Calculating lives: the numbers and narratives of forced removals in Queensland 1859 - 1972

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“But there are other important side-issues in connection with the reserves and these are:
Upon what grounds are we justified in removing Aboriginals to these reserves at all?”

Walter Roth, *Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1901*, p. 18

**STATEMENT**

I certify that this work is an original piece of research. It is based on primary sources and, except where otherwise acknowledged, the findings and conclusions are my own. All primary and secondary sources are acknowledged and correct to the best of my knowledge. The material contained in this thesis has not been submitted, in whole or part, for a degree at this or any other university.

Mark Stephen Copland
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ABSTRACT

European expansion caused dramatic dislocation for Aboriginal populations in the landmass that became the state of Queensland. On the frontiers, violence, abductions and forced relocations occurred on a largely informal basis condoned by colonial governments. The introduction of protective legislation in the late nineteenth century created a formal state-directed legal and administrative framework for the forcible removal and institutionalisation of Aboriginal people. This became the cornerstone for policy direction in Queensland and remained so into the mid-twentieth century.

This thesis traces the development of policies and practices of removal in Queensland from their beginnings in the nineteenth century through to their dismantling in the mid-twentieth century. There has been much historical research into frontier violence and processes of dispossession in Queensland. The focus of this study is the systematic analysis of archival data relating to the forced removals of the twentieth century.

The study has its genesis in an Australian Research Council Strategic Partnership with Industry — Research and Training Scheme (SPIRT) grant. This grant enabled the construction of a Removals Database, which provides a powerful tool with which to interrogate available records pertaining to removals of Aboriginal people in Queensland.
Removals were a crucial element in the gathering and exploitation of Aboriginal labourers during the twentieth century. They also constituted a major form of control for the departments responsible for Aboriginal affairs within the Queensland administration.

Tensions between a policy of complete segregation and the demand for Aboriginal labour in the wider community existed throughout the period of study. While segregation was implemented to an extent in relation to targeted sections of the Aboriginal population, such as “half-caste” females, employer insistence on access to reliable, cheap Aboriginal labour invariably took precedence.

Detailed analysis of recorded reasons for removals demonstrates that they are unreliable in explaining why individuals were actually removed. They show a changing focus over time. Fluctuations in numbers of removals for different years reflect reasons not officially acknowledged in the records, such as the need to populate newly created reserves and establish institutional communities. They tell us little about the situation of Aboriginal people, but much about the racial thinking of the time.

This study contributes to our knowledge base about the implementation and extent of Aboriginal child separation in Queensland. A comprehensive estimate of the number of separations concludes that one in six Aboriginal children in Queensland were separated from their natural families as a result of past policies.
Local Aboriginal Protectors (usually police officers) played a major role in the way that the policy of removals was implemented. Local factors often determined the extent of removals as much as policy direction in the centralised Office of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. Removals took place across vast distances, and the Chief Protector was often totally reliant on local protectors for information and advice. This meant that employers and local protectors could have a major impact on the rate of removals in a given location.

Responses of both Protectors and Aboriginal people to the policy of removals were not always compliant. Some Protectors worked to ensure that local Aboriginal people could remain in their own community and geographical location. Aboriginal people demonstrated a degree of resistance to the policy and there are a numerous recorded examples of extraordinary human endurance where they travelled large distances in difficult circumstances to return to their original locations and communities.

The policy of removals impacted on virtually every Aboriginal family in the state of Queensland and the effects of the dislocations continue to be experienced to this day.
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Abbreviations

BTH – Bringing Them Home  Report of National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission

CPA – Chief Protector of Aboriginals

CPH – Community and Personal Histories Branch, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Queensland Government.

DATSIP - Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Queensland Government.

DCPA – Deputy Protector of Aboriginals

DNA – Director of Native Affairs

DDNA – Deputy Director of Native Affairs

HREOC – Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission

NAA – National Archives of Australia

PA – Protector of Aboriginals

RCIADIC – Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

RD – Removals Database . This refers to the database constructed as a part of this project. The database is the property of Community and Personal Histories, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Queensland Government
Introduction

The policy of removals affected every Aboriginal family and community living in the state of Queensland between 1897 and 1971. Even if they were not directly affected, all Aboriginal people living during this period knew of the policy and adapted their lives accordingly. This past policy continues to have an impact in contemporary Australian society. Debates over native title in the 1990s centred on whether Aboriginal people retained rights in the soil following the effects of dispossession.¹ In 2005, Aboriginal people still need to prove a “continuing connection” with country in order to have their native title rights recognised as part of the federal government’s legislative framework of native title. Removals are an important factor when claimants endeavour to “prove continuing connection” to land.

Following the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families in 1997, the term “removal” in relation to Aboriginal people has popularly been understood to mean the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents. This study deals with the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents, but also looks at the removal of adults, and in some cases the removal of whole communities.²

¹ An example of this is Senator Brian Harradine’s speech in which he described how Aboriginal people for thousands of years had, “savoured the soil”: Australian Federal Parliament, Senate Hansard, Tuesday 25 November 1997: p.9438.
² Two examples of this: in 1908 the word tribe is an entry in the removals register to describe people being removed from Blackwater to Barambah; and in 1916 a whole community was removed from Kuranda to Mona Mona: QSA Removals Register A/64785 p.9;119.
From the first incursions of Europeans into the colony of Queensland, Aboriginal people were forced to move from their own territories. Whilst they were officially to be treated as British subjects, in reality this treatment did not include freedom of movement. For much of the nineteenth century, an ad hoc system of removals existed, and this period of ‘informal removals’ will be dealt with in Chapter 1 of the thesis. This changed with the passing of the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*, which gave the Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs in Queensland the legal power to remove any Aboriginal person to a reserve.3

The policy of removals has been described as ‘the cornerstone’ of the Queensland reserve system, yet it is difficult to define what constitutes a removal.4 The difficulty in defining “a removal” can be seen when one considers how the policy affected Aboriginal people in Queensland. Aboriginal people who were forced to sign “employment agreements” whilst not living on reserves or missions could also be considered to have been forcibly removed from their country. A large number of these people had no real choice in the signing of agreements. For more than 8 per cent of removals, “refusal to work or sign an agreement” was the stated reason.5 The intersection between employment and removals policies will be dealt with in depth in Chapter 5.

Whilst I would argue that employment agreements and bonds were a form of removal, it is beyond the scope of this project to deal with them in detail due to the extensive time

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3 This was lawful under section 9 of the 1897 Act. Aboriginal people exempted from this legislation could not be removed — although the exemption could be revoked at any time.

required for further research and the many challenges in the archival records. Nevertheless, this area is one that requires similar historic attention to removals. The use of cheap and unpaid Aboriginal labour contributed much to Queensland’s economy. At the same time, it impacted severely on the economic base and family life of many Aboriginal people.

Definition of Removal

As outlined above, Aboriginal people were forced to move for a variety of reasons. The expansion of European settlement and violence on the frontier forced Aboriginal people to seek refuge or to relocate. Abduction of men, women and children accompanied the expansion of pastoral, agricultural and fishing industries. The first chapter of the thesis concentrates on the emergence of the policy of removals in nineteenth century Queensland. These early removals often took place with the tacit approval of the state. This study will focus on removals that took place within the formal or legislative framework of the state. For the purposes of this study, a removal is taken to mean:

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5 CPH Database. Removals involving employment will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

6 More than two years of detailed primary research at the Queensland State Archives and the office of Community and Personal Histories has been undertaken for this research project. This has involved more than 400 days spent on reading records and data entry. A similar period of time would need to be spent researching bonds and employment agreements. The nature of the data relating to employment of Aborigines would also bring a range of challenges to such a task. The annual reports for the department responsible for Aboriginal affairs between 1900 and 1947 record 156 113 employment agreements or permits. The actual number of Aboriginal people employed during this period could be considerably higher. One reason for this is that a single employment permit or agreement was often issued for a number of Aboriginal employees. Thousands of employment agreements were issued for a period as short as a month, and many of these were not recorded in a central register. If we looked at the period from 1900 to 1971, the number of agreements would be well over 200 000. To combine employment agreements with removals as part of a useable database would have been impossible to achieve within the timeframe of this project. The nature of employment records could not be manipulated in a similar way to the removals database, but other quantitative methodologies could be applied to the data.
The forcible movement of an Aboriginal person to a church or state run institution. This action is brought about or sanctioned by the state often through the use of race-based legislation.

These removals are distinct from the sending of Aboriginal people to gaols or welfare institutions set aside for the use of the wider public. Put simply, they are instances where Aboriginal people have had their freedom almost totally restricted due to their racial background. In saying this, it is recognised that the criminal justice system often clearly discriminated along racial lines. McGuire and Finnane have demonstrated the uneven application of justice to Aboriginal people during the colonial period. In a study of punishment of Aborigines in the colonies of Queensland and Western Australia, they link the treatment of Aboriginal prisoners with the development of the ‘race-specific incarceration’ that is the focus of this study;

Underlying the perception that racially-specific policies were required for indigenous offenders was the idea that Aborigines themselves were irreconcilably different.

This thesis represents the most comprehensive analysis of Aboriginal removals in Queensland to date. Whilst other states and colonies in Australia had similar practices of

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8 Term used by Finnane and McGuire, ibid.
9 ibid., p. 285.
removal, the nature of records held in those states would preclude similar analysis. As a result of this work, it is now possible to know who was removed along with factors affecting removals over a period of 112 years. This has been made possible through the construction of the Removals Database.

The Removals Database

This survey and analysis of removals in Queensland has been a part of a SPIRT project initiated by Regina Ganter and Mark Finnane in partnership with the Community and Personal Histories (CPH) Branch of Queensland’s Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP). The outcome of the collaboration between Griffith University and the DATSIP is the Removals Database.

The Community and Personal Histories Branch was established in 1992 in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC). The CPH Branch assists members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Queensland to conduct family and community historical research. The final RCIADIC report highlighted the importance of ensuring that Aboriginal people have access to archival documents relating to their own families.

Access to knowledge can assist: to reinstate pride in family experiences; enhance a stronger sense of identity; re-establish contacts with family members; reaffirm interaction within broad family networks; revive and

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10 Personal communication with Peter Read for New South Wales, Anna Haebich for Western Australia and Tasmania, Peggy Brock for South Australia and Bill Wilson for the Northern Territory.
maintain Aboriginal traditions, understand the historical background of contemporary personal issues; re-claim ownership of material pertaining to family life; develop resource and enhance research skills.\textsuperscript{12}

This thesis contributes to this effort to make archival collections more accessible to Aboriginal people in Queensland. This database is the property of DATSIP. It is now possible to search for removals by year, place name, personal name and in some cases tribal name. The database also provides the user with access to information gleaned from thousands of files previously not researched in a systematic fashion. The archival evidence used in constructing the database dates back to 1859 — the year that Queensland was proclaimed a separate colony. The database and the archival evidence used to construct it form the basis of this thesis. Chapter 2 describes the construction of the database. The influence of three Chief Protectors of Aborigines (CPA) is also examined.

RCDIAC touched upon the devastating effects of policies of Aboriginal child separation. In investigating the backgrounds of Aboriginal people dying in custody, the Royal Commission found that “the impact of earlier programs of separation of families, forced relocation and institutionalisation was a significant underlying issue.”\textsuperscript{13} In 1990, the Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care submitted that there was no Aboriginal family untouched by the policy of child separation.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11} Australian Research Council Strategic Partnership with Industry — Research and Training Scheme.  
\textsuperscript{12} Commissioner Dodson, RCIADIC National Report Volume 2, Section 11.7.19.  
\textsuperscript{13} J.H. Muirhead, RCIADIC, Interim Report, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.12.  
\textsuperscript{14} RCIADIC, National Report, Volume 2, Section 11.7.7
In 1995, the federal government established a Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. Over a period of two years, the inquiry took written and oral evidence from across the country. The findings of the inquiry were tabled in the federal parliament in May 1997. In an essay titled “In Denial: The Stolen Generations and the Right”, Robert Manne highlighted the significance of the inquiry.

No inquiry in recent Australian history has had a more overwhelming reception nor, at least in the short term, a more culturally transforming impact. … Very rapidly the question of Aboriginal child removal moved from the margin to the centre of Australian self-understanding and contemporary political debate.\(^{15}\)

The creation of this database clearly addresses one of the key recommendations of the Inquiry’s *Bringing Them Home Report* (BTH):

Recommendation 22a: That all government record agencies be funded as a matter urgency by the relevant government to preserve and index records relating to Indigenous individuals, families and/or

communities and records relating to all children, Indigenous or otherwise, removed from their families for any reason.\textsuperscript{16}

The database has been developed in a way that protects the privacy of individuals in keeping with recommendation 22b of \textit{BTH}. It is able to generate statistics that will contribute to our understanding of the process of removal while at the same time fulfilling a primary objective — that of better enabling Indigenous Queenslanders seeking to piece together the jigsaw that past government policies and actions have created.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody also recommended:

\textit{Recommendation 53. That Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments provide access to all government archival records pertaining to the family and community histories of Aboriginal people so as to assist the process of enabling Aboriginal people to re-establish community and family links with those people from whom they were separated as a result of past policies of government. The Commission recognizes the questions of the rights to privacy and questions of confidentiality may arise and recommends that principles and process for access to such records should be negotiated between government and appropriate Aboriginal organizations, but such negotiations should}

proceed on a basis that as a general principle access to such documents should be permitted.\textsuperscript{17}

The object of this thesis is to analyse the details and findings of the database and policies of removal. Whilst a number of historians have dealt with removals to date, there has not yet been a systematic analysis of the policies and practices of removal of Indigenous people in Queensland.

This discussion and analysis will focus on the removal of Aboriginal people. It is recognised that many Torres Strait Islander people were also removed and came under legislation that made this removal “legal”. The database includes Torres Strait Islander removals that fall under the definition of a removal, but it is beyond the scope of the thesis to deal with the experience of Torres Strait Islanders in the thorough and systematic manner that this deserves.

\textbf{The Data}

The data used in the construction of the Removals Database has been drawn largely from government documents and files held at the Queensland State Archives. These primary documents range in dates from 1859 to the 1980s. Between 1859 and 1896, the Colonial Secretary’s Department was the main administrative arm of the newly formed Queensland government. All 807 bundles of Colonial Secretary’s Department

\textsuperscript{17} RCIADIC National Report, Volume 2, 1991, Section 11.7.21.
correspondence held in the Queensland State Archives were carefully combed for evidence of Aboriginal people removed within the state.

Between 1900 and 1971, three handwritten registers of removals were kept by the office of the CPA, later the Director of Native Affairs (DNA). These removals registers form the backbone of the database but contain many gaps. For example, the first legislation empowering the state to remove Aboriginal people on the basis of their racial background was the *Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act* 1865, yet the first register begins with removals from 1900. This database includes all recorded removals prior to 1900.

The majority of removals are contained in two main registers covering the years 1908 to 1971, but no removals are recorded in these registers for the years 1936 to 1942. This study takes into account all removals prior to 1908 along with other removals which have “fallen through the cracks” of the existing registers. Many removals not found in the registers can be located in other files and documents. These gaps have been plugged through a thorough examination of hundreds of removal cards and thousands of correspondence files and official reports, mainly located within the government departments responsible for Aboriginal affairs throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The records of nineteenth century children’s institutions have been drawn upon for this project but, for reasons of privacy, individual records within the Department of Children’s Services (or its later equivalent) have not been accessed.
Two years have been spent daily attending the Queensland State Archives and the CPH offices. The actual number of hours spent on the primary research phase of this project far exceeds two years because at times I worked with a research assistant and fellow postgraduate student combing records for evidence of removals. The equivalent of nine months’ full-time research was spent on researching the colonial period alone. Records from the Police Department, the Health and Home Affairs Department, the Department of Children’s Services, the Lands Department along with the Premier’s Department have been accessed as part of the research for this project.

**Ethical Considerations**

The research plan for this project has been submitted to the Griffith University Ethics Committee and adheres to the guidelines of the National Health and Medical Research Council. Aboriginal historian Jackie Huggins has highlighted a number of important ethical issues that need to be considered when writing about Aboriginal people. In a chapter titled “Respect versus Political Correctness”, she argues the importance of proper consultation with relevant Aboriginal organisations. One of Huggins’ guiding principles for such research is that “the material needs to empower not disempower Indigenous people”. This research has involved almost daily working with staff from Community and Personal Histories Branch of DATSIP. In the research and public dissemination of this work, I have listened to and valued the advice of Aboriginal people working in the Community and Personal Histories Branch.

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18 Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (Queensland government).
20 Ibid.
Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus note that the work of white historians may be regarded with scepticism and hostility by some Indigenous Australians. In their preface to *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights*, they argue that no field of research should be “constrained” by such feelings:

We reject the idea that fields of study should be the sole preserve of particular groups or that some sort of certificate of authenticity be required before one can work in a field such as this. It is our view that the historical imagination cannot be thus constrained — that a work needs to be assessed on its merits, not on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion or political beliefs of the author.21

While the ethnicity of the author should not impact on the subject written about, the degree of government surveillance which created the records drawn upon for this study should always be kept in mind. Aboriginal people in Queensland had many aspects of their lives recorded and judged by authorities in a way unimaginable to the rest of the population in a liberal democracy. When a researcher works with material of a sensitive nature, ethics require that the person conducting the research use that information in a manner that the persons being researched would find appropriate. This is not to say that one’s academic freedom to interpret or analyse the material has been inhibited. The fact is that the researcher has been granted a privilege in accessing this material and should

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ensure that, as far as possible, the dignity of the people about whom the records are written is maintained. Peter Read has raised the issue of Australian historians having a code of ethics when working in this and other areas of history. He argues that, whilst academic freedom remains central, the time has come “to allow that other considerations also are relevant to the academic process”.

What, then, are these “other considerations”? In discussing the need for access to records for Aboriginal people the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody considered the pain this access can cause:

The effect of seeing information which has been kept confidential, because it is private information, or because it was the practice in some States to document every governmental action and ungenerous remark of an administrator, can be devastating. Sympathetic counselling, especially by other Aboriginal people who have themselves been adopted or institutionalised, such as the Link Up staff, ought to be available to Aboriginal people who gain access to records of their family. We should be mindful of the emotional hurt which can be caused.

Almost every removal entered into the database has an accompanying stated reason for that removal. The majority of these reasons are of a subjective nature, and many contain sensitive information concerning individuals regarding such things as health and morality.

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along with subjective judgements and assumptions. This information is restricted from public access and CPH works to ensure that only family members of those removed have access to these details. The database provides the user with what might be termed "hard data" — where individuals were removed from, removed to and the year that this removal took place. An archival reference is also provided to the database user. To access the stated reasons for removal, the database user must follow current protocols administered by CPH.

Much sensitive material is contained in the general correspondence files used in the construction of this database, and the privacy of the individual has been maintained in the use of these files. Other personal files containing information specifically relating to individuals and their families have not been accessed in the research for this project. The database has been constructed with the aim of facilitating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s easy access to information regarding their families and ancestors.

Issues of Interpretation

There is no denying the historical fact of removals. The contest or debate begins when the motivations behind and reasons used for these removals are considered. A plethora of reasons for removal can be found in the removal orders. These include “immoral conduct”, “refuses to work”, “mixes with Chinese”, “neglected”, “for own good”, “inciting other aboriginals to [sic] strike”, “for medical treatment” and “dangerously affected by moon”.24 Chapter 3 of the thesis critically examines these stated reasons and analyses their use over time to determine whether they were excuses for removal or had
some basis in the claims that they made. In stating this it must be made clear that, whether or not the stated reasons had any basis they can in no way be seen as justifying the removal of Aboriginal people to a life of institutionalisation. The policy of removals was a racialised policy which treated Aboriginal people as a separate group. This thesis will show, that even when need was identified amongst the Aboriginal population, removal did little to alleviate this need.

The study will use numbers and narratives to arrive at a better understanding of the development of the policy of removals in Queensland. Numbers will be used as a way of interrogating the motives and factors affecting removals.

Numbers have played a central role in recent debates in Australian history. In March 2000, the federal government made a submission to a Senate Committee Inquiry into the Stolen Generation that disputed calculations and estimates of separated children discussed in BTH. The submission argued that the number of separated children did not constitute a “stolen generation”. One of its principal propositions was that the proportion of Aboriginal children separated from their parents was no more than 10 per cent and that there had never been a generation of stolen children. This submission built upon the work of a small number of newspaper columnists and non-historians such as P.P. McGuinness in the Sydney Morning Herald and Ron Brunton in Brisbane’s

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24 QSA Removals Registers A/64785 and A/64786.
25 Federal government submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee Inquiry into the Stolen Generation, March 2000, p.18
26 ibid., p. ii.
\textit{Courier Mail} attacking \textit{BTH}. Articles also appeared in metropolitan newspapers and journals such as \textit{Quadrant} and \textit{The Institute of Public Affairs Review}.

\textit{Quadrant} nurtured and supported another Australian historical controversy involving numbers in September 2000. Former academic and author Keith Windschuttle delivered a paper entitled “The Myths of Frontier Violence” at a Quadrant Seminar in Sydney, and following the seminar, \textit{Quadrant} published a series of three articles jointly titled “The Myths of Frontier Massacres in Australian History” in which Windschuttle argued that stories of massacres of Aborigines in colonial Australia had been exaggerated by “neurotic Christian missionaries searching for souls and careers”.\textsuperscript{27} This he claimed had then been continued by “twentieth century leftist historians intent upon denying the legitimacy of the British settlement and denigrating Australia’s good name”.\textsuperscript{28} The second article in Windschuttle’s trilogy, “The Fabrication of the Aboriginal Death Toll”, dealt with the number of Aboriginal lives lost on Australian frontiers in the nineteenth century. Windschuttle contested previous estimates of the numbers of lives lost on the frontier as well as ratios of white to black deaths. These estimates had been made by historian Henry Reynolds in his influential book \textit{The Other Side of the Frontier}.

The controversies surrounding the separation of Aboriginal children and frontier violence generated considerable publicity. All major newspapers covered the issue and commentators and historians debated the issues in a range of public forums. The debate

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} Manne, “In Denial”, p. 94.
\item \textsuperscript{28} ibid.
\end{itemize}
became labelled “the history wars”. Thousnads of words have been devoted to the controversies, and they have become topics for conferences and a number of books. The public debate probably hit its lowest level when the life story of a prominent Aboriginal leader, Lowitja O’Donohue, was interrogated and, she was trapped into answering questions about whether, as a small girl, she was “stolen” or “removed” from her mother.

Organisations such as the conservative Bennelong Group based in Sydney have supported the work of journalists and commentators who have sought to discredit the findings of the BTH. They have argued that Aboriginal policies from the 1970s have failed, and one reason for this is that the wider Australian public have wrongly seen Aborigines as victims. Commentators such as Michael Duffy have proposed that one way ofremedying this state of affairs would be to “re-evaluate parts of history where their victimhood might have been exaggerated”.

In a sense, these commentators are late to the game. Debates over the portrayal of Aboriginal people as passive victims took place within Australian historical circles in the

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30 For example, see the front cover of The Australian Review of Books (March 2001) “History — Whose History? Henry Reynolds on the Slaughter of Black History” and “Inga Clendinnen: the Real History Wars”.


33 Other organisations include the Sir Samuel Griffith Society and the Institute of Public Affairs.

early 1990s. Huggins succinctly posits that Aboriginal people should be depicted as both victims and survivors.\(^{35}\)

Windschuttle’s broadest attack was on what he called the scourge of “separatist policy”. He put forward the view that “massacre stories” had been invented as “ideological supports for the policy of separatism”.\(^{36}\) As this thesis deals with the history of so-called separatism in Queensland, that is — the removal of Aboriginal people to separate institutions — Windschuttle’s claims will be addressed fully. The first chapter of this thesis will clearly demonstrate his misreading of history and lack of evidence for such claims.

Truth-telling plays a central part in any process of reconciliation. A greater understanding of the historical practice of removals in Queensland is not just important for Aboriginal citizens of the state; it is important for all who call this place home. Professor Larissa Behrendt writes of the importance of all Australians truly grappling with their past:

For White Australia, the current challenges are even greater as there is more division about the vision of what kind of Australia we should be living in from the non-Indigenous side of the equation. This split is evidence of an identity crisis and finds its current form in the "culture wars", the fierce debates about the telling of history, the squabbling about numbers killed on the frontier and the debates over the proper legal definition of "genocide".

\(^{35}\) Huggins, *Sister Girl*, p. 87.
These "culture wars" are not about Aboriginal history because our experience and perspectives remain unchanged by semantic and numerical debates by academics. They are, instead, a battle about white history and, more importantly, white identity.37

**Quantitative History: The Numbers**

Numbers have been central to debates surrounding the Stolen Generations and frontier violence. Some of the questions raised relating to numbers have been: How many Aboriginal children were stolen? How many children separated would be needed to constitute a generation? How many Aboriginal people were killed by white hands on Australian frontiers? How many deaths make a massacre? What was the death ratio of whites and blacks on the frontier? An over-arching question that appears to have been the driving force for those whom Robert Manne has labelled “denialists” is the controversial issue of whether the policies concerning the forcible separation of Aboriginal children from their parents amounted to acts of genocide.

It is not the purpose of this study to answer all of the above questions or to fully engage in the semantics of “the history wars”. This study will address the broader issue of how Australian historians, and in more recent times political commentators, have dealt with numbers. Some of the questions that will be dealt with are: How useful or necessary are estimates for historians? What can numbers and statistics reveal about policies over time?

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What can quantitative history bring to the larger field of social history? The intersection of technology and the practice of history will also be discussed. To date, historians have mainly used personal computers along with word processing software. Greenstein, however points out that historians have for a long time been involved in developing systems to collect, organize and selectively retrieve information.\(^3\)\(^8\)

The history of race relations in Australia has largely been the domain of historians employing qualitative methodologies. Much of the work has been thorough and constructed from a wide range of sources. Blake, Critchett, Goodall, Haebich, Markus, Milliss, Reece, Reynolds and Thorpe along with many others, have mined archival and oral sources to provide readers of Australian history with an understanding of our past, and have well and truly broken “the Great Australian Silence” highlighted by W.E.H. Stanner in 1968.

Rowley’s *Destruction of Aboriginal Society* was one of the first studies to address the Queensland frontier and the establishment of a system of reserves. Whilst subsequent writers have found fault with his approach, Rowley played a valuable role in starting to unravel “the cult of forgetfulness”.\(^3\)\(^9\) Historians Raymond Evans, Kathryn Cronin and Kay Saunders rightly claim that, prior to their publication *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, no book had been “so diligently — perhaps obsessively — researched from

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archival sources, contemporary newspapers and manuscript collections”. Rosalind Kidd’s *The Way We Civilise*, published in 1997, was similarly groundbreaking. Whilst Evans had sourced previously neglected materials, Kidd sourced materials for her PhD at Griffith University which had been previously restricted from the public. The breadth of primary material researched by Kidd would definitely make the term “empirical history” an understatement. Kidd conducted what could almost be termed “historical auditing” in uncovering and highlighting the way in which the wages of Queensland Aboriginal people were stolen during most of the twentieth century.

Given the many histories of race relations and Aboriginal administration in Queensland what can this particular study that deals specifically with removals bring to the field? Geoffrey Bolton describes the role that access to archives has played in the development of an understanding of frontier history in Queensland:

> it has sometimes been impossible to provide complete and objective histories of the Aboriginal presence in Australian history because researchers have not been able to get at the records.

The appointment of a full-time archivist in Queensland in 1959 provided a platform for historians such as Raymond Evans and Henry Reynolds to draw upon during the 1970s.

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41 In 1990 Ros Kidd was granted access to Queensland departmental files dealing with Aboriginal Affairs. Prior to this much of the material had been restricted from any public access.
43 ibid.
The creation of CPH devoted to keeping and providing access to records led to further studies, the most prominent of which has been The Way We Civilise by Rosalind Kidd. Evans and Kidd viewed their sources through very different historical lenses — Evans favouring a race relations approach and Kidd an institutional or administrative approach. This thesis will enable readers to view the theories of Evans, Kidd and others using the large amount of empirical evidence collected as part of the Removals Database project.

Quantitative history has rarely been used in the history of Aboriginal Australians. An exception is Our Original Aggression by the economic historian Noel Butlin, which examines the impact of diseases brought by Europeans after 1788 on the Aboriginal populations of Southeastern Australia. Butlin suggests that the original Aboriginal population was much larger than had been previously accepted, and that there was a major decrease in this population due to the effects of small pox. Using computer simulations, Butlin estimates the Aboriginal population in Southeastern Australia to have been in the order of 250,000 people, more than four times the estimate reached by Radcliffe-Brown in 1930.

Quantitative history in the Australian context has largely been employed in debates over the character and origins of the convicts. In the mid-1950s a view of the convicts which

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44 Community and Personal Histories Branch, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (Queensland government)
45 Raymond Evans and Rosalind Kidd are both currently adjunct professors at Griffith University’s Centre for Public Culture and Ideas.
46 Noel Butlin, Our Original Aggression: Aboriginal Populations of Southeastern Australia 1788–1850 (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983)
47 ibid., p. 8.
caste them as victims of circumstance, as people more “sinned against than sinning” was overturned. Historians Manning Clark and Lloyd Robson combined previously neglected sources and quantitative methodology to bring about this revision, drawing on the convict indents to investigate the convicts’ “real character”. The indents recorded each convict’s name, age, education, religion, marital status, family, native place, employment background, offence, place of trial, time of trial, sentence, former conviction, height, complexion, colour of hair and eyes, along with special marks and scars and general remarks. Robson in particular “crunched the numbers” using a systematic sample of five per cent of the convicts to create a database of more than 7000 entries. This was accomplished without the aid of a computer, relying instead on punch cards and a knitting needle — a prototype of a database.

The view that convict women were largely prostitutes was one outcome of these quantitative studies. This misleading conclusion reflected the researchers’ uncritical acceptance of the convict indents and failure to consider conditions of production of the historical evidence, notably the influence of factors of class and gender. In the 1970s, this portrayal of convict women as “immoral” or “whores” was reinterpreted by feminist historians Miriam Dixson and Anne Summers. However, whilst questioning what prostitution meant in the context of the convict women’s lives, they did not question the

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50 ibid., pp. 22–25.
51 ibid., p. 5.
52 “A particular and resilient theme emerged, resurrecting a nineteenth century notion: convicts belonged to a professional criminal class…. These were professional criminals, or, in the case of women, professional prostitutes, who lived entirely through crime….”, ibid.
fundamental validity of the claims made about the character of convict women in the
sources they used. From the late 1980s, historians have dealt more rigorously and
critically with records relating to convicts. Deborah Oxley utilised quantitative methods
and computer software to comprehensively investigate the background to and experiences
of convict women in her study, *Convict Maids.* Oxley challenged depictions of convict
women as immoral and dissolute harlots who contributed nothing to the colony other than
vice. Based on the convict indents, she found that convict women came to Australia
“bearing economic luggage loaded down with substantial skills, social baggage well-
packed with experiences of ordinary working life, and a conducive age distribution which
should have served colonial development singularly well”.

The nature of the convict indents bears some similarity to the removals registers that are
the basis for this study. Both sources contain what might be termed “hard data” and “soft
data”. The hard data contained in the convict indents consist of name, age, education,
religion, marital status, family, native place, height, complexion, colour of hair and eyes,
etc. The hard data contained in the Queensland Removals Registers consist of name,
place removed from, place removed to and sometimes age. Such hard data are reasonably
straightforward, reliable and usually beyond dispute.

Both historical sources also contain soft data that are of a more contentious nature. The
convict indents make pronouncements on the social worth of the convicts. Women are

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53 ibid., p. 8.
54 ibid.
55 ibid., p. 237.
described as “a regular thief”, “prostitute”, etc. Far more subjective in nature are the reasons stated for removal which appear in the Queensland removals registers. Reasons such as “leading immoral life”, “separated from her husband”, “a bad influence”, “threat to Europeans” and “dangerous character” abound. Both the convict indents and the removals register were compiled largely by white middle-class men with a range of assumptions as to what constituted fit and proper behaviour.

By separating and critically analysing the soft and hard data, this thesis will test the integrity of the soft data (in this case, reasons for removal). In conducting this study, I have refused to read the reasons for removal at face value. They will be tested and findings made as to what can be reliably read out of records regarding Aboriginal removals in Queensland.

The comparison between the convict indents and removals register cannot be taken too far. Aboriginal people removed in Queensland were never found guilty of a crime. They were unable to appeal their removal and never had “their day in court”. In fact, on many occasions when police were unable to find enough evidence to charge an Aboriginal person with a criminal offence, they removed the person instead. These extra-judicial removals will be dealt with in Chapter 3. There is little evidence to suggest that many Aboriginal people even had the reason for their removal explained to them.

