

# Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton

16 February 1881 – 1 October 1899

## Details

---

The Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton was run by the State Government of Queensland. Boys under the age of 18 years were sentenced to a term of confinement at the reformatory by Children's Courts. It opened 1881 when inmates from the hulk *Proserpine* were transferred to the new land-based reformatory. It closed 1899 when the boys were moved to the Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys which was opened at South Brisbane.

Industrial and reformatory schools were established for the purpose of segregating neglected and convicted juveniles from adult prisoners.

Boys under the age of 18 years were sentenced to a term of confinement at the reformatory by Children's Courts. It appears that some boys were transferred to orphanages before the expiration of their sentences. Parents of neglected and convicted inmates were required to contribute financially to the maintenance of their sons whilst in the reformatory.

Boys who were transferred from the *Proserpine* to Signall Hill, Lytton in 1881, assisted in the building of the new reformatory. Their labour contributed to a defensive stockade surrounding Signal Hill, and the building of Fort Lytton itself. Buildings included dormitories, classrooms and a tailor's workshop. Industrious boys were offered individual garden plots in which they could grow their own produce.

Mr James Wassell, superintendent of the Reformatory for Boys on the *Proserpine*, continued as superintendent of the Lytton reformatory. He held sole power of punishment which in serious cases meant boys were canned. Warders supervised inmates while outside and in the workshop.

Those boys considered trustworthy were sent out to service for the remainder of their sentence. A school teacher lived on-site, holding classes for the younger boys in the morning and older boys in the afternoon. The boys made their own clothes in the tailor's workshop.

On 1 October 1899 the boys were transferred to the Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys at South Brisbane, while buildings from Lytton were moved to and re-erected at a site at Westbrook, near Toowoomba. The boys relocated to Westbrook on 5 May 1900.

## More info

---

### Chronology

- Reformatory School for Boys - Hulk *Proserpine* (15 March 1871 - 16 February 1881)
  - **Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton (16 February 1881 – 1 October 1899)**
    - Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys (1 October 1899 - 5 May 1900)

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Colonial Secretary \(10 December 1859 - 6 August 1896\)](#)  
Date: 1881 - 1896
- [Home Secretary's Office \(6 August 1896 - 5 December 1935\)](#)  
Date: 1896 - 1899

### Related Legislation

- [Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act 1865, Queensland \(1865 - 1911\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Department of Justice and Attorney General \(2012 - current\)](#)  
The Department of Justice and Attorney General controls access to the records of the Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton.

## Resources

- [The Lytton Reformatory](#), Brisbane Courier, 25 September 1885
- Savige, Alan, ['Naughty Boys' The Education of Reformatory School Boys at Lytton 1881-1899](#), Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1993
- [A visit to the Reformatory at Lytton](#), Brisbane Courier, 20 May 1886
- [Research Guide to orphanage and children's home records at Queensland State Archives](#), Queensland State Archives website, February 2022

## Records

---

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

### Records held by other organisations

- [Institution Files, Queensland Government-run Institutions \(c. 1871 - c. 2001\)](#)
- [Visiting Justice's Minute Book, Reformatory School for Boys - 'Proserpine' Hulk and Reformatory Schools for Boys - Lytton, Diamantina, Westbrook \(16 September 1874 - 28 February 1916\)](#)
- [General Correspondence, Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys, Westbrook Reformatory for Boys and Farm Home for Boys, Westbrook \(26 June 1885 - 29 November 1941\)](#)
- [History Papers - Westbrook \(22 February 1892 - 31 December 1992\)](#)
- [Admission Registers, Reformatory School for Boys - Hulk Proserpine, Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys and Westbrook Reformatory for Boys. \(16 March 1871 - 6 September 1906\)](#)
- [Case Files, Reformatory School for Boys - Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys, Westbrook Reformatory for Boys, and Farm Home for Boys \(1 March 1890 - 20 August 1953\)](#)
- [Discharge Register, Reformatory School for Boys - Hulk Proserpine, Reformatory School for Boys, Lytton, Diamantina Reformatory School for Boys and Westbrook Reformatory for Boys \(14 March 1872 - 6 September 1906\)](#)
- [Visiting Medical Officers' Journals - Westbrook \(18 February 1873 - 19 April 1990\)](#)
- [Visitors' Books - Westbrook \(18 February 1873 - 9 July 1984\)](#)

---

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/reformatory-school-for-boys-lytton/>