

# A NSW Aboriginal Education Timeline 1788–2007

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## Introduction

This timeline briefly outlines some turning points and events in NSW institutional Aboriginal education from 1788 to 2007.

Indigenous Australian people have sophisticated education practices and systems based on spoken knowledge and teaching by experience and observation, which were developed well before 1788. Aspects of Aboriginal education have both endured and changed over time, despite non-Aboriginal people's frequent efforts to 'improve' upon, or destroy their knowledge and teachings.

Aboriginal peoples' early experiences of non-Aboriginal education included missionary schools, mixed and segregated public schooling from 1880, and training institutions which focused on manual work.

Numerous Indigenous people and non-Indigenous supporters have fought against inequality in seeking to gain access to relevant public education for Aboriginal children and adults. Their efforts have been central to the success of initiatives such as the establishment of Tranby College in the late 1950s, Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups in the 1970s, Aboriginal Studies subjects, language revival and teaching.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are increasingly involved in education planning and delivery, signalling a growing respect for Aboriginal people's abilities to learn and teach from multiple cultures of education.

An historical lack of access to educational opportunities, together with racism, economic disadvantage and health issues have left a legacy of problems faced by many Indigenous students and teachers today. Yet hard-working teachers, students and community members have made significant achievements which are recognised in this timeline as important elements of Aboriginal education history in NSW.

## A note on the approach used

The timeline does not capture every important event in Aboriginal education in NSW since 1788. It is a brief chronology with quotations from Indigenous educators, students, activists, authors and community members included to provide insights into NSW Indigenous people's personal and cultural experiences of education.

Case studies of school education in **Gulargambone** (central west NSW) and **Nulla Creek or Bellbrook** (north coast NSW) explore segregation, access disputes and school history in more detail than is possible within a timeline framework.

We hope the timeline and case studies inspire you to find out more about Aboriginal education – to learn about your school, your family and friends' experiences, and to make some education history of your own!

## Timeline

### 1789 The capture and English education of Bennelong

Governor Arthur Phillip organised the capture of Bennelong.

Phillip attempted to teach Bennelong about English language and culture and to learn about Aboriginal people from Bennelong.

References: Dark (1966) pp 84–85; Heiss & McCormack (2002)

<[www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme7.htm](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme7.htm)>

Associate Professor Anita Heiss (Wiradjuri) and Terri McCormack discussed Bennelong's attempt to educate non-Aboriginal people about his culture:

'While Bennelong suffered from the worst aspects of enculturation, he also represents those who tried to change the behaviour of Europeans on Aboriginal lands.'

Heiss & McCormack (2002).

### 1790 Attempts to educate individual Aboriginal children

Convict George Bath 'adopted' and provided a European style education for 'James' whose parents were shot by non-Aboriginal people near Toongabbie (Sydney).

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 15.

### 1796 An early Aboriginal experience of a NSW school

Reverend Samuel Marsden attempted to provide a British education for 'Tristan' and sent him to school in Parramatta.

'Tristan' was one of the earliest known Aboriginal people to attend a NSW school.

The Marsden family attempted to train him as their house servant but he ran away from them in Rio while travelling to England in 1807. He eventually boarded a ship back to Sydney and died soon after arriving home.

After this event, Marsden claimed that nothing could be done to educate Aboriginal people.

References: Bridges (1968) p 228; Fletcher (1989a) p 15.

### 1815–22 Parramatta Native Institution (Sydney)

The Native Institution was an 'experiment' in education established by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and former missionary William Shelley.

Aboriginal children (who educators thought were more easily influenced than adults) were taught to be labourers and servants for colonists.

They were instructed in basic literacy skills, agriculture and craft and encouraged to convert to Christianity.

Some students were brought to the school by force, and students were separated from their Aboriginal families and cultural influences.

While several students achieved excellent results, they chose to return to their communities after schooling.

References: J. Brook & J.L. Kohen (1991), Chapter 4; Read (2006); Fletcher (1989a) pp 19–21.

### **1821 Student achievement**

An Aboriginal student at the Native Institution and Sunday school received top marks in her examinations, ahead of non-Aboriginal students.

References: Brook and Kohen (1991) pp 250–251; Duncan (1997) p 193.

A reporter noted:

‘...a black girl of fourteen years of age between three or four years in the school, bore away the chief prize, much to the satisfaction of the worthy judges and auditors.’

*Sydney Gazette* 17 April 1819, cited in Brook & Kohen (1991) p 251.

### **1822–3 Native Institution at the Black Town (Sydney)**

The Native Institution was relocated to Black Town, on one of the earliest land grants to Aboriginal people assigned to Nurragingy-Colebee by Governor Macquarie.

Problems with the Parramatta site including epidemics, partly contributed to the decision to relocate the school.

Proximity to the Blacktown Aboriginal community and access to farms for practical teaching also influenced the move.

Approximately 12 students attended.

References: Brook & Kohen (1991) pp 38–46, p 87, Chapter 7 pp 132–157; Fletcher (1989a) pp 21–22.

### **1825 Aboriginal students at Liverpool Orphan School (Sydney)**

Several students from the Blacktown Native Institution were moved to the Liverpool ‘Orphan’ School as part of a mixed schooling trial.

Governor Brisbane wanted to see if mixed schooling at the Orphan School would lead to the assimilation of Aboriginal children.

References: Brook & Kohen (1991) pp 240–241; Fletcher (1989a) p 22.

### **Mission education at Lake Macquarie (Central Coast NSW)**

Reverend Threlkeld established a London Missionary Society mission at Lake Macquarie to preach Christianity to local Awabakal people.

Later Threlkeld learnt from Biraban (John McGill) how to speak Awabakal.

Under Biraban’s tuition, Threlkeld eventually interpreted for Aboriginal prisoners at trials and published early studies of the Awabakal language.

References: Bridges (1968) pp 233–234; Gunson (1967) pp 528–530.

### **1827 Scott-Hall segregated school established at Blacktown (Sydney)**

NZ Missionary William Hall and Archdeacon Scott attempted to revive the Native Institution at Blacktown.

Maori, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children attended, though classes were racially segregated.

Reading and writing lessons were provided and boys were trained in carpentry.

Fletcher (1989a) pp 22–23; Brook & Kohen (1991) Chapter 10, pp 204–228.

**1829 Black Town Aboriginal School closed**

Remaining students were sent to Liverpool to complete their education with Reverend Cartwright as their teacher.

Cartwright wanted the children to remain segregated from the rest of the colony.

Students ran away frequently.

References: Brook & Kohen (1991) p 225; Bridges (1968) pp 232–233; Ramsland (1986) pp 33–37.

**1832 Anglican Church Missionary Society establishes Wellington mission and school (northern NSW)**

Reverend Handt and Reverend William Watson established a Christian mission and school at Wellington.

They taught Aboriginal children using visual and oral approaches as well as music, recognising and using connections with Aboriginal education techniques.

Attendance was eventually forced, and parents hid their children, fearing their removal.

References: Fletcher (1989a) pp 24–26; Edwards & Read (1997) p xi.

**1837 Select Committee of House of Commons (UK) inquired into the conditions of Indigenous people in British Colonies**

The Select Committee recommended a system of Protectors for Aboriginal people in Victoria, which influenced policy in NSW.

The committee was influenced by the emerging anti-slavery movement in the UK.

References: Fletcher (1989a) pp 26–28.

**1848 Peak education management established**

The Denominational (religious) Schools Board and Board of National Education (secular) were appointed to manage colonial education.

Governor Fitzroy referred Earl Grey's proposal of sending Aboriginal children to existing schools and creating boarding schools in remote areas to these peak bodies.

References: Fletcher (1989a) pp 31–35.

**1849 NSW Select Committee decides against investing in Aboriginal education**

The Select Committee reviewed previous efforts and experiments in education for Indigenous people.

They decided Aboriginal people could not be 'changed' by European education.

Education funds were directed towards educating non-Aboriginal children rather than Aboriginal students.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) p 39.

**1853 The NSW Board of National Education rejects boarding school proposal**

The NSW Board of National Education rejected Grey's mixed boarding schools proposal.

They regarded efforts at providing education for Aboriginal people to be futile.

References: Fletcher (1989a) pp 34–35; Parbury (1999) p 67.

**1858–9 Aboriginal student's achievement at Fort St Public School**

At Fort St Public School (Sydney) an Aboriginal student came first in Geography two years in a row.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 38.

**1866 NSW Council of Education formed**

The Council of Education was made responsible for managing government schooling.

**Public Schools Act established**

The Public Schools Act stated that provisional schools could be set up for 15–24 pupils who attended regularly.

Half-time schools could be established for 10 pupils in an area.

References: Fletcher (1989a) p 52; pp 81–82.

**1870s Aboriginal children enrolled in public schools**

Some Aboriginal parents enrolled their children in schools around the state.

Population growth, the expansion of public schools, and increasing Aboriginal employment on rural properties contributed to higher Aboriginal student enrolments.

Several parents wanted their children to learn skills to improve their children's economic and social prospects.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) pp 37–38.

**1874 Malgoa Mission School established (south-western NSW)**

Daniel and Janet Mathews established the Christian Malgoa Mission School near the Murray River.

They taught basic maths, writing and singing to approximately 25 Aboriginal students.

After numerous rejections, the mission received government funding after 1881.

Sunday schools and other church-based societies supported the school too.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 60; Fletcher (1989a), pp 42–49, Brady (1996).

Dr Wendy Brady, a Wiradjuri academic, argued in her thesis that the mission schools were experimenting with education as the missionaries tried to convert Aboriginal people to Christianity. (Brady, 1996)

**1875 Rooty Hill Public School established (Sydney)**

The NSW Council of Education agreed to establish a school at Rooty Hill, where 25 Aboriginal children, including the extended Locke family, lived.

Many Locke descendents still live in the area today.

The Rooty Hill site was close to the previous Native Institution, marking a connection between Aboriginal communities and education in the area.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p58; Fletcher (1989a) pp 39–40; Brook & Kohen (1991) p 240, p 259.

**1880 NSW Public Instruction Act**

Henry Parkes's NSW government oversaw the introduction of free, compulsory and secular education.

Primary schools were to be 'free and fair', open to all children of school age within 2km of a school – though in practice access was often not equal.

Aboriginal families in many areas enrolled their children in public schools.

Approximately 100 Aboriginal students were enrolled by the end of the 1870s, mainly in the heavily populated coastal areas.

The Council of Education became the NSW Department of Education.

References: Fletcher (1989a) p 40; Duncan (1997) p 194.

**Warangesda Aboriginal School becomes a government school (south-western NSW)**

Warangesda Mission School opened and run by Reverend Gribble for non-Aboriginal (15) and Aboriginal (27) students.