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56 ibid., p. 238.
57 Registers of Removals, QSA A/64785 08/2146 ; A/69523, 11; Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals, 1902, 14; Col 483(a) Correspondence Relating to Fraser Island Settlement; CPH Removals Cards.
58 This ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ data is similar to what Floud terms ‘nominal’ and ‘ordinal data’. Roderick Floud, *An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians* (London, Methuen and Co, 1973), pp. 8-10.
What can quantitative history bring to a history of removals of Aboriginal people? The work of Clark and Robson on the convict indents demonstrates that quantitative history has no ransom on the truth. Their findings simply quantified subjective assumptions that had been made about convicts. The pitfalls of such an approach have been considered in the construction of this study. As Oxley points out: “Reliability is a problem for both quantitative and qualitative data, and historians must constantly challenge the validity of sources, and find ways of testing them and methods of using them which overcome some limitations.”

The records relating to removals lend themselves to the quantitative method. The same range of pre-defined fields (year of removal, place removed from, placed removed to) are available for almost every record. The techniques employed in this study enable the data to be examined in a way that has not been done previously. As Hudson states, “Statistical techniques may enable us to uncover important characteristics which are not apparent in the raw data and to confirm that relationships and patterns in the data are not present merely by chance.”

The construction of the Removals Database allows us to address questions that cannot be answered through the use of qualitative evidence. The collection of data allows a breakdown of numbers of men and women removed at certain times and throughout the


study period. A similar figure is available for children removed. To gain an overall picture of removals in Queensland, numbers of removals can be analysed year by year. An analysis of reasons used should also prove useful in better understanding the practice of removals. Racial factors such as the use of terms “half-caste” or “Chinese” can also be analysed as part of the removal process. The age of people removed has been analysed. Removals policies under various Protectors, along with factors such as geography, the spread of “settlement” and growth of particular industries will also be examined. The claims made by various historians regarding the policy of removals can be tested on the data collected.

One way to demonstrate the value of a study such as this is to compare results of other researchers and this project.

### Table I.1 Comparison of Removals with Long (1970)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Copland</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911-13</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-18</td>
<td>1685</td>
<td>1705</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-23</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>1374</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-28</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-33</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-38</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>1509</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6082</td>
<td>7198</td>
<td>1116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Long’s 1970 survey of Aboriginal communities in Eastern Australia examined the number of removals occurring in Queensland between 1911 and 1940. This project has identified over 1000 extra removals during the same period.

Table I.2 Comparison of Average Removals per Year to Barambah with Blake (1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Blake</th>
<th>Copland</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905 - 09</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-14</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-19</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, this study has identified an annual average of 15 per cent more removals to Barambah not calculated in Thom Blake’s 1991 study of the Southern Queensland settlement. This study has also identified a number of removals and separations not found in BTH. The Queensland government submission to the HREOC Inquiry had 1000

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fewer children removed and 400 less children separated from their parents than found in this study.\textsuperscript{62} The final chapter looks at previous estimates of Aboriginal children separated from their natural families and concludes that the policies and practices of the Queensland government affected at least 13076 children.

These comparisons are not used just to highlight deficiencies in previous studies. They provide evidence that a research project such as this is essential to gain a greater understanding of the extent and pattern of Aboriginal removals in Queensland. Figures such as those referred to above do not just represent a thousand extra removals that can be used as artillery in a “history war”. They represent a thousand more individual stories of dispossession and separation from country and kin. One of the values of this study is that members of the Queensland Aboriginal communities might be able to access records of removal which they had not previously been able to.

This comprehensive survey and analysis of removals with its database component is of practical benefit to the wider community and also furthers our understanding of past policies concerning the removal of citizens of Queensland. It draws on technology in a way that very few studies have done in the field of race relations. The removals registers and associated records are a rich source of data as yet unavailable in other states of Australia. The critical analysis of this data helps us move beyond a one-dimensional view of history to a shared history which includes all of us.

\textsuperscript{62} DATSIP Submission to National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, cited in Anna Haebich, \textit{Broken Circles Fragmenting Indigenous Families}
Narratives of Removals

Whilst the method and approach to the data are quite similar to those of quantitative historians dealing with convicts, the basic questions asked of the data are fundamentally different. A number of historians have used the convict indents and similar sources to endeavour to answer the question of “Who were the convicts?”; however, Thorpe and Evans rightly criticise any claim that the convict indents can reveal the convicts’ essential nature. An uncritical reading of sources like the Queensland removals registers runs the risk of producing a study “innocent of any analysis of power”.

The importance of the narrative in examining power relationships between historical actors is highlighted by Evans and Thorpe. They criticise some quantitative studies for their “unquestioned assumption about the unimpeachable nature of statistics”. They rightly point out that the manner in which official data are collected should be considered. The class and power relationship between the collectors and the sources of the information being collated must be analysed along with the relationship between statistical data and the real human beings and social situations that such data are meant to represent. This study begins with an approach that assumes that the registers of removal and removal orders reveal very little information about the Aboriginal people removed.

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66 ibid.
Along with Tasmanian historian Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, I would argue that such registers reveal more about the writer than the subject of the writing.  

The statistics generated by this study shine new light on the subject of removals in Queensland. Despite this, the word “removal” if captured within the world of pure statistics can become a clinical term, a simple form of transfer which does little to reflect the human journey and experience of removal. Each entry in the Queensland removal registers has a story of pain attached to it. The entry in the Annual Report for the Northern Protector of Aborigines for 1903 which requests that a boy named Walter be separated from his mother and removed from Cardwell to Yarrabah does not depict the sick boy sobbing inside the Cardwell lock-up with his mother howling outside trying to comfort him. The single entry of a “tribe” to be removed from Blackwater to Barambah found in the removals register for 1908 does not reflect the pain of those left behind who cut themselves with knives and tomahawks as an expression of their grief. Nor do the nine removals from Cape York to Palm Island entered in the register for 1933 tell the story of guns, handcuffs, physical beatings, sexual assaults and neckchains used as four women and a child were marched 145 miles for a health examination. Similarly the feats of endurance as people escaped institutional life and walked thousands of

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69 Petition from J.T. Bartholemew and residents of Duaringa protesting brutality of police removal, 24 February 1909, QSA HOM/J47.
70 See Chapter 4 for details of this removal from Cape York to Palm Island in 1932.
kilometres to return to their country can never be captured as an entry in a database or a line on a graph.\textsuperscript{71}

Case studies or narratives will be used in this thesis to ensure that the human experience of removals is not lost in the numbers. Historian Inga Clendinnen makes the following case for focusing on the particular, the specific historic event:

My own view is that the quest for global interpretations and grand narratives is always a mistaken one, assuming a shapeliness in human affairs and a simplicity of human motivation never encountered in muddy actuality....Large theories may generate good questions, but they produce poor answers. The historian’s task is to discover what happened in some actual past situation - what conflicting or confused intentions produced what outcomes - not to produce large truths. The most enlightening historical generalisations tend to be those that hover sufficiently close to the ground to illuminate the contours of intention and action in circumscribed circumstances.\textsuperscript{72}

Deborah Oxley also describes the advantages of employing quantitative methodologies:

\textsuperscript{71} In 1901 a man named Tommy Tomahawk was wrongly accused of murder and removed from the Cairns district to Fraser Island. He subsequently escaped and returned to Redlynch near Cairns and joined the tribe there. Following this he was removed to Barambah twice and escaped on both occasions. This journey was more than 2000 kilometres: Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1901, p. 10. QSA Removals Register A/69523, p. 10; In 1913 two men made their way from Barambah to their place of origin, Coen — again a journey of more than 2000 kilometres: QSA A/64785.

While I might feel guilty of losing sight of the specific, an aggregate approach allows me a vision of the bigger picture – a framework of understanding into which individuals can then be placed.\(^{73}\)

The course set for this study is to soar with Deborah Oxley over the broader patterns and numbers of removals and to hover with Inga Clendinnen around the narratives of individual removals. Numbers and narratives will be engaged in an interrogation of motives for and factors affecting removals. The use of the word “narrative” does not mean “the Aboriginal voice” or “the story of Aboriginal people”. The use of narrative in this sense is taken to simply mean the reconstruction of events based on the careful and critical use of primary sources. Narratives or case studies will be used to interrogate the reasons used for removal which appear in removal orders and removal registers created by the Chief Protector of Aborigines and his successors.

Numbers can often have a dehumanising effect. In total institutions\(^{74}\) inmates can be addressed by numbers rather than by names. The number of people killed in a war hardly conveys the human experience of war. The number of people voting for a political party at an election masks the human thoughts and feelings that have brought about a political result. A pure concentration on numbers of people can dehumanise the experience of a group of people. But, while a focus on hard data can obscure the human experience of removals, a sole focus on the narratives of a small number of individuals might leave the

\(^{73}\) Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 33.

\(^{74}\) I am using the term “total institution” as defined by Goffman. In this work, Goffman discusses the taking of an inmate’s name in the admission procedure to a total institution: Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 18.
reader without any idea of what is typical or special about a particular case. This study will bring numbers and narratives together to get closer to understanding the policy of removing Aboriginal people in Queensland.
Chapter 1

From Bullets to Blankets:

The Emergence of a Policy of Removals

The forced removal of Indigenous people to separate institutions was not a policy or practice unique to the colony and state of Queensland. In an essay on the removal of the Cherokee people of North America, Ronald N. Satz describes the practice as “a grim reminder of what can happen to a politically powerless minority in a democratic society”.¹ This chapter explores the way in which the policy of removals emerged in Queensland. During the nineteenth century, frontier violence greatly increased the dislocation of Aboriginal people in Queensland. It is argued that, whilst the policy of removal was often justified with the rhetoric of amelioration, the reality of expanding white settlement along with the labour needs of the pastoral and marine industries played a central role in the emergence of a policy of forced removals.

The claim by Keith Windschuttle that exaggerations of frontier violence were the basis of a policy of separatism which involved removals of Aboriginal people cannot be sustained. This chapter demonstrates that policies of protection which dominated Aboriginal affairs in Queensland for the majority of the twentieth century were more about the interests and benefit to the dominant white population than they were about support for Queensland’s Aboriginal population. The chapter concludes with an

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overview of the laws and machinery which made the removal of Aboriginal people possible between 1859 and 1972.

**The Myth of Separatism**

Beginning in 2000, the “history wars” largely focused on two aspects of Australian history: frontier violence and the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents. This chapter concentrates on the way in which frontier violence caused displacement of Aboriginal people and then investigates the claims of Keith Windschuttle that frontier violence was largely exaggerated by contemporary humanitarians and missionaries.

One of the key planks of Windschuttle’s argument is that a small number of influential individuals had exaggerated the extent of frontier violence in order to establish what he terms a policy of separatism.² This argument does not reflect the Queensland experience in terms of the development of policy. Windschuttle has built his argument on quite a narrow base of evidence and seriously misread some of the rhetoric of humanitarians and missionaries glossing over the reality of Aboriginal policy as played out in the colony of Queensland.

Windschuttle’s article, “Massacre Stories and the Policy of Separatism”, is an ill-conceived riposte to Henry Reynold’s book *This Whispering in Our Hearts*.³ Windschuttle crudely attempts to link a number of humanitarians with Reynolds and other “supporters of the cause”. The argument runs that individuals such as George Augustus Robinson, Lancelot Threlkeld, John and Ernest Gribble and Mary Bennett were
part of a tradition that saw its logical conclusion in the construction of institutions such as Palm Island:

The truth is that both Palm Island and all the other reserves that followed the 1897 Queensland legislation were the logical consequence of the ideas Threlkeld and Robinson shared. Moreover, two more of the subjects of Reynold’s book, Rev. John Gribble and Rev. Ernest Gribble both figured in the immediate developments that produced the 1897 Act. While Ernest Gribble had an important role in the actual operation of the Palm Island reserve from 1931 to 1957.4

This claim is neither original nor well-informed. Windschuttle completely ignores one of the first attempts at a reserve system in Queensland, which occurred in 1874 with the establishment of the Commission for Aborigines. Rowley made the link between this Commission and Palm Island as early as 1978.5 There is evidence that “anti-Aboriginal” forces within the Queensland community advocated for “separatism” in the same way that humanitarian and missionary forces did. The eventual implementation of a system of separate institutions with legislated removals only came about when those holding the colonial purse strings could be convinced that it would benefit the state at a minimal cost.

3 Henry Reynolds, This Whispering in Our Hearts,St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998).
Bullets to Blankets: Policing the Frontier

Christopher Anderson details some of the factors in Aboriginal population change following the arrival of Europeans in Queensland. Drawing on the work of Len Smith, he estimates that the Aboriginal population was reduced by 80 per cent from 120000 in 1788 to 22500 in 1933 as a result of European occupation. This population was not only severely reduced but was also greatly displaced. Three factors to be considered as an explanation of this dislocation are “circumstantially forced migrations, voluntary migrations and government instigated removals”.

It is hard to distinguish between forced relocation and voluntary migration in many cases following European expansion in various parts of the state. Access to water sources was disrupted and prevented along with access to many food sources. Competition for land and resources had a devastating effect on the Aborigines in the Maranoa district. The missionary William Ridley recorded in 1855 that, on the Balonne River in South Western Queensland:

> the effect upon the aborigines of the occupation by Europeans was forcibly presented. Before the occupation of this district by colonists, the aborigines could never have been at a loss for the necessaries of life. Except in the lowest part of the river, there is water in the driest seasons; along the banks game abounded; waterfowl, emus, parrot tribes, kangaroos, and other animals might always, or almost always be found.

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And if, at any time, these failed to supply food for the human tribe, the fish furnished a sure resource. But when the country was taken up, and herds of cattle introduced, not only did the cattle drive away the kangaroos, but those who had charge of the cattle found it necessary to keep the aborigines away from the river, as their appearance frightened the cattle in all directions. In fact, it is said that while troops of aborigines roam about the runs, and especially if they go to the cattle camps and watering places, it is impossible to keep a herd together. 8

He continued:

After some fatal conflicts, in which some colonists and many aborigines have been slain, the blacks have been awed into submission to the orders, which forbid their access to the river. And what is the consequence? Black fellows coming in from the west report that last summer very large numbers, afraid to visit the river, were crowded round a few scanty waterholes, within a day's walk of which it was impossible to get sufficient food; that during the hottest weather the great red ants in that dry locality were so formidable that neither men nor even oppossums could rest night or day except for an hour or so at noon; that owing to these combined hardships many died. This is only black fellow's report; but when we know that people have been cut off from four-fifths of their usual supply of food, and reduced to a scanty supply of bad water, is it an incredible

7 ibid.
report that sickness and death have fallen upon them?⁹

The establishment of the northern Native Police on the southern bank of the Macintyre River¹⁰ on 10 May 1849 was one of the first policy decisions regarding Aboriginal people in what was to become the colony of Queensland. The operations of the Native Police established a dominant theme in race relations in the colony. This was the application of maximum control over Indigenous lives for minimal expenditure from the public purse. In 1866, the brutal nature of the Queensland Native Police came to the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies via a number of press reports by the writer, Gideon Lang.

The Executive Council defended the Native Police describing their original purpose as that of protecting settlers in the Northern Districts.¹¹ Defence of the settlers was seen as defence of the empire. In a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Executive Council compared the Queensland, New Zealand and Cape of Good Hope frontiers. The use of imperial forces was described as a burden on the colonial taxpayer from the “mother country”. The council challenged the secretary:

If it is thought that the protection of the settlers in Queensland can be provided for by the Imperial better than by the Colonial Government, it is, of course, open to the former to try here the experiment so long tried in New Zealand.

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⁹ ibid.
¹⁰ The Macintyre River became part of the southern boundary of the colony of Queensland in 1859.
¹¹ QSA Executive Council Minutes EXE/E14, 66/64.
The cost of such a policy to the British taxpayer should, however, be carefully calculated.\(^{12}\)

The Native Police impacted severely upon the movement of Aboriginal people and control of their lands within the colony of Queensland. One of their roles was to break up or “disperse” camps and assemblies of Aboriginal people. Often dispersal was a synonym for killing.\(^{13}\) Dispersals were not confined to actions of the Native Police. In a small number of documented cases, the regular police also took part. In 1860 a magistrate investigated an attack on Aboriginal people at Breakfast Creek in the Brisbane district. He concluded:

That in forcibly removing a Camp of Blacks in such a hasty manner, destroying their property, and intimidating them by firing, the Police acted most injudiciously and unwarrantably – such an act of aggression is calculated to foster that spirit of revenge, which is usually vindicated on some unoffending person. All this might have been avoided by giving the Blacks notice to remove them to some other locality; by removing them at all the Chief Constable acted wrongly.\(^{14}\)

\(^{12}\) ibid. In this executive minute it was pointed out that 10,000 soldiers at a cost of half a million pounds sterling would be needed to defeat 2000 hostile Queensland Aborigines. The savings to the British people and the cost of the Native Police to Queenslanders are also highlighted. “The entire cost of the Native Police Corps is borne by the people of this colony, who pay per head for protection more than the people of the United Kingdom pay per head for the same object – including the army and navy of the British Empire.”

\(^{13}\) In March of 1850 James Bennett from the Roma district signed an affidavit describing the “dispersal” of a camp of Aboriginal people. Native Police were involved in this action and Bennett concluded his statement “I did not count the number of natives slain.” Affidavit from James Bennett, 14 March 1850, QSA, NMP/4.

\(^{14}\) Police Magistrate, Brisbane Report on destruction of Blacks Camp, Breakfast Creek, COL A/8 60/1952.
The burning of *gunyahs* at Breakfast Creek in the 1860s is reminiscent of the burning of huts at Mapoon in the 1960s. Both acts of violence reflected a reality in which Aboriginal people had little power to determine their own security.

In October, 1861, a Lieutenant in the Native police, John Marlow, reported “dispersing” a group of Aborigines on the Maranoa River. He stated:

> I accordingly led my men to close quarters and after a sharp struggle dispersed them with a loss of ten men on their side. I was insensible for a short period during the engagement from a wound on the head, one of the men also got struck but not severely.\(^{15}\)

This is just one of many official reports of “dispersals” on the frontier by Native Police. Many of these include vague references to the loss of Aboriginal lives. Much research has been conducted and is continuing to be done on violence and deaths on the frontier. This chapter examines more closely the process of dislocation and forced removals. Aboriginal people on the frontier were forced to seek refuge at stations willing “to take them in”, but even here they were not always safe from the Native Police.

In early 1861, Charles Dutton, local Police Magistrate in the Upper Dawson River district asked a group of Aborigines to come on to his station to receive a gift of tomahawks that he had promised them. As he waited for the arrival of a dray carrying the tomahawks, the local Aboriginal people gathered at his station. On Sunday, 17 March Lieutenant Patrick of the Native Police arrived with a group of troopers and asked Dutton if he had “allowed the

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\(^{15}\) Lt John Marlow to Lt Carr (Native Police), Maranoa River, 22 October 1861, QSA COL A/23 61/3266.
blacks” on to his place. When Dutton replied that he had, Patrick demanded to know when they would be removed:

I replied about that I shall use my discretion — in a state of maniacal excitement he cried out to his men uncap your carbines and drive them out two or three of the troopers obeyed the order the rest looked coolly on the camp was close to a scrub and those blacks who could run were out of sight in a moment he followed them some distance then returned and carried off what few spears and waddies they possessed. Justifying the procedure by stating that his orders are to disperse armed mobs — this armed mob consisted of 8 able bodied men and 17 women, children and cripples …

Dutton reflected on the action: “Can anything be more repugnant to every feeling of humanity and that such a violation of every principle of justice and good faith …” When questioned, Lieutenant Patrick did not deny the brutal actions, but instead claimed that he had acted at the request of Dutton himself! Dutton had previously complained of the actions of the Native Police towards an Aboriginal woman working on his station.

Patrick justified his actions by declaring: “I told him that I wanted them to move further out and that while the Police remained on the ground I would not permit a single black belonging to any tribe in the District to camp so near the Barracks.” Such an attitude reflected a desire to prevent troopers from interacting with local Aborigines. In a number of

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16 C.B. Dutton to Colonial Secretary, Bauhinia Downs, 14 October, 1861, QSA COL A/21 61/2545.
17 ibid.
18 ibid. Patrick stated that the removal had been the result of Dutton stating that “his black girl seemed incapable of performing her duties while my men were on the ground”.
cases ‘deserting’ troopers joined with them to wage campaigns of resistance against white settlers.\textsuperscript{20}

From 2000 onwards, a number of attacks were made upon histories of violence on the frontier. One of the disputed facts was the meaning and use of the word “dispersal” by the Native Police.\textsuperscript{21} By the 1980s, a commonly held view by historians of the frontier was that “the term commonly used for breaking up Aboriginal groups, ‘dispersing’, was understood to mean firing at them”.\textsuperscript{22} A very basic reading of the reports and letters from the Native Police in Queensland shows that, in most cases when the word “disperse” was used, Aboriginal lives were lost.\textsuperscript{23} It is certainly beyond dispute that one of the major roles of the Native Police was to break up “assemblages of Aborigines”.\textsuperscript{24} But whether the words used by Native Police were “disperse” or “remove”, the effects were the same in terms of displacement and dispossession of Aboriginal people. Charles Dutton pointed out in a letter to the Colonial Secretary that the Aborigines’ rights as human beings had been ignored in the conduct of the Native Police. When they were “dispersed” or “removed”, no thought was given to where they could flee. The Registrar-General’s report of 1860 displayed a widely held belief that Aboriginal people had no particular territory or connection with country:

\textsuperscript{19} ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} ibid. Similar attacks by the native police occurred on the runs of Dutton’s neighbours. One of these neighbours, ex-Native Police Commandant Frederick Walker described a picture of peace in the district, where stations were largely run by Aboriginal labour. He reported: “This peace was broken by the Native Police under Mr Patrick attacking and killing and wounding several of the friendly blacks at Mr Rolleston’s station.”
\textsuperscript{21} Keith Windschuttle, “Selected Readings 1”, \textit{Australian Review of Books}, April 2001, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{22} Loos, N. \textit{Invasion and Resistance} (Canberra: ANU Press, 1982)
\textsuperscript{23} Lt. Wheeler (Native Police) defining the method of dispersal: “I don’t think they can understand anything else except shooting them.” “Minutes of Evidence”, in 1861 Votes and Proceedings, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{24} Loos, \textit{Invasion and Resistance}, p. 25.
These unfortunate beings are divided into numerous tribes hostile to each other, and speaking different dialects, but all evincing a deeply-rooted aversion to a permanent residence, or to any regular occupation.\textsuperscript{25}

It followed that Aboriginal people could be taken randomly for employment or sex and their dwellings and weapons could be burnt and destroyed.

Even the manner in which the Native Police “recruited” troopers gave little recognition to the rights of Aboriginal people. The large number of desertions documented in the correspondence of the Native Police suggests that troopers were rarely willing accomplices. Troopers were often taken from employment on stations. One young man named Tommy Hippi was taken by the Native Police on his way home to Tchanning Station (Condamine River District) after participating in a \textit{bora} ceremony. Four years later, John Ferrett, owner of Tchanning Station, wrote to the Colonial Secretary pointing out that Tommy was the only son of “a very well disposed blind woman” and wished to return to his “native home country”\textsuperscript{26}. Tommy’s commanding officer, Frederick Wheeler, was against the release of Tommy:

\begin{quote}
I would humbly suggest that it is an unwise precedent, as all the men under my control have at one time or the other been in private employment; it causes jealousy and ill-feeling amongst the troopers so they will all consider they have an equal right to leave…\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25} Registrar-General’s Report, 10 June, 1861, Statistical Register, 1860.
The troopers had no right to leave the force and some were “shot while escaping”.\textsuperscript{28} In 1874, an inquiry was held in relation to the death of a Native Police trooper named Sam. James Cassidy, a grazier on the Lower Herbert, told the inquiry that he did not see it as necessary to report the death as: “It has always been my opinion that police officers could shoot their runaway troopers.”\textsuperscript{29} In 1863, John O’Connel Bligh, Commandant of the Native Police, suggested that officers be given the authority to apprehend and punish deserters.\textsuperscript{30} At that time, 50 recruits were required but he suggested that “80 should be aimed for to allow for desertions”.\textsuperscript{31} Complaints from settlers about recruiting of troopers from pastoral stations were often couched in terms of lost or stolen property. Any thought of hardship or suffering incurred upon the unfortunate recruit was subordinate to employer’s feelings of outrage at being deprived of a source of cheap and dependable labour.\textsuperscript{32}

**Women and Children**

Women and children often fared the worst on the Queensland frontier. In Cardwell in 1874, complaints were made against Sub-Inspector Johnstone’s Native Police Troopers taking Aboriginal servant girls, and it was claimed that the local police magistrate was cooperating with the practice. One girl who was in the company of a deserting trooper was shot dead.\textsuperscript{33}

In January of 1876, Native Police Officer Frederick Wheeler kidnapped three Aboriginal

\textsuperscript{26} John Ferrett to Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, 22 June 1861, QSA COL/A17 61/1712.
\textsuperscript{27} ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Eg. Jacky who deserted in Brisbane was shot by Lieutenant Carr at Terryboo (Condamine) stockyard: Letter from Mr Coxen to Colonial Secretary, 30 January, 1863, QSA COL/A38 63/683.
\textsuperscript{29} QSA COL/A202 74/2615.
\textsuperscript{30} Report from John O’Connel Bligh, Commandant of Native Police, Rockhampton, 7 November 1863, QSA COL A/46 63/2733.
\textsuperscript{31} ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Police Department to Colonial Secretary, report on allegations of abduction of “Barney” by a Native Police Officer. 1 December 1868, QSA COL/A115 68/3902; 68/4133.
\textsuperscript{33} QSA COL A/196 74/1403.
women from the Belyando tribe. The manager of Banchory Station, from which the women were taken, pointed out the anger that this action had caused the local tribe:

There is no doubt that such acts of the police tend to make the bush roads unsafe for travelling and really if such a case happened I could not or would not blame the blacks.\textsuperscript{34}

Three years prior to this, Wheeler and his troopers were charged with the abduction of four Aboriginal women in the lower Thomson River area.\textsuperscript{35} On occasion, children who survived Native Police attacks were taken by officers and given to local townspeople. An editorial in the \textit{Queensland Patriot} in 1878 described such an occurrence.

Occasionally it happens that one or two children are protected. We remember one instance, not a very old one either, when a native police officer brought in a little toddling boy about three years old. The little fellow, with the courage of utter despair, got the chance of clinging to that gentleman’s leg, as he stood watching the hellish scene around him. He picked the little fellow up and and brought him in as a present for a lady friend in a neighbouring town.\textsuperscript{36}

The Police Magistrate for Burketown, W. Landsborough, had difficulties in deciding how to legally deal with the abduction of children. He wrote to the Attorney-General describing

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{34} Arthur Brown to Commissioner of Police, Banchory, 28 March 1876, QSA COL A/228 76/1517; Wheeler was later dismissed from the Native Police for flogging an Aboriginal man named “Jamie” (on the same station) to death with whips and riding girths. Executive Council Minute, 11 September, 1876, QSA COL A/227 76/2698.

\textsuperscript{35} Charles Weldon Birch to Colonial Secretary, Blackall, 20 May 1874, QSA COL/A 198 74/1714

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Queensland Patriot}, 20 June, 1878.
\end{flushleft}
how “certain parties” had taken a boy of twelve, a girl of similar age and an infant from Bentinck Island to Sweers Island. He pointed out that this had happened previously but he could not get any Bentinck Islanders to testify, as they feared the long journey to court as witnesses. Landsborough was successful in having the two girls returned to their home but believed that the boy had been taken to the Norman River settlement.  

Landsborough was advised by the Colonial Secretary to enlist the aid of the police in his efforts to prevent abduction and kidnapping of children. This would have been impossible, as one of the Native Police Officers in the district was involved in the abductions. In October 1870 Michael Bird Hall reported another case of kidnapping of children from Bentinck Island. Native Police Officer Wentworth Darcy Uhr was reported to have taken the Customs Boat from Sweers Island to Bentinck Island. He waited on the beach and in the morning “rushed a blacks camp” and took two small boys aged eight and ten years of age. Uhr also took many of the “implements” of the camp at Bentinck Island. The children were ironed together to keep them from escaping. The customs boatman reported that the cries of the parents for their children were “heartrendering”. Landsborough insisted that the children be returned but although one was returned the other boy was “disposed of to a person named Doughty”. The payment was reported to be in grog. In a letter to the Queenslander newspaper in 1879, Bird-Hall described the abduction of another “boy” named Victoria who was sent to Mr Coward of the Norman Police Force.

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37 Police Magistrate, Burketown, 19 July 1868, QSA COL/A 115 68/4031.
38 ibid.
39 Michael Bird-Hall to Colonial Secretary, Gilbert Ranges, 10 October, 1879, QSA COL/A 150 70/3098.
40 ibid.
The links between retaliatory violence on the part of the local Aboriginal population and the taking of their children was quite clear to some. Bird-Hall wrote:

Sir, there is scarcely a paper we get but there is an account of depredations [sic] committed by the blacks and can we wonder at it before the arrival of this gentleman [Uhr] there was no complaints but immediately upon his arrival he commenced the trade by kidnapping a black boy upon the mainland that set the example that followed …  

When Bird-Hall had raised this issue with local whites, he was told: “Uhr catches them and gives them away — why should not I have one?” Bird-Hall called for an inquiry, asking:

Do [sic] our enlightened government pay police to build boats for the purpose of kidnapping the blacks children, what would have been the report spread the length and breadth of this colony had the blacks attacked a white man’s habitation and stolen his why troopers would have been out in all directions and death would have dealt out unsparingly …

In 1874, the Police Magistrate at Cloncurry forwarded a detailed list of abductions to the Colonial Secretary, also viewing them as a motive for “recent outrages” committed by local Aboriginal people.

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41 ibid.
42 ibid.
43 ibid.
44 Police Magistrate, Cloncurry to the Colonial Secretary, 25 October 1874, reporting that Aboriginal women and children were being stolen and that this could account for some of the recent “outrages” committed by the local Aborigines. Attached to this letter is a three-page list of cases that have come to the
In 1868 the disempowering and disorientating effect of removal was considered as a tool to be used in the theatre of frontier conflict. In January of that year, Native Police Inspector John Marlow in the Bowen district submitted a “Plan for Suppressing the Slaughter of Cattle by the Blacks”. He suggested that all Aboriginal women and children be taken away and “placed on some suitable island where they could be educated and taught to become useful”. He believed that if the men did not have their women to depend on for fish and yam collecting, and were not able to kill cattle, they would be soon forced to join their wives and children.

Taking away the Gins would have the effect of making the blacks resort to their old mode of living for if unsuccessful in cattle hunting they would not have the fruits of the gins fishing etc. to fall back on.

A great many of the Blacks could from time to time be captured and placed with the Gins and by means of Interpreters taken from the Blacks and kept a short time with the police so as to learn their Language, I have no hesitation in stating all the Blacks on the coast might be eventually removed for upon

Police Magistrate's attention — an Aboriginal woman taken from Kimberley Station by drovers; an Aboriginal boy taken by two men and brought into Normanton and kept by the brother of one of these men; two Aboriginal boys taken by Jimmy Shaw, a publican residing about nine miles from Normanton; Jimmy Shaw also kidnapped an Aboriginal woman; an Aboriginal boy taken by Brannigan, a carrier, travelling between Cloncurry and Normanton; an Aboriginal woman brought to Fort Constantine by Dennis Bourke who says she was given to him by Fred Gainborni; and an Aboriginal woman taken by Daniel Finlay at Jackey's Lagoon, QSA COL/A20 74/2424.
hearing what had become of their Gins and Children they would be only too
glad to join them.\textsuperscript{45}

Upon reading Marlow’s submission, the Colonial Secretary commented: “Mr Marlow’s
proposition is unique but cannot be acted upon.”\textsuperscript{46} Later that year, the Reverend James
Black, also from Bowen, wrote to the Colonial Secretary with a plan to remove Aboriginal
children and place them in an institution. He found many children orphaned as a result of
frontier conflict:

During a late visit to several of the stations north of Cleveland Bay I found
not only that the number of orphans was greatly on the increase through the
war of extermination carried on by the settlers to say nothing of the
necessary punishment inflicted by the Native Police. …\textsuperscript{47}

Black described a large number of squatters wishing to “supply him with children” and a
number of persons wishing “to take charge of, train & educate numbers of these
aboriginal children”.\textsuperscript{48} One of the public servants that the Reverend Black was most
anxious to enlist in his task of taking the children was Native Police Inspector Marlow:

Mr Inspector Marlow is perfectly willing to accompany me and assist in
obtaining these children from the District north of & near to Dalrymple

\textsuperscript{45} Commissioner of Police to Colonial Secretary, 6 January, 1868, QSA COL/A 100 68/56.
\textsuperscript{46} ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Rev. Black, Trinity Parsonage to Colonial Secretary, 7 September 1868. QSA COLA/111 68/2974; Rev
Black requesting govt co-operation for black children in Kennedy District 1868 cited in Loos, Frontier
\textsuperscript{48} ibid.
where they are so easily procurable without lots of time or labor within a
distance of ten miles.\textsuperscript{49}

Whilst the Native Police Inspector saw the removal of women and children as a strategic
move, Reverend Black saw it as something to be done “in the cause of humanity, religion
and civilization”.\textsuperscript{50} A.W. Manning, the Under Colonial Secretary, instructed him:

\begin{quote}
I understand that the Colonial Secretary allows Mr Marlow to act as he
considers right in the matter, but cannot extend any official recognition to
the undertaking.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

The idea of removing Indigenous peoples to an island was put forward several times in
colonial Queensland. In 1889 the Townsville Aboriginal Protection Society wrote to the
Colonial Secretary regarding a proposal to establish an Aboriginal Reserve on Palm Island.
The society had highlighted that many Aboriginal people in the district were “starving and
consumed by disease”.\textsuperscript{52} The Police Magistrate from Townsville voiced some concerns
about the effects of removal upon Aboriginal people. With a degree of prescience, he noted:

\begin{quote}
Deporting Aborigines from their native haunts to some other place
means a rapid decrease in their numbers, irrespective of any efforts,
that may be made to ameliorate their condition. I think the case of the
Tasmanian Aborigines is one that may be quoted, as they decreased
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{49} ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} QSA COL/R6 68/1149. For further details of Inspector Marlow and Reverend Black’s schemes see
very rapidly, after being deported to Flinders Island from the main land. Putting this aside I don’t think the Palm Islands contain sufficient game to support even 250 aborigines, the smaller number given in letter referred to.

