

Bagot Aboriginal Reserve

1938 – 1978?

Other Names: • Bagot Road Aboriginal Reserve

Details

The Bagot Aboriginal Reserve was established in 1938. All the residents of the Kahlin Compound were moved to this new reserve in 1939. The Retta Dixon Home was located at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve. In the late 1970s the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve was handed over to Aboriginal custodians and became known as the Bagot Aboriginal Community.

According to Bill Day, the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve was established 'to control and manage the increasing drift of Aboriginal people to Darwin from remote settlements, and to provide training in accordance with the prevailing policy of assimilation'. It was situated on 23 hectares of land next to the Ludmilla Creek, close to the sea.

Residents of the Kahlin Aboriginal Compound were moved to the new Bagot reserve in 1938 and Kahlin subsequently closed. Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, like Kahlin, segregated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the rest of the population of Darwin.

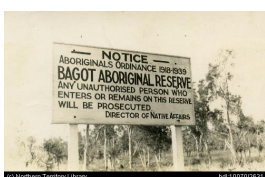
Residents of Bagot Reserve were also segregated from each other on the basis of race. There was a fence to separate the 'half-caste' and 'native' communities from each other. By 1946, the Retta Dixon Home had been established on a site at the corner of the Bagot Reserve.

According to Barbara Cummings (1990), children removed from the community had been indoctrinated by missionaries: 'Many of these people were our countrymen, our grandmothers, cousins, brothers and sisters, some of whom came into the Home to work in the laundry or to chop wood. They were our kin and yet we were prevented from even talking to them' (p.84).

During World War Two, some residents of Bagot Aboriginal Reserve were evacuated to a camp at Berrimah after the 119 Australian General Hospital took over the compound at Christmas in 1940. Approximately 200 people were moved from Berrimah Native Compound back to Bagot in 1951 (*Northern Standard*, 12 January 1951).

After Darwin was declared a town in 1959, Bagot Aboriginal Reserve became a political football. Calls for the reserve to be relocated and Bagot to be converted into a 'normal' suburb were unsuccessful. In 1979 the reserve was vested to an incorporated Aboriginal community council to become a self-governing community.

Gallery



Notice outside Bagot Aboriginal Reserve

Description: The image is a picture of a sign from Bagot Aboriginal Reserve. The sign states: "Notice - Aboriginals ordinance 1918-1939, Bagot Aboriginal Reserve. Any unauthorised person who enters or remains on this reserve will be prosecuted. Director of Native Affairs."



Aboriginal people on Bagot Reserve

Description: Original caption: A gathering for a corroboree.



Interior of the school at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, near Darwin, NT.

Description: This image shows the school room at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve.



Aerial view of the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, near Darwin, NT.

Description: The full title is recorded as: Aerial view of the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, near Darwin, NT. There are 26 family cottages and three dormitories. An average of about 150 men, women and children live there.



A family hut at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, near Darwin, NT.

Description: The full title is recorded as: A family hut at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, near Darwin, NT. Each hut has beds and basic furniture. Louvres provide ventilation. There is no rent to pay. Huts usually house two families.



Bagot Aboriginal Reserve [altered from original title]

Description: Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, near Darwin, NT, was an example of the Federal Government's policy regarding Indigenous Australians.



Housing at Bagot Reserve - Darwin, 1975

More info

Chronology

- Kahlin Compound (1913 - 1939)
 - Bagot Aboriginal Reserve (1938 – 1978?)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Native Affairs Branch, Australian Government \(1939 - 1955\)](#)
- [Welfare Branch, Northern Territory Administration, Australian Government \(1955 - 1970\)](#)
- [Welfare Division, Northern Territory Administration, Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)
- [Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Territory Division, Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)

Related Events

- [Case Study 17: Retta Dixon Home, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(2014\)](#)

Bagot Aboriginal Reserve was briefly mentioned in Case Study Case Study 17: Retta Dixon Home, but was not the primary focus of the study.

Related Organisations

- [Myilly Point Home \(1924 - 1939\)](#)
Children from the Myilly Point Home were moved to the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve when the Myilly Point Home closed in 1939
- [Retta Dixon Home \(1946 - 1982\)](#)
The Retta Dixon Home was located on the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve.

Resources

- Aborigines Inland Mission, [Our Aim newsletters](#), 1907 - 1961
- Duguid, Charles, [The Aborigines of Darwin and the Tropic North](#), 1951
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Report of Case Study No. 17: The response of the Australian Inland Ministries, the Australian and Northern Territory governments and the Northern Territory police force and prosecuting authorities to allegations of sexual abuse which occurred at the Retta Dixon Home](#), July 2015. Relevance: Bagot Aboriginal Reserve was briefly mentioned in Case Study Case Study 17: Retta Dixon Home, but was not the primary focus of the study
- Rawlinson, Clare, [Behind Bagot's walls](#), ABC News, 29 May 2013

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