

Homefinder

1890 – 1920s

Details

Homefinders were people who worked to find places for children who needed foster parents or apprenticeships. The term was used in New South Wales, and was borrowed from American charities. George Ardill of the Sydney Rescue Work Society used the term in his publication *The Rescue*, and it was used by other Sydney charities. The Aborigines Protection Board, of which Ardill was Vice-President, employed a Homefinder, Miss Alice Lowe, in 1910, when it was setting up the Cootamundra Training Home.

The New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board Homefinder's job was to tour Aboriginal reserves and stations and convince parents to allow their children to be apprenticed or sent to Cootamundra, Singleton Home, Bomaderry Home or Kinchela Training Home for Boys. If parents agreed she would escort the children from their homes to the institution, or to their new employers.

If parents refused to relinquish their children, the Homefinder would recommend the Aborigines Protection Board call in the police or the State Children's Relief Board to have children charged with neglect in a Children's Court. She worked with the State Children's Relief Board to remove Aboriginal children from private properties that were not under Board control.

The Protection Board's Homefinder also found people who were willing to take on Aboriginal apprentices and inspected the Homes, while monitoring the children while they were in service. When the Board employed male inspectors, after 1915, the Homefinder focussed on girls. After Miss Lowe's retirement the title of the position was changed to Lady Inspector.

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