The school became segregated after a school inspector's visit, as he regarded mixed education as 'improper'.

Warangesda became the first Aboriginal school to become a government school.

Children were placed in separate dormitories and sent out to 'service' from this school, a precursor to Cootamundra Training Home and Kinchela Boys Home.

Wiradjuri parents protested to the APB about their children being taken away.

Historian Peter Read estimates that 300 girls were sent to service from Warangesda before 1909.

References: Brady (1992) pp 94–98; Elphick (1989) p 41, pp 41–72; Read (1984) p 11.

**1882 Number of Aboriginal children attending schools**

A census conducted by the Protector of Aborigines NSW stated that 200 Aboriginal children were attending school in NSW out of approximately 1500 school-age children

References: Fletcher (1989a), p 54.

### **1883 Brungle Aboriginal School established (south-western NSW)**

Schools were established on some Aboriginal reserves (which did not have an on-site manager) and stations (which had a manager present) such as Brungle Station, after Aboriginal students were refused entry to some public schools.

In other cases they attended local public schools, if there was no non-Aboriginal outcry, for example Botany Heads Public (later La Perouse) and Sandringham Public (Sydney).

References: Goodall (1996) p 110; Duncan (1997) p 194.

### **Aboriginal students attend Botany Heads School (La Perouse)**

Botany Heads (later La Perouse) Public School records mention the attendance of nine Aboriginal children from La Perouse camp.

It is likely that Aboriginal children attended this school with other local children from its commencement in 1868.

References: Mission Publications of Australia (1968), p 8.

### **Aboriginal children were prevented from attending Yass Public School (southern NSW)**

Yass Public school expelled all 15 Aboriginal students from the school after non-Aboriginal parents complained about them attending.

The Catholic school enrolled them, but in a segregated class.

The Minister for Education publicly accepted the case for exclusions of Aboriginal students from schools in NSW when local non-Aboriginal communities excluded their children.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 74; Goodall (1996) p 110.

The Minister for Education stated after the Yass dispute:

‘No child whatever its creed or colour or circumstances ought to be excluded from a public school. But cases may arise, especially among Aboriginal tribes, where the admission of a child or children may be prejudicial to the whole school.’

Minister for Education, George Reid, 1884 cited in Fletcher (1989b) p 74.

### **Aborigines Protection Board (APB) established**

The APB consisted of members of charity bodies, government, police and the legal fields – all non-Aboriginal representatives.

Local police were often used to enact policies, distribute rations and clothing to the sick and aged, and to ‘encourage’ working age men and women to join the cash economy.

The Board favoured segregated government-run stations and supported the existence of separate schools if communities were isolated.

If indigenous children lived close to public schools, the APB supported their attendance.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) pp 57–60.

### **TAFE begins**

The Board of Technical Education assumed management of Sydney Technical School.

TAFE NSW system commenced.

Reference: DET (1983) p 9.

**1884 NSW Education Minister's policy on Aboriginal schooling**

The Minister for Education favoured separate schools in areas with large Aboriginal populations.

Where there were few Aboriginal students they were to attend the nearest public school if they were 'habitually clean, decently clad and they conduct themselves with propriety...'

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) pp 74–75.

**Killawarra school boycott (north coast NSW)**

Non-Aboriginal parents of students at Killawarra Public threatened to boycott the school after an Aboriginal girl attended.

While the Inspector agreed with the non-Aboriginal parents' position, the Education Minister overrode the decision and she was allowed to stay.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 64.

**1887 Wallaga Lake Aboriginal School established (south coast NSW) Wallaga Lake Aboriginal School established (south coast NSW)**

Wallaga Lake Aboriginal School was established on the request of local people, after the NSW Parkes government rejected their appeals for support in 1880 to attend local schools.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 65.

**1890 Forster School exclusions (north coast NSW)**

Non-Aboriginal parents demanded the exclusion of 11 Aboriginal students at Forster claiming they were a 'dangerous presence'.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 67.

**Brewarrina Aboriginal School opens (northern NSW)**

Brewarrina Mission Station Provisional School commenced.

Jimmy Barker who later completed numerous recordings with Janet Mathews, attended the school as a child from 1912.

He experienced violence from some teachers, but others were encouraging.

He taught himself to read, outside school hours.

Reference: Barker (rev. ed. 1988) pp 56–65.

Murawari author Jimmy Barker recalled his schooling at Brewarrina:

'School started in early February, and I shall never forget my first day. Billy and I sat together both feeling very nervous. It was on this day that I learnt how unacceptable Aborigines are to other people. The manager [Scott] told us straight out that we were just nothing... He said it was not much use trying to teach us and that he wanted to make it clear that it was a complete waste of time. I had never before encountered the cruelty and brutality which surrounded us here, and it was a shock to find that this could occur.'

Barker (1988) p 56.

**1891 [Gulargambone Public School exclusions \(central west NSW\)](#)**

Aboriginal students were excluded from Gulargambone Public after petitions were sent by non-Aboriginal parents to the Department of Education.

Though the teacher pointed out they could not be excluded under the ‘clean, clad and courteous’ directive, the Department recommended their exclusion.

References: SRNSW, NRS 3829 [5/16180.2] f.308, 312, 333–4,324–5

**1892 North coast school exclusions**

Rollands Plains, Wauchope and Pelican Island (north coast NSW) Aboriginal schools established after complaints from non-Aboriginal parents about their attendance at local public schools.

References: Fletcher (1989a) p 68; Goodall (1996) pp 109–110.

**1893 Downgrading of the curriculum for Aboriginal school students**

The Aboriginal schools’ course of study was set at a lower standard than that of public schools.

Teachers employed at these schools were often not qualified and the buildings and equipment provided were frequently poor.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) p 101.

**More segregated schools established in north coast and southern NSW towns**

Segregated schools established at Grafton, Cabbage Tree Island (north coast) and Cowra (south-west).

15 of 27 separate schools established between 1883–1909 were established on the north coast according to Goodall.

Aboriginal reserves and independent farms were under pressure from non-Aboriginal communities and closer settlement policies in relation to land.

References: Fletcher (1989a) p 69; Goodall (1996) p 110.

**1894 A simplified syllabus developed for Aboriginal Schools**

The APB requested a modified and less challenging version of syllabus for Aboriginal schools, to which the Education Board agreed.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 84.

**1899 [Gulargambone protests result in separate schools \(central west NSW\)](#)**

Non-Aboriginal parents withdrew their children from the [Gulargambone Public School](#) after Aboriginal students attended.

Various education officials visited and found the children to be acceptable for school attendance, yet the Department still decided to exclude the Aboriginal students.

The separate Gulargambone Aboriginal School was built.

References: SRNSW Gulargambone Aboriginal School 1876–1939, NRS 3829 [5/16180.2]

[\\*Please link to Gulargambone case study](#)

## **1900 Bomaderry Children's Home established (south coast NSW)**

The Bomaderry Home was established by the United Aborigines Mission. Babies and young children were taken away from their Aboriginal families to the home.

As the children grew older they were sent to training homes, such as Cootamundra Girls Home or Kinchela Boys Home, where they were apprenticed to work as servants for non-Aboriginal families.

References: HREOC (1997) Section 10

'John' was taken from his family as a baby to Bomaderry in the 1940s and transferred to Kinchela when he was 10:

'It was drummed into our heads that we were non-Aboriginal. I was definitely not told I was Aboriginal. ... We hardly saw any visitors... None of the other kids had visits from their parents. No visits from family. The worst part is, we didn't know we had a family.'

HREOC (1997) Section 10, p 11.

## **Exclusion from Collarenebri Public School (northern NSW)**

Aboriginal students were excluded from Collarenebri Public after non-Aboriginal parents complained about their attendance.

Aboriginal parents protested unsuccessfully for their readmission.

Reference: Harris (1976) p 4.

## **1902 Exclusion on demand policy for NSW public schools**

Aboriginal children were refused entry to Euroka School (north coast NSW) by the teacher, who was supported by the Inspector and NSW Minister for Education.

A Christian organisation, the Aborigines Mission of NSW, protested to the Minister of Education.

The NSW Minister for Education, John Perry, instructed NSW schools to remove Aboriginal children from school if non-Aboriginal parents complained.

Non-Aboriginal parents frequently claimed diseases were rampant among Aboriginal students, and that they were unhygienic. These claims were rarely unsubstantiated.

Some non-Aboriginal parents claimed in their appeals to the Education Department that their children's moral welfare was at stake.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) p 88.

According to Ella Simon, author and community worker from Purfleet (north coast NSW), her grandfather's school was the first Aboriginal school built in the Purfleet area. Aboriginal children couldn't go to any local school if white parents had any objection. Through the Aboriginal people's hard work, and with the mission's help, the Purfleet school was established.

Simon (1978) p 61.

## **Breeza Public School exclusions (northern NSW)**

Aboriginal children were excluded from Breeza Public School, with the teachers support. Parents of the excluded Aboriginal children petitioned the Minister for Education wanting to know why their children were excluded.

The Minister for Education refused them entry; so Aboriginal parents had little choice but to move to other areas to get access to education for their children.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 90; Fletcher (1989a) pp 76–78.

**1903 Nulla Creek Aboriginal school established (north coast NSW)**

A provisional school for Aboriginal children was established at **Nulla Creek** Reserve after proposed mergers of schools failed.

The APB built the school and the Department of Education supplied a teacher.

Teachers at Aboriginal schools were not required to be qualified.

Reference: SRNSW: NRS 3829 [5/17188.3], f.1

[\\*Please link to Nulla Creek Aboriginal School case study](#)

**1905 Burnt Bridge Aboriginal School established (north coast NSW)**

Burnt Bridge Aboriginal School was established after Aboriginal children were continually refused entry to Euroka Public School.

Aboriginal parents campaigned for this school after their children were rejected from Euroka.

Reference: Goodall (1996) p 110.

**Northern NSW school exclusions**

Aboriginal children were excluded from Collarenebri, Walgett and Mogil Mogil schools in north and north-western NSW.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) p 80.

**1909 Aboriginal Protection Act passed**

This Act increased the influence of the APB over many areas of Aboriginal people's lives.

The Act stated that if Aboriginal children were found to be 'neglected' the Board could take custody of the children.

This enabled the APB to take away children at the age of 14 from their families and 'apprentice' them.

References: Duncan (1997) p 195; HREOC (1997) Section 3, p 2.

Section 7c of the Aborigines Protection Act stated that the intention of the Act was 'to provide for the custody, maintenance and education of the children of Aborigines.'

HREOC, (1997) Section 3, p 2.

