

OUTBACK GHETTOS



To Norm Etherington and those long dinnertime conversations

Studies in Australian History

Series editors: Alan Gilbert, Patricia Grimshaw and Peter Spearritt

Steven Nicholas (ed.) Convict Workers
Pamela Statham (ed.) The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities
Jeffrey Grey A Military History of Australia
Alastair Davidson The Invisible State
James A. Gillespie The Price of Health
David Neal The Rule of Law in a Penal Colony
Sharon Morgan Land Settlement in Early Tasmania
Audrey Oldfield Woman Suffrage in Australia
Paula J. Byrne Criminal Law and Colonial Subject



OUTBACK GHETTOS

ABORIGINES, INSTITUTIONALISATION AND SURVIVAL

Peggy Brock

DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY





CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521447089

© Cambridge University Press 1993

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1993

Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication data

Brock, Peggy, 1948-

Outback ghettos.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 43435 1.

ISBN 0 521 44708 9 (pbk.).

1. Koonibba Mission Station – History. 2. Nepabunna Mission – History. 3. Poonindie Mission (Poonindie, S. Aust.) – History. [4]. Aborigines, Australian – South Australia – Cultural assimilation. [5]. Adnyamathanha (Australian people. [6]. Aborigines, Australian – Missions – South Australia – History. I. Title. 305.8991509423

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Brock, Peggy, 1948-

Outback ghettos: A history of Aboriginal institutionalisation and survival.

Peggy Brock.

p. cm. (Studies in Australian history)

Includes bibliographial references and index.

ISBN 0-521-43435-1. ISBN 0-521-44708-9 (pbk.)

1. Australian aborigines – Government policy. 2. Australian

aborigines - Cultural assimilation. 3. Australian aborigines - Social

conditions. 4. Social integration – Australia. 5. Acculturation –

Australia - History. 7. Australia - Politics and

government. I. Title. II. Series.

GN666.B75 1993

306'.0899915-dc20

93-16329

CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-43435-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-44708-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.



Contents

List of maps/illustrations		vi
Abl	viii	
Note on currency and measurements		ix
Acknowledgements		
1	Introduction	1
2	Legislation and policy: The context of outback ghettos	11
3	Poonindie, home away from 'country'	21
4	An established community and its destruction	43
5	Koonibba, a refuge for west coast people	63
6	Institutional upheaval and adjustment	89
7	Dispersal and the end of the mission era	103
8	Adnyamathanha, survival without institutionalisation	121
9	Nepabunna mission	138
10	The ghetto experience and survival	156
Sel	ect Bibliography	168
Index		176

v



List of maps/illustrations

List of maps				
Australia showing South Australia and mission locations	15			
Poonindie region				
Koonibba region	64			
Flinders Ranges	123			
List of illustrations				
Poonindie				
St Matthew's Church, Poonindie	27			
Portrait of Samuel Kandwillan, a pupil of the Natives' Training Institution, Poonindie,				
South Australia, by J. M. Crossland, 1800–58	30			
Farm machinery and implements, late 19th century, Poonindie	33			
Poonindie Mission, mid-1860s	38			
Adults and children, Poonindie, c. 1885	47			
A photograph that was probably taken about the time Poonindie closed in the 1890s	57			
Koonibba				
Christmas at Koonibba in the first years of the mission	70			
Koonibba workers, c. 1901	75			
Six young women on the verandah of the Children's Home, c . 1914	81			
Koonibba church on the day the Children's Home was opened	83			
-				

vi



	LIST OF MAPS	vi
Koonibba mission buildings, c. 1914	84	
A group of children on the verandah of the Children's Home, c. 1914	94	
Mr F. M. Linke with confirmation class, Koonibba, between 1909–15	97	
Nepabunna		
Rufus Wilton with Mavis Patterson, late 1930s	133	
Nepabunna Mission	140	
Stone hut with pressed kerosene tin roof, Nepabunna, late 1930s	142	
Hut made of lime mortar on chicken wire, Nepabunna, late 1930s	143	
Fred McKenzie, late 1930s	147	
An Aboriginal camp with women in mourning, North Flinders Ranges	151	
Donkey team pulling car body, Nepabunna, late 1930s	165	



Abbreviations

AL	Australian Lutneran
AMB	Aboriginal Mission Board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia
CL & I	Crown Lands and Immigration
GRG	Government record group, Public Record Office of South Australia
LKA	Der Lutherische Kirchenbote für Australien
PRG	Private record group, Mortlock Library of South Australiana
SAPP	South Australian Parliamentary Papers
SAPRO	South Australian Public Record Office
SRG	Societies record group, Mortlock Library of South Australiana
UAM	United Aborigines Mission

viii



Note on currency and measurements

Currency

In the currency used during the period dealt with in this book, there were 12 pennies (d.) in one shilling (s.), and 20 shillings in one pound (\pounds) .

The sum of 10 shillings and 6 pence could be written as 10s 6d or as 10/6. A farthing was a quarter of a penny, and a guinea was £1 1s.

When Australia changed to decimal currency in 1966, \$2 was equal to £1.

Mass

1 ounce (oz) = 28.3 g 1 pound (lb) = 454 g 1 stone = 6.35 kg 1 ton = 1.02 t

Area

1 acre = 0.40 ha 1 square mile = 2.59 km²

Length

1 mile = 1.61 km

Volume

1 pint = 0.57 L 1 gallon = 4.55 L 1 bushel = 0.036 m³ = 36.4 L



Acknowledgements

This book could not have been researched and written without the cooperation of many people. First I would like to thank the Aboriginal people and communities with whom I worked for their cooperation and interest in researching their history. In particular the Adnyamathanha, who participated in numerous field trips and the Koonibba Community Council for their invitation to research their history. Also Doreen Kartinyeri, a descendant of the Poonindie people, who produced genealogies which link present-day Aboriginal people with the history of Poonindie. The Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people I interviewed for this study are too numerous to mention, but I thank them all for their willingness to work with me and for the information they contributed.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Aboriginal Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Planning in South Australia, for its support of my research and its foresight in recognising the importance of post-contact history to the heritage of Aboriginal people of South Australia. Vlad Potezney of the Aboriginal Heritage Branch drafted some of the maps reproduced in this book, others were drawn up by the graphics department at Edith Cowan University and I thank them for their assistance.

The staff at the Mortlock Library of South Australiana and the South Australian Record Office have assisted me over many years and I would like to acknowledge their help. Also, I would like to thank the archivist at the Lutheran Archives for his cooperation in making Koonibba records available and arranging for the transcription of records in the old German script into spoken German. I would like to acknowledge C. V. Eckermann's assistance in introducing me to the Lutheran Archives, correcting some of my German translation and challenging my interpretation of Koonibba history from his own deeply committed perspective.

Professor Fay Gale and Dr John Young supervised the PhD thesis on which this book is based and I thank them for their interest in my research over many years. Finally I thank my husband, Norman Etherington, for his unflagging interest and enthusiasm in this project and his invaluable critical comments on final drafts.

x