

Yalata Mission

1954 – 1974

Details

The Yalata Mission was established in 1954 by the Lutheran Church on a government Aboriginal reserve 130 miles west of Ceduna. Aboriginal people from Maralinga and the Ooldea Mission had been brought to the area in 1952. The Mission operated a school and other facilities for the residents of the reserve. In 1974 the Yalata Mission was transferred to the control of the Yalata Community Council.

The Yalata Mission was established in 1954 by the Lutheran Church on the former Yalata Sheep Station which had been purchased some years earlier by the government for an Aboriginal reserve. The one million acre property was situated approximately half way between Ceduna and the Koonibba Mission on the west coast of South Australia.

Aboriginal people from the Maralinga area and Ooldea Mission were moved hundreds of kilometres south from their traditional lands to the reserve at Yalata in 1952 to make way for the Long Range Weapons Organisation program out of Woomera and the British Government's atomic bomb tests at Maralinga. Lutheran Missionaries from Koonibba Mission assisted with the enforced move. The Aboriginal people from Ooldea lived on the reserve for two years before the Yalata Mission was established.

Brady writes that the people moved from Ooldea did not want to stay at Yalata, 'on the powdery grey soil of the Nullabor edge. They were homesick for Ooldea, they preferred the red sand and spinifex of the desert ...' (Brady, p.7)

Newspapers from March 1954 reported that the Lutheran Church was ready to take over the Yalata Station to run as a Mission for Aboriginal people. Missionaries from Koonibba stated that they would teach the Aboriginal people at the Mission sheep farming.

Yalata Mission had a central core of administrative buildings, services, a school and a store. The population lived in two camps with the majority in the mobile 'Big Camp' which was moved to different sections of the reserve at different times during the year. 'Little Camp' housed Aboriginal mission workers and their families and some of the elderly or sick residents who required regular assistance. In 1969 there were approximately 300 Aboriginal people living at Yalata.

In 1974 the reserve was transferred to the control of the Yalata Community Council and the Yalata Mission ceased to operate as a Mission.

Gallery



Yalata Aboriginal Community

Description: Original caption: Yalata Aboriginal community, 200 km west of Ceduna along the Eyre Highway. People living here used to live around Ooldea, far to the north and were forcibly removed to Yalata in 1952. This included people who had been moved from Maralinga, the site where the British were to conduct nuclear tests in the 1950s.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Lutheran Church of Australia \(1838 - current\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Ooldea Mission \(1933 - 1952\)](#)

Many Aboriginal people at Yalata Mission were brought to the government reserve at Yalata from Ooldea Mission in 1952

Related Concepts

- [Stolen Generations](#)

Records

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 \(1850s - 1970s\)](#)

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