**1911 Cootamundra Training School established (south-western NSW)**

Aboriginal girls were removed from their families, and trained as domestic servants, then sent to work for non-Aboriginal families, sometimes for no payment at all.

These training organisations and removal policies had devastating effects on Aboriginal people's cultural connections, family links and relationships to country, causing enormous and ongoing suffering.

Goodall has argued that the APB targeted girls of puberty age for removal, to stop reproduction and cultural transmission. They were concerned that the number of people identifying as Aboriginal was increasing.

20% of the Bringing Them Home Inquiry witnesses who spent time in such institutions reported physical assault having occurred.

References: Goodall (1990,1995); Read (1982); HREOC (1997) Section 3, p 6.

Margaret Tucker, who later became a respected activist and author, experienced violence at the Cootamundra Home and during domestic service.

‘We got used to accepting our fate, although May Myrtle and I would often get homesick. We would go to a quiet corner of the building to talk about home and our family. We would wonder when we would see them again...’

Tucker (1984) p 101.

### **Moonacullah Mission School established (south-western NSW)**

Moonacullah missionaries began teaching at the Mission School.

Margaret Tucker recalled the missionary teachers’ encouragement of students and learning about music and sport.

Ongoing respect for education by elders is also evident in her account of *Nkuppa* Taylor teaching the children about spirituality.

Reference: Tucker (1984)

Tucker recalled *Nkuppa* Taylor speaking with the Sunday school teacher at Moonacullah:

‘...old *Nkuppa* said half in the language and half in English, ‘Do you know we had the Good Spirit a long time before you white people came here? The Good Spirit is everywhere. We know Him long before you white people come, everywhere in the bush He live, Him Good Spirit.’

Tucker (1984) p 58.

### **1913 Aboriginal teacher employed at Moonacullah Aboriginal School (south-western NSW)**

John Lewis, an Aboriginal teacher, was employed at Moonacullah Aboriginal School.

His elitist approach, evident in his reports to the Education Inspector, alienated some of his students.

References: Fletcher (1989b) pp 112–113; Tucker (1984) pp 60–61.

Margaret Tucker recalled:

‘After the missionary ladies left Moonahcullah we had a crippled part-Aboriginal teacher. He was a proud man, and would not mix with the other Aboriginal people on the Settlement... Our people didn’t like him either... His wife and children were friendly though, and one of the step-daughters about my age would sneak down at times to hear my mother telling us stories at night... Later, at Moonahcullah Mrs Hill was our teacher, and it was while she was there that we were taken away to the Domestic Training School at Cootamundra.’

Tucker (1984) pp 60–61.

### **1915 Aboriginal parents take legal action against their children’s exclusion from Bellata Public (northern NSW)**

The parents of an Aboriginal student excluded from a school at Bellata (near Moree) took legal action against the school.

The Quinns' case was unsuccessful despite the solicitor's clear presentation of a strong case for Emily Quinn's re-entry based on her health, cleanliness and family support.

The Education Board successfully defended its policy of exclusion if non-Aboriginal parents complained about Aboriginal students attending the school.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) pp 116–119.

J.Quinn (father of Emily who was excluded though she had attended the school for 4 years) wrote:

‘For the past year my child has been deprived of education and the only reason is that she is the offspring of coloured parents. I am a taxpayer and an elector, so therefore I am assisting to carry the burden of education for the children of NSW... I am perfectly justified in asking that the same facilities of education will be extended to my child...’

Letter to the Minister of Education, 6 March 1916, Bellata School files [5/14854] SRNSW cited in Fletcher (1989b) pp 116–117.

### **1915 The APB's ability to take Aboriginal children away increased**

The Aborigines Protection Amendment Act enabled the APB to take children without having to prove in court that they were neglected.

The APB sometimes used schools as points from which to organise the removal of fair-skinned children to homes.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 100; Tucker (1984) pp 90–94; NPWS (2004) p 12.

Grace Coombs (nee Hickey), a Yuin woman from Wallaga Lake (south coast NSW) who had two older siblings taken away, recalled:

‘We knew about the Welfare when we were living out there at Wooragee. All the kids that went to school at Terara, they all knew about the Welfare. The Welfare fellas would come around looking. They'd pick kids up when they were walking to school.’

NPWS (2004) p 12.

### **1916 Curriculum for Aboriginal schools developed**

An Aboriginal schools curriculum was devised by NSW Education Inspectors.

This curriculum emphasised manual work and presumed that the students were not capable of coping with intellectually intensive work.

The syllabus explicitly stated that teachers were to direct students' schooling towards boys being station labourers and girls domestic servants.

It was set at a lower standard than public school curricula, entrenching educational disadvantage for Aboriginal school pupils.

References: Fletcher (1989b), pp 121–123; Duncan (1997), p 196.

Yuin author Eileen Morgan remembered her school days at Wallaga Lake (South Coast):

‘We never learned too much because Mr Sampey was always being called out... The older girls or boys would take the tiny ones down the front... and read a story to them or ask them to spell. That was done mostly every day because he was always away. Later I discovered that managers like Mr Sampey were not trained teachers.’

Morgan (1994) p 54.

**1917 Walgett school segregation (northern NSW)**

Walgett school became segregated again.

Children excluded from the Walgett school were removed to training homes.

Some of these children never saw their families again.

The APB told parents that their children were being relocated to Angeldool forcing the parents to move.

Several families were sent to Angledool, but walked back to Walgett.

Reference: Goodall (1996) pp 132–133.

**1918 Singleton Aboriginal Boys Home established (central coast NSW)**

Boys were removed from their families and sent to this home.

The Home included a primary school and boys were sent to Kinchela once it was established.

Reference: APB (1921) p 2.

**1919 Third petition against Aboriginal children’s attendance at [Gulargambone Public School](#) (central west NSW)**

Another petition against Aboriginal children attending Gulargambone Public School was organised by several non-Aboriginal families.

Petitions were sent to the Department of Education in 1891 and again in 1899.

The petitioners objected to having Aboriginal children in the same classroom as the white children.

They expressed concerns about the Aboriginal children being ‘on a level footing’ with their children, yet argued they had a different capacity to learn compared to ‘white’ children.

References: (SRNSW, Department of Education, NRS 3829, School Files 1876–1979; [5/16180.1] Gulargambone 1919–1939. Also cited in Fletcher (1989b) pp 122–123.

[\\*See the Gulargambone case study for more detail](#)

The 1919 petition expressed some non-Aboriginal parents’ fears of intermarriage: ‘...the cases of marriage or living together between blacks and whites is very undesirable yet a common school fosters this.’

References: SRNSW, NRS 3829, Department of Education School Files 1876–1979, [5/16180.1] Gulargambone 1919–1939, cited in Fletcher (1989b) pp 122–123.

**1920 Parents not informed of decisions affecting their children’s schooling at [Nulla Creek Aboriginal School](#)**

The times at which classes were held at [Nulla Creek Aboriginal School](#) were altered, but the parents were not consulted or informed.

Later the Inspector also refused to fund the building of urinals for the boys on the grounds that it was an Aboriginal School, so they were not required.

Reference: SRNSW: NRS 3829 [5/17187.4] f.130

### **1921–22 Huskisson public school exclusion and protests (south coast NSW)**

Aboriginal students were excluded from Huskisson Public School after complaints from the Huskisson Progress Association, and the local Parents & Citizens committee.

Mr Campbell protested to the NSW Minister for Education regarding his children not being allowed to attend the school, which he had attended.

He noted that the local police had tried to make him move away with his children to the Wreck Bay reserve and send his children to the Jervis Bay Naval College.

He inferred this was because he spoke out against the racism Aboriginal people were experiencing.

Fletcher has argued that local white people feared economic competition from Aboriginal fishing families who lived in or moved to Huskisson to attend the school.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) pp 123–124.

T. Campbell, the father of the excluded student wrote:

‘As I have been reared here... it comes very hard to think that our children are turned away from school. My father who cleared the timber... so as the school could be erected in 1883... had six of us attend the same school... he was paying weekly for our education. As we are some of the oldest inhabitants of Huskisson I do not see why our children should be turned away...’

T Campbell, Letter to the NSW Minister for Education, 8 Mar 1822, Huskisson School files 5/16348 SRNSW cited in Fletcher (1989b) pp 123–124.

### **1923 Kinchela Boys Home takes students**

The first students admitted to Kinchela ‘training institution’ in Kempsey (North coast NSW).

351 children – 10 girls and 341 boys – went through Kinchela before it closed in December 1962.

The children were cut off from their families and communities. The boys were taught to be farm workers and labourers.

Nearly 1 in 10 boys were abused in institutions like Kinchela according to HREOC.

Some boys attended local high schools.

References: Elphick, B & D (1997) introduction; Ramsland (2004); Lalor and Beckett (2000); HREOC, (1997) Section 10, p 8.

John, who was moved from Bomaderry to Kinchela in the 1950s, recalled:

‘Kinchela was a place where they thought you were animals ... We had a manager who was sent to prison because he was doing it to a lot of the boys, sexual abuse. Nothing was done. We were prisoners from when we were born ... The girls who went to Cootamundra and the boys who went to Kinchela – we were all prisoners.’

HREOC (1997) Section 10, pp 11–12.

**1925 Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA) forms**

The AAPA formed and was led by Fred Maynard.

The AAPA fought against the removal of children, the closure of reserve lands, and argued for citizen rights for Aboriginal people.

Reference: Attwood and Markus (1999) pp 58–59.

**Segregation at Batemans Bay school and protest (south coast NSW)**

Batemans Bay Public School excluded Aboriginal students in response to a petition from the local P&C group.

The APB and the school principal opposed the exclusion, and local Aboriginal people wrote a protest letter to the King of England.

Eventually the letter was sent on to the Governor-General, the Premier of NSW and then to the NSW Department of Education.

The local inspector argued that Aboriginal students must be readmitted to Batemans Bay Public School.

References: Goodall (1996) pp 147–148; Fletcher (1989b) pp 125–126.

A letter sent by an Aboriginal parent to the King of England appealed for public school access:

‘The Quadroon and half-caste people of Batemans Bay have been writing to different places namely the Minister for Education, the Child Welfare Department, the Aborigines Protection Board, and also our members of parliament but we cannot get fair play. Even the reserve where the coloured race were bred and born, the white race are trying to have them turned off on to another piece of land. It is unfair and I hope you will see that fair play be given; let them stay on the land that was granted to them, also compel the children to be sent to the Public School at Bateman’s Bay...’

Ms J Duren to King George V, 14 June 1926, cited in Fletcher (1989b) p 125.

**1932 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal education at Yantabulla (north-western NSW)**

Yantabulla Provisional School was established.