The Society in their letter offer no suggestion as to how, the Transfer of the Aborigines is to be affected. If they are deported against their will, they will find some means of returning, and I fail to see how they can be made to understand that the deporting will be for their benefit.53

The Police Magistrate advocated old men and women being supplied with rations and “that the young boy(s) and girls, be taken from the Tribes and placed with persons who will bring them up, and make them useful in bush or domestic duties …”54

It can be seen that the Queensland frontier caused massive dislocation of Aboriginal people. Access to a cultural and economic base was impacted upon and they were forced to eke out an existence on the borders of European economy and society. There was an assumption that the bond between Aboriginal people and their territory or specific tracts of country was weak, if it existed at all. Another convenient assumption was that the bonds between children and parents and members of social groups were also negligible. This made it possible to take Aboriginal people as servants or to “rescue” children from their own culture without the consent, or even the knowledge, of their parents.

52 C.H. Haggar to Under Colonial Secretary, 30 October 1889, QSA COL/A 595 89/9668.
In August 1849 J. Durbin, Crown Lands Commissioner for the Maranoa District, wrote to Governor Fitzroy urging the removal of children from their parents:

From the experience acquired during a residence of ten years in the Colony I take the liberty of observing that I am most firmly impressed with the opinion that the only effectual method of ameliorating the condition of this unfortunate race, would be to obtain possession of the young generation including of course both sexes.

Remove them from their own immediate district to a remote part of the colony in order to prohibit any intercourse whatever with any member of their own tribes and then place them at schools for a term of years.

The cruelty that would at first appear in depriving the parents of their children is not so in reality when acquainted with the habits of the lamented race. For a few articles of clothing etc., they would I am convinced be educated to part with their children for the purpose of education.\(^{55}\)

Joseph Carvosso, the Master of the Gladstone National School, also suggested that the education of “native youths” be the prime and leading object of any scheme for the

\(^{53}\) ibid.
\(^{54}\) ibid.
\(^{55}\) NSW State Archives CSIL 4/1141.2.
amelioration of the Aborigines. Carvosso argued that any efforts to introduce social industrial habits or counteract the “intensely nomadic propensities” of “the natives” would only be met with by partial success. Adult Aborigines were viewed as “too far gone” in terms of their ability to be civilised, whereas the young provided the colonists with a “tabula rasa”.

Criticising the poor results of the Catholic Mission at Dunwich in the 1840s the Moreton Bay Courier exhorted its readers to move their attention to the young:

There is nothing like experience in these matters, and as we have some knowledge of the natives, we would recommend these gentlemen who supported the late mission so liberally, to turn their attention to the juvenile portion of the black population, for we feel quite satisfied that a renewal of the attempt to educate the adults must turn out a failure. The black children at present roving about the town are very numerous, and we think the labours of any future missionary ought to be directed for their benefit.

In the following year, the same paper linked the importance of separating children from their parents with employment on cotton plantations:

It is from the young of the race that any hope remains, and it is doubtful if even they can be trained to any useful labour; certainly the attempt were

57 ibid.
58 Moreton Bay Courier, 17 July, 1847.
hopeless unless they were completely isolated from all communications with
the adults of their tribe. Their culture should be both mental and physical but
it has often been regretted that the colony afforded no employment suited to
their years and strength.\textsuperscript{59}

N.L. Zillman, a Lutheran missionary also advocated the “education of the juvenile portion”
of the Aborigines as a method for raising them “to a better condition in the scale of
society”.\textsuperscript{60} A common theme in these proposals was the lack of recognition of bond or
feelings between Aboriginal parents and children. The Reverend Larkin from Roma
proposed the establishment of a house to take in Aboriginal children. In outlining the
aggressions of whites in Southwestern Queensland, he advocated concentration on the
children. Larkin believed that adult Aborigines could never be civilised, as they saw the
whites as anything but civilized:

Some of the settlers on the Branches of the Ballone commit the grossest
outrages on these poor creatures, and as a matter of course we all come in for a
share of their disgust and revenge. The youth must therefore be the subject of
our charity, since it is hopeless to reform the old. I propose then to your
Excellency that a house be built, somewhere in this locality, to receive the
children of the Blacks from two to four years old \textellipsis\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} Moreton Bay Courier, 4 March 1848.
\textsuperscript{60} T.L. Zillman to Colonial Secretary, 22 November 1861, QSA COL/A 22 61/2937; also cited in Kidd,
The Way We Civilise, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{61} Rev. Larkin to Colonial Secretary, 11 October 1865, QSA COL A/84 66/2828.
The Colonial Secretary noted on the letter that “the government have no intention of taking steps in these matters”. This was similar to the response given to the Townsville Aboriginal Protection Society: “The best thing to be done with the blacks is to leave them alone.”

The difficulty with this assertion was that the arrival of Europeans in the colony of Queensland had affected the Aboriginal people in a multitude of ways and had hardly “left them alone.” In 1864, the Hon W. Wood raised the issue of the “Amelioration of the blacks” in the Queensland Legislative Council. He called for the establishment of reserves, “as fast as the advance of the white races may render such necessary.” Such “protective measures” were invariably in the interests of the Europeans. Wood suggested that reserves be established from land deemed to be of “little value for white men.”

Wood’s emphasis was on Aboriginal and “‘half-caste’” children. He urged the government to support the proposal of Bishop Patterson to form a depot in a central locality where “instruction might be afforded to the youth of both sexes”. His greatest concern was the “half-caste” children who would return to their “savage tribes” if not rescued by the state. This interference by the state would, in Wood’s opinion, go some way towards ameliorating the whites’ moral dilemma in taking Aboriginal land.

Wood’s proposals were opposed by several speakers in the House. They highlighted the costs of establishing reserves and educational institutions for Aboriginal people and the

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62 ibid.
63 C.H. Haggar to Under Colonial Secretary, 30 October, 1889, QSA COL/A 595 89/9668.
64 Queensland Parliamentary Debates Legislative Council 11 May 1864, p. 31.
65 ibid.
failure of educational ventures in other Australian colonies. The impact upon Aboriginal children of separation from their parents was ignored and the reason for failure was pinned on the inherent traits of the “savage native”. The Hon H.B. Fritz described the taking of a child as an act of “educative kindness”. 67

The concerns of Wood were taken up in the Legislative Assembly in August 1864. The Colonial Secretary proposed that the government grant land “to persons who may be prepared to undertake the amelioration of the aborigines by establishments of missions or industrial schools”. 68 It was pointed out that no actual expense on behalf of the government would be required for this measure, and the resolution was passed. Discussions of locations of such reserves all emphasised the importance of distance from centres of European settlement.

In 1865 the Queensland government passed the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act. This Act addressed what the Colonial Secretary saw as a danger to society — “a large number for the size of the colony, of neglected children”. Historian Ros Kidd points out that the establishment of industrial schools was part of a broader European strategy to reform “problem populations”. 69 The framers of the 1865 legislation based it largely on measures taken “from the old country”. 70 The Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act was the first statute to deal with “the correction and training of aberrant children”. 71 Before 1865, children found to have committed serious crimes were sent to adult gaols. The new

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66 ibid.,
68 Parliamentary Debates Queensland Legislative Assembly vol. 1, 26 August 1864, p. 315.
70 Queensland Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly, 1865, p. 146.
legislation was designed to deal with two main categories of children: delinquent and neglected children under the age of 15 years. The president of the Legislative Council raised some concerns over the mixing of delinquent and neglected children. In 1999, the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions found that these categories of children had been treated in a similar manner from the nineteenth century through to the 1970s.

The 1865 Industrial School Act also stated that “any child born of an aboriginal or half caste mother” could be deemed to be neglected. In the third reading of the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Bill, the member for Maryborough gave examples of children born of white fathers and Aboriginal mothers who needed to be “rescued”. In pleading his case, he argued that Brisbane society would immediately rescue a white person living “in such a state of degradation” and a “‘half-caste’” child, “although born of white and black parents, was nevertheless a fellow-creature”.

Familiar themes were played out in the discussion which followed in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. One member questioned whether the government should stand in place of parents to half-caste children. Others supported the motion denying that the children had living parents. Dr Challinor advocated the establishment of an “institution for black orphans” despite the fact that, in a large number of cases, they still had a parent. John Douglas, the Member for Port Curtis, believed that the only way to proceed was to

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72 ibid.
74 ** Forde Inquiry Page Number **
75 Industrial and Reformatory Schools Bill, Clause 6, section 7
isolate “native children or half caste children” from their surrounding “contaminating influences” and inculcate the principles of Christianity.\textsuperscript{77} The Colonial Secretary did not believe that “the pure aborigines were so capable of being civilised as were the half castes.”\textsuperscript{78} The upper house of the Queensland Parliament agreed with the Legislative Assembly, but believed that these “protective” measures should also apply to Aboriginal children.\textsuperscript{79} As a result, the definition of neglect included children born of an “aboriginal or half caste” mother.

Only a small number of removals took place as the result of the 1865 legislation. Between 1865 and 1897, there were 48 removals of children to institutions compared with 398 between 1898 and 1931.\textsuperscript{80} While the language and sentiment of “protection” might have echoed through the chambers of the Queensland parliament during 1865 the reality of the cost of institutionalising children meant that large numbers were not separated until after the passing of the 1897 legislation. The available evidence reveals little about the racial background of children removed as a result of the 1865 legislation. Of the 48 children removed between 1865 and 1897, eight were described as “Aboriginal”, thirteen were described as “half-caste” and there was no description for the remaining 27 children.\textsuperscript{81}

The policies and practice of child separation in the twentieth century will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{77} ibid., p. 256.
\textsuperscript{78} ibid., p. 257.
\textsuperscript{79} Queensland Parliamentary Debates vol. II, 1865, p. 361.
\textsuperscript{80} Statistics taken from RD.
\textsuperscript{81} ibid.
Overseas Removals

In a small number of cases, Aboriginal people were taken overseas. These involved informal adoptions of children and engagements as domestic servants. In August of 1900, an Aboriginal girl was returned from London to Queensland. She had originally been taken from Hughenden but a Mrs Christison found that the English weather was making her ill. Upon her return, the girl was placed in the Aboriginal Girls’ Home in South Brisbane and then removed to Fraser Island. Possibly the highest profile case of child removal overseas occurred in 1899 with the proposed taking of a pair of children from Fraser Island to London by Lady Lamington and her husband, the Governor of Queensland (see Illustration 1).

Roslyn Poignant details the way in which groups of Aboriginal people were abducted and taken from Queensland to Europe and the United States during the 1880s. Her book *Professional Savages* describes how a group of Queensland Aboriginal people were taken from their homes and made a part of an international exhibition for Barnum and Bailey’s circus touring across Europe and the United States. Archibald Meston also had links with national and international exhibitions of Aboriginal people. In 1893 he was accused of taking a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for an exhibition in Sydney and

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82 Police Magistrate at Herberton requesting permission for Mr Beckley to take an Aboriginal boy named Snowball to England, 7 February 1887, QSA Col/A489 87/1268; Telegram from JH Bond in Normanton requesting permission for his wife to take a young Aboriginal girl to England for about twelve months. She is required to look after their baby. A second telegram in the file states, “No objection”, QSA Col/A572 89/1813.

83 Mary Christison to Horace Tozer, Hampstead Heath, 19 July 1900, QSA COL/145 00/14806 Microfilm frame numbers 64-80.

84 ibid.

85 See Queenslander, 15 April 1899.


Melbourne in handcuffs and leg irons. While there has been some research on the taking of Aboriginal people for the purposes of displays in exhibitions, the story of Aboriginal people taken overseas as domestic servants is yet to be fully revealed.

Illustration 1.

Source: *Queenslander* 15 April 1899

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88 J.T. Embley to Commissioner of Police, Coen, 3 August, 1897, QSA Col 140; Also correspondence relating to complaints that Meston and B Purcell abducted people from Glenormiston Station, Georgina
Thorpe, Poignant and McKay all explore the racial thinking underlying national and international exhibitions of Aboriginal people from Queensland during the 1890s. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note the ease with which they could be taken from their homeland, exploited and abused, and in many cases abandoned. Much of this was done with the knowledge of colonial administrators. If these informal abductions and removals could take place, it was not a large step to formalise a system of removals. It is to the beginning of this formal system that we now turn.

The Commission for Aborigines

The first major step towards a system of Aboriginal reserves came with the establishment of the Commission for Aborigines in the early 1870s. Although there was some agitation and complaints about violent attacks on the frontier, Rowley attributes the reason for the change in direction taken by the Commission to a new “possibility of Aboriginal welfare and settler self interest lying in the same direction”.

In 1874, the Queensland colonial administration appointed a number of Commissioners of Aborigines to “enquire what can be done to ameliorate the condition of the Aborigines of this Colony, and to make their labour useful to the settlers and profitable to

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90 Rowley, Destruction of Aboriginal Society, p. 172.
The appointment of the Commissioners originated in a petition from white settlers in the Mackay District calling on the colonial government to protect them from the Aborigines through the establishment of a supervised reserve. This would benefit the settlers in two ways, by halting violent attacks from Aborigines and providing a reliable supply of cheap labour for the surrounding sugar plantations. Central to this plan was restriction on the movement of Aboriginal people in the district.

Once appointed, the Commissioners distributed a circular and received over a hundred responses which they summarised for the colonial administration. It was a widely believed that Aboriginal populations in almost all districts of Queensland were rapidly decreasing due to diseases introduced by Europeans which were ravaging the middle-aged and young of all tribes. It was also claimed that Aboriginal people were “passionately fond of intoxicating liquor” and had an “unconquerable aversion to persistent labour.” A theme that had been discussed in parliament with the introduction of the Industrial School Bill was then put forward. The Commissioners believed that it was too late for old and middle-aged Aboriginal people, but that the young could be saved through education and training.

Much of the first report of the Commissioners was couched in the language of protection. The need for protection was seen as compensation for the injustice of...
dispossession suffered by Aboriginal people in Queensland. The Commissioners suggested using the revenue raised from land sales as a basis for action. It was argued that a measure of justice would be enacted considering that a quarter of the annual revenue of the colony came from lands formerly belonging to Aboriginal people.  

Part of this benefit would be the appointment of Protectors of Aborigines and the establishment of protectorates in five districts. These Protectors would ensure that all Aborigines not engaged in an employment contract or agreement would reside on these reserves. The abuse of alcohol was seen as one of the factors that such measures would address.

With protection came control. The Commissioners observed that Aborigines had received neither protection nor punishment from the legal system. In their opinion, prisons were not suitable for Aboriginal people who had broken colonial laws. The solution was the establishment of an island which could combine security with sufficient space for the employment of prisoners in cultivating land. Thus began the practice in Queensland of using islands as places of exile and punishment for Aboriginal people.

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96 "More than one-fourth of the entire revenue of the colony (or £350,000 annually) is derived from the sale and lease of those Crown lands which the Aborigines occupied, and the Commissioners think it no more than just and reasonable that some small portion of this large sum should be set apart and held by the Government in trust for the benefit of those who are left of the tribes who formerly held these lands in possession." W.L.G. Drew (Chairman of Commissioners) to Colonial Secretary, 16 May, 1874, QSA COLA/195 74/1005.

97 ibid.

98 ibid. "That the Aborigines (excepting such as are under approved agreements with Europeans) be excluded from towns and places where intoxicating liquors are sold, and that every effort be made to induce them to reside on the reserves".

99 ibid. p. 3. "...such close confinement is so much at variance with their ordinary habits that it is prejudicial to their bodily health." This point was made again more than a century later in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

100 Other island institutions prior to the establishment of Palm Island included Bribie Island, Fraser Island, and Fitzroy Island.
Amelioration or Segregation?

The wishes of the Commissioners and white settlers were often at cross-purposes. Whilst the Commission saw the establishment of reserves and a protectorate system as part of the “civilising project”, many settlers saw reserves as a way of congregating Aboriginal people together in order to prevent attacks upon European people and their property. In 1877, C.C. Rawson, a settler from the Mackay district, wrote to the Colonial Secretary complaining about the lack of control on the reserve managed by George Bridgeman. Aboriginal people could come and go from the reserve as they pleased and Rawson saw it as a harbour for people committing “outrages”. One of the Commissioners, Church of England Bishop Matthew Hale, vigorously defended the Mackay reserve, questioning whether the government, squatters or any other inhabitants of the colony had a right to demand that Aboriginal people be confined within the boundaries of the reserve against their wishes.\(^{101}\)

Nine years later, the European population in Mackay still looked to the authorities to remove Aboriginal people from their town. The town council asked the Colonial Secretary whether Aboriginal people could be “removed outside the municipality between sunset and sunrise”. A note on the letter from the Commissioner of Police advised that the Aboriginal Camp was removed from the town some time ago and “though they sometimes come to town they are dressed and unless disorderly cannot be turned out or arrested by the police”.\(^{102}\)

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\(^{101}\) Archbishop Matthew Hale to Colonial Secretary, 12 October 1877, QSA COL A/249 77/5744.

\(^{102}\) QSA COL A/249 77/5744.
Whilst on this occasion the law could not accommodate the wishes of the white settlers, the reverse was often the case. In 1879 Stephen Egan, a white selector from Rosewood west of Brisbane, called on the authorities to prevent an Aboriginal man named Sandy returning to the district after serving a sentence in gaol. He felt the whole district would be in terror of the man and suggested what he deemed to be appropriate action: “I can’t see why he could not be sent to the troopers on the Palmer or disposed of in some way.” Acting on the wishes of Egan, the Colonial Secretary authorised the police to arrest Sandy as soon as he was released from St Helena gaol. In the same year, A. McDowall of Maryborough asked that “Mick”, who had been sentenced to four months in gaol, be removed to his father’s property near Cardwell. This action was recommended. In this case, the Commissioners saw that the exclusion of Aboriginal people from towns was essential if the reserve system was to work.

In 1878, complaints were made about police “allowing blacks into Brisbane and Fortitude Valley”, making it difficult to detain those remaining on the reserve at Bribie Island. There were similar reports of Aborigines roaming about the town of Maryborough drunk and displaying “improper conduct”. The Commissioners concluded that “the exclusion of Blacks from the Towns is essential to the proper working of the reserves in the several Districts”. Evans cites more than 30 similar sources showing

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102 Mayor, Mackay to Colonial Secretary, 15 January, 1886, QSA COL A/453 86/551.
103 Stephen Egan to Colonial Secretary, Rosewood, 26 April, 1879, QSA COL A/284 79/3513.
104 ibid.
105 Aboriginal Commissioners to his Excellency in Council, 13 September, 1878, QSA COL A/287A 79/4428.
evidence of settlers agitating for and effecting the removal of Aboriginal individuals and camps during the 1870s and 1880s.\textsuperscript{106}

In January 1875, the Commission commended the work of George Bridgeman and his reserve in Mackay. It requested that he be granted £200 to use in the best interests of the Aborigines. At this time, ideas and measures for protection were very much secondary to the main Aboriginal policy instrument of the colonial government — the Native Police. The Commissioners were quite critical of their operation and, along with Governor Cairns, observed the low number of arrests and convictions of Aboriginal offenders. In an official minute, the Governor gave tacit approval to limited killings of Aboriginal people and recognised that, to date, these killings had been common place:

in other words, many more blacks might be brought to trial for their offence, and many less shot down or else subjected to retaliation of a shameful kind. Reprisals of the nature of taking the law in one’s own hands, ought to be the exception and not the rule. …\textsuperscript{107}

The Commissioners recommended that Aboriginal evidence be made admissible in court to enable Aboriginal offenders to be brought to court rather than being shot in battle or “killed while escaping”. They also recommended the reformation of the Native Police Force. In their view, two travelling inspectors should be appointed to oversee Native Police actions and a Native Police training depot established to achieve a force staffed by more experienced and disciplined officers. Combining the twin colonial themes of

\textsuperscript{106} Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, \textit{Race Relations in Colonial Queensland}St Lucia:
punishment and protection, they recommended the establishment of a separate penal institution for Aboriginal prisoners on an island off the Queensland coast and a school “in which such as shewed an aptitude should be instructed, and the rudiments of the Christian inculcated”.  

The Aborigines Protection Society believed that one of the ways to protect Aboriginal people was to make them useful to white settlers:

> to fully protect these men we must give them a Government, and get them a Government, and get them by proper inducements to work, and then, labour being valuable, there will be less wish to have them shot them down.

While the Mackay Reserve had the support of the majority of local white settlers, the reserve scheme advocated by the Aboriginal Commissioners came in for criticism from the Scottish missionary Duncan McNab, who characterised the reserve system as similar to preserving Aboriginal people “like cattle on a run”. He noted that congregating differing tribal groups together would lead to conflict. Other problems were the “continuing practice of polygamy and polyandry” along with the creation of people dependent upon the state rather than achieving a measure of independence. McNab

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107 Governor Cairns to Colonial Secretary, 14 May, 1875, QSA COL A/222 76/1311.
108 ibid.
109 ibid.
110 The Revd Duncan McNab and the Aborigines, Queensland Legislative Assembly, 1876, p. 3.
believed that the desired object was the “permanent settlement of blacks upon the land”.111

McNab put forward practical alternatives to the reserve system. He advocated placing Aboriginal people in distinct family homesteads in their home districts where, under European supervision, they would be encouraged in Christianity, education and industries such as the raising of cattle and sheep. Central to McNab’s plan was Aboriginal access to land. In 1876 he forwarded applications for 640 acre homestead blocks on behalf of a number of Aboriginal men in the Gympie district. McNab believed these applications to be based on a just recognition of Indigenous rights in the soil. One applicant, James Diper, wrote:

I, James Diper, an aboriginal of Queensland, do hereby humbly request the Governor in Council to reserve for my use and benefit the 640 acres herein described; and I desire to be acknowledged the rightful owner of said land, and to be supplied by the existing Government of Queensland with legitimate title deeds to that effect, as I and my ancestors from time immemorial have used these lands and their appurtenances for hunting and fishing, and I now desire to use them for grazing and agriculture.112

The Land Agent declined to approve the application, as it contained no rent or fee. John Douglas, the Minister for Lands recognised the just basis for the application but felt that


640 acres was “too much land for a native to improve”.¹¹³ McNab was resolute: “It is but just that the original possessor of the soil should have as much (land sic) as is allowed to the worst immigrant.”¹¹⁴ Regarding the recognition of Aboriginal title to land, McNab told the Minister for Lands: “I believe you are prepared to do so; but I apprehend that other members of the Ministry may have raised objections.”¹¹⁵ If this was the case, the other members of the Ministry held sway, as McNab’s homestead dream never came to fruition.

The government of 1876 argued that expenditure on a small number of reserves set aside for Aboriginal people was more than adequate. Additional spending would only be implemented if supported by white settlers. They in turn supported such spending if the benefit to themselves was evident. McNab’s scheme held no such benefit, whereas the proposal of the Aboriginal Commissioners promised the twin benefits of cheap labour and a reduction in Aboriginal attacks upon European people and property.

When the local Member of Parliament Francis Armbrust protested the cutting of support for the Mackay Reserve in 1879 his concern was not the welfare of the Aboriginal residents but that of the surrounding white settlers. He claimed that “if Aboriginals were let loose great injury to crops might ensue”.¹¹⁶ Whilst supporting the closure of the school, he insisted that supervision and control over the Aborigines should be maintained. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary, he outlined his view of the role of the reserve:

¹¹³ ibid.
¹¹⁴ ibid.
¹¹⁵ ibid.
¹¹⁶ Francis Armbrust to Colonial Secretary, 7 October, 1879, QSA COL A/287A 79/4428.
3rd That the reserve should be chiefly used by the old people and young children.

4th That all Aboriginals fit to work should be induced to work on stations and plantations.

5th That the school should be done away there not being sufficient money to carry it on.\textsuperscript{117}

\textbf{Solutions to a Problem}

The pattern for future Aboriginal policy had been set. The two prerequisites for future government funding would be control over the Aboriginal population and cheap or free labour for white settlers. Education of Aboriginal children could only be justified if it better prepared them to be useful servants of white employers. At the conclusion of the Mackay experiment, George Bridgeman saw that cutting children’s ties with kin and country was the only way forward:

My own view of the question is that if the government are willing to take any steps in matter, in the northern portion of the colony where blacks are numerous and troublesome, it will be advantageous to collect all the children from different tribes as we have done here to similar institutions, there give them sufficient education to make them useful servants and then to hire them out to suitable employers in other parts of the colony, this will dispose of all the young, the older ones can if kept under proper control be made to a certain extent useful in their own

\textsuperscript{117} ibid.
districts, and when they ultimately die off the whole matter will be brought to an end as far as any further trouble is concerned.118

Separation of children from any connection with their families and country was also endorsed by Aboriginal Commissioner A.C. Gregory. When discussing a proposal to educate Aboriginal children, he stated:

If we educate the aboriginal children, it is our duty to provide the means of their earning an honest living after leaving school, and also take special measures to prevent the females from being taken back to their tribes. These results do not; however, appear to be attainable, unless the children are wholly removed from their tribes and local associations; and after leaving school they should be settled on reserves under some effectual system of guardianship.119

The Mackay Reserve experiment was short-lived and the settlement and school were closed on 30 April 1879. The primary motivation for the closure and eventual removal of the Aboriginal Commission was the government’s refusal to commit funds to ameliorate the condition of Aboriginal people. Despite the Commissioner’s proposal to establish more reserves, funding was halved in 1882.120 The chairman, Bishop Hale, made the following protest over the government decision to break up reserves at Mackay and Bribie Island:

118 George Bridgeman to Aboriginal Commissioners, 8 May 1879, QSA COL A/287A 79/4428.
The sudden withdrawal of the small ration which the blacks at Bribie Island have been receiving from the Government for some considerable time past, and the compulsory dispersion of these blacks to eke out their existence elsewhere as best they can — is likely to occasion distress, especially to the old and infirm amongst them.\textsuperscript{121}

Fellow commissioner Drew also resigned over the lack of support for the Bribie Island Reserve.\textsuperscript{122} The Aboriginal Commission had promoted the ideas of protectors and reserves, and separating Aboriginal children from their parents and country.

Between 1860 and 1880, a miserly £10000 was allocated for the Aboriginal Commission and Aboriginal reserves.\textsuperscript{123} This amounted to less than £500 per year compared with £300000 spent on Native Police during the same period.\textsuperscript{124} While reports of the Commission were replete with the language of “amelioration” of Aboriginal people the government’s resources were largely focused on the protection of settlers lives and newly taken property. Protective policies for Aboriginal people in Queensland were to be shelved for the next fifteen years and an ad hoc policy of distributing blankets and rations would be the main thrust of the state’s benevolent commitment to Aboriginal people until 1897.

\textsuperscript{119} Report of Aborigines Commissioners, Queensland Government, 1878, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{120} Queensland Parliament Votes and Proceedings, 1882, vol. 1.
\textsuperscript{121} Bishop Matthew Hale to Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, 7 March, 1879, QSA COL A/287A 79/4428.
\textsuperscript{122} W.L.G. Drew to Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, 8 May 1879. Drew also resigned over the massacre of 24 Aboriginal people under the supervision of Native Police Inspector O’Connor. QSA COL A/287A 79/4428.
\textsuperscript{123} This figure is arrived at through adding the amounts found in Estimates, Queensland Votes and Proceedings, 1860–1880.
In his discussion of Queensland Aboriginal policy, Keith Windschuttle glosses over the 1874 Commission for Aborigines. He also ignores the Scottish missionary Duncan McNab’s strident criticism of the Native Police and the Queensland administration’s treatment of Aboriginal people. An explanation for this oversight might be that these details do not suit Windschuttle’s purposes. By 1874, the brutal excesses of the Queensland Native Police had been detailed in a number of quarters. Frontier violence was still occurring and there was some agitation for a system of reserves. If Windschuttle’s hypothesis is correct, then one would have expected the 1874 Commission of Aborigines to flourish.

There are three flaws in Windschuttle’s argument. The first is the substantiation of many of the reports of frontier violence by historians. The second is an overstatement of the influence of humanitarians and missionaries. This thesis demonstrates that the removals project was largely a secular one, with church-run missions playing a marginal role. The third flaw is a refusal to acknowledge the major role of Aboriginal labour in the establishment of a reserves system. Windschuttle has adopted the rhetoric and avoided much of the reality. The discussion now analyses the rhetoric and reality in the lead-up to the drafting of the 1897 *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*.

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125 McNab wrote a pamphlet titled “Notes on the conditions of the Aborigines of Queensland”. This pamphlet was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary in 1881. McNab described the Native Police killing hundreds of Aboriginal people in this pamphlet. QSA COL A/316 81/2895. Windschuttle, however only mentions the missionaries Ernest and John Gribble in his discussion of the Queensland system of ‘separatism’. Keith Windschuttle, ‘The Myths of Frontier Massacres’, p. 11.
Archibald Meston is widely recognised as a major influence in the development of the 1897 legislation.\textsuperscript{127} This was the most far-reaching of all such legislation in Australian colonies to this time, and it is recognised as the template for that passed by most other states in Australia.\textsuperscript{128} As a way of analysing the development of Meston’s plans for Queensland’s Aboriginal population, it is useful to discuss how historians have dealt with other architects of the removal of Indigenous peoples. One of the most prominent figures in the Indian policy of North America was US President Andrew Jackson. During the 1830s, Jackson was responsible for the removal of more than 46000 Native Americans, thereby providing the Europeans with 100 million acres of land.\textsuperscript{129}

The North American historian Ronald N. Satz emphasises the importance of differentiating between rhetoric and reality when analysing the policy of removals implemented by Jackson.\textsuperscript{130} In the United States, generations of scholars have relied on the rhetoric of opponents of Jackson when describing his policies of removal. Some of these accounts have cast Jackson as an “Indian-hater” intent upon dispossessing and annihilating Indian tribes.\textsuperscript{131} From the late 1960s, a revisionist view of Jackson emerged which presented Jackson as a man who cared equally for white and Indian inhabitants of

\textsuperscript{126} For a comprehensive rebuttal of Windschuttle’s arguments on frontier violence (especially with a Queensland context) see Raymond Evans and Bill Thorpe, “Indigenocide and the Massacre of Aboriginal History”, \textit{Overland} 2001, vol. 163, pp. 21–39.
\textsuperscript{127} William Thorpe, “Archibald Meston and Aboriginal Legislation in Colonial Queensland”, \textit{Historical Studies}, vol. 21, no. 82, April 1984, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{128} The Queensland Act set the pattern for the Western Australian Act of 1905 and South Australian Acts of 1910 and 1911, which in turn influenced Northern Territory policy Rowley, \textit{Destruction of Aboriginal Society}, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{129} Satz, “Rhetoric versus Reality”, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{130} ibid. pp. 29–54.
\textsuperscript{131} ibid. p. 33.
the United States. It has been argued that a paternalistic interest in the Indians is evident in Jackson’s thoughts and rhetoric.\textsuperscript{132}

Satz urges historians to mine beneath the surface of “good” or “evil” rhetoric and examine the reality of Indian policies in the United States:

\textit{the implementation of Federal Indian policy ultimately depended on the character, integrity, intelligence and interests of scattered field officials and the willingness of frontier law-enforcement agencies and judicial systems to find whites guilty when arrested for crimes against Indians. Thus by focusing their attention either on an alleged pathology of President Jackson or on his supposed humanitarianism, scholars have deemphasized or ignored many very important aspects of Indian–White relations.}\textsuperscript{133}

This is also the intention of this thesis. When there is rhetoric involving “the use of opium” or “immoral behaviour” of Queensland Aboriginal people, the results will be examined by looking at how many people were actually removed. The reality of the introduction of the 1897 legislation was about control rather than care. The primary section of society to be “protected” was Queensland Europeans. The 807 bundles of Colonial Secretary’s correspondence between 1859 and 1896 contain 89 pieces of correspondence with the word “protection” requesting Native Police protection for Europeans and only eight requests for the protection of Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{132} ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} ibid., p. 41.
\textsuperscript{134} An index of all references to Aboriginal people in Colonial Secretary’s correspondence has been constructed as a result of this research. Andrew Walker (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
The moral equation of dispossession was a more prominent argument than “massacre stories” in Archibald Meston’s case for a framework of control and protection of Aboriginal people. In the introduction to his 1894 “proposed system for the improvement and preservation” of Aboriginal people, he wrote:

It seems well to consider here our “debtor account” with the aboriginals. Queensland has so far alienated about 10000000 acres of freehold land and leased about 300000000 acres for pastoral occupation. For the first we have received about six and a-quarter millions in cash, and for the leased land we receive £332800 annual rental. Since the year of separation, 1859, or even since 1842, we have not expended £50000 for the benefit of the aboriginals, and have never since then, or before, paid them a single shilling in cash, clothes or food, for even one acre of land.  

