

Digital copies of *Dawn* magazine can be seen at the AIATSIS website:  
[www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/online\\_exhibitions/dawn\\_sensitivity](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/online_exhibitions/dawn_sensitivity)

*Dawn* pages reproduced from copies of *Dawn* magazine held by the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales ref: Q572.99106/2

- Roy Barker holding his father's box Brownie camera, Lightning Ridge, 2006, photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission  
 ↓ AWB wedding photograph of James (Jimmie) Barker & Evelyn Wighton, with Billie Barker, Brewarrina Mission, 1925, Reproduced with permission of Roy Barker, Lightning Ridge



## ANGLEDPOOL — BREWARRINA — WALGETT

In March 2006 the exhibition team visited Far West New South Wales to meet local Elders with family connections to people who appear in the Aborigines Welfare Board photograph collection

We met George Fernando and Dulcie Dennis who were children when the Board took their photograph at Gingie Aboriginal Reserve in Walgett in the 1930s. And George Rose, co-founder of the Dharriwaa Elders Group, whose mother Linda Fernando and aunt Ida Fernando were photographed whilst in domestic service in the 1920s. And Roy Barker, whose parents' photo is one of several wedding portraits taken at Brewarrina and Angledool reserves in 1925. Margaret Rose, Eileen Peters and Lola Dennis also have wedding photos of their parents in the collection.

Indigenous photographer Mervyn Bishop, who grew up in Brewarrina, and seems to know everyone from Sydney to the Queensland border and beyond, led the exhibition team on the journey to Dubbo, Walgett, Brewarrina, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge. He introduced us to Elders and other townsfolk he had known since he was a child and pointed out significant places along the way that we never would have noticed with our own eyes.

His own family is represented in the Aborigines Welfare Board photographs in the portrait of his grandmother Emma Downey marrying Billy Richardson, which has become one of the images representing the exhibition. Merv's family has a handtinted copy of the same photograph in their collection.

Merv also took photographs along the way that have become an important feature of the exhibition. His contemporary personal photographs for the exhibition will bring new light to images of people and places previously documented in the Board's official record.



→ Noeline Briggs-Smith & Donna Briggs assist young family history researcher & his grandmother with his school project, Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre, Moree, 2006, photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission

↓ AWB photograph of governor's visit to Moree, 1954; Maynee Saunders on veranda (2nd from left); Reproduced in consultation with the Moree community



## ~ MOREE

The town of Moree has an important place in contemporary Indigenous history, most memorably for the Freedom Ride initiated by Aboriginal activist Charles Perkins that came to town in 1965 and challenged the colour bar that segregated the community

However, there are only a few photographs of Moree in the Aborigines Welfare Board records, and those that do exist document a completely different visit — the official 1954 visit of the then governor of New South Wales, Sir John Northcott. The Board photographs focus on the movements of the governor and his official party, and were published in the August 1954 issue of *Dawn* magazine. Sir John is at the centre of all the photos, whilst groups of Aboriginal children and some adults appear attentively, but anonymously, on the fringes.

When the exhibition team visited Moree in March 2006, they imagined the community might be disappointed in the small collection of photographs representing the town, and the fact that local Aboriginal people only appear on the periphery of the images. However, the community members delighted in identifying all the people they knew and remembered at the edge of the official photographs. In 1954 the photographs were important for documenting the governor; in 2006 they are also important for documenting the Indigenous community.

These photos are not new to Moree Aboriginal people. Other similar photographs already exist amongst the extraordinary collection of 10 000 photographs, lovingly collected and documented by Indigenous Librarian Noeline Briggs-Smith. The exhibition team's journey to Moree coincided with the launch of the Indigenous Unit which she manages at the Northern Regional Library. The local Aboriginal community has entrusted their photographs to the unit for care and preservation; research and publication; display and celebration.

Noeline Briggs-Smith has drawn from this collection to publish several books, including *Go the Rangs!*, photographs honouring the 30-year history of the Boomerang Rugby League club, which was launched in Moree in September 2006.