According to Evelyn Crawford who attended the school, students taught the teacher *Burunji* words.

She explained that this language was spoken by children of the area until they were teenagers and had to speak the language of their own tribe/group.

The teacher adapted her teaching methods and some lessons were taught in *Burunji* and English.

As a child, Crawford received a bush and school education at the station.

References: Brady, (1996) appendix; Crawford (1993) p 26.

Evelyn Crawford (Baarkinji), who later became a Teacher’s Aide, Home-School Co-ordinator, and a TAFE Regional Co-ordinator explained her childhood education:

‘The white man’s school was only a part of our life, and not the most important part. We had the white feller school all day, then in the afternoon we’d have to learn all our Aboriginal training. Our teachers were our grandparents and our oldest aunty ... But the most special teachers were uncles – our Mum’s brothers.’  
Crawford (1993) p 26.

‘If you wanted your kids to have the full Aboriginal training, you took them ... Just like the white man doesn’t have to send his kids to University or College, it was like that for us. I could say that our lessons on the sandhills at Yantabulla were our primary schooling, and so our time at Mootawingee was our Aboriginal ‘College.’ Crawford (1993) p 101.

### **1933 Menindee Mission School commenced (north-western NSW)**

The APB relocated Aboriginal people from Wilcannia and Poonindee to Menindee.

Menindee station and the station school were located near a burial ground which distressed the Aboriginal residents.

Tuberculosis outbreaks occurred here also.

References: Elphick (1996) (This book contains a sketch map of the station in 1949 – based on oral history research and completed by local primary students); Goodall (1996) pp 201–202.

### **Moree Aboriginal school established (northern NSW)**

An Aboriginal reserve school was set up at Moree ‘top camp’.

The Aboriginal school was poorly resourced compared to Moree Public, so Aboriginal parents demanded access to the public school for their children.

Child Welfare Officers threatened Aboriginal parents with the prospect of their children being taken away if they refused to send their children to the APB school on the reserve.

Reference: Goodall (1996) p 176.

### **1935 Exclusions in Dubbo (northern NSW)**

Aboriginal children were refused entry to Brocklehurst Public School, Dubbo.

References: Goodall (1996) p 183; *Dubbo Dispatch* 1 July, 1935, p 1

### **1935 Complaints about Kinchela**

Complaints of cruelty and abuse were recorded against the manager at Kinchela

He was accused of being frequently drunk and cruel to boys by withdrawing food, beating them and loaning boys to local farmers.

The Manager was reprimanded but remained employed and was then moved to Cummerajunga Mission (Southern NSW)

References: Goodall (1996) pp 213–214, p 220; HREOC (1997), Section 3, p 5, p 8.

### **School segregation on the north coast**

Baryulgil (north coast NSW) Public School became segregated.

Reference: Goodall (1996) p 220.

### **1936 School closures on the north coast**

Tuncester (north coast NSW) school was closed and moved to Woodenbong, 52km away as part of APB cost reduction and centralisation policies.

The Manager of Runnymede station told Aboriginal people that their children would be taken away if they didn’t relocate.

35 children were left without any schooling as a result of the school closure.

References: Goodall (1996) p 220; Pastor Frank Roberts cited in Fletcher (1989b) pp 176–177.

**1937 NSW Legislative Assembly Select Committee regarding the APB hears Aboriginal criticisms of the APB**

Aboriginal activist William Ferguson of the Aborigines Progressive Association (APA) outlined community problems with APB management, including education to the Select Committee.

Ferguson had recently visited [Gulargambone](#) and commented to the press on the conditions that reserve residents were enduring.

The APA had lobbied for an inquiry in response to increasing APB powers and child removals.

The APA argued for equal rights for Aboriginal people.

References: Fletcher (1989b) pp 178–179; Attwood & Markus (1999) pp 58–60; *Dubbo Dispatch* 17 Sept, 1937, p 6.

Aboriginal activist Bill Ferguson responded to the NSW Select Committee questions:

‘I say that a full-blood can be educated just as well as a half-caste or non-Aboriginal... I say they must have qualified teachers... At present they are not qualified...’

(Legislative Assembly, Select Committee on the Administration of the Aboriginal Protection Board, appointed during the session of 1937–8, Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and exhibits, cited in Fletcher (1989b) p 53.

**Public Schools were encouraged to start readmitting Aboriginal children**

Aboriginal students begin to attend Peak Hill Public (northern NSW) as part of assimilation policies adopted by the NSW government.

Reference: McKeown & Keed (1991) p 135.

**1938 Tabulam Reserve Aboriginal School established (north coast NSW)**

At the Tabulam Reserve School (Turtle Point) the teacher used frequent punishments, and taught basic maths and reading and writing.

The nearest high school was at Casino, so few students from the reserve attended it.

Some of the students such as Charles Moran were being taught by elders Uncle Robin Walker outside of school hours – receiving a dual education.

Reference: Moran (2004), Chapter 2, pp 22–34.

Charles Moran (Bundjalung), who attended Tranby College and is on numerous community advisory groups, comments on his Bundjalung education:

‘I was more interested in my bush education and hunting to provide for myself. My Aboriginal education taught me self-reliance and respect... I also learned to respect the bush but not be afraid of it or anything in it. I learned respect for all things in the wild.’

Moran (2004) p 30.

**Aboriginal protest against the invasion and its aftermath**

The Day of Mourning Conference and protest was organised by the APA in Sydney as a symbolic counterpoint to celebratory Australia Day ceremonies.

People attended from all over NSW including Margaret Tucker, Doug Nicholls, William Cooper and Frank Roberts.

The powerful statement 'Aborigines Claim Citizen Rights' was made at the Day of Mourning and was mentioned in major daily newspapers.

The statement drew attention to invasion and its legacies, attacked the 'Protection' Act and Board, as well as unions for their lack of assistance to Aboriginal workers.

It also mentioned that Aboriginal men who had served in the AIF were denied citizen rights on their return.

A deputation met with Prime Minister Lyons a week later with a plan for recognising Aboriginal people's citizen rights.

Reference: Bandler (1983) pp 54–59.

Jack Patten, Bill Ferguson and other activists raised education as an issue in their statement:

'No-one could deny that there is scope for the white people of Australia to extend sympathetic, or real protection and education to the uncivilized blacks, who are willing and eager to learn when given a chance. But what can be said for a system which regards these people as incurably 'backward' and does everything in its power to keep them backward?'

'Aborigines Claim Citizen Rights' (1938) cited in Bandler (1983) p 55.

### **1938–9 Cummeragunja strike (southern NSW)**

The Cummeragunja Walk-off was led by activist William Cooper in response to the managers treatment of residents, which was contributing to starvation and illness.

They camped at Barmah on the Victorian side of the Murray River and refused to return until the manager was dismissed.

They also called for the abolition of the Protection Board and argued for the granting of full citizen rights to Aboriginal people.

Reference: Goodall (1996) Chapter 18, pp 247–258.

### **1939 Complaints against Nulla Creek Reserve Managers teaching of Aboriginal students (north coast NSW)**

Parents of students attending **Nulla Creek Aboriginal School** (which started in 1903) wrote to the Department of Education, with complaints about the Reserve manager's treatment of residents and his teaching.

They also sent a petition to their local member, Mr Vincent, about the manager's treatment of them.

The APB dismissed him.

Reference: SRNSW: NRS 3829[5/17187.4] f.305, 307, 401–402.

Mrs Scott wrote a letter of complaint about the teaching her children were receiving at Nulla Creek Aboriginal School:

‘My children do not get their full teaching here on this mission station, I have 5 children going to the school. The manager here Mr Dalley comes over to the mission station about 12 o’clock every day instead of teaching the children he’s hunting people out of their endowment homes dogging people away from one home to another. Mr Dalley locks the children in school all day...’I have children turning 14 years of age and can’t read or write yet. We want our children to have a little education.’ ...’

(SRNSW: NRS 3829 [5/17187.4] f.305)

### **The NSW Public Service Board review recommended against education segregation**

The NSW Public Service Board inquiry recommended assimilation rather than segregation policies in education.

The inquiry noted there were major problems with education for Aboriginal people.

This prompted changes in NSW Education Department Policy and contributed to the reformation of the APB.

References: Berg (2003) p 7; Harris (1976) p 4.

### **1940 The APB becomes Aborigines Welfare Board**

The abolition of the APB marked a policy shift from ‘protection’ to assimilation and an increased focus on Aboriginal welfare.

Despite the change in name and focus, the Aborigines Welfare Board still intervened in Aboriginal people’s lives.

Reference: DAA (2001) [www.daa.nsw.gov.au/about/history.html](http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/about/history.html)

### **The NSW Dept of Education responsible for Aboriginal education responsibilities**

The Aborigines Protection Act Amendment meant responsibility for Aboriginal education was formally transferred to the NSW Department of Education.

Reference: Harris (1976) p 4.

### **Aboriginal teachers employed**

The NSW Department of Education started to employ Aboriginal teachers after the APB was abolished.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b), p 194.

### **1941 Exclusion of Aboriginal students from Collarenebri Public School reviewed (northern NSW)**

The NSW Department of Education Chief Inspector, Mr Harkness, ordered the enrolment of students previously excluded from Collarenebri Public School.

Non-Aboriginal parents protested and withdrew their children when Aboriginal children arrived.

Aboriginal families such as the Fernandos and Flicks had lobbied the Education Department to readmit their children at the Public School.

A separate class in an annex building next door was the outcome, with fewer resources provided for the Aboriginal students.

References: Harris (1976) pp 4–6; Flick & Goodall (2004) pp 41–45.

Rosie Fernando, Kamilaroi activist and education campaigner:

‘So we were petitioning the public school for a while at the same time as we were under the bough shed. Even going down to Armidale [Education Department Head Office]... we went down for two or three meetings in 1939 and 1940 to see if we could get into the school – that’s what they were fighting for... So we’d had to petition even to get that Annex, me and this old minister and the policeman.’

Fernando cited in Flick & Goodall (2004) p 41.

### **1943 North Lismore School exclusion (north coast NSW)**

Aboriginal students were excluded from North Lismore Public after political protests by non-Aboriginal communities who opposed their attendance.

Aboriginal students were sent to school at Tuncester, but many received little education at all owing to transport and logistical difficulties getting to the school.

References: Goodall (1996) pp 143–144; Harris (1976) pp 5–6.

### **Aborigines Protection Act amendment regarding exemptions**

Children of parents who obtained exemption certificates (often referred to by Aboriginal people as a ‘Dog Licence’) were able to attend public schools.

Exemption certificates required that holders disassociated themselves from Aboriginal communities and assimilated to access housing and education opportunities that non-Aboriginal people had.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 134, p198; Goodall (1996) p 267; Harris (1976) p 6.

