

Hammond Island Mission Orphanage

1929 – 1952?

Other Names:

- Sacred Heart Mission
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Mission

Details

The Hammond Island Mission Orphanage, on Hammond Island, was run by the the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It opened in 1929 and closed in January 1942, when the residents were evacuated to Cooyar. A boys' dormitory housed the children. The orphanage reopened in 1948, 'for only a short time' (Deere, 1994).

Hammond Island was originally declared a government reserve in 1881. The inhabitants were forcibly removed to Moa Island (also known as Banks Island) in 1922.

In 1929, Father Doyle from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, took about 15 'needy half-caste boys' from the Thursday Island Catholic Orphanage to establish an orphanage on Hammond Island. They were originally housed in a galvanised iron house near the beach.

The Church had built a new boys' dormitory by 1932. The Mission's role was to care for half-caste orphan children and the children whose parents could not provide for them.

A convent was built in 1935 and two Sacred Heart Mission Sisters went to live there at the beginning of 1936. The Sisters took over the school and became responsible for the domestic management of the presbytery and the Orphanage.

In September 1934 there were about 14 boys living in the boys' home. By September 1938, 10 boys were housed in the Orphanage, 6 of whom were identified as State Wards. In June 1939 there were 11 boys in the Hammond Island Orphanage.

In January 1942 all Hammond Island residents were evacuated to Cooyar, a small town north of Toowoomba. This included about 50 children aged between 8 and 15 years. They were accommodated in an old, vacant and de-licensed hotel. It became known as the 'Cooyar Mission', however correspondence about the Hammond Island Orphanage during the war years referred to it as the 'Hammond Island Institution – Cooyar'. The number of occupants began to decrease and the Mission at Cooyar closed in November 1944.

Although the prohibition on re-entry to Thursday Island was lifted in March 1946, the first families did not return to Hammond Island until July 1947. Within 12 months the Hammond Island Mission was functioning again with the local school re-opening in July 1948.

According to Deere, the orphanage reopened in 1948 'for only a short time'.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart \(1885 - current\)](#)
The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart took over management of the orphanage in 1936.
Date: 1936 - 1942
- [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart \(1885 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Cooyar Mission \(1942 - 1944\)](#)
Due to the military take-over of the Torres Strait Islands during World War Two, all the residents of the Hammond Island Mission Orphanage were evacuated to Cooyar in January 1942.

Resources

- [Solving Problems of Half-Castes: Successful Work on Hammond Island](#), Courier Mail, 26 June 1937
- [Only Chance: Half-Caste Problem](#), Queensland Times, 19 July 1934
- Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, [A piece of the story : national directory of records of Catholic organisations caring for children separated from families](#), November 1999. *Relevance:* p.79

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Records \(1880s - current\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
Item B259 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to Hammond Island Mission Orphanage
 - [Correspondence - Alphanumeric Prefix - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs \(1909 - 1992\)](#)
 - [General Correspondence - Torres Strait Islands \(1922 - 1994\)](#)
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