

Aborigines Welfare Board

1957 – 1968

Details

The Aborigines Welfare Board was established by the Aborigines Act 1957. This Act abolished the Board of Protection (first formed in Victoria in 1860). The new Aborigines Welfare Board had the function 'to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of aborigines (full blood and half-caste) with a view to their assimilation in the general community'.

The Aborigines Welfare Board retained many of the far-reaching powers exercised by the previous Protection Board.

One significant change is that the Aborigines Welfare Board did not have specific powers in relation to children. Aboriginal children came under the provisions of the Children's Welfare Act 1954. Any removal of Aboriginal children from their family and community by the government from 1957 was done under the 'mainstream' child welfare legislation.

Peter Read writes that the assimilationist purpose of the Victorian Board led to Victorian Aboriginal children predominantly being adopted into white families, rather than being placed in institutions like children's homes, which by the 1950s had a policy of encouraging the maintenance of family relationships. Read argues, 'By definition, the Aborigines Welfare Board was established to assimilate Aborigines. By convention, adoption was the most permanent method of securing assimilation.'

The Aborigines Welfare Board was abolished in 1968 when the Victorian government established a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

More info

Chronology

- Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, State Government of Victoria (1901 - 1957)
- Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, Colony of Victoria (1869 - 1900)
 - **Aborigines Welfare Board (1957 – 1968)**

Related Entries

Ran

- [Lake Tyers Mission Station \(1861 - 1971\)](#)
Date: 1957 - 1958

Related Legislation

- [Children's Welfare Act 1954, Victoria \(1955 - 1959\)](#)
- [Aborigines Act 1957, Victoria \(1957 - 1959\)](#)

Resources

- [Ebenezer](#), Mission Voices: Missions and Reserves., 2004
- Manning, Corinne, [A Helping White Hand' : Assimilation, Welfare and Victoria's Transitional Aboriginal Housing Policy](#), Labour History, 2004
- [Aborigines Welfare Board](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance*: See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Aborigines Welfare Board

Records

Records

- [Records of Victorian Adoptions \(c. 1908 - current\)](#)
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