→ Clancy Hamilton, Noel Hames, Elaine Hames, David Nicholls, Barbara Rendell (Doolan), outside Pilliga Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2006, photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission



## ~ PILLIGA

The journey to the small town of Pilliga is taken on partly sealed roads from Narribri into the heart of the Pilliga Forest. The exhibition team made the trip to meet with Elders at the Pilliga Local Aboriginal Land Council to consult with them about the photographs of their community held in the Aborigines Welfare Board

The Elders had already seen most of the photos as there has been a lot of local research into the history of the old Pilliga Mission, and the land council office has photocopies of the Board photographs on the walls. The photos still spark a lot of interest every time they are seen and the Elders pored over the images with fascination and pleasure. They agreed as a group that the photographs of Pilliga Mission should be featured in the exhibition.

The mission was established in the late 1800s, when the Kamilaroi people were brought together and moved to the banks of Sandy Creek, just out of town. From the 1920s, the mission was run by a series of managers, who were also responsible for education. One manager, Bob Constable, who was a carpenter, saw the potential value of building a sawmill and used his carpentry skills to set up a timber works.

The Aborigines Welfare Board images show Aboriginal men during this period working at the mission sawmill and in the construction of buildings, including the mission

manager's house. The Board photographs generally focused on young women in domestic service, so the Pilliga photos are particularly important for being some of the few images in the collection of Aboriginal men at work.

When Pilliga Mission was finally closed in 1959, the old mission buildings were transported into town to become local housing. The Aboriginal community moved to a camp on the edge of town until Housing Commission homes were built in the 1960s.

↑ AWB photograph of the community at Pilliga Mission, 1933; Reproduced with permission of members of the Pilliga community  
Thought to be (man & child at front left) Hector Smith, Beatrice Welsh; (man & child at back) unknown; (man with hat) Bob Constable; (man to the right) Major Toomey; (4 women in front of Bob Constable & Major Toomey) Ella Toomey, Leila Clark, Melba Rooke, Thelma Walsh; (man showing eyes only) Dave Peckham; (3 women in front of Dave Peckham) Lena Toomey, Martha Boney, Liz Toomey; (boy at top & man) Cliff Constable, Army Toomey Jnr; (group of 4 women) Joyce Peckham, unknown, Mabel Peckham; Mrs Constable (4 boys in front) unknown; (2 men & child) Les Lang, Herbert Smith, Mary Doolan; (3 men in front) Sid Toomey, Harry Dangar, Harry Doolan





↑ AWB photograph of Ruby Williams, taken at her workplace in Strathfield, late 1920s  
Reproduced with permission of Brenda Nicholas, Coonabarabran; George William Leslie, Sydney; and Joan L Baker, Sydney

← AWB photograph of Ruby Williams, in domestic service to Mrs J Simpson, Strathfield, late 1920s  
Reproduced with permission of Brenda Nicholas, Coonabarabran; George William Leslie, Sydney; Joan L Baker, Sydney; and Alfred Leslie, Moree

## ~ RUBY WILLIAMS

Ruby Pearl Williams is very proudly remembered by her family. There are many photographs of Ruby in the Aborigines Welfare Board collection. Three photographs chart her childhood spent at Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Home. Firstly, as a young girl, probably at the time of her committal at the age of nine, and then later as she became a young woman

The Board collection also includes a series of photographs from the late 1920s of Ruby Williams at her place of work with Mrs J Simpson from Strathfield in suburban Sydney. These photos are quite unusual, because they show Ruby at work. Generally, the Board's photographs of girls in domestic service were studio portraits, and showed them in strangely glamorous poses and staged settings, even whilst in uniform. Very rarely are girls shown working, which was the real purpose of their training and apprenticeship. The photos of Ruby show her feeding chooks and turkeys and caring for pets in the backyard of her employers' home.

