

Department of Native Affairs, State of Western Australia

1936 – 1954

Other Names: • DNA

Details

The Department of Native Affairs (DNA) operated from 1936, taking over the Aborigines Department. It was responsible for Aboriginal matters in Western Australia. The head of the Department, the Commissioner for Native Affairs, was the legal guardian of all Aboriginal children, as stipulated by the Aborigines Act 1905. The Department of Native Affairs was replaced by the Department of Native Welfare in 1954.

The Department of Native Affairs (DNA) was formed on 1 January 1936 as the key government organisation responsible for Aboriginal matters, including the welfare of Aboriginal children in Western Australia. The Department of Native Affairs received the Child Endowment on behalf of Aboriginal parents in Western Australia, making payments in the form of orders in local stores rather than cash. The State Records Office website provides an overview of the DNA's establishment:

In 1936, following the recommendation of the Moseley Royal Commission and the subsequent amendment of the Aborigines Act 1905, functions of the Aborigines Department were considerably increased and its name was at the same time changed to that of the Department of Native Affairs. In 1947, the portfolio of the Minister for Native Affairs was created and a year later the Bateman Survey recommended drastic changes in the organisation of the department. These changes were duly carried out in the following year.

In 1954, the name of the department was changed to the Department of Native Welfare and its duties and functions were laid down by the Native Administration Act of that year.

The head of the Department was known as the Commissioner for Native Affairs. Francis Bray held this position from 1940 to 1946 and Stanley Middleton was the Commissioner for Native Affairs from 1948 to 1954.

More info

Chronology

- Aborigines Department, State of Western Australia (1926 - 1936)
 - **Department of Native Affairs, State of Western Australia (1936 – 1954)**
 - Department of Native Welfare, State of Western Australia (1955 - 1972)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Moore River Native Settlement \(1918 - 1951\)](#)
Date: 1936 - 1951
- [La Grange Bay Feeding Depot \(1918 - 1949\)](#)
- [East Perth Girls' Home \(1931 - 1952\)](#)
Date: 1936 - 1952
- [Carrolup Native Settlement \(1939 - 1951\)](#)
Date: 1939 - 1951
- [Udialla Station \(1944 - 1949\)](#)
Date: 1944 - 1949
- [Alvan House \(1950 - 1961\)](#)
Date: 1950 - 1954
- [La Grange Bay Ration Depot \(1950 - 1954\)](#)
- [Marribank Farm Training School \(1951 - 1952\)](#)
- [Cosmo Newbery Native Settlement \(1951 - 1953\)](#)
- [Bennett House \(1952 - 1981\)](#)
Date: 1952 - 1954
- [McDonald House \(1952 - 1985?\)](#)
Date: 1952 - 1954

Related Events

- [Survey of Native Affairs, State of Western Australia \(1947 - June 1948\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Broughton Lodge \(1942 - 1958?\)](#)
Aboriginal girls were placed at Broughton Lodge by the Department of Native Affairs from in 1954.
- [Kurrawang Mission \(1952 - 1984\)](#)
The Department of Native Affairs provided financial assistance to establish Kurrawang Mission.

Related Legislation

- [Aborigines Act 1905, Western Australia \(1906 - 1964\)](#)
The Department of Native Affairs administered the *Aborigines Act 1905*.
- [Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1936, Western Australia \(1936 - 1964\)](#)
Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1936 created the Department of Native Affairs.
- [Native Administration Act Amendment Act 1941, Western Australia \(1941 - 1963\)](#)
The Department of Native Affairs was responsible for administering the *Native Administration Act Amendment Act 1941*.
Date: 1941 - 1954

Related Concepts

- [Aboriginal Protection in Western Australia \(c. 1832 - c. 1972\)](#)
- [Commissioner for Native Affairs \(1936 - 1954\)](#)
The Commissioner was the head of the Department of Native Affairs.

Resources

- [Margaret Robinson interviewed by Marnie Richardson in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)](#), 13 June 2001
- [Aboriginal History](#), State Records Office of Western Australia website, 2012
- [Pastoral Inquiry Employment of Natives](#), The West Australian, 6 July 1940
- [Govt. to close native station](#), Sunday Times, 13 June 1954
- Foster, Darren J, [Submission No 347 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 3 April 2004
- Foster, Darren J, [She called her coral because it was 'a perfect pink day': The neglecting of Coral Suzanne Dickerson](#), Journal of Australian Studies, 1998
- [Appointment of Woman for Native Welfare](#), The West Australian, 21 June 1951

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [Administration Files - South West District Office \[S.D. Sequence\] \(1949 - 1976\)](#)
 - [Personal Cards \(1920 - 1948\)](#)
 - [Moore River Native Settlement Medical Officer Letters \(1927 - 1944\)](#)
 - [Administration Files - Eastern District Office \[E.D.G. Sequence\] \(1945 - 1975\)](#)
 - [Administration Files - Northern District Office \[N.D.G Sequence\] \(1950 - 1974\)](#)
 - [Administration Files - Roebourne Office \[A.S.D. Sequence\] \(1951 - 1973\)](#)
 - [Department of Native Welfare \[and predecessors\], Client Files \(1921 - 1969\)](#)
 - [Administration Files - South West District Office \[annual single number sequence\] \(1 January 1950 - 1 January 1972\)](#)
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