### **1946 Medical certificates required to enrol Aboriginal students in public schools**

Aboriginal children could be admitted to public schools if they had a medical certificate to prove their health status and did not live on a reserve.

This condition of entry to school was not demanded of non-Aboriginal students.

Reference: Harris (1976) p 6.

### **1947 Aboriginal students finally re-enter Collarenebri Public School (northern NSW)**

Gradually Aboriginal students entered Collarenebri Public School in mixed classes.

Reference: Flick & Goodall (2004) pp 41–45

### **1948 First trained teacher employed at [Nulla Creek Aboriginal School \(north coast NSW\)](#)**

A full-time trained teacher, RC Dennis was employed at [Nulla Creek Aboriginal School](#).

Parents had complained in 1946 to the Department of Education about the education their children were receiving from manager-teachers who were unqualified.

References: APB (1948) p3; SRNSW: NRS 3829 [14/7760]

**1949 Aboriginal students re-enter the public school system in some areas**

The NSW Department of Education no longer required medical certificates for entry to schools.

But children could still be prevented from attending if non-Aboriginal parents complained.

Many young students experienced hostility and racism from non-Aboriginal students.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 198; Harris (1976) p 6.

Elsie Heiss, (Wiradjuri) from Cowra (southern NSW) discussed the prejudice she encountered at her 'integrated' school:

'... I went to an Aboriginal mission school. When I went to the non-Aboriginal school it was a nightmare... because we weren't wanted in the school. They didn't lift the colour bar until 1948... and I remember sitting down with my father, crying and saying, I hate school because they hate us. They don't want us there, the teachers don't like us. They put us down the back of the rooms. The kids didn't want to touch us because they thought they're going to catch a germ of some kind ... it was really hard.'

Heiss (2003) pp 215–216

**1951 Segregated education ends in Collarenebri (northern NSW)**

Students previously educated in the separate annex at Collarenebri were moved into classes in the main school.

Reference: Harris (1976) p 7.

**1953 Aboriginal activists take education issues in [Gulargambone](#) (central west NSW) to the Department of Education**

Aboriginal activist Pearl Gibbs and the Council for Aboriginal Rights took complaints about the substandard education Aboriginal students were receiving at [Gulargambone](#) to the Minister of Education in Sydney.

They proposed integrated education as a solution.

Reference: AWB c6178 box 2801, cited in Fletcher 1989a, p 231.

**1956 First Graduate Aboriginal School teachers begin teaching**

Aboriginal teaching graduate Evelyn Robinson began teaching at Burnt Bridge Aboriginal School (north coast NSW)

James Stirling, another early graduate teacher, began teaching in 1962 at Cabbage Tree Island School (north coast NSW).

Reference: Reid (2000) p 200.

**1957 Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines & Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) formation**

Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines & Torres Strait Islanders formed.

This organisation, which initially had non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal membership, acted as a national organiser of local and state campaigns for rights for Aboriginal people.

References: Bandler (1983); O'Brien (1987) p 104.

### **Tranby College established (Sydney)**

The Co-operative for Aborigines Ltd which set up Tranby Aboriginal College was formed.

An Anglican Minister, Rev. Alf Clint left a bequest to fund co-operative education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Tranby aimed to equip people to manage small businesses and develop self-employment skills training, resulting in economic and social independence for Aboriginal and TSI people.

Several unions gave crucial financial support to the organisation.

Initially, many staff volunteered their time and skills, but now teachers are employed and paid.

The college became independent in 1962 and received government funds for expansion after 1982.

Tranby continues to provide teaching and learning facilities to adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is a place of community meeting and organisation.

References: Newman (1999); Tranby Aboriginal College (no date) <[www.tranby.edu.au/index.pl?page=2](http://www.tranby.edu.au/index.pl?page=2)>; Plater (ed) (1994); Tranby Co-op for Aborigines (1986)

Kevin Cook, activist, former student and CEO of Tranby:

‘Tranby is run by Aboriginal people so it caters for the needs of Aboriginal people... The students who come here come because they want to be here not because they have to. In other institutions there might only be one or two in a class. Here there are 25 Aboriginal people together. They all come from different backgrounds, but they form a community in itself – a very tight community.’

Kevin Cook, cited in Plater et al (1994) p 189.

### **1958 Gulargambone Aboriginal School closes (central west NSW)**

**Gulargambone** Aboriginal School closed and students re-entered the public school.

This was seen by the AWB as a step towards assimilation (where Aboriginal students were to be treated the same as non-Aboriginal students, but with no respect for cultural differences).

There were threats of a boycott by non-Aboriginal parents, but Inspector Meckiff and Aboriginal parents resisted their pressure, forcing a grudging acceptance of Aboriginal children at the school.

Aboriginal students were still treated differently in class and were separated from other students.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) p 233.

*\*See Gulargambone case study*

### **NSW Teachers Federation opposes segregation**

The NSW Teachers Federation opposed segregated Aboriginal schools and supported integration policies.

Reference: Fletcher (1989b) pp 226–227.

### **1961 NSW Teachers Federation research into Aboriginal education**

Inspired by the FCAATSI conference in Queensland, the NSW Teachers Federation conducted a study of conditions in Aboriginal schools based on surveys with teachers at Aboriginal schools.

References: Fletcher (1989b) p 229; Fletcher (1989a) pp 271–272.

### **1962 Save the Children Fund pre-schools begin**

The first Save the Children Fund pre-school for Aboriginal children opened at Coffs Harbour (North coast NSW).

The teacher assistants were all Aboriginal women, as Aboriginal people of the area considered this culturally appropriate.

Save the Children Fund pre-schools were started at Walgett, Brewarrina, Griffith, Armidale and La Perouse.

References: *Dawn* (1964b) p 2; *Dawn* (1974) p 7.

### **1963 Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee (AECC)**

The Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Education, based on Aboriginal community organisation was formed.

This group consulted with Aboriginal people regarding their education desires and needs and conveyed this information to the NSW Education Department.

They recognised that Aboriginal families needed to be involved in education.

At this stage the group received little funding.

Reference: Berg (2003) p 14.

### **1965 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS, later AIATSIS) formed**

The AIAS Act enabled the establishment of a national center in Canberra to document Aboriginal cultures.

The AIAS Act has since been expanded to include Torres Strait Islander people.

The organisation has expanded its role from documenting Indigenous cultures into training Indigenous researchers and has become a major centre for Indigenous family history research and academic work.

References: Nakata (2004a);

<[www.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/wentworth/wentworthcontents.htm](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/wentworth/wentworthcontents.htm)>

<[www.aiatsis.gov.au/about\\_us](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/about_us)>

#### **First Aboriginal graduate from the University of Sydney**

Charles Perkins graduated with his BA from University of Sydney.

He is the first known Aboriginal graduate from this university and had the support of an ABSCHOL scholarship.

He became a well-known activist (famous for his role in organising the Freedom Rides), leader, public servant in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and author.

References: *Dawn*, October, 1963; Read (2001) p 73.

#### **Freedom Rides drew attention to racism in country towns**

Charles Perkins and other students who were members of SAFA (Student Action for Aborigines) organised a tour of country towns such as Moree, Boggabilla, **Gulargambone** (central west NSW) and Kempsey (north coast NSW).

The tour and their meetings with local people in northern NSW drew media and government attention to explicit racism experienced by Aboriginal people – such as exclusion from local pools, pubs, milkbars and cinemas.

The tour also noted discrimination in education, and the poor standard of education that Aboriginal students were receiving.

References: < [www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/freedomride/start.htm](http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/freedomride/start.htm)>;  
Curthoys, Ann (1965) cited in  
<[www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/freedomride/start.htm#Gulargambone](http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/freedomride/start.htm#Gulargambone)>; Read (2001) pp 98–100.

Charles Perkins explained the significance of the Freedom Rides:

‘It was the beginning of a flood of new relationships, a new era in looking at ourselves as Aboriginal people.’

Perkins cited in Read (2001) p 103.

### **NSW Teachers Federation study of Aboriginal education**

The Teachers Federation study found that there was a lack of teacher training for Aboriginal education, which was affecting students’ learning.

The report demonstrated that Aboriginal students were leaving secondary school early and were often struggling, according to teachers.

Economic pressures and racism also created difficult learning environments for students.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) pp 276–279.

### **1966 University of Queensland’s first Aboriginal graduate**

Margaret Valadian graduated with a BA Social Studies from the University of Queensland – the first Aboriginal University graduate from this university.

Valadian has advised government and education organisations on reforms to school education and higher education and is the author of numerous works on education issues.

References: Heywood/National Foundation for Australian Women. (2002) *Margaret Valadian*, <[www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0213b.htm](http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0213b.htm)>; Valadian (1991).

Valadian (1991) suggests that the reasoning behind institutional schooling was to give Aboriginal children a minimal education suitable only to prepare them for the most basic level of employment.

### **Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) Scholarship Scheme started**

The AEC started Incentive Secondary Scholarships and coaching.

This program assisted 27 Aboriginal students to continue their schooling and to complete their leaving certificates.

Their successful work was supported entirely from fundraising and volunteer labour.

Reference: Berg (2003) pp 17–18.

### **Aboriginal Study Centres established (Sydney)**

A study centre was set up at La Perouse for Aboriginal students.

The AEC provided resources, and teachers and university students volunteered to assist Aboriginal students with their schoolwork.

The study centre was managed by the La Perouse community.

Other study centres followed at Kellyville, Green Valley, Alexandria and Chippendale.

References: Berg (2003) p 27; *Dawn* (1970) p 9.

### **1967 The 1967 referendum impact on Aboriginal education**

The successful referendum result enabled the Commonwealth Government to make laws regarding Aboriginal people (previously a state responsibility) and to recognize Aboriginal people as Australian citizens.

The federal government had a greater role in Indigenous education after this date, and could allocate funds and develop policies for Aboriginal education.

Reference: DEST(2001) p 8.

### **Aboriginal pre-school at Purfleet (north coast NSW)**

A pre-school was established for Aboriginal children in Purfleet with the assistance of Save the Children Fund and local fundraising.

It is now known as Girrawong Pre-school, and operates as an Indigenous community-based pre-school.

References: Davis-Hurst (1996) p 85; *Dawn* (1967) p 15.

### **Kirinari Hostel opens (Sydney)**

Kirinari Hostel opened in Sutherland (Sydney) by the Aboriginal Children's Advancement Society.

Aboriginal students from remote areas boarded at the Hostel and received AEC scholarships to attend local high schools.

While some students thrived on scholarships and life in the city, some found the estrangement from their families and friends and racism made their school experiences very challenging.

