

# Ernabella Mission

1937 – 1974

## Details

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The Ernabella Mission was established by the Presbyterian Church in the Musgrave Ranges of north-west South Australia in 1937. A school operated at the Mission. In 1970 the State Government took administrative control of the Mission and in 1972 this transferred to the Commonwealth Government. In 1974 the administration of Ernabella Mission passed to the Pitjantjatjara Council. It was later renamed Pukatja.

The Ernabella Mission was established by the Presbyterian Church in the Musgrave Ranges of north-west South Australia in 1937. Its creation was co-funded by the Presbyterian Church and the SA Government. The Ernabella Station was purchased as a base for the Mission. A school operated at the Mission and Christian teachings were offered, however, unlike many other Missions local Pitjantjatjara language and culture was promoted and staff were required to learn the traditional language of the inhabitants.

At the Mission men were encouraged to find employment in building, gardening or on the sheep station. Children attended the school and women trained in the arts including working with textiles.

In 1970 the administration of the Mission was transferred to the South Australian Government. Two years later, in 1972, the Commonwealth Government took control of Aboriginal Affairs nationally and the Mission came under the control of the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Soon after, in 1974, the community itself through the Pitjantjatjara Council took over the administration. The Ernabella Mission was renamed Pukatja.

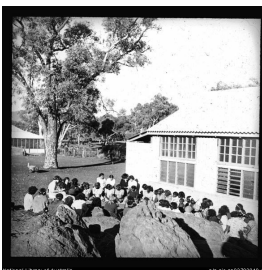
## Gallery

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**School at Ernabella Mission**

**Description:** The library catalogue includes the description: A class of Aboriginal students and their teacher outside the school at Ernabella Mission.



**Large group of people outside a building, Ernabella, South Australia**

**Description:** This image of Ernabella Mission is part of the Charles Duguid collection of photographs of Aboriginal Australians at Ernabella Mission and other locations, ca. 1930-1950.

## More info

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## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Presbyterian Church of Australia \(1901 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1937 - 1970
- [Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)
- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Federal Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)

### Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

## Resources

- [Robert Capp interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2000\)](#), 12 December 2000
- Edwards, Bill, *A Moravian Mission in Australia: Ebenezer through Ernabella Eyes*, 2004

## Records

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

### Records held by other organisations

- [Records of the Aborigines' Office and Successor Agencies \(1866? - 1971?\)](#)
  - [Records of Aboriginal Missions in South Australia \(1850s - 1970s\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
  - [Records of the Aborigines' Friends' Association \(1925 - 1976\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, class 1 \(general, passports\) \(1892 - 1970\)](#)  
Correspondence files, class 1 (general, passports) contains a file on Ernabella Mission
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/ernabella-mission/>