As already discussed, similar arguments were made by the Commissioners of Aborigines in 1874. The 1874 proposal had much in common with Meston’s 1896 proposal — the establishment of reserves, appointment of protectors, monitoring of work agreements, cultivation and employment on reserves and the prevention of access to alcohol. There was one major difference, however. The 1874 Commissioners admitted that their scheme

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135 Meston forcefully stated, “Had we found Queensland occupied by a race prepared to accept even 1d an acre, our bill would already be £1,300,000. At 1s. Our liability would be £15,500,000. Had we paid at the rate received by the Maoris our account would be still more formidable.” Archibald Meston, ‘Queensland Aboriginals Proposed System for their Improvement and Preservation’ addressed to The Honourable Horace Tozer, Colonial Secretary of Queensland (Brisbane: Government Printer 1895) p. 4.
would involve the annual expenditure of considerable sums of public money. Meston, ever the salesman, sold his proposal at minimal cost. Regarding the operation of reserves he claimed,

The reserves can be made not only self supporting if wisely managed, but to yield a profit available for extended operation. In Victoria, the Coranderrk Mission Station in one year grew a hop crop worth £1140, leaving a clear profit of £983.

Meston also offered the sweeteners of trained trackers and readily available seasonal workers for plantation, marine and forestry industries. Thorpe emphasises the economic dimension of Meston’s proposal. The late 1890s was a time of economic depression in Queensland. Due to the effects of world markets, the influential pastoral industry was experiencing a major downturn. Financial institutions were in crisis and the Queensland National Bank was closed for business. When one adds to this the effects of severe flooding across the state, it was inevitable that expenditure on Aboriginal Affairs would be further reduced. Missions were closed and the issue of blankets to Aboriginal people was halved. As Thorpe concludes: “One of the attractions of Meston’s scheme was its cheapness. The first duty of the reserves he wrote, was that they must be self-supporting institutions.”

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136 ibid.
137 Meston, “Queensland Aboriginals Proposed System”, p. 27.
138 ibid. p. 31.
139 Thorpe, “Archibald Meston and Aboriginal Legislation”, p. 64.
140 ibid.
The actions of missionary Ernest Gribble or exaggeration of “massacre stories” as claimed by Windschuttle didn’t play a role in the introduction of the 1897 legislation. It is interesting to note that Rowley makes a link between the 1874 Commission and the establishment of institutions such as Palm Island.\textsuperscript{141} Finnane and McGuire find similarly.\textsuperscript{142} This same Commission advocating “separate institutions”, far from exaggerating frontier violence, refused to believe that settlers could harshly treat Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{143} It is simply not credible to believe that the Queensland administration would have introduced the 1897 Aboriginal Protection Act in the context of great economic hardship because a few humanitarians and missionaries were outraged over frontier violence. All of the complaints of frontier violence were present in the period leading up to Commission of 1874. Many of the proposals of the Commissioners of 1874 were similar to those of Meston. The reason the 1897 legislation was implemented was the benefit that it would bring to the dominant European population.

\textbf{Conclusions}

The violence of the frontier played a major role in the displacement and dispossession of Aboriginal people in Queensland during the nineteenth century. The number of Aboriginal lives lost through the use of the state-controlled Native Police Force is yet to be fully tallied. If the extent of conflict has been exaggerated, as argued by

\textsuperscript{141} “There seems a degree of inevitability, in retrospect; for one can see the chain of causation from this document to Palm Island.” Rowley, \textit{Destruction of Aboriginal Society}, p. 174. 

Windschuttle, it still remains a side issue in the development of the removals project. The importance of the frontier lies in the way in which links with land and family for Aboriginal people were often denied. This meant that people could be taken as domestic servants, hunted from pastoral leases, forced into the quasi-military Native Police Force or simply abducted with little action on the part of the colonial authorities.

The moral argument that Aboriginal people were owed a debt due to their dispossession was used as frequently as, if not more than, “massacre stories”. Even so, this chapter has argued that it was not until a policy of removals could be shown to benefit European interests — or at least be of inconsequential cost — that it received the support of the legislature. This remained the cornerstone of Aboriginal policy in Queensland through to the 1970s (see Appendix 1). The strength was not just in the numbers removed, but in the power of the threat of removal — this underpinned employment, discipline and overall control of the Aboriginal population.

Windschuttle is certainly right in identifying a level of self-interest in some of the complaints of missionaries and humanitarians regarding the treatment of Aboriginal people. Meston’s 1894 proposal for the future of Queensland’s Aboriginal population could be viewed as an extensive application for a position as Chief Protector. But such considerations were tethered tightly to the needs and wants of the colonial economy. From the nineteenth century through to the mid-1930s, many administrators would dream of the ‘separatism’ which Windschuttle alludes to. Some of these administrators had more success than others, but none of them would ultimately succeed. An expensive

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143 “The Commissioners do not wish it to be understood as their opinion that the Natives have been harshly
closed and separate system of reserves could never compete against tens of thousands of exploitative work agreements enforced and controlled with the assistance of thousands of removal orders.
Chapter 2  
The Removals Database

Who shall measure the tears?  
Who will dare to tabulate the lives  
broken on the wheel?  
Who can sketch the hope of a dawning?  
Still — let us try in words and numbers  
To relate the wishes of a people.¹

This chapter looks at the way in which the Removals Database has been constructed. This discussion leads to a better understanding of “who” was removed. The age, gender and racial background of Aboriginal people removed between 1859 and 1972 are explored. The changing nature of removals over time shows that the needs of institutions and the operation of the Office of Chief Protector played a role in these fluctuations. The early architects and practitioners of the policy, Archibald Meston and Walter Roth, are contrasted with the long shadow of Chief Protector John Bleakley.

Periods of intervention with a relatively high number of removals alternated with periods of less activity in which the number of removals was comparatively low. What remained consistent throughout the period of time studied is the power that removals had over the lives of Aboriginal Queenslanders.
Collection of Data

Three removals registers form the backbone of the database.² For a removal to appear in the register there would have been a relay of letters and memoranda from local Aboriginal Protectors (in the majority of cases, policemen) to the office of the CPA. Upon deciding to have an Aboriginal person removed the, CPA would then seek the signature or approval of the government minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs. The majority of these "official removals" emanated from country towns and centres throughout the state.

Chapters 4 and 5 clearly demonstrate the power of policemen in their duties as local Protectors of Aboriginals. This chapter analyses some of the approaches taken by the Chief Protectors during the twentieth century.

The requests for removal, removal orders and entries in the removal registers were all written exclusively by white men. Naturally these men all had their own ideas as to what constituted proper behaviour and when the removal of Aboriginal people from a location might be deemed to be necessary. While the CPA (later DNA) made the official request for authorisation to remove an Aboriginal person, he usually relied on the advice and recommendations of local police officers to inform his decision. Superintendents of reserves and missions and other officials could also be appointed “Protectors of Aboriginals”, but the majority of removals were recommended by police officers appointed as local “Protectors of Aboriginals”.

¹ Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action, Beyond the Act (Brisbane:, 1979), p. 72.
These individual officers did not act in a uniform way with regards to removals. Some energetically sought to clear camps of Aborigines not “usefully employed” while others tried to ensure that Aboriginal people could remain in their country. The CPA and local protectors did not make decisions regarding removal from within a power vacuum. As soon as the 1897 Act was passed, white farmers and townspeople began to call on the state to exercise its new power to have unwanted Aboriginal people removed.

Examples of this pressure abound. Typical of these is W. Hooper, a sheep station owner from Talwood in Southern Queensland who wrote to his local Member of Parliament and Police Commissioner W.E. Parry-Okeden in 1903 requesting that a “mob of starving niggers be cleared out” from his station. Protectors and their superiors did not always buckle to this pressure. An exasperated Archibald Meston reported in 1902:

> Some people write to ask for blacks to be removed as if they were the only blacks in Queensland, oblivious to the fact that the Department has to deal with thousands, and that expenditure must be limited to some reasonable amount.

This comment from Meston reflects further pressure placed upon local protectors. On occasions they were encouraged by the Department to remove Aboriginal people whilst on others they were actively discouraged. The legislative framework encompassing

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2 The registers of removal were created and maintained by the Office of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals and are currently held at the Queensland State Archives.
4 Archibald Meston to Under Secretary, Home Office, 7 July 1902, QSA A/58929 1902/10668.
removals, and the way in which it was allowed proactive surveillance on the part of local protectors on some occasions and a less energetic approach on others.

In conducting this research, a removal was only entered in the database when there was reasonable and reliable evidence that it had taken place. In this context, letters of request for removal were not considered reasonable evidence of a removal having taken place. The registers were supplemented by evidence found in police correspondence. Receipts for travel of Aboriginal people to institutions were carefully noted along with a series of removal cards held in the Office of Community and Personal Histories. A large number of removals have multiple sources entered into the database. Cross-referencing with removals cards, CPA correspondence files and police files demonstrate that the removals register is a highly reliable source of data. If a removal was recorded in the removals register it was considered to be a valid record of a removal having taken place. Cross referencing showed that there are almost no cases where a removal register entry did not take place. At the same time official correspondence relating to a removal did not always result in a removal being recorded in the register or removal cards.

In terms of hard data, archival evidence was found for 12576 removals between 1859 and 1972 in the state of Queensland. It should be noted that there is a difference between the number of people removed and the number of removals recorded because several people had multiple removals. This factor was taken into account through the use of a personal card (see Illustration 2.1) and a removal card in the database.

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5 A branch within the Queensland Government Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy.
Illustration 2.1 - Personal Card

Database Design

The software used for the Removals Database is Lotus Notes. This software was supplied by the industry partner for this project and I worked in collaboration with Information Technology staff from the Queensland Government in its design. Upon finding evidence for a removal, a personal card was entered into the database. The fields for this personal card included: departmental identification number, surname, first name, other names, alias, tribal name, sex, age group and racial description.
In the mid-1930s the Department gave each Aboriginal person on a mission or reserve an identification number. This number was entered on to a card which recorded personal details such as name, “breed” (“full blood”, “half-caste” or “quadroon”), protectorate, year of birth, place of birth, name of parents, name of spouse along with physical marks and scars, etc. and often a fingerprint. The reason for including the identification number (where provided) is that it provides the user with a valuable reference to more information about the person they are researching. The use of these identification cards reflects thoughts on race occurring during the 1930s. These ideas as they developed in Queensland will be discussed later in this chapter.

One of the limitations of the database and difficulties faced in its construction are the number of similar single names and the use of terms such as “aboriginal” or “gin” or “child”. A number of derogatory terms and names appear in records of removal. There are 73 entries in the database where the person has simply been recorded as “aboriginal”. Terms such as “aged blind gin” reflect what Goffman describes as “the mortification of the self”.

On occasion a small number of Aboriginal people’s tribal names have been recorded. This is the reason for including this field in the personal card for each person removed. One way of attempting to subvert the system and maintaining a degree of freedom from authorities was the adoption of an alias. One man had three aliases and was removed six

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times between 1949 and 1957.\textsuperscript{7} Again, the inclusion of the alias field helps the database user link different names with the same individual.

**Figure 2.1 Remova by Gender**

![Graph showing removals by gender over time.](image)

\textsuperscript{7} QSA POL/J30 510M 28.
With the language of protection surrounding removals, it is important to examine how many people of each gender were removed. With sections of the CPA annual reports devoted to “‘half-caste’ Women and Children” it would be expected that a greater number of women were removed. The gender field in the database provides the user with an insight into the number of males and females removed in Queensland. Of the people removed 5797 were male, 4377 were female and the gender is unclear for 1016 people.\textsuperscript{8} The lack of clarity in terms of gender for this number of removals is due to the vagueness of references such as “ten Aboriginals”. A closer examination of removals over time taking gender into account reveals very little difference between males and females. Figure 2.1 shows that the patterns of removal over time for females mirror almost exactly

\textsuperscript{8} See Table 2.1  Figure 2.1 and 2.2.
the same patterns for males. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 demonstrate that, while the language of protection might have concentrated on women, the reality was different.

The age group field for the personal card was included in order to consider the range of ages of people removed. People were grouped according to the following age categories: 0–18, 19–44, 45–59, 60 and over, and unknown. A reasonable hypothesis based upon the framing of the removals policy would be to expect that there would be a large number of children and elderly people removed — that is, those whose labour could not be readily exploited. Unfortunately, not enough data with age-specific references exist to meaningfully test this hypothesis.

Figure 2.3 Age of Those Removed

(Source: RD)
The only meaningful result that can be drawn from these statistics is that a large proportion of those removed were children. The figure of 3077 is a minimum figure and does not include many Aboriginal children removed as part of state children’s legislation. For reasons of privacy, individual records held by the Children’s Services Department were not accessed in the research for this database. Factors involving the removal of children including separation from parents will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

The racial description field was included as a way of determining whether certain racial backgrounds affected the rate of removals. Annual reports and general correspondence from Walter Roth’s period as CPA, for instance, reflect a near-obsession with removing “half-caste” women and children.

The categories of racial description were taken from the records and included descriptions such as “Almost white”, “Chinese Aboriginal”, “Full Blood”, “half-caste”, “half-caste Kanaka”, “half-caste Portugese”, “Malay Aboriginal”, “Mauritian half-caste”, “Quadroon” and “South Sea Islander”. The lack of “racial descriptives” in removal records makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions on the racial background of all removals from the statistics. Of 11570 personal records 94 per cent had no racial descriptors. A tentative finding can be made when combining age category and racial

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9 The exception to this is nineteenth century orphanage records which were thoroughly researched.
10 An example of this can be seen in 1904. A survey of the “half-caste” population was conducted in the Toowoomba Police District in Southern Queensland. Roth approved the actions of police in remanding “half-caste” children until a removal order could be obtained, saying “I can assure you, and any of your officers, that I will at all times render every help in my power to rid the district of incorrigible and undesirable blacks” QSA, A/58749.
11 CPH Removals Database.
description. The largest number of any descriptives is 414 “half-castes” of which 75 per cent were in the 0–18 age category. The conclusion that might be drawn from these statistics would be that a sizable proportion of children removed were “half-castes”.

Table 2.1 Gender of Removees Described as “Half-caste”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 18</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148 (36%)</td>
<td>232 (56%)</td>
<td>34 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: RD)

Table 2.1 shows that there was a concentration on the removal of “half-caste” females, especially those below the age of eighteen. This finding should be considered in the context of the fact that age was often only recorded for child removees. Unfortunately the data drawn upon for this project does not provide enough details on racial background for a rigorous analysis of all removals to be conducted.
Once personal details were entered into the database, an attached removal card was completed. Where it was possible to identify that the same person was being removed more than once, a number of removal cards were attached to the same personal card. The fields that made up the removal card were: removed from; removed to; date; year of removal; removal reason category; reason used for removal; age at time of removal; removal initiated by; separated from parents; and sources along with additional information.
For the majority of removals, the locations for the "removed from" and “removed to” fields were available and in only 257 cases (2 per cent) it was listed as unknown. One of the reasons that locations are not available for this small number of removals is that some of them represent removals that took place following an individual’s escape from an institution. For other removals, the evidence available simply does not record the original location of the person removed. For only a small number of removals, the exact date is available and this has been entered into the date field of the database but the year of removal constitutes more “hard data” and was used to trace patterns of removal over time.

The only “soft data” entered was the reason used for removal. This information is much more difficult to verify and was largely uncorroborated. The method adopted for analysing this “soft data” of removal reasons has been to categorise each removal into a type of reason. In constructing these categories, I have sought to use language as close as possible to that used in the removal record — in this way, I have endeavoured not to initially interpret the data. The categories that the data has been organised into are shown in Table 2.2.

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12 RD.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Examples of Wording Employed in Justifying Removals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Examples include, “spearing cattle”, “dangerous”, “defiant to superintendent”, “bad influence on blacks in camp”, etc. Also included in this category are removals where a person was eligible for release from prison but is sent to a mission or reserve under a removal order instead of being released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Removals in this category include those where the reason used was for children to attend school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>These are removals when people were removed from a location because they refuse to sign an agreement to work or when people are described as “lazy” and unable to obtain employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Examples include, “to be with family, to accompany husbands, parents, wives”, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Examples include, “suffering from diseases”, “suspect VD”, “to receive medical treatment”, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addicted to opium</td>
<td>Examples in this category: “addicted to opium”, “is an opium and morphine wreck”, “heavy opium smoker”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immorality</td>
<td>Examples: “is kept by white men”, “hanging around miners’ camps”, “prostitution”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing with other races</td>
<td>Examples: “harboured by a kanaka” and “not wanting offspring of Chinese and Aboriginal population”. The majority of the reasons in this category include “frequenting Chinese quarters”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insane</td>
<td>This category includes people removed where the reason stated is “insanity”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglected</td>
<td>This category includes all people removed where the reason used is “neglected”. This category largely comprises children — often separated from their parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>These removals include those people where the reason stated is “old age” or “old and indigent”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For care and protection</td>
<td>These are removals with the stated reason “for care and protection” or “for their protection” or “for own protection”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At own request / voluntary</td>
<td>This category includes when people are described as wishing to move to a settlement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An analysis of the reasons used for removal is included in Chapter 3. The next field to be included in the removal card is the reason used for removal or stated reason. This is a way of checking the category of removal that has been chosen. Where available, age at time of removal has been included in a field provided for this data on the personal card. For a number of removals, the person or persons initiating the removal are entered into the “Removal initiated by” field. The majority of these entries are for local protectors, and the possibility exists to compare and contrast the number of removals initiated by individual protectors during certain periods of time. Unfortunately removal orders and the removals registers do not contain enough information on initiators of removals to allow a comparison of individual locations or individual protectors.

The exact number of Aboriginal children separated from their parents throughout Australia still remains largely unknown. The separation field of the removal card is a
way of establishing the number of children documented as being removed from their parents in Queensland. As each removal has been entered into the database, it has been categorised as “Yes”, “No” or “Unknown” with regard to the question of separation from parents. Children account for 85 per cent of removals where the age is known. At least 22 per cent of these are separated from their natural families at the point of removal. The number of child separations will be dealt with in detail in the final chapter of this thesis.

Each removal card in the database has a reference entered in the source field. The vast majority of these references can be found at the Queensland State Archives. The other major sources of references are annual reports of the CPAs and removals cards held by the Community and Personal Histories Branch. The additional information field has been used to alert users of the database to related removals, other references and details of the removal which require further clarification.

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13 RD. lists 3077 children removed, 663 of whom are documented as being separated.
Figure 2.4 shows how the number of removals fluctuated dramatically over time. Many of the peaks and troughs are due to external factors as well as changes in Aboriginal policy and the way in which the Aboriginal Affairs Department was administered. The creation of institutions and wholesale removal of communities played a major role in the fluctuations. The dramatic changes over time severely challenge the veracity of many of the stated reasons for removal which appear in the removals registers and associated files. This argument will be developed further in a discussion of categories of removals in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

The first major increase in removals occurs in 1897 — an expected result with the passing of the *Aboriginal Act*. Eighty four per cent of removals in that year were to the
prototype of all Queensland Aboriginal institutions, the Bogimbah Mission on Fraser Island. The majority of those removed to Fraser Island came from the Maryborough district. From the early 1890s, the non-Aboriginal population there had been agitating for the removal of all Aboriginal inhabitants. In 1897, Archibald Meston reported to the Home Secretary that the young Aboriginal women posed a risk of venereal infection to the wider population. As a result, the Home Secretary ordered this major removal to Fraser Island.\(^\text{14}\) The next major increase in numbers between 1900 and 1902 was brought about as a result of the beginnings of the "protective machinery" of the Queensland administration. During this period, Walter Roth, Protector for North Queensland and Archibald Meston, Protector for Central and Southern Queensland, were appointed and institutions specifically designed to receive and control Aboriginal people were established.

A small rise in numbers in 1904 was directly attributable to the closing of the Bogimbah Mission on Fraser Island and removal of people to Durrundur and Yarrabah. The background to the closure of Bogimbah was one of poor management combined with a protracted campaign against the Church of England Board of Missions by Archibald Meston. There was much evidence of atrocious living conditions being provided on Fraser Island by secular administration under the auspices of Harold Meston, son of Archibald, and by the Church of England mission authorities.\(^\text{15}\) In the final analysis, the decision to close the Fraser Island mission and remove 35 inmates to Durundur and 85 to

Yarrabah\textsuperscript{16} came down to financial considerations. A new Queensland government in 1903 reduced grants to missions which directly affected the Board of Missions’ ability to continue running Fraser Island.\textsuperscript{17} Walter Roth, appointed CPA in 1904, forwarded a memo to the UnderSecretary of the Lands Department in July of the same year highlighting the savings that could be made to the public purse through the removal of people from Fraser Island to Yarrabah. It was claimed that £50 would be saved in the first year, £250 in the second and £300 in the third and succeeding years.\textsuperscript{18} The savings to the government cost the Fraser Island removees dearly. In 1911 the Yarrabah superintendent, W.G. Ivens, recorded that of the original 117 people removed from Fraser Island only approximately ten had survived.\textsuperscript{19} The disastrous results of such removals would be repeated 38 years later with the forced relocation of Cape Bedford inmates to Woorabinda.

Once the practice of removals was fully engaged, the first major drop in numbers takes place between 1904 and 1909. There were two causal factors involved in this reduction of numbers. The first factor is that, between April 1903 and until August 1905, the Lands Department was responsible for the administration of the 1897 Act. The decrease in the number of removals points to a change in administering of the 1897 Act. The second causal factor was a change of Chief Protectors in 1905. Richard Howard took over from Walter

\textsuperscript{16} Chief Protector of Aboriginals Progress Report, 1904, QSA A/44681 , p. 4.
\textsuperscript{17} Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{18} Dr Roth’s Progress Report – July 1904, QSA A/44681, 3.
\textsuperscript{19} Raymond Evans, \textit{A Permanent Precedent: Dispossession, Social Control and the Fraser Island Reserve and Missions, 1897 – 1904} The Ngulag Monograph no. 5 (St Lucia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Unit, University of Queensland 1991), pp. 26–27.
Roth as CPA in July of 1905. Howard’s approach to Aboriginal Affairs was more _laissez faire_ than that of his predecessor. Rosalind Kidd rightly asserts that Howard was often less than eager to remove Aboriginal people, believing instead that they could be useful in areas of unregulated employment.²⁰

The year with the highest number of removals was 1915. This dramatic increase again coincided with a change of CPA. In 1913, the final year of Richard Howard’s appointment, the number of removals was 193. This climbed to 343 in J.W. Bleakley’s first year as CPA and climaxed at 562 in 1915. It may be aleatory to argue a relationship between the jump in numbers and the installation of Bleakley as Chief Protector, but once again the approach of Bleakley to Aboriginal affairs was in stark constrast to that of his predecessor. Kidd describes Bleakley as an active interventionist observing,

> Unlike Howard, Bleakley was fixated with the concept of racial purity. He described Aboriginal people as a “child race”, and over many years he ruthlessly exercised the removal provisions of the legislation in order to maximise the protective functions of missions and settlements.²¹

The statistics back Kidd’s claim regarding Bleakley’s use of the removal provision. Whether the purpose of this engagement of removals was in order to maximise protection for Aboriginal people in 1915 is more open to conjecture. Forty-four per cent of

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²⁰ Kidd mentions areas of employment such as trapping, snaring, and odd jobs around stations and towns: Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 278.
removals in 1915 were for disciplinary reasons.\textsuperscript{22} This was the largest category, followed by 20 per cent with the reason “for their own benefit” used.\textsuperscript{23} In the annual report for 1916, J.W. Bleakley discussed the need for labour in light of recruitment for the war:

in the industries most suitable for natives, such as cattle station work, the supply of white labour, probably owing to the recruiting for the war, has been inadequate in most districts.\textsuperscript{24}

The role of employment in removals will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Another factor which must be taken into account when analysing causes for the rise in the number of removals in 1915 is the introduction of new government settlements. In the years leading up to 1915, three institutions were established. In May of 1911, the Taroom settlement was established in central Queensland. In September of 1913, an Aboriginal reserve near Innisfail on the Hull River was gazetted\textsuperscript{25} and in the same year the Seventh Day Adventist Church established Mona Mona mission near Kuranda in North Queensland. Sixty-seven per cent of removals in 1915 were to these newly established missions and settlements.\textsuperscript{26} It can be concluded then that three factors contributed to the 1915 figure of removals. These were the establishment of three new institutions, the dearth of labour due to the war and the policy direction of J.W. Bleakley.

\textsuperscript{21} ibid., p. 282.
\textsuperscript{22} This figure takes into account “family removals” where individuals are accompanying a removee where the reason is disciplinary.
\textsuperscript{23} RD.
\textsuperscript{24} Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 1916, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{25} Queensland Government Gazette, 6 September 1913, p. 555.
\textsuperscript{26} RD.
The changes in numbers of removals had very little to do with the reasons stated on individual removal orders. A variety of external factors, including the approach of local protectors, racial thinking of the time and a need to people newly created institutions, also impacted upon the number of removals for any given year.

The third largest peak in numbers of removals occurred in 1935. The reason for this is clearly a change in legislation. In 1934 the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* was amended to bring all “mixed race” people in Queensland under the Act unless specifically exempted. This legislation was developed in a climate of fear of an ever-increasing “half-caste” population.\(^{27}\) This fear was felt across Australia. Aboriginal people became more visible with unemployment during the Great Depression, and a renewed interest in race issues brought about a flurry of new measures.\(^{28}\)

The final peak in removals occurs in 1942. A total of 259 were removed from Cape Bedford to Woorabinda in 1942, accounting for 54 per cent of the removals for that year. As Kidd points out, the Cape Bedford people paid the highest price in terms of wartime disruptions to missions and settlements.\(^{29}\) The Cape Bedford removals of 1942 are unique in that they were brought about through federal government intervention.

Cape Bedford was an institution run by Lutheran missionaries. In the climate of war, the German missionaries came under much suspicion from Commonwealth authorities. In

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\(^{27}\) Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 394.
\(^{28}\) Anna Haebich, *For Their Own Good: Aborigines and Government in the South West of Western Australia 1900–1940* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988), p. 315.
\(^{29}\) Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 448.
March of 1942, W.J. MacKay, Director-General of Security, wrote to Francis Forde, Minister for the Army, informing him of possible dangers present at Cape Bedford. MacKay wrote:

there is good reason to fear that there may be some fifth-column activity there as the result of the presence of about 10 missionaries who are probably all of enemy extraction.\(^{30}\)

The Director-General offered to ensure that all of the Aborigines at Cape Bedford would be removed to the Barambah settlement. Press reports concerning the activities of Lutheran missionaries at Finschafen (New Guinea), run by the same mission board as Cape Bedford, immediately placed missionaries Schwarz and Behrendorf under suspicion. Vague reports had been received from the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles that:

German Missionaries are with the Japanese and have all local natives working for them, and that these natives disclose our position.\(^{31}\)

On 17 April 1942, Minister Forde signed detention orders for Schwarz and Behrendorf and they were arrested and sent to the Gaythorne Internment Camp\(^ {32}\) on the grounds that one of them was suspected of having direct contact with the Japanese.\(^ {33}\)

\(^{30}\) Director-General of Security to Minister for the Army, 31 March, 1942. NAA MP 742/1 1/6/204.

\(^{31}\) Deputy Chief of General Staff to Secretary, Department of the Army, NAA MP 742/1 1/6/204.

\(^{32}\) ibid.

\(^{33}\) ibid.
Fearing that Cape Bedford Aborigines would be used by the Japanese as guides for infiltration tactics, the Commonwealth government acted and on 17 May 1942 the community was removed to Woorabinda.\textsuperscript{34} Whilst the primary factor for the removal was the doubts cast over German Lutheran missionaries, Kidd also cites an example of “alleged activism on the part of Cape Bedford residents”\textsuperscript{35}

Kidd vividly describes the disastrous results of the Cape Bedford removals. Those removed were not provided with sustenance for the 48-hour journey from Cape Bedford to Woorabinda. Upon arrival, they encountered grossly inadequate shelter and were given little protection against the winter cold. Within a year, nearly a quarter of those Cape Bedford people removed to Woorabinda in 1942 had died.\textsuperscript{36}

With the involvement of Japan in the war, there was also an evacuation of people labelled “coloured people” from North Queensland in 1942. Ninety residents of Hammond Island were accompanied by Roman Catholic missionaries to the town of Cooyar on the Darling Downs. Two hundred “coloured people” were also transferred from Thursday Island to Cherbourg where they were temporarily accommodated while waiting for employment in rural industries.\textsuperscript{37} The level of freedom afforded “coloured people” was far greater than that given to Aboriginal people removed south during the war years. The removal figures

\textsuperscript{34} ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} A security note at the time reported: “Aboriginals openly stated that the Japs told them that the country belonged to the blacks, had been stolen from them by the whites and that ‘bye and bye’ (the Japanese) would give it back to them.” Ball, \textit{Aborigines in the Defence of Australia} (Sydney: Australian University Press, 1991) p. 57. cited in Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 448.
\textsuperscript{36} Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, pp. 448 –53.
\textsuperscript{37} 1943 Annual Report of the Sub-Department of Native Affairs, p. 2.
gradually dropped to pre-1897 levels during the 1960s. The main category of reasons used after World War II were disciplinary.

**Varying Approaches**

The construction of the database makes it possible to compare the number of removals occurring under different CPAs and DNAs. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Archibald Meston and Walter Roth were intimately involved in the removal of Aboriginal people, touring the state and making recommendations as they went. Only a sample of removals recorded the initiator and these figures just exist for Roth and Meston. The available data suggest that Walter Roth focused on the removal of “half-caste” children.\(^{38}\)

The ideology and approach to Aboriginal affairs taken by individual CPAs is reflected in the number of removals which occurred during certain periods of time. Figure 2.5 shows that 56 per cent of removals occurred during Bleakley’s time as CPA when the average number of removals outstrips any other protector by over 100 per year. The following discussion will concentrate on approaches to removals taken by three CPAs: Archibald Meston, Walter Roth and John Bleakley. Meston and Roth were the first two Chief Protectors to implement the removals aspect of the 1897 legislation and Bleakley’s policies of segregation speaks through the data. The policy direction of Cornelius O’Leary will be discussed in Chapter 3.

