

# Hermannsburg Mission

1877 – 1982

**Other Names:** • Finke River Mission Station

## Details

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The Hermannsburg Mission was established on the banks of the Finke River by Lutheran missionaries from the Hermannsburg Missionary Society and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia in 1877. The missionaries established a school and dormitories for children in the late 1890s. It operated under Lutheran control until 1982 when the land was returned to the local Arrente people.

The Hermannsburg Mission was established on the banks of the Finke River by Lutheran missionaries from the Hermannsburg Missionary Society and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia in 1877. It was the last and longest-running Mission run by the Lutheran Church in Australia.

A School House was built at the Mission in 1896 and separate dormitories for boys and girls erected during the period 1894-1904. Children were rewarded for attending school via the distribution of rations. Missionaries learned the Arrente language and translated much of their spiritual and other educational materials, to ensure that their teachings were understood.

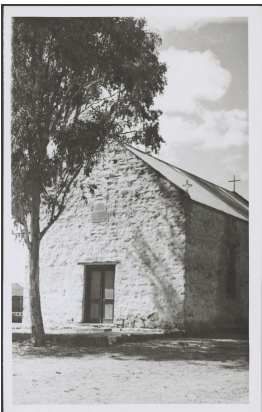
In the 1930s the Mission fully maintained approximately 100 children. By 1952 this had risen to 170 children.

Hermannsburg Mission operated under Lutheran control until 1982 when the land was finally returned to the local Arrente people. The Hermannsburg Historic Precinct was included on the National Heritage List on 13 April 2006. The database record for the Precinct provides a detailed history of the Mission.

The buildings that were the School House and boys' dormitory were still standing in 2014. The girls' dormitory was destroyed by fire in 1954.

## Gallery

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**School house, Hermannsburg Mission, Finke River, Northern Territory, 1947**  
[picture]

**Description:** This image shows the school house at the Lutheran Hermannsburg Mission on the Finke River.

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## Hermannsburg Mission

**Description:** This image shows the Hermannsburg Mission former boys' dormitory and school house.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

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

#### Related Organisations

- [Haasts Bluff Native Settlement \(1940s - 1959\)](#)  
Haast's Bluff Native Settlement became an outpost of the Hermannsburg Mission.
- [Papunya Native Settlement \(1958 - 1978\)](#)  
Missionaries from the Hermannsburg Mission provided church and welfare services at Papunya Native Settlement
- [Lutheran Mission Block, Alice Springs \(1963 - 1982\)](#)  
The Lutheran Mission Block was established by missionaries from the Hermannsburg Mission
- [Kormilda College \(1967 - 2017\)](#)  
Some of the first students to Kormilda College came from Hermannsburg.  
Date: 1968 -

#### Related Places

- [Finke River Mission \(1877 - c. 1982\)](#)  
Hermannsburg Mission and its outposts at Haast's Bluff, Areyonga and Papunya Native Settlements were often referred to as the Finke River Mission

## Resources

- Love, J. R. B., [\*The Aborigines : their present condition as seen in northern South Australia, the Northern Territory, north-west Australia and western Queensland\*](#), 1915

## Records

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

### Records held by other organisations

- [Records held by the Lutheran Archives \(1838 - current\)](#)
  - [Family database for Aboriginal Lutherans of Central Australia \(1900s - 1980s\)](#)
  - [Copies of review inspection reports - Hermannsburg \[Hermannsburg\], Oenpelli, Yirrkala, Elcho Island, Groote Eylandt, Finke River, Roper River, Milingimbi and Port Keats \(1959 - 1959\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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