

Moorgunyah Hostel

1967 – 1996?

Other Names: • Port Hedland Hostel

Details

Moorgunyah Hostel, in Port Hedland, was established in 1967 as a government-run Aboriginal education and employment hostel for young people going to high school in Port Hedland. The number of students able to be accommodated at Moorgunyah changed from 52 (1971) to 30 (1995). It closed, possibly around 1996.

Government reports (*Signposts* 2004, pp.357-359) show that Moorgunyah was a Department of Native Welfare hostel that in 1971 had 52 high-school age children living there. In 1972, responsibility for Moorgunyah was transferred to the Department for Community Welfare (DCW) in accordance with government policy at that time.

The hostel was 'upgraded' (*Signposts* p.358) during 1975 and 1976 and in 1979 and 1980 the DCW gave some information about the children living at Moorgunyah: There were '46 school aged children who came from Koordarrie, Minderoo, Wyloo, Mt Stewart, Yarraloola and Boodarie Stations; from the Pilbara Tin Mine; and from the Onslow, Wickham, Roebourne, or Marble Bar areas...The function of the Department hostel in caring for aboriginal children so that they may have regular schooling, is expanding to provide a back-up service for families who may wish to use the facility to provide an occasional meal, a laundry service and provide homework supervision. This is the need that some families have in making the transition into homes of their own in the local township. Greater efforts are also being made to provide children and parents with opportunities to spend more time together by providing camping facilities when the parents come to town.'

In 1984, Moorgunyah hosted a Christmas Camp for children visiting Port Hedland from Marble Bar (*Signposts* p.428).

By 1987, Moorgunyah, along with other country hostels, reportedly (*Signposts* p.358) admitted only 'senior students' and it was a policy to ensure that Aboriginal staff were employed to work in the hostel.

A description of Moorgunyah in June 1995 was provided by child welfare authorities (OHAC Cost Project, Department for Community Services, quoted in *Signposts* pp.358-359). Moorgunyah was a: 'campus style facility providing dormitory style accommodation for High School students with a bed capacity of 30. The grounds were extensive on ocean front land, with a rear vacant lot. The buildings, which were constructed in the 1960s, offered little private space for students and were not conducive to study. There were no ancillary education resources, but a recreation program was operated by staff. Places at Moorgunyah were in high demand among Indigenous families, but the overall standard of building and furnishing was considered to be institutional and substandard. 30 students were admitted in each term in 1994, and the facility had two buses – a 22 seater and a 15 seater'.

Moorgunyah closed sometime after 1995. The exact operating dates were unknown in 2014.

In government records, Moorgunyah is named and spelled various ways including Morgunyah and Moorgunah.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Native Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1955 - 1972\)](#)
- [Department for Community Welfare, State of Western Australia \(1972 - 1985\)](#)
- [Department for Community Services, State of Western Australia \(1 January 1985 - 1 October 1992\)](#)
- [Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia \(1 October 1992 - 1 July 1995\)](#)
- [Department for Family and Children's Services, State of Western Australia \(1 July 1995 - 1 July 2001\)](#)

Resources

- Wilson, Katrin and Michael V. Robinson., *Aboriginal Hostels in Perth : A Comparative Survey*, 1971

Records

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

Records held by other organisations

- [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/moorgunyah-hostel/>