\(^{38}\) RD. A search on the database shows that Meston initiated 92 removals while Roth initiated 128. Sixty of Roth’s removals involved “half-castes” while only nineteen of Mestons recorded the removee as “half-caste”. Roth is shown to have initiated removals for 67 children while the figure for Meston is 47. These
Table 2.3 Average Number of Removals per year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protector/Director</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archibald Meston 1897 - 1903 *</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Roth 1898 - 1905 *</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Howard 1906 – 1913</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bleakley 1914 – 1940</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelius O'Leary 1942-1963</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Killoran 1964 – 1986</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: RD) *W.E. Parry-Okeden was Chief Protector during part of this period but Roth and Meston were main administrators of policy

Figures are based only on those entries in which specific information is given regarding who initiated the removal.
The interregnum of Meston and Roth as Southern and Northern Protectors from 1897 to 1903 complicates the determination of removals initiated by them. These figures have, however, been accurately calculated and cross-referenced through the use of the RD, annual reports and a breakdown of removals according to geographical location. The relatively low number of removals occurring during the period of Walter Roth’s control seems somewhat surprising considering his vigorous efforts in report writing, ethnographic research, touring through the northern districts, and inspection and enforcement of employment agreements. Most historians have rightly painted him as “a

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39 Walter Roth’s progress reports can be found in the following locations: QSA A/58912, A/44679, A/44680, A/44681, HOM/J15, HOM/J17.
determined and effective opponent of the economic and sexual exploitation of Aborigines”.\textsuperscript{40}

Manne has highlighted Roth’s preoccupation with removing “half-caste” children claiming he was “a pioneer in Australia of the policy and practice of Aboriginal child removal”.\textsuperscript{41} Finnane and McGuire have also demonstrated Roth’s willingness to use removals as a form of punishment for those Aboriginal people he described as “incorrigibles”.\textsuperscript{42} Both of these claims will be dealt with in depth in Chapters 3 and 6, but they certainly pose the question as to why the number of documented removals for the period of Roth’s administration is so relatively low.

Despite the evidence for Roth’s keenness to remove Aboriginal children deemed to be exploited and Aboriginal men perceived to be dangerous criminals, there is also evidence to suggest that Roth did not see the act of removal as central to his role as a Protector of Aborigines. In his early role as Northern Protector of Aboriginals, Roth encountered what he believed to be a common misunderstanding of the purpose of the 1897 Act. In 1898 he wrote to his superior, Parry-Okeden, expressing his surprise that a deputation of graziers who had met the Premier in Cairns had suggested that the *Aboriginals Protection Act* was enacted to remove Aborigines to reserves. He wrote:

\textsuperscript{41} Manne, “In Denial”, p. 7.
this idea of forcibly removing blacks on to reserves is however very prevalent among the Northern populace, both black and white. I am very well aware indeed, I reported so to you shortly after I came to Cooktown …where the statement was actually made in the local papers. The same thing happened at Normanton where, owing to a similar impression, the majority of the blacks left the township as soon as my arrival was known. Of course the idea originally emanated in the imagination of mischievous whites.43

The deputation which met with Premier T.J. Byrnes in May 1898 made a great impact upon him. In a telegram to the Home Secretary, he stated:

Very strong opinions expressed by deputation of graziers, farmers and miners against stringent enforcement of aboriginal protection act in Cairns, Russell River, Atherton, Thornborough and Herberton districts have promise that Govt. will not enforce act so as to interfere with legitimate employment of aborigines engaged & also that Govt will not compel the removal of aborigines from their own country to reserves.44

The telegram was passed to the Commissioner of Police and CPA, W.E. Parry-Okeden,

43 COL/139 Walter E. Roth to the Commissioner of Police, Cooktown, 27 May 1898, QSA COL/139 (Microfilm frame numbers 567-568): In a defensive margin note on the original letter Parry-Okeden, the Police Commissioner and Chief Protector at the time commented: “The Premier thoroughly understands the lines on which I am working the Act. No harm could accrue therefore by misrepresentation where Dr Roth is too much concerned about these matters” QSA COL 142 1898/6934.
44 T.J. Byrnes to Home Secretary, 5 May 1898, QSA Pol/J15.
who responded:

Since The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897” came into force I have endeavoured to carry out its administration in the northern portion of the colony in the spirit indicated in the telegram under reference. The instructions given by me have been that the Act is not to be enforced so as to interfere with the proper and legitimate employment of Aboriginals, but is to be applied to the suppression of abuses. There seems, however, to be a certain amount of misconception on the subject, and many of the blacks appear to have been brought to the belief that it is intended to forcibly remove them to “reserves” — a course of action which has never been contemplated.45

Premier Byrnes approvingly commented: “Noted and the prudence evinced in the interpretation and administration of the Act thoroughly approved.”46 Byrnes also underlined Parry-Okeden’s phrase referring to the forcible removal of Aboriginal people and wrote in the margin of his letter “decidedly not”.47

Within days of Byrnes having met the deputation of farmers, miners and graziers Sub Inspector Cooper, Protector of Aboriginals, was sent on a tour of the Cairns district in order to educate whites and blacks with regards to the implementation of the policy of removals. He met with 500 Aboriginal people and informed them, “that the Government

45 Commissioner of Police to Under Secretary, Home Department, 11 May 1898 QSA Pol/J15.
46 ibid., margin note.
wished to be their friend and that they were not to be removed from their own country but that the able bodied must get work when possible”. Cooper also met with the Barron Valley Farmers Progress Association and Montalbion Progress Association. At these meetings, Cooper encountered much opposition to the policy of removal. He reported to his superior:

the idea of shifting the Blacks onto any given Reserve would not I respectfully suggest be a success, …as you will see Sir from the minutes of the meetings I attended public feeling is very much against this clause in the Act.49

The meeting of the Barron Valley Farmers Progress Association was held at Atherton and passed a motion objecting to “Chinese, Kanakas and Asiatics being able to employ Aboriginals”.50

The meeting also moved that any European permitted to do so by the Aboriginal Protector be able to use Aboriginal labour on a casual basis. Showing a high degree of self-interest, the meeting supported a motion stating:

That it is not desirable in the interest of the Aboriginals to remove them out of their own district to any reserve as we consider such removal would tend to shorten the period of their lives.51

47 ibid.
48 Sub Inspector Cooper to Commissioner of Police and Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 3 June 1898, QSA COL 142.
49 ibid.
Pushing for unrestricted access to Aboriginal labour the Montalbion Progress Association passed a similar motion:

Taking Aboriginals away from their native Tribe and Country is injurious in its effect. The Aboriginals pine for native country and friends and die under the confinement as they consider it.\(^{52}\)

Protector Cooper assured the Europeans that no such thing would happen and published a version of Parry-Okeden’s letter in the local press to allay any further fears of a loss of this cheap and casual pool of labour.\(^{53}\)

So was to begin a battle against vested interests that would follow Walter Roth throughout his period of time as Northern Protector and later as CPA. The only room he was given to manoeuvre was in terms of policing and enforcing employment regulations and the suppression of abuses. Clashing with European employers was one of the major factors which helped to bring about his downfall as Chief Protector in 1906.

In an article titled “The Powers of Protectors”, Ganter and Kidd examine the conflicts between and different approaches taken by Roth and Meston in the implementation of Queensland’s 1897 Aboriginal legislation.\(^{54}\) Ganter and Kidd argue that Archibald

\(^{50}\) ibid.
\(^{51}\) Barron Valley Farmers Progress Association, 22 May 1898, QSA COL 142.
\(^{52}\) Montalbion Progress Association, 14 May 1898, QSA COL 142
\(^{53}\) Sub Inspector Cooper to Commissioner of Police and Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 3 June 1898, QSA COL 142.
Meston’s push to preserve the “purity” of both races was subordinate to the “political pragmatism of Parry-Okeden’s intensified controls”.\(^{55}\) This was certainly the case in the framing of the 1897 legislation, but the administration of the Act saw a greater number of removals take place under the direction of Archibald Meston. The number of removals occurring under Meston’s jurisdiction between 1897 and 1903 was an annual average of 90 compared with Roth’s average of 47 removals annually for the time that he was Northern Protector and later CPA.

Ganter and Kidd are correct in drawing distinctions between the philosophies and approaches to removals taken by Roth and Meston. I would argue that whilst these differences in approach would have played some role in the difference in the number of removals, external pressures also need to be taken into account. The pressure brought to bear by northern miners; graziers and farmers supported by Premier T.J. Byrnes meant that Walter Roth was in no position to implement a policy of wide-ranging removals.

In contrast to this, Archibald Meston had Southern and Central Queensland pastoralists begging him to remove Aborigines to reserves. Figure 2.6 shows that one of the peak periods of removal for the Southern regions was that of Meston’s administration. Around the turn of the century, a drought severely affected areas in Western Queensland and many pastoralists refused to continue providing Aboriginal people living and working on stations with rations.\(^{56}\) Home Secretary Foxton, acting on reports of the drought,\(^{56}\)

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\(^{55}\) ibid., p. 540.
\(^{56}\) One example of this: Archibald Meston to Home Secretary, July 1901: “The Union Bank has appealed to me for removal of the blacks on Thylungra Station where it appears they cannot be fed any longer.” Letters were also received from Comongin and Pilteroo stations in South Western Queensland, QSA COL 144.
instructed Meston to conduct a tour of the country “West of the Warrego” with the intention “to effect an early and decided improvement in the condition of the Western aboriginals”.57 One hundred and fifty people were removed as a result of Meston’s tour and, despite calling for wholesale removals, he emphasised: “On this trip I took no blacks away from any of the stations.” 58 Those people whose labour could not be exploited were removed.

Meston saw the removal of Aboriginal people from southwestern Queensland whose labour could not be exploited as central to his project of preventing miscegenation.

By removing these unemployed aboriginals to the Coast we shall not only save them from starvation, and the too well-known evils which the desperate struggle for existence involves but by restricting the aboriginal women to their own men, — and in the seclusion of the Reserves, — we shall arrive at the only practical solution of that half-caste problem so urgently in need of settlement …”59

Despite Meston’s drive to prevent the “spread of half-castes”, he needed to ensure that European labour needs could still be met when required. In 1892, Rev. H.M. Shuttlewood, Rector of Charleville, had recommended that a reserve be established in the far west towards Windorah and his suggestion was acted upon in 1902, when a reserve

57 *Aboriginals West of the Warrego*, Report to the Home Secretary June 1900, 12, QSA COL 144; *The Queenlander* 27 July 1901.
58 ibid.
59 Archibald Meston, *The Western Aboriginals*, July 1901,p. 3. QSA COL/144.
was established at Whitula Station, 30 miles from Windorah.\(^6^0\) Meston saw the reserve as a cheaper way of administering rations to “Western Aboriginals” suffering the effects of the drought. The reserve should be maintained until the country was restocked and Aboriginal people could be employed once again.\(^6^1\) This reserve was to cater for all Aboriginal people within a 200 mile radius, and was administered by Meston’s son Harold until it closed in 1904.\(^6^2\) People from other places in the southwest of the state (including Stonehenge and Jundah) moved to the fringes of Longreach by 1902, from where they too were removed to missions and reserves.\(^6^3\) A stark demonstration of the effects of removal in Southwestern Queensland can be seen in two sets of statistics looking at the numbers of Aboriginal people living in selected locations in 1897 and 1900 (see Table 2.4).\(^6^4\)

**Table 2.4 Dispossession in South Western Queensland 1897–1900**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charleville</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augathella</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooroorooka</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adavale</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunnamulla</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morven</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma to Toowoomba</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Archibald Meston, *Aboriginals West of the Warrego*, June 1900, QSA: COL/144, 00/9625..)

\(^6^0\) Queensland Government Gazette, 20 September 1902, p. 701.
\(^6^1\) Harold Meston to Under Secretary, Home Office, 28 June 1902, QSA COL/144, 02/9385.
\(^6^3\) Archibald Meston to Under Secretary, Home Office, 13 March 1902, QSA, A/58929.
\(^6^4\) Meston, *Aboriginals West of the Warrego*. 
While it may not fully explain the differing number of removals, Ganter and Kidd are right to highlight the different approaches of Roth and Meston in their administration of the 1897 legislation. They point to the removal of Keppel Islanders in Central Queensland to further illustrate these differences. In 1902 the Northern and Southern Protectorates met at the Tropic of Capricorn near Rockhampton and “it was here that the Keppel Islands became the site of a vicious battle between Meston and Roth over policy”.

The Keppel Islanders came under official scrutiny again in 1900 when Meston moved to remove the women, viewing this as a measure to prevent the spread of sexual diseases and miscegenation. Two women and their children were subsequently sent to Fraser Island. When efforts to remove more women were stifled by the manager of the sheep station, James Lucas, Meston made further efforts to have the entire Aboriginal population removed. At this stage, Walter Roth moved to support Lucas and prevent the removal. He suggested that the spread of sexual diseases could be attributed to coastal fishermen and that “it was right and just [that] these few fast disappearing blacks be left to die ‘at home’.” However, Meston was to have his way and in September of 1902 all the Keppel Islanders were removed.

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68 ibid.
A similar dispute between Roth and Meston over removal policy occurred in the Muttaburra district in 1903. On 13 July, Muttaburra Acting Sergeant of Police informed his superiors that a European man had been living in the district with an Aboriginal woman for the previous five to six years, making a living from tending horses and kangaroo shooting. With regards to the relationship the police report stated: “It is said that he is as kind to her as he would be to a white woman.” Archibald Meston receiving the letter later replied: “Would advise that ________ be removed to Longreach by cheapest method possible and sent to Rockhampton by first escort.”

Meston’s order was not immediately followed. A letter clarifying which action should be taken was then sent from the Inspector of Police in Longreach to the Commissioner of Police. This time Walter Roth was asked for advice and wrote:

After 5 or 6 years cohabitation, it would, in my opinion, be a hardship on _________ to be turned adrift to seek her own living. On the other hand the police have apparently nothing against _________ (name of husband), and I am consequently prepared to give him permission to marry her, should he wish to. Please let him be informed accordingly, but at the same time warned that if he continues the present illicit intercourse, not only will action be taken against him for harbouring etc., but steps will be taken for the gins removal.

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69 Acting Sergeant of Police, Muttaburra to Inspector of Police, 13 July 1903, QSA A/58749.
70 ibid. (margin note on Letter).
71 Margin note on letter from Inspector Lamond, Longreach to Commissioner of Police, 6 October 1903, QSA A/58749.
Neither action was taken, as the European man took the Aboriginal woman to the blacks’ camp at Manda where she remained four months later.\footnote{Acting Sergeant of Police Muttaburra, to Inspector Lamond, Longreach, 11 January 1904 QSA A/58749.}

This section has demonstrated that, on occasions, the individual approaches of Roth and Meston played a role in removals but that broader regional and external factors probably played a larger role in determining the number of people removed during the early years of the twentieth century. The influence of the European employers of the Cairns district and the graziers of Southwestern Queensland again demonstrate that the individual or community needs of Aboriginal people were rarely taken into account when the implementation of the policy of removals was being considered. Both Roth and Meston argued in terms of what was best for Aboriginal people, but there is little evidence of any involvement of Aboriginal people in this process.

During the early years of implementing the policy of removals, ideology or racial thinking made way for the pragmatic needs and interests of the pastoral and marine industries. Racial thought was, however, to play a central part in the number of removals which occurred during the period of time that John Bleakley occupied the Office of Chief Protector in Queensland.

**Bleakley’s Clearing House to Civilisation**

The majority of removals occurred during the administration of J.W. Bleakley as CPA. It is important, therefore, to investigate the racial thinking of Bleakley. There is much
evidence for his obsession with racial purity and concentration on “the ‘half-caste’ problem”. In the annual report for 1919 Bleakley began to disseminate his thinking on issues of race. He advocated a policy of “complete segregation”, stating that “it is only under such conditions that any measures for the social betterment of the race can have any success”.73 Viewing the mixing of races as a disease, he vehemently opposed any notion of “racial absorption”:

It is estimated that half the aborigines of this State are half-castes, which indicates that they have already suffered a 25 per cent infusion of white blood, and it is indisputable that the European population must, in the process, have also been contaminated to an extent sufficient to warrant serious reflection. The alternative to segregation is their eventual absorption by the more numerous and more virile race, a prospect not to be viewed without some misgivings.74

Bleakley’s 1919 push for complete segregation can be seen as a contributing factor to the large number of removals in 1920.75 In that year, he unsuccessfully pushed to establish more government settlements.76 By 1922, Bleakley was pointing to statistics collected by his department as proof that the policy of segregation was preventing the Aboriginal race “dying out”:

74 ibid.
75 See Figure 2.4 to see rise in removals for 1920.
A perusal of the statistics for the last two years, 1921 and 1922, discloses an interesting fact, contrary to the common belief, the natives are not dying out fast...This improved vitality is particularly noticeable on self contained reserves, where the native is segregated from the evils to which, if the popular prophecy is to be fulfilled, their extinction will be due.\(^77\)

Bleakley was less inclined to use departmental statistics when they didn’t support his view of an impending “half-caste” disaster. In 1929 he refused to accept that the number had decreased in Queensland by 550. Making a nonsense of perceived differences in “full-bloods” and “half-castes”, Bleakley believed that local protectors had inaccurately described “darker cross-breeds” as “full-bloods”.\(^78\) Covering all bases he decided that if there was some truth in the drop in the number of “half-castes”, it was due to his segregationist policy.\(^79\)

Bleakley believed that there needed to be a policy direction which specifically addressed “half-castes”. Protection was to be given to them, even if it needed to be done by force.

Unlike the full-blood, who usually accepts protection as a matter of course, the “half-caste”, once civilised, frets at the supervision so

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\(^77\) Annual Report, 1922, 7.  
\(^78\) Annual Report 1929, p.7.  
\(^79\) ibid. “It may be regarded as some evidence of the effectiveness of the department’s efforts to check miscegenation that the increase in the number of half-castes, if any, has been very small.”
necessary for his welfare, and this discontent is often fomented by unscrupulous or misguided people.\textsuperscript{80}

Bleakley felt that “half-castes” suffered from a “social handicap imposed by their colour” and would not be accepted by Europeans for a long period of time. Viewing “a return to the Aboriginal camp” as a retrograde step, and mixing with whites as unthinkable, he believed that conditions should be created so that “half-castes” could mix in isolation with each other and slowly progress along the scale of civilisation: \textsuperscript{81}

The policy is to check as far as possible the breeding of half-castes, by firmly discouraging miscegenation, and, in conformity with this every effort is made to encourage the marriage of those now with us to people of their own race.\textsuperscript{82}

This was a view which differed from that of the Aboriginal administrators of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

In 1929, John Bleakley completed a report into Aboriginal administration in Northern and Central Australia for the federal government. The report continued the theme of separation of the races and he recommended that steps be taken to “check the breeding of “half-castes”.\textsuperscript{83} He further recommended that all “Crossbreeds be rescued from

\textsuperscript{80} Annual Report 1923, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{81} Annual Report, 1929, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{82} Annual Report 1928, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{83} John Bleakley, \textit{Aborigines and Half-castes – North and Central Australia} (Canberra: Government Printer, 1929), NAA A461/7 D300/1.
camps” and that “half-castes” be encouraged to “marry their own race”. With regards to “quadroon” and “octoroon types”, he proposed the removal of children and training them for future reception into the white race. He believed that light-skinned children needed to be kept away from the “dangers of the blood call”.

Bleakley deeply opposed the policy of biological absorption or “breeding out the aboriginal strain” — a policy implemented in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. He feared the “evil of hereditary transmission” and the effects that this might have on the white race. Discussing the grave concern throughout all states over increasing “half-caste” populations, Bleakley continued to promote complete segregation:

It is difficult to see how this social blot can be erased as long as the white and black races are allowed in contact, no matter how stringent the laws may be made. Only complete segregation of the black races, which is financially impracticable at present, or, as even suggested by some, sterilisation of the females, an absolutely unacceptable solution, will prevent the results of intercourse.

This “unacceptable solution” was proposed in 1934 by W.J. Gall, the Under Secretary to the Home Department — the Department responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. In a memorandum to the Governor of Queensland, Gall proposed a final solution:

84 ibid.
85 Bleakley, Aborigines and Half-castes, p. 21 also cited in Haebich, Broken Circles, p. 194.
86 Annual Report, 1933, p. 9.
87 Annual Report, 1932, p. 9.
Inferior races will have to go and, in my opinion, Governments, sooner or later, will have seriously to consider the question of sterilization of the half-castes.\(^{88}\)

Governor Wilson responded:

It is a most difficult question, and one to which it seems almost impossible to find any solution, except the one mentioned in the paragraph of your memorandum, and I cannot believe that any Government would be brave enough to legislate in that direction.\(^{89}\)

The Governor of Queensland was right. Such legislation would not be instituted in Queensland, but this was the climate in which the *Amendment Act* of 1934 was introduced.

The social engineering by Aboriginal Protectors in the state of Western Australia and the Northern Territory during the 1930s has been well chronicled.\(^{90}\) J.W. Bleakley was no less preoccupied with the future of the Aboriginal race, and in particular the quest to solve “the ‘half-caste’ problem”.\(^{91}\)

\(^{88}\) W.J. Gall to Governor Wilson, 7 August 1934, QSA A/8725.

\(^{89}\) Governor Wilson to Gall, 13 August 1934, QSA A/8725.


\(^{91}\) An insight into this preoccupation can be made through observations made by Bleakley during his long service leave in 1935. In a trip with his wife to Noumea, he observed the state of race relations and was
In a review of Queensland’s Aboriginal policy direction towards “half-castes”, Bleakley bemoaned the lack of “intelligent field machinery”. He devised a new direction, part of which involved drafting what he termed “the Crossbreeds” into three categories. These were:

a) the inferior type, usually of lower Asiatic or Pacific Island mixtures who are little better than the fullbloods and have no ambition to leave them

b) the superior types, with preponderance of European blood many of whom have had the freedom and opportunity to do so in the past, but have shown that they cannot succeed without help

c) the children of (b) who require educational and vocational equipment to enable them to take their proper place in the civilised community.92

Bleakley’s focus was on the second “superior type of ‘half-caste’”. His vision for them was to construct “half-caste” colonies where families would live on individual blocks of land, developing a “private family life”. Each family would support itself through outside employment combined with the tending of gardens and the keeping of livestock. A state schoolteacher would be employed to provide children with education and a nursing matron would also provide the community with health care and mothercraft.

affronted by the way in which “cross-breeds” and whites freely mixed. In notes presented to his superiors he concluded that Queensland’s policies had prevented the “low social and moral tones of New Caledonia”. J.W. Bleakley to Home Secretary, 13 September 1935, QSA A/69499.

92 ibid.
From this institution, it was expected that the next generation would be introduced into European civilisation.\textsuperscript{93} In Bleakley’s own words, the “half-caste” colonies were to be “a half caste clearing station to civilisation”.\textsuperscript{94}

The Bleakley solution came very close to implementation. The Chief Protector and the Minister for Health and Home Affairs (Hanlon) released their proposal for a model “half-caste” village in 1937 at the first conference of Commonwealth and state bodies concerned with Aboriginal affairs. A series of newspaper articles heralded the beginning of a “half-caste” colony at Purga near Ipswich.\textsuperscript{95} A similar proposal had previously been planned for the Gayndah district in central Queensland.\textsuperscript{96} In 1941 a parcel of land was gazetted as a “Training Colony for the upliftment of half-castes”,\textsuperscript{97} with the state setting aside £3532 for its first year of operation.\textsuperscript{98}

Not all sections of the community were in favour of the “‘half-caste’ colonies”. In 1940 the Queensland League of Women Voters urged Bleakley to abandon his plan for segregation of “half-castes”:

\textsuperscript{93} ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} ibid.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Sunday Mail}, Brisbane, 30 May 1937; \textit{Courier-Mail}, 29 May 1937; \textit{Telegraph}, 29 May 1937; \textit{Courier-Mail}, 24 April 1937.
\textsuperscript{96} CPA to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 4 August 1936, QSA A/58801.
\textsuperscript{97} Queensland Government Gazette No. 97, 26 April 1941.
\textsuperscript{98} DDNA. to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 17 December 1941, QSA A/58932.
We trust that you will give up the idea of segregation for them, and allow them to take their place among us as full-blooded whites. Their white blood entitles them to this.\(^9^9\)

By 1941 Bleakley faced larger hurdles than the League of Women Voters in seeing his vision come to fruition. The first was a lack of interest among “half-caste” Aboriginal people. A circular was sent to all districts in Queensland informing prospective inmates of the objectives of the colony and inviting applications for membership. The poor response seemed to perplex Bleakley:

> so far very few replies have been received and from these it does not seem that the people it is desired to help are very much interested in the proposal, the replies are mostly, that they are maintaining themselves alright in the country and are quite satisfied. This attitude is peculiar because my inspection of the dwelling conditions of all such people I have come across shows that their living conditions are miserable …”\(^1^0^0\)

An even larger hurdle to the establishment of a “half-caste” colony was the war. As a result, the project was cancelled in 1941 and never resurrected.\(^1^0^1\)

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\(^9^9\) Mary Guthrie, Secretary, League of Women Voters, Queensland to DNA, 28 December 1940, QSA A/58932.

\(^1^0^0\) J. Bleakley, to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 7 August, 1941, QSA A/58932

\(^1^0^1\) DDNA to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, QSA A/58932
The perceived “social and health menace” of the “half-caste” was the driving force behind the 1934 Amendment Act and related corresponding increase in the number of removals. The draconian measures in the 1934 legislation were designed to sweep all people of colour back under the Department’s control, where they could be redrafted into specially designed institutions. In a letter to a concerned citizen from South Australia, Bleakley explained his reasons for a change in policy:

The reason for the amendment, last year…was the evidence that numbers of crossbreeds who were outside of the Department’s control were little better than aboriginals in their mode of living, intellect and morals and were consequently a danger both to the black and white community.102

While the route taken by Bleakley was different to that of his counterpart in Western Australia A.O. Neville, the ultimate destination was the same. Neville advocated “absorption” of the “half-caste” population while Bleakley sought to keep them separate from the wider population. As Pat Jacobs highlights: “He held the view that there were inherent traits in the part-Aboriginal that would handicap them …”103 Extended family ties and wider community obligations needed to be broken if these people were to become truly civilised. While Neville and Cook concentrated on eliminating the colour of skin, Bleakley’s project was to eliminate what he termed “the colour of the mind”.104

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103 Jacobs, Mister Neville, p. 254.
The demise of Bleakley’s scheme for “half-castes” in the early 1940s illustrates the limits of the power of the CPA or DNA. Ideology and racial thinking were generally tempered by economic demands on state resources. The ideal of complete segregation could never be achieved due to the cost of implementation and the great loss of cheap Aboriginal labour for the pastoral and marine industries. The 1934 Amendment Act and the accompanying upsurge in removals provide an instance where the perceived threat by a non-white population was deemed grave enough to justify greater costs to the state.

The Geography of Removals

To ascertain whether location was a factor in the number of removals occurring over time, the state was divided into eight areas – southeast, southwest, central, central west, north, northwest, Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands. Figure 2.7, depicting the proportion of removals from each of these areas with regard to total removals, reveals that the number of removals largely reflects the size of the Aboriginal population for each area. Forty per cent of removals occurred in the northern region of Queensland followed by 24 per cent for the southeast of the state. This graph also shows that the more remote the area, the smaller the number of removals — so the Torres Strait, Cape York, Northwest and Southwestern Queensland also have the lowest number of removals.

Figure 2.7 shows the pattern of removals for each part of the state. Examining the data in this way makes it clear that at different times regional factors have played a part in the number of removals. There was no over-arching structure to the way in which removals took place. For example, there is no evidence that removals began in the coastal region
and then moved west, or that they began in the north or south and progressed in either
direction.  The major peaks occurred in North Queensland in 1915 and 1920 and Cape
York in 1942.  Factors involved in these peaks have been outlined earlier in this chapter.
Similar to the wholesale removals from Thursday and Hammond Islands in 1942, there
was also a mass transfer of people from Bentinck Island to Mornington Island in 1945.  

The figures for Northern and Southern Queensland have been combined in Figure 2.6  to
better understand if overall patterns are evident.  The main differences which can be
observed in numbers of removals over time occur between the years 1897 and 1906.
During this period the number of removals for Southern Queensland uncharacteristically
outstrips the number of removals for Northern Queensland.  These figures support the
previous discussion of the factors involved in removals under Walter Roth and Archibald
Meston.  Varying pressures from local white employers affected removals in different
ways across the regions.

Figure 2.6 Removals from North and South Queensland

Removals from North and South Queensland

Number of Removals

Years

1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450

STH

NTH
Maps 1 – 8 in Appendix 2 clearly show the degree of dislocation brought about through the policy of removals. All of the regions had removals to settlements and missions throughout the state. Settlements were not used simply as local reception centres, but families and communities were scattered across the state — sometimes as a matter of policy. The two regions with the greatest number of removals, North Queensland and Southeastern Queensland did have a greater proportion of what could be termed local removals. Forty-two per cent of removals from Southeastern Queensland were to the
Barambah/Cherbourg settlement located in the region and 48 per cent of removals from the North Queensland region were to the northern settlement of Palm Island.\textsuperscript{106}

The degree of dislocation across the state was also greatly felt by Aboriginal people on a local level. Christopher Anderson has estimated that 15–20 per cent of the Aboriginal population from one part of Cape York was removed to southern settlements.\textsuperscript{107} One of the legacies of the policy of removals was the creation of the Aboriginal settlement, mission or community. The impact of forcing peoples from different cultures, languages

\textsuperscript{106} Source: RD and Maps 1 – 8 (See Appendix 2)
\textsuperscript{107} ibid., p. 303.
and histories into an impoverished state of dependency has been well documented. On
the Barambah settlement, Blake records the diversity of languages present on Barambah
in the early twentieth century:

Nineteenth century reserves typically contained only one or two language
groups. The inhabitants were linguistically and culturally homogenous. By
comparison, Barambah contained a potpourri of language of ‘tribal’ groups,
with almost every linguistic group in the state represented.108

In his study of Barambah, Blake links the number of removals with the level of mortality
on the settlement, arguing that when removals were at their highest the mortality rate was
also at its peak.109 Blake describes a process in which removals effectively caused
inmates of Barambah to become, “cultural and genealogical isolates”.110

In 1876, the Scottish missionary Duncan McNab had advised the Colonial Secretary that
“Hostile tribes cannot be congregated on a reserve.”111 Other warnings also went
unheeded.112 In her study of Palm Island in 1993, Joanne Watson linked the practice of

108 Blake lists 356 different linguistic groups present on Barambah: Blake, “A Dumping Ground” PhD
109 This study has found a greater number of removals than found by Blake. Nevertheless this does not
undermine Blake’s argument – it simply expands the extent of the impact of the policy. Blake, “A
Dumping Ground”, p. 192.
110 ibid. p. 260.
111 Rev D. McNab to Colonial Secretary, 9 May 1876; Queensland Votes and Proceedings, vol. 3, 1876 , p.
161.
112 Richard Howard: “The grouping of many tribes of natives in one area would mean continual warfare
amongst themselves and practically survival of the fittest.” Annual Report 1910, p. 9 also cited in Joanne
Watson, ‘Becoming Bwgcolman: Exile and Survival on Palm Island Reserve, 1918 to the Present’, PhD
removing diverse language and cultural groups with levels of violence present in Aboriginal communities:

It thus appears that the breakdown of skin groupings, of law, knowledge and religion, and the build up of tensions between Palm Islanders were the offshoots of a deliberate government strategy. Paul Wilson’s research reveals that these reserves by the late twentieth century had the highest rates of violence in the Western World.  

Figure 2.9 Destinations for Removal

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113 ibid.
Table 2.6 shows the proportion of people removed to government-run settlements. Eighty-two per cent of removals were made to government settlements with 18 per cent of Aboriginal people being removed to church-run missions. Anderson claims that Palm Island was regarded as a “penal settlement” where people were sent for punishment and control, whilst other institutions received women and children, especially those people of mixed descent. The data bears out this proposition. It can be seen that a far greater proportion of males were sent to Palm Island compared with other institutions. It can, however, also be observed that the greatest number of children were also sent to Palm Island. In terms of gender breakdown of removal figures, the church-run mission of Yarrabah had close to equal numbers of men and women removees while, the government-run settlements all had a greater number of men compared with women.

Table 2.5 Number of Males, Females and Children Sent to Main Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution removed to</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Ratio (females : males)</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barambah /Cherbourg</td>
<td>1269</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>1:1.3</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taroom/Woorabinda</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>1:1.6</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Island</td>
<td>2224</td>
<td>1247</td>
<td>1:1.8</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarrabah</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>1:1.1</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

115 Source: RD. It is important to note that the gender of 1025 of those people removed was unknown.
Table 2.6
Proportion of People Removed to Missions and Government Settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of location removed to</th>
<th>Number of removals</th>
<th>Percentage of total removals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>2193</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government settlement</td>
<td>9795</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.10 Destination for Children Described as “Half-Caste”

Figure 2.10 shows the proportion of children labelled “half-caste” who were removed to various destinations. Although this graph only represents the removals of 268 children identified as “half-caste” it does demonstrate a concentration of removals to church-run institutions. The major reason for this result is the extra funding that was available to...
institutions designated as industrial schools. The use of industrial schools as destinations for “half-caste” children and the development of this policy of removal are discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

Conclusions

This chapter has concentrated on a number of aspects of removals in Queensland. The construction of the removals database has made it possible to describe who was removed in terms of age, gender, racial background and original location in Queensland. There is little evidence for protective intent involving removals. For example, there are more removals of males than females with only a few people described as “aged” being removed. The pressures of sectional interests was evident during the periods of time that Archibald Meston and Walter Roth held their key positions. The attraction of cheap Aboriginal labour tempered any enthusiasm that either Roth or Meston had for removals. Aboriginal affairs in Queensland during the 1920s and 1930s were dominated by John Bleakley. This chapter has detailed some of the racial thinking of this period of time, and the efforts made by Bleakley to bring about a form of social engineering. Bleakley diverged from the approach of administrators such as Cecil Cook in the Northern Territory and A.O. Neville in Western Australia. Cook and Neville supported a total absorption method whereby the colour would eventually be “bred out” of Aboriginal people, thereby eliminating “the problem”. Bleakley instead wanted to improve the “type” of Aborigine, proposing greater segregation and the implementation of a “clearing house” as a stepping-stone on the way to total assimilation. Put simply, Bleakley was the removalist extraordinaire — his obsession with “half-castes” and eugenic
management of Queensland’s Aboriginal population was a major factor in the implementation of the policy of removals.

