

Native Institution

1814 – 1833

Details

The Native Institution was established at Parramatta by Governor Lachlan Macquarie on 10 December 1814 as a 'school for the education of the native children'. It was a children's home and asylum and was run by a Christian missionary, William Shelley. In 1823 it was moved to Blacktown. It closed in 1833.

The Native Institution was significant as the first school for Aboriginal children in New South Wales. A number of the students who attended it used their education to prosper in white society, including Maria Lock, daughter of Yarramundi of the Boorooberongal clan of the Darug. Maria is recognised as a matriarch by the Darug people of western Sydney, and was one of the first Aboriginal people to claim a land grant.

However, the practice of government authorities removing Aboriginal children from their families to educate them, as occurred at the Native Institution, is seen as an important precursor to the policies that led to the stolen generations.

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