

Hope Vale Mission

c. 1950 – 1986

Other Names: • Hopevale Mission

Details

The Hope Vale Mission, at Hope Vale, was run by Lutheran Church missionaries. Previously known as Hope Valley Mission, it was taken over by the Army in 1942 and residents were transferred to Woorabinda in southern Queensland. After World War Two, in 1949, a work party of former residents returned to re-establish the mission which was to be known as Hope Vale. It was gazetted as an Aboriginal reserve in September 1952. In 1986, the community formed the Hope Vale Aboriginal Council.

In 1926 it was noted that there were children living at the two boys and girls dormitories at the Hope Valley Mission (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, 2019).

In 1942, approximately 300 people living at Hope Vale were removed to the Woorabinda settlement, west of Rockhampton, over 1,000 kilometres away. This group, which became known at Woorabinda as the 'Cape Bedford people', suffered greatly as a result of this removal and there was a high death rate among former Hope Vale residents.

According to an Honours thesis by Therese Forde (1990), Army Intelligence regarded the Lutheran Superintendent (who was of German descent) at Hope Vale with suspicion, and he was taken into internment on 17 May 1942. Forde writes that when the army came to Hope Vale the mission itself was levelled: 'crops of maize, sweet potatoes and fruit were flattened, and the R.A.A.F. built an aerodrome and runway on the site' (p.41) Forde writes that while some elderly people were sent to Palm Island from Hope Vale, the majority were taken to Woorabinda in an arduous journey 'by steamer, train and cattle truck'.

A Queensland Government website states that 60 of the Cape Bedford people died while at Woorabinda. The high death rate amongst the Cape Bedford people was partly attributable to inadequate housing and medical care at Woorabinda. The residents from Hope Vale were not equipped with clothing, blankets or bedding that was appropriate for winter conditions in southern Queensland. Forde writes that many people died from pneumonia shortly after their removal from Hope Vale.

Those who survived the move to Woorabinda were not permitted to return to their home mission until February 1950.

In April 1949, building had commenced on the new Mission site which was about 25 kilometres from the old Hope Valley Mission. By December 1949 there were 15 houses, a boys' dormitory, a workshop and a shed erected on the site. The girls' dormitory was completed soon afterwards.

By 1953 the Mission had three permanent residences for the staff, a school, store, boys' and girls' dormitories, machinery shed and over 50 houses.

A new girls' dormitory was built in 1962, and extensions to the original girls' dormitory were completed during 1963/64.

In January 1968 all dormitories at the Hope Vale Mission closed and the children were placed with either their parents or foster parents.

In 1986 the community received a Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) and formed the Hope Vale Aboriginal Council.

More info

Chronology

- Hope Valley Mission (c. 1896 - May 1942)
 - **Hope Vale Mission (c. 1950 – 1986)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Lutheran Church of Australia \(1838 - current\)](#)
Date: 1950 - 1986

Related Organisations

- [Woorabinda \(c. 1927 - 1986\)](#)
During World War Two, residents of Hope Vale Mission were removed to Woorabinda.

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Resources

- Pohlner, Howard J., *Gangurru*, 1986

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 \(1880s - current\)](#)
- [Miscellaneous Items and Correspondence - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander files \(1859 - 1997\)](#)
- [Health & Home Affairs/Education Department Batch Files \[Correspondence\] - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander files \(1884 - 1970\)](#)
- [Photographs and Photograph Albums of Aboriginal settlements and missions \(1940 - 1960\)](#)
- [Correspondence Files \[Offices of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals and Director of Native Affairs\] \(1901 - 1944\)](#)
- [Peter John Sutton Papers, Aurukun Mission, Palm Island Mission and Hope Vale Mission \(1974 - 1980\)](#)
- [Admission Registers - Hope Vale State School \(1970 - 1983\)](#)
- [Correspondence Files - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs \(1916 - 1999\)](#)
- [General Correspondence - Torres Strait Islands \(1922 - 1994\)](#)

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