Ruby's family remember her as a very proud woman who still laid out a table with fine linen and cutlery, just as she had been taught at Cootamundra. She and her sister Sophie had been taken from their father as young girls

after their mother died. Unlike other parents, he was able to keep in touch by letter with the girls, because he was serving in the army. Sadly, he died before Ruby was released from service at the age of 18 years, so she never saw him again.

Ruby's daughter Brenda Nicholas (Leslie) remembers the story of Ruby being a servant to Dame Nellie Melba, when the opera singer visited a property near Cootamundra. Ruby made her debut in Quirindi in a dress given to her by Dame Nellie. Brenda is also pictured in the Aborigines Welfare Board photographs as a young girl attending the Board's summer camp at La Pouse. One of the photographs was reproduced as the front cover image to the February 1954 issue of *Dawn* magazine.

→ Ron (Reuben) Ardler identifying an AWB photograph of himself as a young boy fishing with Darcy Johnson (left) and his father Charlie Ardler (centre), original caption; 'Jervis Bay'; Photograph by Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission

↓ AWB photograph, original caption: 'Ration Store – Wreck Bay'; thought to be Desi Picalla (left) & Herbert Henry Chapman (right) Reproduced in consultation with the Wreck Bay community



## ~ WRECK BAY

The photographs of Jervis Bay and Wreck Bay in the Aborigines Welfare Board collection give us clues to the ways the local Indigenous community have attempted to navigate their lives between two cultures. Images of the community fishing in the bays for food are a link to traditional life and culture. Whereas the photo of the ration store with its tins of Sunshine powdered milk, big boxes of tea and bags of sugar and flour represents the dramatic impact of white settlement and Board control on traditional practices

Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay are located on a path that Aboriginal people have used for centuries to travel up and down the south coast of New South Wales for special occasions and ceremonies. Contemporary Aboriginal people were drawn to the bays for their fresh seafood and water, and established a small settlement at Summercloud Bay in the early 1900s, although they continued to remain highly mobile.

For most of the 20th century, the land was under the control of various Commonwealth and State authorities. Community histories record that:

'From the early 1950s, the Aboriginal Welfare Board stationed a manager in what was then known as the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Reserve. His status was virtually that of a

police officer, controlling visitors entering and leaving the reserve, issuing rations to residents and administering the day-to-day affairs of the community.'

In 1987, after decades of lobbying, Wreck Bay became the first community outside the Northern Territory or Queensland to have their traditional lands returned to them. In 1995, the Wreck Bay Community Council also obtained title over the Jervis Bay Commonwealth National Park and Botanic Gardens (the only Aboriginal-owned Botanic Gardens in Australia). The community named the land Booderee, which means 'plentiful bay' in the local Dhurga language. They now jointly manage the public park and gardens with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.



↓ AWB photograph of children doing exercises at Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home;  
Reproduced in consultation with representatives of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home



## ❧ BOMADERRY ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S HOME

The Bomaderry United Aboriginal Mission was one of the first institutions in NSW established for Aboriginal children removed from their families under the *Aborigines Protection Act* of 1909. The home was for babies and young children, who would then be moved on to Cootamundra Girls' Home or Kinchela Boys' Home as they grew older. Bomaderry was the beginning of institutionalised life for many of the Stolen Generations

The aim of Bomaderry was to 'replace original family ties with a new family unit, created according to a European Christian model'. To reinforce this model, the matrons and sisters tried to create a family atmosphere by encouraging close attachments between older girls and babies, infants and young children. At the same time, staff withheld knowledge of the children's own original family and of other Aboriginal people and their culture.

Confidential evidence given to the Bringing Them Home Commission by a former child at the home described life at Bomaderry. The children lived very secluded lives, away from outside influences. They didn't have visitors and never saw their families. Most didn't even know they had families. They thought the matrons were their mothers, and they were taught they were white. Their childhood world was changed overnight when they were moved on without any warning to Cootamundra or Kinchela.

At a reunion held at the old home site in 2001, many of the former children expressed their mixed feelings about the home. Although they believed Bomaderry was not as brutal as other state run homes, such as Kinchela, 'they could not forgive the policy of removal which had placed them there, nor could they forget the impact it had on their lives'.