References: 'Kirinari: a place of learning', *Dawn* (1972) p 3; Berg (2003) pp 30–31; Morgan (2006) p 46; Goodall (2004) p 142.

### **1968 AWB dissolved**

The Aboriginal Welfare Board was abolished and approximately 1000 children were left in institutional or family care.

Reference: HREOC (1997) Section 3, p 8.

### **1969 ABSTUDY established**

Commonwealth Aboriginal Secondary grants scheme announced.

This program was based on the AEC model for incentive scholarships.

The scheme provided financial assistance to students having difficulty completing school due to economic problems.

Reference: Berg (2003) p 19.

Millie Butt who attended Cowra Mission School (southern NSW) in the 1950s and 60s:

‘I had to leave school because of financial problems. Couldn’t afford uniforms, couldn’t afford lunch money, couldn’t afford shoes, sports uniform and all the things you need to have in school... I didn’t even complete the first year of high school. I had to talk my mother into letting me leave. I said ‘I want to leave, I want to get a job. I want to help out in the family.’

Millie Butt cited in Read (1984) p 21.

## **1972 The NSW Department of Education was no longer allowed to refuse Aboriginal students entry to public schools**

The Director General of Education removed public school principals’ right to refuse entry to Aboriginal students after letters of complaint appeared in national newspapers.

The letters pointed out that the Teachers Handbook allowed for Aboriginal students’ exclusion due to home conditions or non-Aboriginal community opposition.

In response, the section was removed.

References: Parbury (1999) p 72; Harris (1976) pp 7–8.

### **Aboriginal Teachers Aides employed**

Vera Byno from Weilmoringle and Heather Allen from Walhallow (northern NSW) were employed as Aboriginal Teachers Aides by the AEC.

Teachers Aides assisted students with language and teaching approaches in the classroom and were educational role models.

The NSW Department of Education created 22 Aboriginal Teachers Aide positions after the initial intake.

References: Berg (2003) pp 21–23; *New Dawn*, 1973, p 14 .

### **Tent Embassy in Canberra established**

The Tent Embassy was established in front of Parliament House, Canberra.

It drew attention to ongoing effects of dispossession and the lack of compensation received by Indigenous communities.

The Tent Embassy is still occupied today, despite various attempts to remove it by police.

Reference: Goodall (1996) pp 338–339.

## **1973 Scholarships program extended**

Scholarships were extended to all Aboriginal students attending secondary school.

The extension of scholarships was recognition of the economic difficulties, which many Aboriginal students and their families faced in completing education.

Reference: Berg (2003) p 19.

#### **1974 Technical Education courses for Aboriginal students**

Sydney Technical College began to offer vocational training courses designed for Aboriginal students without their School Certificate qualification.

Courses in engineering trades and home science were offered as well as classes in expression, Aboriginal cultures and industry.

Reference: Neill (1991) p 78.

#### **Aboriginal education staff lobby for Aboriginal Teachers Aides**

Evonne Bolton, Bill Rose, Olive Campbell, Evelyn Crawford and others took the case for the employment of Aboriginal teachers and Teachers Aides in schools to the NSW Education Department.

Reference: Crawford (1993) pp 260–262.

#### **1975 Schools Commission and the formation of the Aboriginal Consultative Group**

The Commonwealth Schools Commission established a standing committee to advise them on Aboriginal education, selected by Indigenous people from across Australia.

The Committee recognised that education needed to be considered in a wider context of health and welfare and recommended the establishment of consultative groups in each state and liaison social workers for schools.

It acknowledged developments such as outstation schools, employment of indigenous teachers, bilingual programs and tertiary courses developed for indigenous students.

The advisory group became the Aboriginal Consultative Group.

References: O'Brien (1987); Fletcher (1989a) pp 312–313; Partington (1998) pp 48–49.

#### **Education for teachers regarding racism**

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs provided support for programs in race relations for teacher education students.

This recognised that training teachers needed to learn more about Aboriginal cultures, students and learning approaches.

Reference: Elphick (1989) p 216.

#### **Aboriginal Teachers Aide course began at the University of Sydney**

Alan Duncan and Heather Allan established the Aboriginal Teachers Aide training course at the University of Sydney.

The course acknowledged that professional recognition and training was required for this important role.

Aboriginal educators such as Joyce Woodberry started work at schools in La Perouse, Redfern and Mt Druitt (Sydney).

Evelyn Crawford in Brewarrina (Northern NSW) and Betty Wright (Kempsey) were other early graduates.

References: Berg (2003) pp 23–24; Woodberry (2003) p 154; Courtney (1984), p 3.

Foundational NSW AECG member Joyce Woodberry:

‘Education is such an important issue to us. To me, it’s a tool that makes other things possible. If you don’t have education you can’t get a job, it involves your health and if your health is no good and you don’t get decent housing – it just gets worse.’

Woodberry (2003) p 155.

### **National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) formed**

National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association established in Sydney.

This organisation established Arts training programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

NAISDA eventually included certificate and diploma courses with academic, training and cultural studies included.

Reference: Horton (1994) p 755.

### **Aboriginal Unit established at the NSW Department of Education**

The Aboriginal Unit at the NSW Department of School Education was established.

Education providers begin to cater for specific needs of indigenous students.

References: NSW AECG Inc and NSW DET (2004).

## **1976–7 Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) development and expansion**

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (including Margaret Valadian) advised the Commonwealth Schools Commission to establish state AECGs.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission assisted with funding state Education Departments to form their own AECGs.

AECGs provide invaluable guidance and involvement in Aboriginal education through community representatives.

Reference: Parbury (1999) pp 77–78.

Evelyn Crawford (Baarkinji), Teachers Aide, Home-School Co-ordinator, TAFE Regional Co-ordinator for Far Western NSW:

‘About this time, the white education people were agreeing with what we’d been talkin’ about on that tree root on the river bank at Bre – that it would be good if there was someone who could advise them about Aboriginal people. It was us four [Bill Rose, Olive, Evonne and Evelyn] that started what became the Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group (AECG).’

Crawford (1993) p 269.

### **Adult education – management training initiatives**

Natasha McNamara and Margaret Valadian lobbied for funding to conduct management training programs to equip remote communities to run their own organisations.

They established the Aboriginal Training and Cultural Institute in Balmain, Sydney to provide Aboriginal people with training in community management and Aboriginal Studies.

References: Valadian (1991) p 7; Plater et al (1994) p 244.

According to Valadian (1991), in those days the AECG provided the only means of channelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' views to State and Federal governments.

**1976 First Aboriginal law graduate from the University of NSW**

Pat O'Shane, formerly a teacher in Queensland schools, became the first Aboriginal graduate from Law at UNSW.

She later became a magistrate.

Reference: Heiss & McCormack (2002)

[www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/timeline/timeline.htm](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/timeline/timeline.htm)

**1977 NSW Anti-Discrimination Act passed**

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act made discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race or gender illegal.

An Anti-Discrimination Board was established to investigate cases.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) pp 314–315.

**Aboriginal Fellow appointed at Armidale (northern NSW) College of Advanced Education (CAE)**

Armidale College of Advanced Education appointed Lillian Holt as their first Aboriginal Fellow.

Holt planned the first diploma of Aboriginal Studies offered at Armidale CAE.

Reference: Elphick (1989) p 216.

**1978 Anti-Discrimination Board Report on Aboriginal Education**

The Anti-Discrimination Board Report on Aboriginal Education recommended that the NSW Education Department develop education policies with Aboriginal people which would support self-determination.

It also recommended employment of Aboriginal people at higher levels of management and decision-making.

Reference: Fletcher (1989a) pp 317–322.

**Aboriginal Programs developed at Sydney Technical College**

The first co-coordinator of Aboriginal Programs was employed at Sydney Technical College.

Reference: Neill (1991) p 84.

**Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Education at Armidale CAE (northern NSW)**

The Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Education offered at Armidale College of Advanced Education.

It was one of the earliest programs in Aboriginal Education offered in NSW.

James Miller author of *Koori: a Will to Win* was a graduate of this course.

Reference: Elphick (1989) p 216.

### **1979 Aboriginal Education programs developed by TAFE**

Aboriginal Education Programs were developed by the Department of Technical and Further Education.

Many Aboriginal students returned to education as adults, favouring the combined work/study approach of TAFE, as well as the flexibility of the courses.

References: NSW AECG Inc and NSW DET (2004) p 35; Parbury (2005) p 189; DET (1983) p 104.

Elsie Heiss (Wiradjuri) discusses her experience of TAFE:

‘I didn’t really start re-educating myself until about 1988, when I went back to TAFE and said, I’ve got to get more education’... I went right through. I did a fulltime TAFE course... I got the highest marks in the TAFE in 1989! I thought that was a great achievement for someone who had only finished off in Year 8.’

Heiss (2003) p 218.

### **1980 National Aboriginal Education Committee Policy**

The NAEC committee, which emerged from the Aboriginal Consultative Group, produced the first Indigenous education policy.

It emphasised the importance of building on cultural heritage, the importance of Indigenous studies for all Australian people, promotion of cross-cultural understanding, skills acquisition, and Aboriginal people’s involvement in managing their own education.

Reference: Partington (1998) pp 49–50.

### **1982 NSW Aboriginal Education Policy**

The first NSW Aboriginal Education Policy was developed, as advised by the AECG and DET.

It focused on involving Aboriginal communities and students in education, enhancing Aboriginal students self-esteem and cultural identity, and teaching all students about Aboriginal societies past and present.

References: Parbury (1999) p 78; Horton (1994) p 168; Wray et al (2005b) p 1.

### **1983 NSW Land Rights Act passed by NSW Parliament**

The Act was intended to partially compensate Aboriginal people for loss of land through invasion, through allocation of a proportion of land tax to communities through land councils.

This is especially important in intensively occupied NSW.

The Act saw the establishment of NSW Land Councils system.

Reference: Goodall (1996) p 356.

### **Tertiary Preparation course pioneered by Tranby**

Tranby College established the initial Aboriginal Tertiary Education Preparatory course.

Tranby staff worked with TAFE teachers to develop TAFE’s preparation courses.

These programs eased the transition to study for people who were returning as adults to study and for students who had left school early.

Numerous organisations have developed such programs since.

Reference: Tranby Co-op (1986) p 10.

#### **An example of local education initiative**

Peak Hill Public School (northern NSW) developed an Aboriginal education policy with Aboriginal communities in the area and the local AECG.

Reference: McKeown & Keed (1991) p 136.

#### **1984 Eora College starts in Redfern, Sydney**

Eora an indigenous college that focused on visual arts and media within TAFE system commenced.

