

La Grange Bay Relief Station

1912 – 1918

Details

La Grange Bay Feeding Depot was established by the Chief Protector of Aborigines in 1912. Aboriginal people had been receiving rations from the La Grange Bay telegraph station from around 1900, but from 1912 a paid government officer was appointed to distribute food, blankets, clothing, and medical treatment. The Aboriginal people visiting the station may have included children. By 1918, the Chief Protector referred to the Relief Station as the La Grange Bay Feeding Depot.

The presence of government authorities at La Grange Bay pre-dates the establishment of the first permanent 'relief station' and it has an even older place in history. What was known to government as La Grange Bay has been described by the State Solicitor's Office (*Guide to Institutions*, 2005 p.77) as 'neutral territory for a number of Aboriginal groups'.

In its annual report for 1900, the Aborigines Department (p.7) had recorded that 'relief to Aborigines and Half-castes' was dispensed from the La Grange Bay station by FW Tuckett. In its 1901 report (pp.45-46) it was confirmed that the 'station' mentioned in 1900 was in fact the La Grange Bay Telegraph Station and Mr Tuckett was the officer in charge. At this time, Aboriginal people came to the telegraph station to receive rations, blankets and medicines, but were not permitted to camp there unless they were employed by the telegraph station staff. The police officer is quoted in the report (1901, p.51) as saying he knew of few young children in the area as 'most natives are out back, and will not come in'. In its 1906 annual report (p.7) the Aborigines Department recorded 'from 60 to 70 natives' going to the La Grange Bay telegraph station to 'obtain relief'.

By 1908, according to the annual report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines (1908, pp.19-20), government authorities were actively seeking out and removing 'half-caste' and 'full-blood' children from the Broome area. Eleven children who had been 'collected from the coast about Lagrange Bay' were sent to Beagle Bay Mission (p.10).

In 1912, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, CF Gale, established a permanent government 'relief station' at La Grange Bay. In his annual report for the year ending 30 June 1912, Gale (p.6) that there had been 'for years past' a 'relieving station at La Grange Bay' and that the government had paid a 'per capita grant for relieving indigent natives'. However, Gale felt this was not sufficient and, in his words, 'recommended an alteration of the system, in consequence of which a Departmental relieving station has been formed, and a paid officer appointed to distribute rations'. This represented a cost saving to the government, according to Gale, who believed it was 'more satisfactory in every way'.

More info

Chronology

- **La Grange Bay Relief Station (1912 – 1918)**
 - La Grange Bay Feeding Depot (1918 - 1949)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Aborigines and Fisheries, State of Western Australia \(1 January 1909 - 1 January 1920\)](#)

Related Concepts

- [Aboriginal Protection in Western Australia \(c. 1832 - c. 1972\)](#)

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs \[predecessors\], Records \(1886 - 2004\)](#)
 - [Files - Department of Aborigines and Fisheries \(1909 - 1920\)](#)
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