In many cases, removals took Aboriginal people thousands of kilometres from their original locations. There appears to be no pattern of removal in terms of geography. The disastrous results of this forced dislocation are still being experienced by Queensland people presently living on Aboriginal communities.\textsuperscript{116} Removals occurred in a sporadic fashion across the state between 1859 and 1972. Variations in the annual number of removals call into question the validity of many individual reasons for removal. Peaks occurred due to local factors along with changes of direction from the Aboriginal administration. This chapter has provided an insight into who was removed during this time. The next chapter explores the reasons used to justify their removal.

\textsuperscript{116} In November 2004 reaction to the death of an Aboriginal man in custody led to a riot on Palm Island. A number of reports on the incident mentioned the lack of stability in the community due to the legacy of removals. (Tony Koch, \textit{Australian}, 29 November 2004).
Chapter 3

Reasons for Removal

This chapter investigates the wide range of reasons used to justify the removal of Aboriginal people in Queensland between 1859 and 1971. This represents the “soft data” entered into the database. Many of the reasons used for removal went in and out of fashion over time. For instance, some removals which cited “for care and protection” as a reason were designed to prevent miscegenation. In 1936 a woman was removed from Coen to Palm Island “for her future care and protection”.1 The acting sergeant from Coen revealed that the woman’s removal was due to her “immoral association with the miners at Portland Rd”.2 In 1941 another woman was removed from Herberton to Palm Island with the following reason used: “For future care and protection — to break up undesirable association with white man.”3 “For care and protection” was also used when Aboriginal men and women were no longer able to work on pastoral stations and required medical attention.4

These reasons were highly subjective and tell us little about the Aboriginal people who were removed, but they do give some insight into the thinking of local Aboriginal protectors and policy-makers, and ideas of race at the time. The language of protection

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1Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 415.
3Removals Register, QSA A/64786, p. 41.
4Example of a man removed from a station in the Collinsville area when he was “unable to look after himself”; QSA A/69443.
largely masked the benefits to the dominant white population that Aboriginal removals brought. The over-arching focus of removals was the control of Aboriginal people.

In the same way that Aboriginal people responded to dispossession and frontier violence with resistance, the practice of removals was also resisted. This chapter outlines some of the actions taken by Aboriginal people to escape the controlling influence of removals. Chapter 4 examines the invocation of health and morality as reasons and Chapter 5 analyses employment-related removals. Figure 3.1 shows that the majority of removals were enforced using discipline, health and employment as reasons.

**Figure 3.1 Stated reasons for removal.**
All the stated reasons for removal fluctuated in their usage over time. At peak periods of removal, a number of these reasons experienced a surge in popularity. Employment, discipline and “for their own benefit” all peaked around 1915. This strongly suggests that the reasons used for removal reflected external factors such as changes in policy rather than the condition of those removed. These fluctuations call into question the integrity of the reasons used. For instance, it would be difficult to accept that the increase in “discipline” removals from 105 in 1914 to 284 in 1915 meant that there were 179 more “unruly” and “uncontrollable” Aboriginal people in 1915 than there were in 1914. Similarly, it would be a nonsense to believe that 105 Aboriginal people needed to be removed “for their own benefit” in 1916 when only five people “required” such removal in 1918 and a further five in 1919.  

Removals for certain reasons peaked due to local changes in the approach of Aboriginal protectors and the culture of surveillance which permeated the office of the CPA. Almost all of the reasons used for removal experienced fluctuations due to specific local protectors acting at certain times. Whilst the language of removal is often masked with phrases suggesting benefit to Aboriginal people a closer analysis usually reveals that the real benefit was to the wider Queensland community.

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5 See Figure 3.2 (source RD.)
One per cent of documented removals had “voluntary” listed as the reason. However, when these removals are more closely examined, the degree of agency each individual possessed in their “voluntary” removal to a government mission or settlement is questionable.

The majority of “voluntary” removals can be broadly placed into two categories. The first comprised people whose friends and family had been removed and who wished to reconnect with them. In February 1937, an elderly man complained that it was too lonely for him camping in the Police Paddock at Cloncurry and he requested that he be sent to
Palm Island where he could associate with his friends.⁶ This was agreed to on the basis of a large amount of money that the man had in his bank account. The Cloncurry Protector commented: “This boy has a substantial banking account (about £400) which is sufficient to keep him for a number of years should he live that long.”⁷ The ties of kinship were evident when an Aboriginal woman chose to be removed from Rockhampton to Durundur in July of 1902. She made a statement from Durundur: “I would like to stay here. All my countrymen left are here and I would hardly ever see one of them if I stayed at Rockhampton.”⁸

A second category of “voluntary” removals were those in which the acceptance of a removal was a matter of survival. In December 1903, an Aboriginal man named Weena was discharged from the Rockhampton hospital. He approached the local police station and stated that he had “no money, food or clothes — except those that he was wearing”. It was decided that he be sent to Durundur and he agreed.⁹ Lack of employment also brought about documented “voluntary” removals during the Depression years. In the early 1930s, Ruth Hegarty’s family lived in the Mitchell district in Southwest Queensland. They relied on her grandfather’s income to survive and, with the onset of the Depression, work was increasingly hard to find. George Duncan (Ruth Hegarty’s grandfather) visited the local protector seeking advice as to whether there was work available in other districts. He was advised to move his family to Barambah. “He said

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⁷ ibid.
⁹ Inspector of Police, Rockhampton, 10 December 1903, QSA A/58930.
we’d be looked after. The government people will help us out. We could camp there until the hard times are over, just a few months, just a little while.”\textsuperscript{10} This turned into a life sentence for Ruth Hegarty’s family.\textsuperscript{11} Ruth remained at Cherbourg until 1951 when she married at the age of 22. The removal is recorded in the Register of Removals on 6 March 1930.\textsuperscript{12} Ruth Hegarty’s autobiography contextualises this, demonstrating the lack of options involved in some removals and the way in which the word “voluntary” cannot be taken at face value.

Removals documented as “voluntary” were often a \textit{fait accompli} with a written removal order in place should the removees decide to change their minds so that they had no real alternative. In the Mossman district in 1939, it was decided that an elderly blind Aboriginal man should be removed to Yarrabah. Regarding the voluntary nature of the removal, the CPA informed the local police:

\begin{quote}
Should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ not agree to proceed voluntarily, kindly advise when a Minister’s Order will be obtained, but in view of his affliction it is thought he would be pleased to go to the mission.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Other reasons behind “voluntary” removals included a lack of adequate health services. One man in the Herberton district became despondent that his illness was not responding

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{12} Removals Registers, QSA A/64785 323; QSA A/69523, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{13} CPA to PA, Mossman, 20 March, 1939, QSA A/69443
\end{flushright}
to any treatment and requested removal to Palm Island. On occasions when Aboriginal people were “unsuited” to labour they were also encouraged to submit a “voluntary” removal. In 1937 a young man who was thought to be “too heavy” for stock work was recommended for removal by the protector at St Lawrence. Chief Protector Bleakley instructed: “I would be pleased if you would ascertain from this boy if he is willing to proceed voluntarily to Woorabinda Station, in order to obviate the necessity for obtaining a removal order.” Two days later, the man’s “desire” to voluntarily move to Woorabinda was recorded. There is seldom written evidence to support such “voluntary” removals.

The peak for removals using “voluntary” or “at own request” as the reason occurred in 1936. All of these removals were from the Coen district of North Queensland and the destination for the majority was the Anglican Church’s Lockhart River Mission. During late 1935 and early 1936, a missionary living in Coen made repeated complaints about the conditions of local Aboriginal people and requested that the CPA establish a compound in the district. This suggestion was rejected by the local protector but, in concert with the office of the CPA, moves were made for wholesale removals from the Coen District. Negotiations took place with the Bishop of Carpentaria and, as a result, 94 Aboriginal people were removed from the district with the majority being sent to

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14 PA, Herberton to CPA, 29 March, 1939, QSA A/69443.
15 CPA to PA, St Lawrence, 19 January, 1937, QSA A/58804.
16 PA, St Lawrence to CPA, 22 January, 1937, QSA A/58804.
Lockhart River Mission in 1936. Chief Protector Bleakley informed his departmental superiors:

The Bishop’s co-operation has been secured and steps are now in train for the drafting of about 30 old natives from the Coen district together with sundry others from Moreton and Batavia into Lockhart River while the West Coast Missions at Weipa and Aurukun also are co-operating in absorbing some of the aged nomads from the districts west of Batavia.

None of the correspondence regarding these removals suggests that Aboriginal people willingly went to Lockhart River — or that there was consent given prior to their removal.

**Neglected, Education and Care and Protection**

Eighteen per cent of removals were “family” removals — that is, those that took place when one or two members of the family were removed and the rest of the family accompanied them. Of those removed for educational reasons, or because they were said to be in some way “88 and 91 per cent respectively were children.” The period during which the majority of removals for reasons of “neglect” occurred was at the beginning of the twentieth century, while Walter Roth was CPA (see Figure 3.4).

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17 Twenty-four people were removed from Batavia; thirteen were removed from Blue Mountains – Coen; 47 were removed from Coen; and ten were removed from Moreton. RD; QSA A/3842.
18 J.W. Bleakley to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 15 June, 1936, QSA A/3842.
Removals with “education” as the stated reason only amounted to 122 cases (1 per cent of removals). With such a small number, it would be difficult to argue that a pattern of removals for “education” reasons emerges, but the majority of these removals occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. The removal of children is dealt with in detail in the Chapter 6.

The fear that Aboriginal people had of the removal of children for school was demonstrated in the Cooktown district in 1944. The local protector made a patrol to a remote Aboriginal camp known as “Fish Hole” to make arrangements for children in the area to be sent to the Normanton Aboriginal Inland Mission (AIM) school. One of the camp residents inquired whether the intention of the local protector was to take some of the elder children and said he would kill his five children to prevent them being taken away. The context of this threat was that previously a number of people had been sent from the area to Palm Island where they had subsequently died. The people from “Fish Hole” camp believed that if their children were taken away they would never see them again. Taking into account the depth of feeling of the parents, a holiday scheme was proposed as a way of introducing the people of “Fish Hole” camp to the notion of schooling their children at Normanton. The local protector insisted on the education of

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19 RD. This represents 107 out of 122 removals for “education” and 347 out of 383 removals for “neglected”.
20 PA, Cooktown to DNA, 23 September 1944, QSA QS 505/1 ID/11 Box 257.
21 ibid.
these children because “it was a shame to see” girls like these “when they could be
learning domestic duties and becoming useful”.\textsuperscript{22}

The importance of contact between children and parents was further illustrated in the case of an Aboriginal Police tracker attached to the Coen Police Station. In 1942 the tracker requested that his stepchild be sent to the Cooktown convent for education. He was willing to pay for fees but refused to countenance the idea of his daughter being sent to a mission where she could not easily be contacted.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22} ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Sergeant Cooper to Inspector of Police Cairns, 30 April 1942, QSA A/44857.
Figure 3.3 Gender of Removals with “Neglected” as reason

Figure 3.4 Removals with “Neglected” as reason
Another category which included a large proportion of children as well as women was “care and protection” (32 per cent children and 57 per cent were female). Figure 3.6 demonstrates how “care and protection” became a reason for removal from 1935 onwards.

A peak of 58 removals for “care and protection” occurring in 1936 was directly attributable to local events. Of the 58 removals for “care and protection” in 1936, 43 were sent to Lockhart River Mission. When arranging the removal of people to Lockhart River in May 1936 Chief Protector Bleakley optimistically believed that the minister’s
orders for removal would not be required. He had the view that, once the removees understood the nature of assistance that they would receive at Lockhart River, they would agree to the removal. Despite this, 30 of the people removed from the Coen protectorate were reported as objecting strenuously to their removal.24

Insanity

Over the study period, there were only 46 removals which used “insanity” or “mental health” as a reason. The main reason for such a low number was the public cost of institutionalisation. In 1903, Archibald Meston removed an Aboriginal man and woman
from the Goodna Hospital for the Insane to the Durundur Aboriginal Settlement. He boasted that this represented a saving of £140 a year for the state. The man had been admitted for creating a public disturbance. This was later attributed to a bout of the “horrors” following a session of drinking. The woman was simply called “the aboriginal gin (name unknown)” by the medical superintendent despite having been in the institution for a period of three years.25

In November 1902 the Medical Superintendent for the Hospital for the Insane requested the removal of two Aboriginal men: “I see from Mr Meston’s last report that he takes over dangerous blacks and those who have served sentences, or were qualifying for gaol.”26 The superintendent described one of the men whom he wished to release from the hospital:

On his admission papers the cause of his insanity is given as opium, and this he personally confirms. It is also stated that he assaulted and almoststrangled two old aboriginals in his camp. When arrested on the 27th September 1900 he said he wanted to kill Willie and Jimmie with a tomahawk and a nulla-nulla and then he wanted to die.27

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25 CPA to PA, Coen, 8 May 1936; CPA to The Bishop of Carpentaria 6 August 1936; QSA QS 505/1 Box 739 7A/10 Protectorates Coen — Relief.
26 Medical Superintendent, Goodna Hospital for the Insane to Under Secretary, Home Secretary’s Department, 23 March, 1903, QSA A/58929
The superintendent feared that the man might have access to opium again but believed that “under slight supervision” he would be safe. The argument for removing the patients was concluded with a comparison of costs:

The average cost of keeping a patient here is £25 per year, at Durundur I see it only costs £2 a year, and at Fraser’s Island £4 a year, so that there would be a considerable saving in removing them.

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26 ibid., Letter dated 12 November, 1902.
27 ibid.
28 ibid.
The savings to the state won the day and the men were subsequently removed. There is no evidence that extra measures were taken in terms of supervision of the patients or the safety of other inmates of Durundur. A familiar theme emerges — one with an emphasis on control and parsimony. There was little real consideration for the welfare of the people removed, or indeed of the community to which they were being removed.

Incredibly only 20 per cent of removals using “insanity” as a reason were to a mental health institution (See Figure 3.7). Thirty-seven per cent were to the major institution of control — Palm Island. Those deemed to be “insane” were not diagnosed by a medical practitioner, but more often than not by the local police officer. Some of the reasons used to remove people to Palm Island were: “probable insanity — unsound mind — own protection”; “mentally deficient; disturber of peace”; “apparently deranged”; “suffers from delusions; otherwise quite harmless”; “suspected unsound mind — discharged old feeble”; “mentally deficient — worries aboriginal women”. Three people were removed for being “dangerously affected by the moon”. Seventy per cent of those removed for “insanity” reasons were male.

29 ibid.
30 There were 94 Aboriginal admissions in the Insanity Register from 1892 onwards but the majority of these do not appear in documents relating to Aboriginal removals. There is no information available as to where the patients came from. QSA B/729
31 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, 359, 355, 345, 235, 197, 311.
32 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, 315, 341; Removal cards — Community and Personal Histories, DATSIP
33 RD — 32 males and fourteen females
Mental health institutions also were used as sites of control for non-Aboriginal people, but the admissions were not made on the recommendation of the local policeman, as in the case of Aboriginal patients.

During the 1950s and 1960s, children in care were sometimes placed in mental health institutions. In 1959 the Director of Children’s Services voiced concerns over the issue of “uncontrollable girls” whom the denominational industrial schools were not accepting. A number of these girls were admitted to Ward 16 of the Brisbane Mental Hospital. In an internal letter, the Director admitted: “I feel that practically all of these girls are quasi-medical cases at the most … this is a matter of concern and could prove damaging to the Department.”

Sedation was often used as a form of controlling such difficult girls.

Kidd outlines the tragic case of an Aboriginal boy who was separated from his parents and moved between church and government institutions over a number of years:

After a time at Westbrook he was again moved, this time to the Salvation Army Boys’ Home at Riverview. After six weeks there he absconded and tried to break into the Salvation Army Girls’ Home, Kalimna (located at Toowong, Brisbane) in order to visit his cousin. Following his capture the authorities at Riverview refused to take him back, and he was again sent to Wilson. By this stage the boy’s two-year

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34 Director of Children’s Services to Under-Secretary, 2 October 1959  QSA File 90I/7/0 Part C
period of care and control under the SCD had expired, and the Department was keen to have him returned to the Woorabinda reserve.

However, he was instead removed to Westbrook and placed in the maximum-security section. He was medically assessed as 'quiet and depressed with underlying irritability' and 'paranoid about the officers'. His treatment consisted of the prescription of 25 mg of a tranquiliser three times daily. Within a short space of time he attempted unsuccessfully to escape, injuring two officers in the process. On being questioned as to his motivation for the attempted break-out, the boy stated, as he had on previous occasions, that he was 'sad and irritable', and desperate to get out of confinement. However, the Medical Officer recommended ‘prolonged treatment’ at Wolston Park psychiatric hospital, ‘rather than institutionalisation’. His medication was tripled in dosage and issued four times daily instead of three. The boy had not yet reached his fifteen birthday.37

Kidd concludes that it is unlikely that such a case would be unrepresentative.38

36 ibid., pp. 124-40. Westbrook was a government run reformatory for boys located in the Darling Downs region.
37 ibid., 57-58; 152-58. Wilson Youth Hospital was a quasi-medical institution in which children who were wards of the state would be placed. It was established in 1961 and continued to function until 1971.
38 ibid.
In 1963 a young Aboriginal man was involved in an escape from the Brisbane Mental Hospital. The escape was reported in the *Brisbane Telegraph* newspaper in which a trainee male nurse complained of being bashed “for no reason”. An inquiry into the incident was conducted and the Queensland cabinet pushed to have the man transferred to the Ipswich Mental Hospital. The cabinet did not take into account the racial taunts that the Aboriginal man had received whilst in the Brisbane Mental Hospital. The Medical Superintendent of the Brisbane Mental Hospital interviewed the young man and heard that he had been slapped in the face by the trainee nurse and called a “Boong” and a “black C_____”.42

Medical opinions varied on the mental status of the young man. One of these “ascribed his sullen, morose state to have been caused by Security measures at Westbrook”. (The young man had been previously held in Westbrook reformatory.) An official report painted a picture of a young man who resented his lack of freedom and responded to respect:

> At Brisbane Mental Hospital his conduct was variable and he appeared to be easily upset and sensitive regarding his skin colour. He absconded in December and again recently. There has been no history of sustained aggressiveness or tendency towards violence and has had, on medical

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39 *Brisbane Telegraph* 6 February, 1963 “Escapee bashes Goodna trainee”.
40 *Brisbane Telegraph* 26 March, 1963 “Transfer of Inmate – Hit Trainee Nurse”.
41 Medical Superintendent, Brisbane Mental Hospital, 6 February, 1963, QSA TR1889/1.
42 ibid.
43 ibid., Medical Superintendent to Director of Mental Hygiene, 7 December, 1963, QSA TR1889/1.
recommendation: Work in Vegetable Gardens, Attendance at Entertainments — and since 10th January 1963 out-door work with considerable freedom with the Kelly Gang. Male Nurses Eickenloff and Smith of the Kelly Gang speak of him as pleasant, bright and of good behaviour and conduct. A general opinion is that much depended upon how the boy was handled. ⁴⁴

Violence on the part of the young man in the institution was largely attributed to the use of racially offensive terms by fellow patients and staff. When asked about the young man’s prognosis, one of the medical staff at the hospital answered: “It is entirely a matter of how he is handled. There is no psychiatric reason for holding him here in my opinion.”⁴⁵ Despite this, the young man — who had originally been sent from Palm Island — continued to be held within the mental health system.

Another young Aboriginal patient involved in the escape gave insight into the workings of the system when he was interviewed by a Doctor Patrick from the Brisbane Mental Hospital. This patient hailed from the town of Mitchell in South Western Queensland:

Dr Patrick: What are you doing here?

Patient: I don’t know

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⁴⁴ Medical Superintendent 6 February, 1963, QSA TR1889/1,
⁴⁵ Notes Taken During Investigation Ordered by the Health Minister into Escape of Patients and Assault of Trainee Nurse Manning, QSA TR1889/1.
Dr Patrick: How did you come to get here?

Patient: I was working at the Salvation Army at Red Hill, and the Probation Officer took me to Ward 16. He said I was going for a drive, and when we got to the General Hospital I thought I was going to see Miss Richardson up at Lowson House, then I was taken to Ward 16 and told I would only be there for the night. I went in on Saturday, and the Monday after that I came up here. I have been working at O.T., and I buzzed off on Monday.

Dr Patrick: What did you buzz off for?

Patient: I didn’t like the place long here. I am only used to being away for a month from home. I got homesick.\textsuperscript{46}

After detailing his escape with another Aboriginal patient, one of the interviewing doctors concluded: “Psychotic patients are incapable of planning. That is the trouble with having these young chaps here that are capable of banding together and of planning escapes and putting them into effect.”\textsuperscript{47} The 1999 Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions found that, during the 1960s and 1970s, the number of

\textsuperscript{ibid.}
Aboriginal children in institutional care greatly increased. It would be more than likely that children such as those outlined above were caught within the mental health system. Individual children’s records were not accessed as part of this research, so it is difficult with the available evidence to accurately quantify the extent of these removals.

**Figure 3.8 Removals with Old Age as stated reason**

![Graph showing removals with Old Age as stated reason over the years.](image)

**Old Age**

Removals using phrases “old and indigent” were often as much about the employability of the people concerned as they were about their welfare. Blake describes this facet of the removals policy:

47 ibid. Comment by Dr Boyce.
The phrase ‘old and indigent’ was used frequently as the reason for removal and was code for: ‘no longer employable or useful’. Aborigines who had spent their working lives on stations were sent to a settlement when they could no longer be gainfully employed. In 1936 Charlie Maranoa was sent from Tinnenburra station in south-western Queensland to Woorabinda because he was ‘too old’. He lived, however, another 30 years after being removed.⁴⁸

In early 1903, sixteen Aborigines were removed from Cunnamulla and Charleville. Highlighting the cost-saving measures, Meston recorded that amongst these removals were three very old women from Gilmore Station, all of whom were destitute and would have required feeding in their own locality at considerable expense.⁴⁹

In 1960, an elderly man who had worked for most of his life on Kindon Station in Southern Queensland was removed to Cherbourg. His contribution was acknowledged, but it was felt that he would no longer be able to care for himself. In an admission of the force involved in these removals, it was acknowledged that a police officer may be required to enforce the removal as the man would be reluctant to leave his home.⁵⁰

Some of the strongest resistance to removals came from elderly Aboriginal people. In 1896 the local police reported that five elderly Aboriginal women described as “too

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⁴⁹ Archibald Meston, 13 January 1903, QSA: COL/144, 03/1524.
⁵⁰ QSA POL P1 2616AR.
feeble to work” had refused to leave Caboolture.\textsuperscript{51} In Cania near Warwick in Southern Queensland, the local Member of Parliament pleaded that rations be continued as local Aboriginal people refused to be removed:

Constable Hagan has frequently tried to persuade them to agree to the State Reserves but they say they want to die where they were born, and have lived, and would rather be shot than removed.\textsuperscript{52}

In 1899 William Addison, writing from Miles in central Queensland informed his local member:

There is one thing you must make the Home Secretary understand that these old blacks will not leave their old Tourie they say they will die here.\textsuperscript{53}

Sergeant Dyer from St George in Southern Queensland reported similar difficulties when trying to remove a number of elderly people to the Barambah government settlement:

All the blacks here appear to have been told that a great many die when they go to the mission stations. I told them that the government might stop their

\textsuperscript{51} Sergeant Johnson, Caboolture, 15 September 1896, QSA A/69417.
\textsuperscript{52} Edward Williams to Mr Kent, MLA 16 June, 1902, QSA COL/140 02/9969
\textsuperscript{53} William Addison to W.H. Moore, MLA 22 September 1899 QSA, COL/143, 02/14997.
rations if they did not go. But they did not appear to care most of them said that they would rather die than go away from their country.\textsuperscript{54}

Dyer concluded that force would be needed if the removals were to be effected.

Once again the peak in removals for “old age” in 1929 can be attributed to a particular location. That year, twenty people were removed from Bollon in Southwest Queensland to Barambah. The stated reason was, “old and indigent”.\textsuperscript{55} Included in this removal for “old age” were eight children and two people aged under 44.\textsuperscript{56}

In 1965, a report on housing in the Windorah district was made by the local Protector of Aborigines. The case of an elderly woman who lived in a humpy on a block of land (which she owned) was discussed. The standard of housing was felt to be sub-standard, but there was little prospect of new accommodation being provided for her. Jack Pizzey, the Minister for Native Affairs, directed that the woman should be offered accommodation at any government settlement that she wished to nominate. The elderly woman reluctantly agreed to go on “a holiday” to Palm Island in December 1966. The shire clerk observed: “She is doubtful if she will remain there permanently, and apparently her feelings are motivated by some aboriginal tribal belief that she must return

\textsuperscript{54} Sergeant Dyer to Inspector Savage, St George, 21 February 1907, QSA A/58912.
\textsuperscript{55} Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 319.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid.
to her natural and original surroundings”.57 There was no removal order for this relocation and by May 1967 the elderly woman had returned to Windorah.58

Even with the support of local white employers and parliamentarians, elderly Aboriginal people were often powerless to prevent their removal. In 1921, G.P. Barber, a parliamentarian from central Queensland wrote to the CPA pleading that an elderly Aboriginal gentleman not be removed. Barber told the CPA that he was well respected in the district and had always worked hard. A supporting white resident wrote:

He says he is too old to work under agreement and he can get satisfactory places if he had a free permit. He would not go to the home for aboriginals preferring to remain free.59

Despite this, the man was removed to Barambah in November 1921 with the reason stated as: “Very Old, Unfit for hard work, badly ruptured.”60 The DCPA informed Barber that his letter had arrived too late and it was best that the man be sent to Barambah “where he could be looked after”.61 Despite his age, he demonstrated his preference for freedom two years later when he absconded from Barambah to the Maryborough district.62

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57 W.T. MacNamara to DAIA, 15 December, 1966, QSA QS 505/1, Box 283, ID 242.
58 ibid.
59 George Barber MLA 23 November 1921, QSA A/70009.
60 Removal Order 17 November 1921, QSA A/70009.
61 DCPA to G. Barber MLA 28 November 1921, QSA A/70009.
Sometimes removals of the elderly were impacted upon by the physical limitations of the removees themselves. In 1944 there was a push to remove all natives from Blue Mountains, Wenlock and Iron Range (Cape York) to Lockhart River Mission. The local protector reported:

I have to report that the matter of removing all old and indigent natives from the above mentioned places has been in abeyance for some considerable time, owing to the fact that some of the natives are cripples and no means of transport was available for their removal to the Lockhardt Mission.

The natives Shelly and Mona are very old and Shelly is a deformed cripple, and their removal to the mission was slow owing to the fact that they had to be carried all the way from Wenlock. 63

It is difficult to imagine the trauma of being physically carried away from a district which had always been home for these elderly people. Reports such as this which detail the removal of 23 people do not occur in the official removal registers and were not authorised with removal orders. No mention of voluntary removals was made in the accompanying correspondence so it would be a reasonable assumption that they occurred outside of the legal framework of removals in 1944. This also supports the argument that the numbers collected in this study represent a bare minimum of the actual number of Aboriginal people removed.

63 PA, Coen, 17 October 1944, QSA A/69465 IE/27 QS 505/3 names changed to maintain privacy).
Addicted to Opium, Mixing with Chinese and Other Races

Addicted to Opium, Mixing with Chinese and Other Races

The restriction of the use of opium played a major role in the drafting of the 1897 protective legislation in Queensland. Charles Rowley suggests, along with other historians of Queensland race relations, that this restriction of the use of opium was central to the control and protection of Aboriginal people in Queensland:

The special provisions (sections 19–25) against possession of opium, the right of police to break into premises if necessary to search for it, and other measures to control its distribution indicate that it must have become a really serious destroyer of Aborigines.

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64 Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897
Ganter states that the major target of intervention of the 1897 *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* was the supply of charcoal opium to Aborigines by Chinese.\(^{66}\) Evans also documents the linkages made between Chinese people and consumption of opium by Aboriginal Queenslanders:

> the rapid spread of the habit throughout the colony, plus its oriental origins and bizarre effects, led observers to brand it overwhelmingly the main destroyer of the semi-civilized black.\(^{67}\)

The rhetoric surrounding Aboriginal people, Chinese people and the use of opium was most evident around the beginning of the twentieth century. Archibald Meston believed that opium use was responsible for the deaths of thousands of Aboriginal people within ten years.\(^{68}\) Walter Roth also observed: “This drug is exerting a far more baneful influence on the aboriginal then even liquour and venereal disease.”\(^{69}\) *The Bulletin* clearly linked Chinese people, opium use and the demise of Aboriginal people.

> Up this way (N.Q.) the aborigines are fast dying out; opium or rather opium charcoal being the chief enemy. What were a few years ago mere youths


\(^{68}\) Cited in Evans et al., *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, p. 309.

\(^{69}\) ibid.
are now miserable-looking old men …. the opium traffic …. is chiefly carried on by Chows.  

This rhetoric was not necessarily matched by reality in terms of the number of removals involving use of opium by Aboriginal people. Removals using “addicted to opium”, “mixing with other races” and “immorality” as reasons were quite rare. In terms of numbers, there were 245 removals for addiction to opium, 53 removals for mixing with other races and 457 removals with “immorality” as a stated reason. Together these only constituted 6 per cent of all removals. Although the language was pronounced, the actual numbers were quite low.

Considering the low number of opium-related removals, it would seem that the extent of opium use and involvement of Chinese in supplying the drug to Aboriginal people were exaggerated by proponents of the 1897 Act. There were only 53 people removed for “mixing with other races”. Of these, 34 were female, seventeen male and two people with unknown gender. Of the 245 people removed for being addicted to opium, 85 were female, 96 were male and the gender of 64 people was unknown.

A peak of 47 opium-related removals occurred in 1903. These can be attributed to the implementation of the 1897 legislation. Another peak occurred in 1915 when 54 people were removed from Mareeba to Mona Mona with the stated reason, “addicted to opium, children to accompany their parents”.  

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70 Cited in Evans et al. Race Relations in Colonial Queensland, p. 353.
71 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, 91.
of 40 people from Banyan and Silkwood to Palm Island. The reason given was “being supplied with opium by Chinese hawkers and will not work”.  

An interesting interplay between opium use, Aboriginal labour and removals took place in the Blackwater, Duaringa district in Central Queensland during 1908. Police inquiries in the district found that only small amounts of opium were being used by local Aboriginal people. Possum skins were traded for the drug and this led to complaints being made by local white employers because employers found that they were being asked to pay higher wages for Aboriginal employees. This was believed to be due to the rising cost of opium in the district. The final result of the complaints was the removal of ten people from Blackwater to Barambah in 1909. Those singled out for removal were “unemployed” and living in a camp at Blackwater. The motivation for this removal was the impact that the use of opium was having on local employment arrangements. Those supplying the drug could not be convicted and so it was decided to remove the users of the drug. Those investigating the local situation reported a healthy population with minimal use of opium. At this time, opium use was widespread in the general community. The impact of the removal on the remaining Aboriginal population of Blackwater was observed by local whites who described scenes of grief in which people

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72 ibid., p. 229.
73 Acting Sergeant Mackenroth, Emerald to Inspector of Police, Rockhampton, 7 September 1908, QSA Hom/J47.
74 Removals Register, QSA A/69523, 42.; QSA Hom/J47.
cut themselves with knives and tomahawks.\textsuperscript{75} This removal was at the request and for the benefit of white employers.