Numerous performers, artists, filmmakers have trained there since its establishment.

Artists Gordon Syron and Bobby Merritt were involved in establishing the college and were early teachers at Eora.

References: Review of Aboriginal Education, Ch3, p 166; NMA (2007) [www.nma.gov.au/events/naidoc\\_week\\_2007/who\\_you\\_callin\\_urban\\_forum\\_program/speaker\\_gordon\\_syron/](http://www.nma.gov.au/events/naidoc_week_2007/who_you_callin_urban_forum_program/speaker_gordon_syron/); Pattison, (1987) p 8.

#### **1985 Aboriginal Medical Student Entry Program begins at University of Newcastle**

The Medical Students Program commenced at the University of Newcastle with the aim of increasing the number of qualified ATSI people in medical fields.

Community representatives were involved in the selection of students and pre-admission bridging courses were offered to successful applicants.

Awabakal Aboriginal Co-operative and the Awabakal Medical Service were involved in the program from the outset.

References: Goldman & Garvey (2006); University of Newcastle Faculty of Arts and Education (2006) <[www.newcastle.edu.au/school/aboriginal-studies/about/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/aboriginal-studies/about/)>; Wright (1992) pp 166–167.

#### **1985 TAFE initiative to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers**

TAFE NSW introduced a recruitment and training program for indigenous teachers.

Reference: Pattison (1987), p 10.

#### **Some funded positions at universities for indigenous students**

The Commonwealth Government Aboriginal participation scheme funded extra places for Indigenous students in higher education.

This was recognition of low participation rates for Indigenous students and inequity of access.

References: Ellis (2001) p 59; Davis-Hurst (1996) p 133.

Patricia Davis-Hurst from Purfleet (north coast NSW) a graduate of Aboriginal Health and Community Development at Cumberland College of Health Science (Sydney) commented in 1987:

‘Going to College was a real test, imagine being 53 years old with limited education, (there were quite a few older Kooris who went through with me) and having to sit through all the difficult sessions... I think over a period of time the white educators were learning from us and the role of teaching was reversed many times. Many teachers told me they enjoyed the whole experience of working with Kooris, and it is a good thing when we can learn from each other’.

Davis-Hurst (1996) p 133.

## **1986 Jumbunna Aboriginal Education Centre opens at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS)**

Aboriginal students at UTS such as Frances Peters-Little and Ken Canning argued for an Aboriginal centre at UTS.

Jumbunna provides tutorial help, support, teaching in Aboriginal programs and curriculum development for the university.

References: De Bruce (1993); Plater et al, (1994) p 205.

### **First Aboriginal Principal in higher education**

TAFE NSW employed the first known Aboriginal Principal in an Australian tertiary education institution.

Reference: Pattison (1987) p 10.

## **1987 Aboriginal Studies in schools made compulsory**

The Aboriginal Education Policy was made mandatory for all NSW schools.

However, if few Aboriginal students were enrolled teachers often regarded it as ‘irrelevant’ and it was not taught.

Reference: Parbury (1999) p 78.

Joyce Woodberry, a foundational NSW AECG member, commented on Aboriginal Studies in schools:

‘It’s not just for Aboriginal kids, it’s important for all kids.’

Woodberry (2003) p 158.

### **Aboriginal Studies resources distributed to schools**

*Survival: a History of Aboriginal People in NSW* was published.

This accessible text was delivered to all public schools in class sets and widely used in teaching Aboriginal Studies courses.

Reference: Parbury (1988).

## **1988 Survival Day**

A commemoration of 200 years of colonisation and 200 years of Indigenous peoples’ survival was held.

A Survival Day concert and march was held in Redfern.

### **Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre formation**

NAISDA expanded as an organisation and developed two major streams – the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre and the academic program/college.

Graduates have performed with Bangarra Dance Theatre and other international touring companies, while others have worked in film, television, modeling, opera and the public service.

References: Horton (1994) p 755; Plater et al (1994) p 211.

### **Kamilaroi teaching fellow appointed at the University of NSW**

Eualeyai/Kamilaroi historian Paul Berendt was appointed teaching fellow at UNSW and asked to introduce Aboriginal content and perspectives to courses.

He established the Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre at UNSW (now called Nura Gili).

Reference: *National Indigenous Times*, Nov 2, 2006.

Professor Larissa Behrendt (Kamilaroi/Eualeyai) reflected on her experiences studying and teaching law:

‘At the University of NSW, like other universities, there are courses for Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal issues are being integrated more and more into curriculums. That makes it sound like it is a natural progression, but... behind those step-by-step changes is the hard work, sweat and tears, arguments and frustrations of people working in Aboriginal Education.

‘... I would not have made it through the first year without the support of the Aboriginal student centre... If the atmosphere of a safe place can be generated by Aboriginal student centres on university campuses they provide an important lifeline for Aboriginal students.’

Behrendt (1996) p 7.

### **Hughes Report into Aboriginal Education**

The Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force report (also known as the ‘Hughes Report’) recommended a national policy to address inequities and problems in Indigenous education.

The findings became the basis of NATSIIEP (National Aboriginal and TSI Education Policy) later NIEP.

References: DEST (2002) p 8; Parbury (1999) pp 78–79.

### **1989 National Aboriginal and TSI Education Policy (NATSIEP) developed**

Australian Education Council (Council of State and Federal Ministers for Education) developed a National Aboriginal and TSI Education policy.

The policy aimed to work towards equity in Aboriginal education and contained 21 agreed national goals for Indigenous education.

The policy included making Aboriginal heritage a part of all school curricula for all students to increase cross-cultural understanding.

References: Parbury (1999) p 78; DEST (2002) p 8.

[www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/national\\_goals\\_for\\_indigenous\\_education.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/policy_issues_reviews/national_goals_for_indigenous_education.htm)

### **Aboriginal Education Centre at the University of Sydney**

The Aboriginal Education Centre was established at the University of Sydney.

The Centre, known since 1992 as the Koori Centre, provides support and resources for Aboriginal students.

References: Mooney & Cleverly (2006) < [www.koori.usyd.edu.au/aboutus/history.shtml](http://www.koori.usyd.edu.au/aboutus/history.shtml)>

### **Gnibi College of Indigenous Australians opens at Southern Cross University, Lismore**

Gnibi College uses teaching methods based on Indigenous principles and offers innovative approaches to higher education.

The college includes a keeping place, a support centre for students, courses in Indigenous Studies, recognition of Elders' knowledge and teaching in Elders' programs, partnership programs with community organisations and government, and research centres.

References: personal communication with Gnibi College staff, April 2008; Southern Cross University (1996) <[www.scu.edu.au/schools/gnibi/index.php/21/](http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gnibi/index.php/21/)>

### **1990 Tertiary Education scholarships**

AEC scholarships program for Aboriginal students entering tertiary education commenced.

Reference: Berg (2003) p 20.

### **Respected author a guest speaker at a once-segregated school (Baryulgil, north coast NSW)**

Dr Ruby Langford-Ginibi, author of *Don't Take Your Love to Town* (1988) visited Baryulgil school to speak with students.

The visit was part of a research trip for her book *My Bunjalung People*, a history of Coraki/Bonalbo Koori lives in the area in which she grew up.

The book includes some discussion with schoolteachers about language and culture teaching at the school.

Reference: Langford-Ginibi (1994) pp 158–159.

Bunjalung author and educator Dr Ruby Langford-Ginibi told the Baryulgil teachers:

‘They are hungry to know more about us. This country cannot deny its history anymore! It’s been denied for too long. If our history was taught in the schools it would promote a better understanding of Aboriginal people and their culture... we Kooris need to educate ourselves so we are not years behind everybody else.’

Langford-Ginibi (1994) p 163.

### **1991 National Inquiry into Racist Violence Report**

This report noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were subject to racist violence emerging from racist attitudes endemic in the police force and other institutions.

A key recommendation of the report was the criminalisation of racist violence.

Other recommendations included training for schoolteachers in anti-racist and cross-cultural approaches, and school curriculum support for respecting cultural diversity.

An information kit for Indigenous communities informing them of their rights, and guides for media workers were other outcomes.

References: O'Shane (1994); Craven (1999b) p 20.

### **Deaths in Custody Royal Commission releases education recommendations**

The Royal Commission, which commenced in 1987, handed down its final report.

The report discussed Aboriginal people's experiences of segregated schooling and the continuing legacies and impact of this in relation to their over-representation in prisons.

- The Commission's education-based recommendations included:
- Aboriginal perspectives in curricula and consultation
- improving teacher education
- developing bridging pre-school programs
- increasing Aboriginal input in education
- providing further training.
- support for NATSIEP strategies and approaches
- financial assistance to enable students' participation in education
- recognition of the importance of Aboriginal Education Workers.

These national findings influenced reforms to NSW education policies.

Reference: Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody (1991) Chapter 33.

### **Pemulwuy Community High School opens in Sydney**

This independent Aboriginal school opened in Newtown, Sydney.

It was based on Indigenous principles of education.

Pemulwuy Community High closed in 1993.

References: Heiss & McCormick (2002);  
<[www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/timeline/timeline.htm](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/timeline/timeline.htm)>; Matheson (1991); Plater et al (1994) p 209.

### **1991 Aboriginal Studies offered as an elective at HSC level**

Studies have shown that the senior Aboriginal Studies course being offered is an incentive for Aboriginal students to continue their schooling beyond Year 10.

The Aboriginal Studies course is perceived by Aboriginal students to assist with the development and affirmation of their self-esteem and identity.

References: Wray et al (2005a), p 2; Wray et al (2005b) summary.

### **Federal Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation formed**

Education was recognised by the federal government as a means to promote reconciliation.

Through education, a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and contemporary cultures could be developed, assisting the process of reconciliation.

Reference: Craven (1999b) pp 19–20.

**1992 The High Court Mabo decision**

The High Court Mabo decision dismissed the notion of *terra nullius*, recognising Murray Islanders' tenure system.

**1993 WIPC:E (World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education) conference held at Wollongong (South Coast)**

Wollongong hosted the World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education, bringing together indigenous educators, researchers and students from around the globe.

WIPC:E is a forum for exchanging ideas, strategies and knowledge among diverse indigenous communities.

The first conference was held in Canada in 1987, followed by another in NZ in 1990.

The 2008 conference will be held in December in Melbourne.

Reference: WIPC:E (1993) <[www.halcyon.com/pub/FWDP/International/wipce.txt](http://www.halcyon.com/pub/FWDP/International/wipce.txt)>

**1994 Aboriginal Studies for Years 7–10**

The Aboriginal Studies Years 7–10 Syllabus was introduced in NSW schools.

Reference: Parbury (1999) p 78.