← AWB photograph of Cootamundra girls in their confirmation dresses, early 1950s;  
Reproduced in consultation with representatives of Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Home

## ❧ COOTAMUNDRA ABORIGINAL GIRLS' HOME

The Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls was officially opened in 1913. The home was part of the policy of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines to remove young girls from the influence of their family and culture and train them as domestic servants

The girls led a regimented life that revolved around domestic duties, schoolwork and church. Some remember the home as a kind of prison or army training camp; others speak of their time at the home with some fondness, as it was the only home they knew.

Peter Read, in his powerful paper on 'The Stolen Generations', written in 1981, describes the role children's homes were designed to play in girls' lives:

'If they were young they were to go to the Home for Aboriginal Children at Bomaderry, near Nowra; when they were six or seven they were to be transferred to the Cootamundra Home for Aboriginal Girls. When they turned 14, they were to be sent to domestic service where they would remain until twenty-one.

Raised entirely by whites, they would learn to be ashamed of their colour, race and culture. In service they would naturally meet and marry white men and perhaps raise their children without ever mentioning the fact of their Aboriginal descent.'

Looking at photos of the home brings back strong emotions for Cootamundra girls, now aged from their fifties to their nineties. They recall the hard domestic labour, the forced smiles for the camera and the rituals of daily life in the home. They survived with the hope their parents would find a way to come and take them back home and from the friendships they made with the other girls. Cootamundra was finally closed as an Aboriginal girls' home in 1974, but its impact on the girls' lives continues to be felt by their families and communities today.

↓ AWB photograph of boys at Kinchela, 1940s;  
Reproduced in consultation with representatives of Kinchela Aboriginal Boys' Home



## ~ KINCHELA ABORIGINAL BOYS' HOME

Photographs of Kinchela Aboriginal Boys' Home show groups of boys lined up on parade for visiting officials, or working hard on the land — barefoot in winter and wearing short pants. Many boys remember standing in cow pats, just to get their feet warm. Others recall trying to escape, only to find that they had been separated from their families and communities for so long that they had nowhere to go, and, so had to return to the home

The boys were called 'inmates' in many of the official reports of the time. When they arrived at the home, their heads were shaved, any meagre possessions were taken away and they were officially referred to by number. Many of them suffered abuse.

In the biography of Aboriginal activist Burnum Burnum by Marlene Norst, she writes of his memories of the hardships of being a child at Kinchela:

'The boys got up at dawn to milk the 90 cows. Breakfast was at seven. If you did not finish your work, you got no food. Then there was housework to be done. The boys were rostered onto a particular job for one month at a time. Everything was done to the blow of a whistle.

School was conducted on the premises and lasted till 3pm, when boys had to go back to work on the farm. There was no time to play. The only official recreation time was from 7.30 to 8pm followed by lights out. No speaking was allowed after you went to bed.'

In their early teens, children from Kinchela and the other homes were sent out to work. The boys had been denied an adequate education and had few skills to equip them for anything but basic manual work. They were alone, separated from their communities and culture and the friendship of boys they had grown up with in the home. Most of the boys have spent the rest of their lives trying to recover from their time at Kinchela Boys' Home. Never a day goes by when they don't think about what happened to them and wonder why.



## ~ JULIA FENTON-COLLETT-MOORE

This photograph is from the collection of the Aborigines Welfare Board. It shows Julia Fenton-Collett-Moore, who began her life as Julia Fenton, the daughter of Eliza and Thomas Fenton. In 1928 she married Samuel Moore, but died a young woman in 1937. During the years her life was under the control of the Aborigines Protection Board, she was known as Julia Collett — the surname of her stepfather and many of her descendents. This photograph is reproduced with permission from the family of Julia Fenton-Collett-Moore.





Handtinted photograph of the wedding of Emma Downey & Billy Richardson, from the family collection of Mervyn Bishop; Reproduced with permission