There can be little doubt that there was a relationship between interaction with Chinese people and opium related removals. Only 112 removals contained the word “Chinese” in their stated reason — 76 of these also contained the word “opium”.\textsuperscript{76} This relatively low number of removals would suggest that prosecuting of Chinese for trafficking opium was preferred by authorities to removing Aboriginal people for using opium. The reason for this might be the labour value of allowing Aboriginal workers to remain in various localities. The number of convictions for possession and supply of opium between 1897 and 1945 far outweighed the number of removals.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Convictions for supply of opium & Convictions for possession of opium & Total number of removals with opium as reason \\
\hline
637 & 1394 & 244 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Various Opium related Convictions involving Aboriginal People}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{76} Search conducted on RD.

\textsuperscript{77} Source: Annual Reports, 1897–1945; RD.
Mixing of Races and Immorality

Interaction between Aboriginal and Chinese people was viewed as dangerous and the 1897 Act made it illegal for Chinese men to cohabit with Aboriginal women or for an Aboriginal person to be employed by a Chinese person. The Queensland legislation tended, in Frederickson’s terms, to “racialise others”, leaving white Queenslanders as “simply humans”.  

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Guy Ramsay argues that “white authorities resorted to removal legislation to reassert their position within normative racial discourse”. The results of a search of the database calls this into question. Although references appear in correspondence the actual number of removals due to mixing with Chinese and “other races” was relatively small. The claim that “white authorities employed removal legislation to counter the challenge presented by Indigenous–Chinese contacts” is tentative at best. Figure 3.10 shows that convictions for use and supply of opium were one of the main methods of disrupting relationships between Chinese and Aboriginal people.

Miscegenation and the mixing of races were largely seen as matters of “morality”: “The interaction of Asian men with Indigenous Australian women was always suspicious and considered tendentially immoral, not least since Asian men were seen as such.” The Amendment Act of 1901 gave protectors the power to control the marriage of female Aborigines and also prohibited visitors to Aboriginal camps. Aboriginal women were largely perceived to be the cause of this “immorality”. This view is well illustrated through the words of the Queensland Governor Leslie Wilson following a visit to the Cherbourg settlement in 1934:

However much one may deprecate the fact that white men become fathers of these half-caste children, the blame must rest, to a very large extent, on the

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native girls, who, by temperament, and a desire to have a child by a white father, encourage white men in every way.\textsuperscript{81}

\textbf{Figure 3.11 Removals with “Immorality” as a reason}

The peak of removals with “immorality” as a stated reason occurred in 1914. This was largely due to a removal of 39 people from Strathmore Station to the Yarrabah Mission in North Queensland. The stated reason was: “Owing to immorality on Strathmore Station it is necessary to remove the aboriginal camp.”\textsuperscript{82} With the ever-present need for

\textsuperscript{81} Governor Leslie Wilson to Acting Premier of Queensland, 6 June 1934, QSA A/69584; also cited in Ros Kidd, \textit{The Way We Civilise} (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), p. 126.

\textsuperscript{82} Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 75.
Aboriginal labour, the removals register notes: “Fifteen stock boys allowed to remain until term of agreement finished.”

Regina Ganter demonstrates the way in which association with Asian people amounted to “immoral associations”. In an article entitled “Living an Immoral Life – ‘Coloured’ Women and the Paternalistic State” Ganter details the way in which “protective legislation” was enacted to remove young women of mixed descent from Thursday Island in North Queensland to Barambah and domestic service in Southern Queensland.

Despite much evidence calling into question assumptions made by local protectors on

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83 ibid.
84 Ganter, “Living an Immoral Life”, p. 16.
Thursday Island, individual women were cast as “immoral” and those white residents supporting them were labelled “avowed immoralists”. Figure 3.12 demonstrates the way in which Aboriginal women were perceived to be immoral. More than 69 per cent of removal orders involving “immorality” as a stated reason were for women.

The conflation of miscegenation and morality issues continued with the introduction of the 1934 *Amendment Act*. This act targeted the “coloured” population of North Queensland. Section 9 of the Act made sexual intercourse between an Aboriginal woman and non-Aboriginal man an offence punishable with a £50 fine or six months’ imprisonment.

The impact of the 1934 legislation on removals involving “immorality” and “mixing of the races” can be seen in Figure 3.11. The early to mid-1930s represent the period in which the largest number of removals involving these stated reasons occurred. While this is significant, it must be stressed that the number of such removals was relatively small.

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85 ibid.
87 ibid.
Removals to Mona Mona Mission – For Their Own Benefit?

As demonstrated in figure 3.1, 7 per cent of removals were enacted because the removee was said to be destitute or that the removal was for their own benefit. The latter category peaked in 1916. This fluctuation was like others due to the influence of local protectors and events. A close analysis of the removal to Mona Mona indicates that it was for the benefit of a church-run mission rather than for the removees.

In September 1913, the Mona Mona mission was established in the Kuranda district by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. In keeping with the direction of Chief Protector Richard Howard, the mission was designed to inculcate mechanical and agricultural skills
amongst Aboriginal people with a view to becoming self-supporting.\textsuperscript{89} For the first year of operation, the number of inmates on Mona Mona remained low, then in 1914 a total of 51 people were sent from Mareeba and in 1915 another 54 people were removed from the same location. The reason given for the latter removal was “addicted to opium, children to accompany their parents”.\textsuperscript{90} This removal represents the peak of opium-related removals shown in Figure 3.10.

In January 1915, the superintendent of Mona Mona Mission wrote to the CPA informing him that the mission would be ready to take the entire Kuranda tribe by July. He later wrote in May: “I think it would be a great advantage to have them sent here under the Minister’s order otherwise I fear I will have trouble with them running back to Kuranda”.\textsuperscript{91} In September 1915, the Northern Report of the CPA stated:

\begin{quote}
About sixty natives are yet camped around the town of Kuranda and it would be greatly to their benefit to transfer them all to this Mission. They are all poor destitute lot, half-starved and half-naked and are really an eyesore to the numerous visitors to this beauty spot in the North.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

The problem with this report was that it contradicted the local protector of Aboriginals who had already reported that the majority of the 64 people living in the district were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} Shane Collins, “Mona Mona: A Culture in Transition”, Grad Dip Material Culture, James Cook University, 1984, p. 14., AIATSIS MS 2067.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 89.
\item \textsuperscript{91} J.L. Brandford to CPA, 3 May 1915, QSA A/69429.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Extract from the Northern Report of the CPA, 7 September 1915, QSA A/69429.
\end{itemize}
strong. By October 1915, the Kuranda tribe had still not been removed and the superintendent of Mona Mona complaining of the drought asked if “they could remain where they are until the end of the year, it would give us a chance to get over the drought a little”. The local protector reported on the effects of the drought on the Kuranda people.

the drought is not affecting them in any way. It is reported that they can obtain plenty of native food and owing to the creeks drying up they can also get plenty of fish. There is no necessity for their immediate removal.94

In November 1915 the CPA wrote to the Mona Mona administration informing them: “Under the circumstances their removal can wait until you are ready to receive them.”95 The official orders for removal were signed on 10 February 1916. A special contingent of police began the forced removals using handcuffs. A number of local employers (no doubt with a degree of self-interest) complained of the removals which were proving not altogether successful. In June of 1916 the Senior Sergeant of Police in the Cairns District reported:

so far the removal of the tribe has not been effected. Up to the present 36 of them have been removed. The others are scattered about the district and

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93 See Appendix 4.
94 PA Cairns to CPA, 27 October, 1915, QSA A/69429
95 CPA to Superintendent, Mona Mona, 8 November, 1915, QSA A/69429
always evade capture as they do not care to go to the mission. The remainder will be rounded up as soon as possible.96

It was not until December 1916 that the same officer reported that the entire tribe, except for one “boy”, had been removed to Mona Mona mission. This was more than two years after moves had first been made to remove people from Kuranda. So these people were officially destitute and half-starved, and needing removal “for their own good” yet had remained strong and well-fed in their own country for two years. One disgruntled white employer pointed out that the Mona Mona mission was in direct competition with local farmers. The removal of 1916 was entered in the removal register as: “poor, destitute aboriginals; to be removed for their own good.”97 It is clear that the removal took place because the mission required numbers rather than the people from Kuranda requiring protection or receiving a benefit from the relocation.

The effects of European settlement upon the landscape also impacted upon removals for reasons of “destitution”. In 1938 a family was removed from the South Johnstone area to Palm Island. The Chief Protector, J.W. Bleakley, observed:

These natives are living in a destitute condition in the South Johnstone area. Until recently they were able to obtain an abundance of food

96Senior Sergeant Kenny to Commissioner of Police, 14 June 1916, QSA A/69429.
97This phrase was used as title for Anna Haebich’s study of race relations in Western Australia.
supplies and game, but since the Palmerston scrub area has been opened for selection this source of supply is not now available.98

Figure 3.14 Removals with Health as Stated Reason

Health

“Mixing of races”, “immorality” and “destitution” were reasons used for removal which linked quite closely to those initiated ostensively for issues of health. The influence of Dr Raphael Cilento, a senior government health officer in the development of the 1934 Amendment Act and the increase in removals during the 1930s, was quite pronounced. Cilento was Director of Tropical Hygiene in the Commonwealth Health Department from

98 J.W. Bleakley to Under Secretary Department of Health and Home Affairs, 21 December 1938, QSA A/69443.
1928 to 1933 and was appointed Director of Health and Medical Services in Queensland in 1934.\textsuperscript{99}

In November of 1932, Cilento conducted a survey of Aboriginal people in North Queensland. He used the survey to compare residents of Palm Island with what he termed a “coloured” population living with “minimal restrictions” in North Queensland.\textsuperscript{100} He described Aboriginal people living in North Queensland as “hanger-ons” living on the fringes of white settlements and part of a rapidly declining tribal remnant.\textsuperscript{101} Venereal disease was believed by Cilento to be widely carried by the “non-white” population of North Queensland:

> It is almost impossible for any aboriginal woman to escape venereal infection in the neighbourhood of (say) Cairns or Innisfail, and among the large foreign and sometimes coloured populations that exist in these localities. Promiscuity is encouraged by circumstances almost impossible of governmental control.\textsuperscript{102}

Cilento’s “intermediate coloured persons” were South Sea Islanders and other non-Aboriginal people of non-European descent. In the view of Cilento, they were carriers of disease such as hookworm, venereal disease, filariasis and malaria. The solution for

\textsuperscript{100} Raphael Cilento, \textit{Report of a Partial Survey of Aboriginal Natives of North Queensland} October-November 1932, NAA A 1928/1 4/5 SECT 1 Survey of Aboriginals.
\textsuperscript{101} ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} ibid.
Cilento was clear — all non-whites had to be brought under stricter governmental control.

It is emphatically my opinion that the coloured groups, both aboriginal and other, in the neighbourhood of towns, should be eliminated, either by absorption of the better elements into the general community, or by the transfer of the aboriginals to Aboriginal Settlements. Coloured persons living as natives might be given their choice of transfer to Aboriginal Reserves or Settlements, passing thus voluntarily under the control of the Chief Protector, or otherwise dealt with in accordancy with the laws relating to vagrancy and so forth.

If the mainland natives are to remain in their present locations, it will be necessary to provide them with a much more liberal food issue, and one that is not only received by them, but eaten, and not disposed of for tobacco or other luxuries. It is difficult, from the experience of other countries, to see how this could be effected without transferring the natives to compounds, but without it, they are merely doomed to extinction, in a way that reflects little credit upon the community.\(^\text{103}\)

Part of the motivation for Cilento’s policy recommendations was the threat posed to Queensland’s population by “non-whites” or the “coloured” people. The poor standard

\(^{103}\) ibid.
of care actually provided for those removed for health reasons is detailed in Chapter 4. Cilento’s proposal went far beyond health — it was a further proposal for a total “solution”. He concluded his 1932 survey:

I would venture to suggest that the whole aboriginal problem from the point of view of Settlements, be regarded as an indenture system, with the State as protector. The aboriginal is sufficiently low in the scale of economic progress to respond to a modified and temporary programme of paternalism, unadapted as such a system may be to people educated in the consciousness and independence of thought and action.\(^{104}\)

The idea was that once natives had reached an “adequate stature of development” they were to be returned to the white community:

If it be suggested that this converts Palm Islands into no more than a clearing station for the health of natives, it may be pointed out that, in effect, the care of the native is essentially a matter of constant medical supervision — a supervision that goes all the way from actual disease control to the control of adequate food supplies and suitable working supplies and suitable working conditions, and methods of recreations and educational improvement.\(^{105}\)

\(^{104}\) ibid.
Figure 3.12 shows a significant increase in the number of removals for health reasons between 1942 and 1944. The peak of these removals occurred in 1944, with 102 recorded cases. This surge in numbers can be attributed directly to concerns over the spread of venereal disease during the years of World War II. Ninety-eight (96 per cent) of these were to Palm Island.

The perceived threat of Aboriginal people on Cape York collaborating with Japanese during the first half of the 1940s was discussed in the previous chapter. Presbyterian and Church of England mission authorities were investigated by the Deputy Director of Security for Queensland and found to be of minimal risk in terms of collaborating with the Japanese.\(^{106}\) Aboriginal people on Cape York were, however, also perceived to be a potential health threat to Australian and US army personnel stationed in the area.

In November 1942, Colonel Wills of the Australian Army suggested that “for reasons other than operational, transfer should be effected of certain female natives from Missions in Cape York Peninsula, situated in close proximity to Military encampments”.\(^{107}\) The major reason for this suggestion was that it was believed that US and Australian troops were at risk of contracting venereal disease from local Aboriginal

\(^{105}\) ibid.
\(^{106}\) R.F.B. Wake, Deputy Director of Security for Queensland to Commanding Officer Security Section, Brisbane, 11 February 1943, NAA A373/1 3950 Transfer of Natives — Cape York Peninsula.
\(^{107}\) ibid., L.H. Lemaire, Lt-Col Inspector Administration to Chief Inspector of Army LHQ, 18 November 1942.
women. Wills voiced a concern that “white control is deteriorating due to natives associating with AMF and Negro troops in the Peninsula.”

Michael McKernan describes a climate in which the spread of venereal disease was viewed as an increasing menace in Australian society during the second world war. Women were viewed as the carriers of the disease and the Australian and Allied military forces worked with civilian health and police departments to detect and detain women suspected to be infecting soldiers.

There was little evidence of venereal disease amongst Aboriginal people living in the Church run missions on Cape York. Nevertheless, the DNA agreed to a request from the military that Aboriginal women who came into contact with troops periodically be examined and that if they were found to be suffering from venereal disease, removal from the area would take place. Due to the Department of Native Affairs’ inability to implement such a strategy, it was agreed that the examinations would be conducted by military medical officers.

Once again, the perceived threat to the white population was weighed against the benefit of Aboriginal labour. Discussions on removal of Aboriginal people from the Cape York

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108 ibid.  
111 ibid., Brigadier i/c Administration HQ to Allied Land Forces HQ.
district highlighted the value of Aboriginal labour. It was decided that those suffering from venereal disease be removed whilst ensuring that there was sufficient Aboriginal labour to supply fresh fruit and vegetables to the Army Personnel on Cape York. The provision of fresh fruit and vegetables was seen to be of the utmost importance to the health of the troops in the district.\(^{112}\)

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{From} & \textbf{To} & \textbf{Number of removals} \\
\hline
Torres Strait & Palm Island & 9 \\
\hline
Cherbourg & Palm Island & 46 \\
\hline
Woorabinda & Palm Island & 20 \\
\hline
Mornington Island & Palm Island & 2 \\
\hline
Cape York & Palm Island & 6 \\
\hline
Other Locations & Other Destinations & 19 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{“Health” Removals, 1944}
\label{table:health-removals}
\end{table}

(Source RD)

Despite the concerns of the military, there were only six removals from Cape York for health reasons in 1944. There was a clear policy that the destination of all health removals was to be Palm Island and in 1944, 75 per cent of Palm Island removals were

\(^{112}\) ibid., Major General S.R. Burton Minute Paper to Adjutant-General 1 December 1942.
related to suspicion of venereal disease.\textsuperscript{113} Cilento’s objective of Palm Island becoming a medical “clearing house” for Aboriginal people from other settlements and reserves had partially been achieved.

Health-related removals sometimes contained an element of discipline. For example, a man was removed from Cairns to Palm Island in 1929 as he was said to be “Nuisance among female abors. Suspected to have VD.”\textsuperscript{114} In 1939, a woman was removed from Burketown to Palm Island for being a “Troublesome character. Absconding from employment and suspected of suffering from VD.”\textsuperscript{115} In 1944 another woman was removed from Ingham to Palm Island for “Unsatisfactory behaviour and suspect VD.”\textsuperscript{116}

In the north of Western Australia Mary Anne Jebb describes the way in which leprosy patrols were used to remove people who were not active in the station workforce and were considered to be “troublemakers”.\textsuperscript{117}

**Discipline Removals**

The majority of removals constituted a form of control over Aboriginal lives. Analysing the various categories used for removal, the largest proportion was for discipline-related reasons (36 per cent). On many occasions, reasons such as health were later changed or revealed to be disciplinary reasons.

\textsuperscript{113} These statistics are based on search of RD. There were 98 removals for health reasons to Palm Island in 1944. This is from a total of 102.

\textsuperscript{114} Removals Register, QSA A/64785 p. 319; Removal Card, CPH.

\textsuperscript{115} Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 373.

\textsuperscript{116} Removals Register, QSA A/64786, p. 21.
As early as 1900 Walter Roth recognised the deterrent powers of removal. He wrote that:

A new departure has been taken in the expatriation of certain aboriginal desperadoes from the northern Districts to Fraser’s Island….I consider this method of dealing with aboriginals of notoriously bad character, a most excellent one: it does good in both ways. The culprit is cut off from his old

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associations, while his mates keep quiet in the belief that the death penalty has been meted out.\footnote{Dr Roth Progress Report January 1900, 3., QSA A/58912} Redislocation was also a form of punishment and a method of quelling disquiet amongst Aboriginal populations in Queensland. \footnote{Archibald Meston to Home Secretary, 7 July 1902, QSA A/58929} In 1902, Archibald Meston, Protector for Southern and Central Queensland, conducted a tour of the protectorates for which he was responsible for. He wrote to his superior:

\begin{quote}
I would ask the Home Secretary’s authority to settle the trouble at Emerald, Planet Downs and Mantuan Downs by removing some of the blacks to other localities and a few to one of the reserves.\footnote{Quarterly Report on Durundur, April, 1903, QSA A/58929}
\end{quote}

This request was approved and eighteen people were removed from Emerald to Durundur in 1903.\footnote{Quarterly Report on Durundur, April, 1903, QSA A/58929}

The peak years for removals involving discipline as a reason were 1915 and 1921. Of 284 discipline-related removals in 1915, 177 (62 per cent) were to the Hull River Settlement. Of these 160 came from the Tully and Murray Rivers district. The stated reason for these removals was: “Loafing class; are a hindrance and annoyance to better

\begin{thebibliography}{1}
\bibitem{Roth} Dr Roth Progress Report January 1900, 3., QSA A/58912
\bibitem{Meston} Archibald Meston to Home Secretary, 7 July 1902, QSA A/58929
\bibitem{Isdell} James Isdell, Travelling Protector, Western Australia Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for the Year ending 30 June 1910, 12. in QSA A/69468; Western Australian Archives ACC 430 4335/1915
\end{thebibliography}
class of aboriginals.” In 1921 a total of 187 people were removed for reasons of discipline and control.

Resistance

The number of removals which were employed to quash resistance from Aboriginal people undermines the phrases of protection that often accompanied removal orders. Representative of these removals was a group of people sent from Cooktown to Palm Island and Cape Bedford in 1921. Those removed to Cape Bedford had previously absconded from the mission. The reason given for removal was: “To keep them on Settlement; and give Superintendent authority over them.” Eight of the people suspected as ringleaders were removed to Palm Island for “causing serious trouble amongst natives in employment and desertions from Cape Bedford”. In 1922, a man and his wife were removed from Cooktown to Palm Island because it was feared that they would desert if they were sent to Cape Bedford. Palm Island was used on a number of occasions to prevent the escape of inmates. In 1920, a man was removed to Palm Island with the entry into the removal register stating: “Destination altered from Yarrabah as it is too easy of egress.”

121 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 101.
122 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 225.
123 ibid., p. 223.
124 ibid., 241.; Removal Card, CPH.
125 ibid., 203.; Removal Card, CPH.
A total of 264 removals were implemented as a result of people absconding from settlements and reserves. In his Annual Report for 1903, Walter Roth acknowledged with grudging admiration the extraordinary feat of a man who had been removed from Cape York to Fraser Island:

It would appear that he escaped from Fraser Island in the early part of February 1903, and although the police were notified next day, he seems to have eluded their vigilance, making the overland journey of at least 800 miles in under six months. Considering that he is a “myall,” and hardly able to speak a word of English, that he has had to pass through tribe after tribe, and country all foreign to him, and that he was originally taken down by steamer from Thursday Island, the performance is a remarkable one.

A number of Aboriginal people made extraordinary efforts to get back to their kin and country. In 1901, a man named Tommy Tomahawk was wrongly accused of murder and removed from the Cairns district to Fraser Island. He subsequently escaped and returned to Redlynch near Cairns and joined the tribe there. Following this he was removed to Barambah twice and escaped on both occasions. This journey was more than 2000 kilometres. In 1913, two men made their way from Barambah to their place of origin, Coen — again a journey of more than 2000 km. While some travelled great distances

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126 This figure is based on a search of RD.
127 Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1903, pp. 16-17.
128 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 49.
to escape the reach of the Department, others made repeated efforts to abscond. One man
had three aliases and was removed six times between 1949 and 1957.\footnote{129}

In 1905, Police Inspector Roland Garroway was sent to arrest Aboriginal deserters from a
cutter belonging to one of the Jardine brothers. Garroway and his police were frustrated
in all their efforts to arrest any of the deserters. He had no doubts as to who the ringleader
was.

One boy in particular, named ‘Wimera” (who is said to have committed at
least three murders some years ago) should be removed from Peninsula.
This boy has also threatened whites, and is now away with the deserters
from Jardine’s boat. He is said to have twelve boys with him ex Water
police boys and others and stated that if interfered with they would fight
\footnote{130}

Garroway complained about the “black water police”. He found that they warned locals
of the movements of police and believed that they would not be reliable when required to
work against their own countrymen.\footnote{131} There is no official account or record of the
removal of Wimera.

\footnote{129} RD.
\footnote{130} Walter Roth, CPA to Commissioner of Police, 19 June 1905, QSA A/45212.
\footnote{131} ibid.
Extra -judicial Removals: Removals as Punishment

Finnane and McGuire discuss the way in which removals to institutions were part of a controlling response to the effects of colonial dispossession:

Incarceration within unique institutions, segregation from the settler population and surveillance and regulation through an expanding bureaucracy were strategies of social control increasingly deployed in an attempt to address the distinctive challenges posed by a dispossessed indigenous population.132

Chapter 1 detailed the emergence during the nineteenth century of the concept of islands of incarceration on which Aboriginal people could be detained. From 1897 onwards, the implementation of “protective” legislation made the removal of Aboriginal “ex-prisoners” with suspected “criminal tendencies” possible. The 1897 Act was amended in 1901 to enable the removal of “dangerous Aborigines” from one district to another.133 From this time, the removals framework represented a parallel system in which Aboriginal people could be punished twice for offences committed, and in many cases offences for which they had never been convicted.

There was no minimal threshold of evidence for removal. In 1903 a man was removed from Cooktown to Fraser Island for allegedly stealing oranges. The local police, acting

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133 ibid., p. 290.
on the recommendation of a white resident admitted that there was no evidence for the “offence”.\textsuperscript{134} In 1901, a man was removed from Herbeton to Fraser Island for allegedly being involved in a murder. Once again, the local police and Northern Protector Walter Roth acknowledged that there was insufficient evidence to bring the matter before a court.\textsuperscript{135} A number of such removals took place on the initiative of Walter Roth.\textsuperscript{136}

Archibald Meston advocated the removal to institutions of men and women who had served time in prison in order to prevent them from returning home. The nature of the evidence against the removee was largely irrelevant — suspicion or allegation was enough to provoke a removal:

As a decided rule it is certainly not desirable for blacks charged with serious crimes, whether found innocent or guilty, to return to the same locality. In no case should time expired prisoners be returned to their original haunts.\textsuperscript{137}

The practice of removing ex-prisoners to Aboriginal reserves and settlements continued from the beginning of the twentieth century through to the mid-1960s. Aboriginal people were removed to institutions with stated reasons such as, “after serving prison sentence”,

\textsuperscript{134} QSA Pol/ J15.
\textsuperscript{135} Removals Register, QSA A/69523, 10 ; Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1901, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{136} Some of these include: Removal of Tommy from Mareeba for alleged murder — Annual Report if Northern Protector, 1903,16; QSA A/69523, 13; Removal of Pumpkin from Moreton E.T.O. for alleged murder — Annual Report of Northern Protector 1902, 15; QSA A/69523,11; Removal of Sandy from Pascoe River to Durundur for alleged murder — Annual Report of Northern Protector 1902, 15; QSA A/69523, 11; QSA A/58930 Lands Dept Batch Files, 1903.
\textsuperscript{137} Archibald Meston to Under Secretary, Home Office, 7 July 1902, QSA A/58929.
on release from prison” and “released from prison”. A total of 425 people are recorded as being removed from a gaol or prison to an Aboriginal settlement or reserve. This represents 10 per cent of all removals for disciplinary reasons. Of these 380 (89 per cent) removals involved males. Figure 3.16 shows the way in which disciplinary removals affected mostly males.

McGuire and Finnane rightly emphasise the way in which disciplinary removals were motivated by the notion of “sending a message” to other Aboriginal people. In 1923 a man was removed from Maryborough to Barambah as an “absconder: being returned for

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138 Removals Register, QSA A/64786. pp. 69, 99; QSA POL/P1 2660AR.
139 Search conducted on RD.
140 This figure was arrived at by a search for “prison” and “gaol” as terms used in all discipline removals on the RD.
There are at least 70 examples of removals in which the stated reason is revealed to be explicitly as a deterrent to other people. Representative reasons are: “troublemaker; as an example to others”, “causing trouble to mission; as an example”, “deserters from Yarrabah; to be returned as an example to others”, “ringleaders in cattle killing at Rokeby Station, as an example to others”.

Removals were also used to apprehend and return people absconding from the control of missions and reserves. In 1923, a man was imprisoned for ‘deserting’ the Taroom settlement. At the completion of his sentence, he was sent from the Brisbane Gaol to the Barambah settlement. In 1915, fourteen people originating from Bowen were removed from the Cairns Gaol to Yarrabah. The reason used was “absconding from Yarrabah”.

Figure 3.17 shows the major destinations for removals involving discipline as a stated reason. It is clear from this graph that the government-run settlements of Palm Island, Cherbourg, Fraser Island, Taroom and Woorabinda were the major destinations for disciplinary removals. This graph reveals that, whilst the greatest proportion of removals for disciplinary reasons were made to Palm Island this was roughly in the same proportion of all removals (also see Figure 2.9).

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143 Removals Registers QSA A/64785, 253; QSA A/69523,170; QSA A/69519 Reason used for removal: “Served imprisonment for desertion from Taroom: removal recommended by magistrates.”
144 QSA POL/J30 510M5.
145 Although established by government Fraser Island was later managed by the Church of England.
It is interesting to note that 41.88 per cent of removals of ex-prisoners were to Palm Island. The settlement has always had a reputation as a place of punishment but there is evidence to show that removal to other settlements was also used as a method of control.

Discipline was also used as a removal reason when external factors or pressures required the relocation of local populations. In 1963, the removals register records the removal of thirteen people from Mapoon to Bamaga for “disciplinary” reasons.\textsuperscript{146} These removals were in fact occasioned by the closure of the Presbyterian-run mission.

\textsuperscript{146} Removels Register, QSA A/64786, p. 96.
Mapoon mission was established in 1891. Kidd describes how, during the post-World War II period, a number of church-run missions in North Queensland were transferred into government hands.\textsuperscript{147} This process was due to the Queensland government decreasing mission subsidies, sometimes refusing requests for basic supplies and materials needed for the adequate running of the institutions.\textsuperscript{148} Mapoon was one of the missions earmarked for closure. As early as 1948, a proposal to relocate the residents of Mapoon to Bamaga was floated.\textsuperscript{149} Discussions around the Mapoon relocation continued between government and mission officials through the mid-1950s. Community members of Mapoon strongly rejected any proposed move to the nearby mission of Weipa or to other locations.\textsuperscript{150}

Mining companies had shown interest in the Weipa and Mapoon Aboriginal reserve areas for a number of years. In 1958, Comalco was granted an 84-year lease over 93 per cent of the land which had made up the Mapoon, Aurukun and Weipa Aboriginal reserves since the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{151} The relationship between church, state and mining company have been well detailed by Wharton and Kidd. Church and international humanitarian organisations expressed concern over the pressure being applied on residents of Mapoon to relocate to Bamaga. In December 1961 the secretary of the Anti Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights wrote to W.H. Noble, the Queensland Minister for Native Affairs:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{147} Kidd, \textit{The Way We Civilise}, pp. 191-194.
  \item \textsuperscript{148} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{149} ibid., p. 195.
  \item \textsuperscript{150} ibid., p. 200.
  \item \textsuperscript{151} ibid., p. 204.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
A number of this Society’s correspondents in Australia have brought to our notice the hardship inflicted on Aborigines who have been told to move from the area of Mapoon Mission following the granting of concessions in that area to Comalco mining company.\textsuperscript{152}

The Queensland government denied that the deal struck with Comalco played any part in the closure of Mapoon and forced removal of residents to Bamaga. Wharton points out:

\begin{quote}
It is hard to believe that the government was not influenced by both companies desire to establish harbour or other facilities near Mapoon, at least until Comalco announced its preferred port site in 1958.\textsuperscript{153}
\end{quote}

A range of factors came into play in the closure of Mapoon. It is difficult to isolate which was the dominant factor, but concerning the forced removals of 1963, the government and Presbyterian church authorities, under the possible influence of mining companies, had come to the decision that it was most convenient to close Mapoon mission and remove the residents to Weipa, Bamaga or other locations on Cape York. One of the obstacles to this mission closure was opposition from a number of community members and leaders from Mapoon.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{152} Secretary, Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights to W.H. Noble, Minister for Native Affairs, 22 December 1961, NAA A452/1 62/879.}
In the time leading up to the removal, a man named Charlie Turner was appointed by the DNA to fill a liaison role on the mission. Turner encountered much resistance, and believed that moves were afoot to take control of some of the basic resources necessary for Mapoon to continue functioning. Turner reported that there were plans for a community-run store — that the community would live off the proceeds of crocodile hides and a number of women who had previously been employed in the mission school would facilitate the education of the remaining children through enrolment in the Primary Correspondence School. In late August 1963, Turner described a group of determined and organised community leaders opposed to the closure of the mission.\(^{154}\)

The DNA, Patrick Killoran, responded:

> At Mapoon there remain a few persons who have been engaged in a campaign of passive resistance and non-co-operation with the Mission authorities….It is my intention to issue a Removal Order involving those persons who, in my opinion, are attempting to intimidate the majority of the persons remaining at Mapoon …”\(^{155}\)


\(^{154}\) “They appear to me to be both the dominating and influential group here, and I fear are retarding others from moving out.” C. Turner to DNA, Thursday Island, 28 August 1963, QSA A/69496 Proposed Removal of Mapoon to New Site.