**1995 Revised policy for NSW Aboriginal education**

'All students-all staff-all schools' NSW Aboriginal Education Policy developed.

It focused on improving Aboriginal students' education as well as educating all students about Aboriginal Australians.

The policy was devised by the AECG and the Department of School Education Aboriginal Unit.

References: Parbury (1999) p 78; Parbury (2005) p 189; NSW AECG Inc & NSW DET(2004)

Lola Ryan who is involved in school and prison visits in Sydney explained the changes in education she has witnessed:

'Since I've been visiting the schools, I've seen big changes... In the past the Aboriginal child at school, especially high school, could have a bad time, but since Aboriginal culture has been included as part of the curriculum the schools seem to have changed for the better.'

Ryan (2003) p 21

**1995 National Education Policy**

The Ministerial Council on Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), a national partnership of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments developed a taskforce on Indigenous education and agreed upon national goals for schooling.

References: NSW AECG Inc and NSW DET (2004) p 9; Parbury (1999) p 79.

**1996 High Court Wik Decision**

Recognition that co-existence of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on pastoral lands did not necessarily extinguish native title.

**Aboriginal education training for University of Newcastle teacher education students**

An indigenous Higher Education Centre, Wollotuka, was established at University of Newcastle.

Wollotuka offered a compulsory Aboriginal Education Unit for all teacher education students within the Graduate Diploma of Education.

References: University of Newcastle Faculty of Arts and Education. (2006)  
<[www.newcastle.edu.au/school/aboriginal-studies/about/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/aboriginal-studies/about/)>

### **Aboriginal Education Unit opened at Miller TAFE (Sydney)**

Robyn Williams and Merv Donovan co-ordinated the Miller Aboriginal Education Unit, which was established to promote and support training and education for indigenous students in western Sydney.

Williams was especially supportive of education for Aboriginal women, early childhood education and Aboriginal Studies.

References: *Liverpool Champion* (1996); Dixon (2004), p 12.

### **1996 Educating teachers about Aboriginal students and Aboriginal Studies**

Teaching the Teachers: Indigenous Australian Studies Project of National Significance manuals for primary pre-service teachers were published.

This project was developed from 1991 onwards, to better equip teachers to teach Indigenous students and Aboriginal Studies in schools.

Subsequent studies have shown that such courses have had a positive impact in schools in increasing respect for ATSI cultures among students and teachers.

References: Craven (1999a); Craven (2005); Wray et al (2005a)

### **1997 National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (NATSIEP) 1996–2002**

Revised NATSIEP agreement made across all levels of government involved in Aboriginal education.

A key agreed aim was to have all children leaving school able to read, write, spell and add.

References: NSW AECG Inc and NSW DET (2004).

### **NSW Reconciliation Council formed**

The NSW Reconciliation Council was formed from the NSW State Reconciliation Committee, chaired by former teacher Linda Burney (Wiradjuri).

The NSW Reconciliation Council supported and promoted reconciliation initiatives involving communities and government.

Reference: NSW Reconciliation Council Inc.(no date) <nswrecon.com/about\_us/history.php>

### **Bringing Them Home/'Stolen Generations' report released**

HREOC *Bringing them Home* report released.

This powerful report documented the policies of child removal and their impact on Aboriginal communities, families and individuals who were taken to Cootamundra, Kinchela and other training organisations.

Aboriginal people's experiences of cultural dislocation, health problems, trauma, racism and ongoing damage are evident in their testimony.

The report recommended that the history of child removal policies and the ongoing effects be included in school curricula.

Reference: HREOC (1997)  
<[www.hreoc.gov.au/social\\_justice/bth\\_report/report/index.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/report/index.html)>

### **1998 Sorry Day recognised in NSW schools**

Sorry Day activities commemorated in schools.

Sorry Day was recommended by *Bringing Them Home* as a public recognition of the harm caused by child removal policies and as a reconciliation/healing process.

References: Parbury (1999) p 86; HREOC (1997) [www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/sorry/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/sorry/)

### **1998 HSC Aboriginal Studies revised**

The Aboriginal Studies syllabus was revised to develop student knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people's experiences both historical and contemporary.

Concepts of shared histories were also a central focus of the new Aboriginal Studies syllabus, which was revised along with other curricula across NSW at this time.

Reference: Wray et al (2005b), p 1.

### **1999 First NSW Croc Festival held at Moree (Northern NSW)**

Annual Croc Festivals bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school students in remote areas together to perform and learn about health, sport and career options.

References: Parbury (2005) p 193; Global Rock Challenge (no date) <[www.crocfestivals.org.au](http://www.crocfestivals.org.au)>

### **Teaching Aboriginal Studies resource available**

*Teaching Aboriginal Studies* was published.

This significant teaching resource emerged from extensive consultation, discussion and conferences held as part of the 'Teaching the Teachers' project.

Reference: Craven (1999a)

### **2000 North coast pre-school programs**

The AEC's *Jarjum* program for pre-schoolers started at Cabbage Tree and Coraki Public (North coast NSW)

The program developed children's oral and literacy skills as preparation for school education.

Reference: Berg (2003) p 29.

### **Reconciliation Events**

Broad support for reconciliation was demonstrated in a historic walk across the Harbour Bridge by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, supported by the NSW Reconciliation Council.

Other state and territory capitals also held mass events.

Reference: NSWRC (no date) <[nswrecon.com/about\\_us/history.php](http://nswrecon.com/about_us/history.php)>

### **National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Training Strategy (NIELNS)**

NIELNS is a Commonwealth initiative to improve Indigenous students' participation and learning in reading, writing and numeracy skills.

Reference: DET (2000) <[www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications/2000/LNS.pdf](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications/2000/LNS.pdf)>

### **2003 AEC secondary scholarships**

Secondary scholarships for Indigenous students in Years 8–9 were introduced by the AEC.

Reference: AEC (2005) <[www.aec.org.au/AboutTheAEC.aspx](http://www.aec.org.au/AboutTheAEC.aspx)>

### **Aboriginal educator elected to NSW parliament**

Linda Burney (Wiradjuri) was the first Indigenous person to be elected to the NSW parliament.

Burney had been a teacher and was president of the AECG from 1988–98.

She was extensively involved in Aboriginal education initiatives, such as developing the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy.

Reference: Kovacic & Lemon (2005) <[www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE1256b.htm](http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE1256b.htm)>

### **2003–4 Review of Aboriginal Education**

An extensive examination of problems and strengths in education was conducted by DET and AECG.

It involved field trips around the state to meet with more than 4000 teachers, students, staff and community members.

The report recommendations included:

- strengthening policy, planning and implementation
- supporting quality teaching and learning
- strengthening the identities of Aboriginal students
- engaging Aboriginal students in learning – especially through greater community involvement
- applying Aboriginal cultural knowledge
- collaborating in partnerships
- building community capacity in challenging racism
- developing Aboriginal leadership and accountability

Reference: DET & AECG (2004)  
<[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/aboriginaledu/the\\_report.htm](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/aboriginaledu/the_report.htm)>

### **2004 Maths and literacy programs developed by Aboriginal Education Unit, DET**

Several maths and literacy development programs designed to suit community cultural contexts and to develop student abilities were developed.

Reference: DET (2004)  
<[www.aboriginaleducation.nsw.edu.au/vet\\_programs/Teaching\\_and\\_Learning\\_Resources.pdf](http://www.aboriginaleducation.nsw.edu.au/vet_programs/Teaching_and_Learning_Resources.pdf)>

### **Aboriginal Language Programs: sharing experiences**

Schools such as Broulee, Vincentia (south coast NSW), Lightning Ridge Central, Forbes North, St Joseph's Walgett (northern NSW) and Parkes High (south-western NSW) have developed Aboriginal language programs.

They shared the lessons they had learnt through video, photos and other material online, to encourage and assist other teachers and communities to develop their own programs.

Reference: BOS (2004) <[ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/](http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/)>.

## **2005 Aboriginal Languages syllabus for NSW schools & a Language Resource Centre opens**

Aboriginal Languages Resource Centre was established.

NSW Aboriginal Languages syllabus from Kindergarten to Year10 introduced by the Board of Studies NSW and the NSW Department of Education.

Language revival and teaching are important ways of keeping culture, identity and expression alive.

The syllabus focuses on students gaining language skills, studying languages as systems and understanding the relationship between land, language, culture and identity.

The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs supported the development of language programs in jails and detention centres.

A disproportionate number of Aboriginal people spend time in prison, making it a key area for education programs.

References: DAA (2004) <[www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/langpolicy.html](http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/langpolicy.html)>; Poetsch (2003) <[www.fatsil.org/VOTL/Articles/25-3.htm](http://www.fatsil.org/VOTL/Articles/25-3.htm)>

Uncle Stan Grant Snr, a founder of the Wiradjuri Language Development Centre stated:

‘This will increase children’s self-esteem and sense of identity and help them understand who they are and where they come from. Their language is their country. Language belongs to the land, it is who you are.’

Reference: Cited in Poetsch (2003)

## **2006 Expansion of Indigenous Language Programs**

46 language programs were operating in NSW schools in 10 languages: Bundjalung, Dharawal/Dhurga, Dharug, Gamilaraay/ Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay, Gumbaynggirr, Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba, Dughutti–Thungutti, Wadi-wadi, Wangkumarra and Wiradjuri.

Reference: Aboriginal Languages Research and Resources Centre (NSW) (2006) <[www.alrc.nsw.gov.au/pages.asp?page=&pubid=102&issid=109&artid=226&pgid=206](http://www.alrc.nsw.gov.au/pages.asp?page=&pubid=102&issid=109&artid=226&pgid=206)>

### **Aboriginal Education Training Strategy**

This response to the 2003 review was designed to improve Aboriginal education to a level compatible with other students.

Reference: DET (2006) <[www.aboriginaleducation.nsw.edu.au/strategic\\_policies/index.html#strategy](http://www.aboriginaleducation.nsw.edu.au/strategic_policies/index.html#strategy)>

### **Developing and valuing staff in Aboriginal education**

NSW DET Aboriginal Human Resources Development plan devised, which included strategies to retain staff, mentor future staff, provide development opportunities and educate all staff about Aboriginal cultures.

Reference: DET (2006)

[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat\\_direction/corporate/ahrd/ahrd\\_bochure.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/corporate/ahrd/ahrd_bochure.pdf)

**2007 Aboriginal education achievement awards**

The First *NSW Schools Nanga Mai Awards* were held.

The awards recognise achievements in Aboriginal education in New South Wales – for students, staff, community members, schools and other education employees.

Reference: DET (2007) <[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/awards/nanga\\_mai.htm](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/awards/nanga_mai.htm)>

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