\(^{155}\) Patrick Killoran, DNA, 23 August 1963, QSA A/69496 Proposed Removal of Mapoon to New Site.
On 14 November 1963, removal order 32/63 was issued by Patrick Killoran, DNA. The order listed eleven adults and accompanying children. The reason stated for all except one was “disciplinary”. On the evening of 15 November, two Queensland policemen arrived at Mapoon and entered the houses of several people who later reported being frightened by having torches shone at them while they lay in bed. Following the removal of thirteen people, Torres Strait Islander Police were involved in the destruction of a number of houses. Geoffrey Wharton records the resistance of some of the residents left behind on Mapoon following the November removal:

I saw few houses got burned in front of my eyes but I didn’t say anything you know… Harry (or Henry) Brown… went along and he see these Torres Strait Islanders Police they come and he said to himself, ‘What are they going to do to my house?’ He went over to them and said ‘What are you going to do?’….They said ‘Well we gotta burn every house. We have to shift the people away’….He started to make his .303 (rifle) straighten up you know, straighten the gun up and he shoved one (bullet) half way. He said ‘shift all those leaves out the back there otherwise I’ll waste all these bullets through all of you’ …They went away, went straight through and never came back

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156 Patrick Killoran to Officer in Charge, Police Station, Thursday Island, 14 November 1963, QSA A/69496.
The removees arrived at Bamaga with no housing to go to; a year later, with more people arriving, there was chronic overcrowding. The Presbyterian Chaplain at New Mapoon, Bamaga recorded that many of the promises made to the people of Mapoon had not been kept.\footnote{Rev G.W. Taylor quoted in Wharton, “The Day They Burned Mapoon”, p. 24.}

Some church and trade union affiliated organisations, as well as the Aboriginal Advancement League, criticised the actions of the Queensland government.\footnote{An interview between J.M. Stuckey, General Secretary, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions and Queensland Aborigines and Overseas Missions Secretary Rev J.R. Sweet with DDNA, Patrick Killoran, 6 May 1963: “In view of continuing propaganda against Church and Government by Queensland Trades and Labours Council, A.A.L. and deputation work by Mrs Muriel Callope what does D.N.A. advise? Answer: Masterly inactivity.” QSA A/69496.} Prime Minister Menzies’s office responded to an urgent telegram from Fenner Brockway and Joyce Butler, two members of the British House of Commons, protesting at the forced removal of Aboriginal people from Mapoon. Menzies’ secretary drafted a reply letter stating:

The protests which have reached you may have arisen from the fact that there were about a dozen natives who did not wish to be moved. These people were in fact, taken to the new area, because it was felt that they could not be allowed to remain to starve in the old area…….The move is in no way connected with mineral questions, but has been dictated entirely by the interests of the Aboriginals.\footnote{An interview between J.M. Stuckey, General Secretary, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions and Queensland Aborigines and Overseas Missions Secretary Rev J.R. Sweet with DDNA, Patrick Killoran, 6 May 1963: “In view of continuing propaganda against Church and Government by Queensland Trades and Labours Council, A.A.L. and deputation work by Mrs Muriel Callope what does D.N.A. advise? Answer: Masterly inactivity.” QSA A/69496.}
The historical record does not support such a claim. There is scant evidence that the wishes of the Aboriginal people of Mapoon were listened to or acted upon regarding the closure of the mission and relocation. Kidd and Wharton highlight the complexities and conflicting interests surrounding this incident. The removal from Mapoon employed “discipline” as a stated reason. This was a method of quashing Aboriginal efforts challenging the legitimacy of church and government authorities in their desire to dislocate and dispossess a community.

**Conclusion**

The removal from Mapoon to Bamaga in 1963 is illustrative of the way in which removals were used to control a community of people. All the stated reasons for removal say far more about the wishes of the Queensland government and other interested parties then they do about the wishes or state of the individual Aboriginal people removed. The stark numerical variations in reasons for removals, and the way in which these reasons came into and out of fashion, calls their integrity into question. The reasons used for removal are not hard data, but subjective judgements — sometimes involving callous decisions on the part of individual protectors.

This chapter has shown the way in which local factors and the needs of institutions affected the numbers of people removed. Voluntary removals were made when

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161 E.J. Bunting, Secretary to Prime Minister Menzies to A. Fenner Brockway, House of Commons, London (n.d.) NAA A463/63 1962/2747 It is unclear whether this letter was sent as there is a second copy in file. This copy is crossed out with a notation stating “No answer to go to Fenner Brockway.”
Aboriginal people found themselves isolated from family and community. They were also made when economic conditions were poor and employers were unable to provide for their subsidised Aboriginal employees. Removals involving old age also meant that the benefits of labour were no longer available to white employers.

Reasons such as being addicted to opium and mixing with other races were largely enacted to prevent a perceived threat to the wider Queensland population. Immorality and health removals were more about maintaining a degree of racial purity and healthy white males than they were about addressing the medical condition of Aboriginal people. The large proportion of removals which were for disciplinary reasons demonstrates the punitive role that removals played in Queensland Aboriginal policy for much of the twentieth century. Total control of the population was always tempered with the need for Aboriginal labour, and for this reason close to 10 per cent of removals involved employment-related reasons.

The process of removals met with Aboriginal resistance and the number of abscondings and multiple removals of individuals bears testimony to this. The reasons for removal were rarely questioned, and Aboriginal removees had no avenue to appeal or question the reason applied to them. When individual removals are analysed, it becomes clear that the wishes of local white residents, employers, missionaries and Aboriginal protectors

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played a significant role in the reasons used for removal. This analysis of a particular removal is explored in the next chapter.
Chapter 4

Who’s Responsible? Removals from Batavia River 1932

In December 1992 Prime Minister Paul Keating made a speech at Redfern Park, Sydney in which he spoke of a connection between all contemporary Australians and Aboriginal Australians affected by past injustices. He stated:

We took the traditional lands and smashed the original way of life.
We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders.
We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice.

The question of historical responsibility for past injustices was widely debated in Australia during the late 1990s. Taking a different view to his predecessor, Prime Minister John Howard addressed federal parliament, stating:

I do not take the black armband view of Australian history … I believe that the balance sheet of Australian history is overwhelmingly a positive one.

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2 ibid., p. 3.
Explaining the position of Prime Minister Howard on an apology regarding the Stolen Generations, Peter Reith, then Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, wrote:

The government does not support an official national apology. Such an apology could imply that present generations are in some way responsible and accountable for the actions of earlier generations.³

Debates over responsibility, connection and national identity have also been played out in other contexts around the world. A recent article by Konrad Low argues that, in the context of the Third Reich ordinary Germans could not be held responsible:

we should oppose those who speak in general terms of a collective guilt of the Germans, if by this is meant that the vast majority of those then alive share the guilt for one of the biggest crimes in human history. Such an accusation, if not proven, is monstrous.⁴

In his article, Low uses the individual to exonerate the collective. Examples are cited where Jewish people were offered the protection of ordinary German people from the brutality of the Nazi machine. Low argues that this death machine was not challenged, and there was no “legal duty” for ordinary Germans to do so.⁵

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⁵ ibid. Low argues that: “The Basic Law establishes in Article 20(4) a right to resistance. It does not speak of a duty to resist. Where is the ethical norm that stipulates resistance against murderous force without any concern for one’s own security?”
Any parallels between Germany in the 1930s and Queensland in the 1930s are not specifically argued in this chapter. Some of the racial thinking and the social climate of the time are however, similar. The reason for introducing the historical situation in Germany in the 1930s is to employ the same questions posed by Low and historians such as Daniel Goldhagen. We closely examine one removal occurring on Cape York and ask: ‘How did this transgression upon the dignity of a group of Aboriginal people occur?”, “Who was aware of this abuse?” and, following on from this the key question: “Who was responsible?”

Goldhagen’s study of “ordinary Germans” and their involvement in the destruction of millions of Jewish lives demonstrates the importance of analysing how the basic human dignity of a particular group of people can be trampled upon. Goldhagen’s study of perpetrators in Germany post-1933 analyses the motives and actions which helped to bring about the massive slaughter of Jewish people. For this to occur, “rational” and “ordinary” German people were needed as willing accomplices. Goldhagen rejects arguments such as Low’s that ordinary Germans had little choice but to become involved in the genocidal actions which amounted to the Holocaust. He demonstrates the way in which members of police battalions could “opt out” of killing without a negative consequence — either personally or professionally. This chapter employs Goldhagen’s approach by analysing the action of police protectors and their level of involvement in removals.

Goldhagen stresses the importance of dealing with the “particular”. As we consider removals as a whole, we should consider that removals such as the one outlined in
this chapter occurred thousands of times.\textsuperscript{6} For the removals project to take place, active and willing removers needed to act. Police protectors were not passive participants carrying out the government policy of the day. The enacting of a removal order usually required the endorsement and support of the police protector on the ground. It was well within his powers to recommend or avoid the removal of Aboriginal men, women and children. The fragile nature of the “protective apparatus” in Queensland — that is, the relationship between the office of the CPA and the Police Department — was such that great power was afforded local protectors while very little real “protection” was available to Aboriginal people.

A number of people knew of the brutality of the removal detailed in this chapter, yet very little was done. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was a typical removal, or indeed what a typical removal was. There can be little doubt though that, in common with many of the other cases documented in this thesis, it demonstrated a pattern of personal and state power conducted in a manner which left little room for accountability.

The geographic focus for this chapter is the Batavia goldfields on Cape York. During the early 1890s a prospector named William Baird found gold in the region but it was not until 1911, when an Aboriginal couple named Pluto and Kitty found more gold, that the Batavia diggings became known as one of the richest gold-producing areas in Queensland.\textsuperscript{7} Pluto was reported to have owned one of the richest claims on the part of the field that was named Plutoville. Despite the claim yielding thousands of


\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Walkabout}, 1 October 1939, p. 45.
pounds worth of gold, Pluto died penniless having been “robbed by certain of his white friends”. After his death, Kitty discovered another rich deposit of gold which became known as Lower Camp Diggings. It is tragically ironic that in 1921 Kitty was removed to the Yarrabah mission. The discoveries made by Kitty and her husband had brought people to the district and they were now in the way. Between 1899 and 1947, at least 58 people were removed from the Batavia diggings.

Before daylight on the morning of 24 December 1932, an Aboriginal man of about 50 years of age awoke in his camp and emerged lighting his pipe. Constable Alex Thies from Coen struck him on the back with a doubled whip. He was handcuffed to two other men and forced to march towards the river. Constable Thies struck the men severely to hurry them along towards their destination. Upon arriving at the river, the men were repeatedly questioned as to where their wives had gone. The men refused to cooperate and were threatened with removal to Palm Island. After this, they told Thies they would find them “by and by” and were further frightened with a revolver. Unable to locate any women with these men, Constable Thies later released them.

On the same morning, Constables Thies and Neil approached another man who had been employed by the police and labelled a “King”. The police took the King’s wife without giving any reason. Constable Neil then took off the man’s police clothes and

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8 ibid.
9 Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 227.
10 This is the date given in evidence to inquiry held by DCPA. Photographs and notes taken by anthropologist Donald Thomson suggest this removal might have taken place around 13 December. Both sources document the removal as occurring in December of 1932.
11 Evidence taken before J.W. Bleakley, CPA, 22 October 1933, QSA A/58802.
burnt them in front of him stating: “You are not King now.” Jim, who worked for one of the white miners as a yard boy, returned from a morning’s wallaby hunting to be run down by Constable Thies with a revolver pointed at him. Constable Neil struck Jim on the back with a stick. No word was spoken to Jim. His wife was forced to expose her genital region to both policemen, presumably for an inspection for venereal disease. After this, the police moved away from Jim’s camp.  

Herbert, a local Aboriginal man, was on the lower Batavia River around Christmas of 1932 and returned to the Batavia diggings during the new year of 1933. He found that all of his spears had been broken, his garden destroyed, melons and beans all pulled up and the door to his dwelling broken. The men who had experienced the violent police attack told Herbert that Constable Thies had destroyed his dwelling — but had not given any reason. The CPA recorded that Herbert and his wife had always “stopped in the bush” and did not go near the miner’s camps or work for them. Herbert’s wife had fled to the Pascoe River in fear of Constable Thies. 

This was not the first act of police brutality meted out on the Batavia diggings. Earlier in 1932, Erick Brenning, a returned soldier and local miner, nursed an Aboriginal man who had received a beating from the Coen police for allegedly deserting his place of employment. The man was found to be suffering from a broken rib, split lower lip, contusions to the jaw, contused scalp, wounds, abrasions and large bruises all over his body. This man was given a bed in Brenning’s kitchen where he was fed on soaked bread and liquid food for ten days on account of his wounded

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12 ibid.  
13 ibid.  
14 ibid.  
15 ibid.
jaw. He continued to be nursed for six weeks after which he fled to the bush. Brenning also reported the destruction of gardens, humpies and shelters. The police had done this, as they wished to force the Aboriginal people to congregate in one camp rather than several. Brenning reported:

> I can honestly say that I have never seen more wanton and brutal cruelty inflicted on natives in this, or any other country, and I was a resident in Iquitos, Upper Amazon, Peru, during and before the inquiry into the Peruvian Rubber atrocities.\(^{16}\)

These early morning attacks on camps of Aborigines had many echoes of police and white vigilante violence on the nineteenth century frontier. The rushing of camps before dawn and the destruction of Aboriginal weapons and property similarly occurred on the Queensland frontier.\(^ {17}\) This wanton destruction of Aboriginal homes and property also occurred in the Mapoon removals of 1963.\(^ {18}\) The common thread in these attacks is that they were largely made upon unarmed defenceless people who posed no real threat to the safety and security of the police or vigilantes involved.

**The Long March to Laura**

Following the raid of 24 December four women and one child were captured and started on a long march to Laura from where they would be taken to Cooktown,

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\(^{15}\) ibid.

\(^{16}\) ibid. Statement from Erik Brenning, Batavia, 8 April, 1933.

\(^{17}\) Two examples: Destruction of a camp at Breakfast Creek, Brisbane in 1860 — Police Magistrate, Brisbane Report on destruction of Blacks Camp, Breakfast Creek, COL A/7 60/1952; Destruction of camp on Umbercollie Station in Southern Queensland – Maitland Circuit Court Depositions Regina v Richard Knight, Stephen Holden, John Reardon, Martin Cummins, “Billy” Aboriginal: standing trial for the murder of an aboriginal “Bootha” March/April 1849 NSW Archives (9/6354).

Cairns, Townsville and then Palm Island. The journey to Laura was 232 kilometres, which was walked in twenty days in oppressive wet season conditions. One of the women described how the journey began:

The native trooper, Tommy Hamilton put a chain around my neck and chained me to Judy. Then they brought Nancy Graham, with her little baby and chained her to Judy. Then they brought us to Thompson’s store. We stayed in Thompson’s saddle room. That was on Sunday, Christmas Day. We had Christmas dinner at Thompson’s with chains on our necks and legs. That night we were chained to posts by our legs and the chains were still on our necks.\(^{(19)}\)

One of the men asked if he could accompany his wife and use some of his horses for her to ride on. He was told by Constable Thies to “Let her walk”.\(^{(20)}\) Constable Thies repeatedly flogged men and women for walking too slowly. One of these women was six months pregnant:

After we left Mein Constable Thies flogged me with a stockwhip round the legs. I still have the scars on my legs from it. He flogged me because I would not walk quick enough. The sun was very hot and the ground was slippery and I got sick and could not walk fast.\(^{(21)}\)

\(^{(19)}\) Statement given to Cornelius O’Leary, DCPA, 31 March 1933, QSA A/69470.
\(^{(20)}\) ibid.
\(^{(21)}\) ibid.
This same woman went for long periods of time without water and later took a fit near Yarraden Station.

A number of other Aboriginal people were captured and removed along the way to Laura. One of these men removed for “cattle stealing” described further floggings by Constable Thies at Aurukun mission.

While we were in the gaol at Aurukun we were singing a native song. Constable Thies walked into the cell and flogged James Harry and Eddie with a stockwhip which was doubled up. I saw them getting a flogging through the cracks in the wall between their cell and mine. Const Thies then came into my cell and flogged me with the whip. He hit me with the back with the whip three times. James Harry cried when he was flogged. The boys did not speak when they were hit. We were too frightened to speak.  

Freddy, removed from Coen for disciplinary reasons, described the dehumanising tactics employed by the police during the same removal:

Constable Thies took my belt off and gave me a hiding with it. He put a chain around my neck and made it fast to a tree. He made me lie down on the ground. I was lying on my side. He then started to belt me with the strap, saying, “Do you feel it?” I did not speak for a long time and he kept flogging me. Then I sang out, as my shoulder where he was hitting

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\(^{22}\) ibid.
me was very sore. I did not get up for some time after he flogged me.

Constable Thies did not hit me any more after that.\textsuperscript{23}

Another man who was removed for “probable insanity — for his own protection” spent a large amount of the journey unclothed. He was repeatedly beaten to the point of blood running from his legs.\textsuperscript{24} The above descriptions of brutal treatment received whilst being removed are but a few incidents taken from over 60 pages of evidence given to Bleakley and his deputy, Cornelius O’Leary. Included in this evidence was an allegation that Constable Thies had forced an Aboriginal woman to have sex with him. This woman was not removed from Batavia River.\textsuperscript{25}

**Beyond the Call of Duty**

In his analysis of perpetrators’ actions, Goldhagen describes voluntary cruelty — that is where perpetrators use initiative to conduct acts of cruelty without doing so under direct orders of superiors.\textsuperscript{26} The act of removal represented cruelty in itself, but these acts of violence were not a necessary part of the removal. The indiscriminate beatings, burning of clothes, destruction of dwellings and implements, etc. could in no way be perceived as acts of “protection”. These were entirely voluntary acts made without provocation and with no relation to a perceived threat from the victim. They were not what Goldhagen would term “crimes of obedience”

All “obedience,” all “crimes of obedience” (and this refers to situations in which coercion is not applied or threatened), depend

\textsuperscript{23} ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} ibid.
upon the existence of a propitious social and political context, in which the actors deem the authority to issue commands legitimate and the commands themselves not to be a gross transgression of sacred values and the overarching moral order.²⁷

The primary acts of removal — that is, the decision to remove the group of people from Batavia River to Palm Island and the physical relocation of the people — both were perceived within the wider society to be a necessary process. They were justified through a perceived benefit to the non-Aboriginal population of Queensland and a perceived benefit to the removees themselves.

**Justifications for Removal**

The Christmas 1932 removals from the Coen police district were justified using a number of reasons. Seven of the women were removed for “immoral associations with miners”. Immorality in this context was often shorthand for “inter-breeding of the races”. From the late 1920s through to the mid 1930s the Queensland government — along with other Australian governments — spent time considering “the half-caste problem”.

Kidd attributes the introduction of the 1934 Amendment Act to a desire by Bleakley to control the “non-white” population of Queensland in the area of health and morals:

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 383.
By broadening the categories to include everyone of Aboriginal and Islander extraction, a “big proportion” of the coloured population of north Queensland who might be a menace to health and morals because of their low caste condition and association with Aboriginals” were brought under surveillance.28

Health was often used as a pretext for eugenic management of Queensland’s population. The medical expert Dr Raphael Cilento had an influence on policy and was instrumental in the move towards making Palm Island and Fantome Island “clearing houses” to eliminate venereal disease. The removal regime was more about removing a danger to the white population in North Queensland than a desire to seriously address the sexual health of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. This is shown through the appalling level of care removees received on Fantome Island.

In 1932, Cilento visited Fantome Island and observed that one man treating 160 patients suffering from venereal disease. This lack of medical care meant that many would never leave the island.29 In 1940, a man who had been sent to the Fantome Island Lock Hospital suffering from venereal disease died after being given an injection. The Public Service Commission found that the hospital was run by a woman who did not possess a general trained nurse’s certificate.30 It was also found that the medical superintendent had not given an injection (a task which fell within his

29 Raphael Cilento, 28 July 1932, Cilento Collection, Fryer Library UQFL 44 Box 3.
30 Public Service Commissioner, Report on the Administration of the Palm Island Settlement and of the Lock Hospital and Lazaret at Fantome Island, 15 December, 1940, QSA A/58861.
role) for a twelve-month period. No staff had any knowledge of the VD regulations under the *Health Act*. The primary focus of Palm and Fantome Islands was to use them as places of punishment and isolation rather than places of care and cure.

There is certainly some evidence of sexual relationships between white miners and Aboriginal women on the Batavia goldfields. A small number of women told the Deputy Protector of Aboriginals that they had been sexually involved with white miners on the goldfields. The nature of these relationships is difficult to assess. Whilst it might be assumed that many of these relationships were exploitative, none of the women involved saw removal to Palm Island as a passport to a secure haven. A number of women who had no involvement with white miners were also swept up in the removals of Christmas 1932.

Later medical examinations suggest that some of the women were suffering from venereal disease. There is nothing in the correspondence and evidence surrounding the removal that displayed any level of concern or compassion for women and men suffering a serious medical condition. The level of treatment these people received on arrival at Palm Island also reveals that the priority was to remove a perceived threat to a white community rather than to treat people who had contracted a highly contagious disease, often as a result of sexual exploitation.

Mary Anne Jebb’s research into venereal disease and Aborigines in Western Australia demonstrates the way in which the state intervened in Aboriginal lives as part of the

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31 ibid.
32 ibid.
“Lock Hospital Experiment”. Jebb shows that this intervention was much more than a humanitarian response to a disease:

The Lock Hospital scheme provides a case study of the complex web of social, institutional, political and economic relations converging around the regulation of Aborigines and interracial sexual relations.\(^{33}\)

Similar to the Queensland situation in the early 1930s, assumptions about moral and physical degeneration led to an intrinsic association with Aboriginality. The Western Australian Lock Hospital experiment of the early 1900s and Cilento’s Queensland “clearing house” scheme of the early 1930s did more than address a health issue — they posited Aboriginal people as the disease:

As an Aboriginal hospital the scheme drew together the strands of social segregation and contagious disease control. It fused the ‘protectionist’ ideals of Aboriginal policy with the public health ethic, both of which advocated strong state intervention in the lives of people who were identified as a risk to the majority.\(^{34}\)

Table 4.1 clearly demonstrates the intersection between race-based policy and public health concerns from 1934 onwards. A dramatic increase in the number of removals to Fantome Island can be seen from 1934 onwards. This is clearly attributable to the influence of Cilento and the introduction of the 1934 Amendment Act.


\(^{34}\) ibid., p. 216.
Raphael Cilento was one of the major influences on Aboriginal policy during the early 1930s. Race and health came together easily in Cilento’s thinking. Venereal disease was assumed to be largely introduced and carried by ‘non white’ sections of the population. An example of the thinking of Cilento can be seen in 1942 when he made some observations about venereal disease in Queensland. He believed that the main element in the spread of the disease was the presence of African American troops. The thought of white Australian women having sexual relationships with black American troops particularly repulsed Cilento.35

35 “The main element in the spread of venereal disease here is undoubtedly the American soldier. In particular this applies to sailors who are more heavily infected than other units (probably in all countries), and the negro troops who are themselves a very serious problem from the sociological point of view, apart from that of venereal disease. Brothels have been set up for black and other coloured U.S. troops where white girls are available to them. Americans, who in their own country, would lynch a negro for even looking at a white woman queerly, seem to find no difficulty in persuading themselves to advocate almost violently the provision of our white girls for the coloured soldiers they injudiciously brought into this country.” Raphael Cilento to Roy Rowe Esq., Secretary, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Social Security, 3 March 1943, Cilento Collection Box 4 44/11 Fryer Library.
TABLE 4.1  Removals to Fantome Island between 1930 and 1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Fantome Island</th>
<th>Percentage of total annual removals</th>
<th>Total removals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
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<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 show the great increase in removals to Fantome Island during the 1930s. It was in this context that the removals to Batavia River took place in 1932.

Figure 4.1 Percentage of Removals to Destinations during the 1920s
Figure 4.2 Percentage of Removals to Destinations during the 1930s

- Palm Island, 41.9%
- Fantome Island, 8.7%
- Cherbourg, 17.1%
- Woorabinda, 7.8%

Figure 4.3 Percentage of Removals to Destinations during the 1940s

- Palm Island, 49.6%
- Fantome Island, 2.7%
- Cherbourg, 17.7%
- Woorabinda, 22.7%
Questions of Evidence

Any discussion of the reasons used for removal must be tempered by the fact that these reasons were almost never questioned or tested. There are very few instances of the recommendations of local Aboriginal protectors being rejected or countermanded by the office of the CPA in Brisbane. It is to this relationship between local protectors and the CPA’s office that we now turn.

Looking at the official reasons used for removals provides us with little real understanding of the process involved. We need to know instead how the removal orders themselves came into being. Some time during 1932, Bleakley conducted an inspection of the Cape York Peninsula missions. During this inspection, he received information that Aboriginal women were being “openly kept” by white miners. He proposed that the Commissioner for Police send a “special man” secretly to report on the situation at the diggings. The wet season came and most of the white men left the district. Despite the fact that one of the main offenders was no longer present on the diggings, the Police Commissioner secured a removal order for the women.36

The information that sparked off the removal came from Constable Alex Thies — the man who was also largely responsible for the police violence at Batavia River. Thies defended his actions thus,

\[\text{during the time that I have been at the Coen station I have done my utmost to clean the district of diseased aboriginals and also those of notorious bad character, and in my opinion when I made a report to}\]

the Chief protector on the 28th June 1932 regarding the prostitution of female aboriginals at Batavia I was doing what I considered right and that it was the best that could be done for them, was to obtain removals and have them removed to Palm Island.

While I have an opportunity I will endeavour to get removals for the aboriginals. I also told him that it was my doing that the removals were issued and that I had made an application for same and that at the present time I had captured several and hoped to get more.  

The language of Thies in describing a cleansing of the district almost merged disease and race. The problem was perceived to be Aboriginal people as much as it was the ravages of venereal disease.

Ganter and Kidd argue that the “protective legislative framework” in Queensland gave wide discretionary powers to CPAs, allowing them to pursue private agendas to the detriment of the well-being of Aboriginal people. Such an assertion is beyond dispute, but when removals are taken into account it is also important to consider the influence of the local protector — the man on the ground.

To demonstrate contrasting approaches by individual CPAs, Ganter and Kidd cite an example in central Queensland in which CPA’s Walter Roth and Archibald Meston directly intervened. I would argue that, considering the geographical vastness of

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37 Constable A Thies to Inspector of Police, Cairns, 30 March 1933, QSA A/69470.
39 ibid.,pp. 542-47. This example is the removal of people from Keppel Island.
the territory covered by CPAs and the level of resources available to them, removals in which there was personal knowledge and a level of personal intervention were rare. There are almost no instances of requests for removal from local protectors being refused by the CPA. In the Batavia River, case Bleakley and O’Leary personally investigated the brutality of the removal but the actual decision to remove people was never questioned.

The over-arching approach to removals might have been set by the CPAs, but in the majority of removals they were almost entirely reliant on the information fed to them by local police officers acting as protectors of Aboriginals. The relationship between the Office of the CPA and the Queensland Police Commissioner is central to an understanding of the way in which removals took place.

When Constable Thies threatened Aboriginal people from Batavia River with removal to Palm Island, the threats carried considerable weight. Following the removals of Christmas 1932, a number of miners at the Batavia diggings reported that “the natives were in a state of nerves and afraid to come in from the bush, especially as stories were current amongst them that he had taken down names of others whom he [Thies] threatened to have sent to Palm Island”. 40

The role of Constable Thies in the removal from the Batavia diggings highlights the power of the local police protector. It also highlights the fact that Aboriginal affairs in Queensland was largely a police operation. The Office of the CPA was a small one reliant on police officers throughout the state to continue to function.

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40 J.W. Bleakley to Under Secretary, Home Department, 9 November 1933, QSA A/58802.
A local police protector had many motivations for bringing about removals in his police district. The correspondence files of the CPA frequently contain complaints from the Police Department in which the added tasks of police protector are brought to the notice of the office of the CPA. By removing Aboriginal people, a police protector would bring an end to enforcing employment agreements, replying to the CPAs correspondence and responding to complaints from local white citizens.

The concentrating of Aboriginal people into one camp, settlement or reserve was also seen as a cost-cutting measure by the Police Department. Protectors’ patrols in remote parts of the state were expensive and the removal of all people not working under registered agreements would mean that such patrols could be kept to a minimum. The power possessed by the local police protector could also be used to put a brake upon the process of removals. In some situations, police officers recognised Aboriginal people’s wishes to remain in their own country and stalled the removal process. An example of this occurred in the Coen district in 1963 when the local police protector urged the DNA to allow two Aboriginal men to return to their country.\(^{41}\)

The occasions on which local protectors chose to prevent removals demonstrate their level of responsibility. There were no personal negative consequences for protectors avoiding the removal of Aboriginal people. There was a high level of personal initiative in almost every removal. Similar to Goldhagen’s analysis of Germany in the early 1930s, in Queensland there needed to be a widespread acceptance of the

\(^{41}\) T.J. Newman to D.N.A., Police Station, Coen, 14 October 1963, QSA ID 196 Box 122 QS 505/2.
“rightness” of the policy of removals for them to go ahead. While there are individual cases of protectors disregarding removal orders or avoiding removals of Aboriginal people, there are few examples of local protectors challenging the legitimacy of the overall policy. Removals orders did not originate in the CPA’s Office in Brisbane. They were signed and endorsed there, but they originated in local police stations like the station in Coen in the early 1930s. In one sense, local Aboriginal protectors were even more powerful than fellow white citizens living in their communities — even when these citizens disagreed with brutal methods of removal.

Responses to Brutality

A large number of miners from the Batavia goldfield petitioned the CPA and local Members of Parliament stressing the brutal actions of Constable Alex Thies:

> We as Citizens of Batavia, object to blacks being interfered with, and resent them being illtreated by the Police, and trust some alteration will be made, so they will be left alone, to live their lives in peace, as they are happy and contented.⁴²

J. Higgins sheeted the responsibility for the brutality home to the Australian Labor Party. The letter moved through the Australian Workers Union and found its way to Home Secretary Hanlon. Higgins, a resident of the Batavia goldfields, wrote to his brother in Cairns,

> There are letters wrote about it, also the way they have been knocking the blacks about. Anyhow it is making the name of the Labor Party
stink; and if an election were on next week instead of the voting being 45 Labor, 15 Tory; it would be 60 Tory, Labor 0. And if it is allowed to stop at this, after a life time support of the Labor Party, I am finished.43

Complaints about the removal of Aboriginal people by the authorities were not restricted to the Batavia River miners. Similar complaints about removals were made in other mining areas in North Queensland. Whilst there is certainly evidence that some Aboriginal women were used and abused by white miners on the Batavia goldfields there is also much evidence that in some instances a positive relationship existed between some white miners and Aboriginal people there. One of the men removed on Christmas day gave evidence to the DCPA of his life on the goldfields:

I had a claim and was working it with Tuesday Smith, an aboriginal. He is still at Batavia. I sold any gold I got from the claim to Mr Armbrust. He paid me cash for it. My wife worked for Mrs George Thompson of Batavia. She got no pay but received food.44

Without down playing the exploitative nature of labour on the goldfields, situations such as this represented a relatively high level of autonomy compared with Aboriginal people working in other industries at the time. It was possible for some Aboriginal people to enter nominal agreements with friendly miners and still work on their own

42 Declaration by residents of Batavia 3 April, 1933, QSA A/58802.
43 J. Higgins to T. Higgins, Batavia River via Coen, 7 January 1933, QSA A/69470.
44 Statement given to Cornelius O’Leary, DCPA, 31 March 1933, QSA A/69470.
claims. To receive cash and “be one’s own boss” with freedom to meet cultural obligations would have been far superior to a life on Palm Island.

The CPA responded to the complaints and petitions of the miners, and on 28 March 1933 the DCPA went to Palm Island and the Batavia Goldfields to investigate the allegations of police brutality. An extensive investigation took place, with O’Leary taking evidence from eleven of the Aboriginal people removed. Over 60 pages of transcripts, all largely corroborating each other, were sent to the CPA along with a medical report which found wounds which could have been inflicted by a whip on one of the men and the pregnant woman still visible two months after it was alleged they had been received.45

J.W. Bleakley forwarded a report to the Home Secretary summarising it by stating,

The sifting of the evidence as above shows that there would appear to be ample evidence that Constable Thies of Coen as officer in charge of the escort taking these natives on the first stages of the road from Batavia River to Laura on removal order; illtreated several of these natives … by flogging them with a stockwhip and in circumstances that made this illtreatment actually inhuman as these natives were all in delicate condition of health.46

In this report there is no indication that the Office of the CPA is responsible for the abuse of Aboriginal people. The local protector is now described as a “constable” —

45 R. Elliott Murray, Medical Superintendent, Palm Island, 31 March 1933, QSA A/58802.
he was a policeman first and a Protector of Aboriginals second. Both roles allowed enough room to manoeuvre to ensure that nobody was ultimately deemed to be responsible.

The CPA urged that a searching inquiry be made and that Constable Thies be employed in duties which had no contact with Aborigines. About this time, Sergeant Watson of Coen went on leave and Thies was made Protector of Aborigines for the Coen Police District. It was not until the 30 March; following O’Leary’s investigation that Thies and his superior Sergeant Watson wrote a letter to the Inspector of Police at Cairns. Thies denied all allegations and spent much of his two-page letter slurring the character of Thomas Higgins, one of the first miners to report the brutal removal.47

In October 1933 J.W. Bleakley visited the Batavia goldfields and took evidence from six more residents (Europeans and Aborigines) who further corroborated the large volume of evidence taken by O’Leary in March. Included in Bleakley’s evidence was a statement by one of the police trackers who had worked with Constables Thies and Neil. This tracker stated clearly that floggings occurred on a daily basis from Batavia River to Laura, during which time most of the Aborigines were kept in neck chains and handcuffs. The tracker’s statement was witnessed by Sergeant Watson who in March of 1933 had told his superiors: “Wanton cruelty on the part of the Constables here is a thing that I cannot believe.”48

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46 J.W. Bleakley to Under Secretary, Home Dept 24 April 1933, QSA A/58802.
47 Const A Thies to Inspector of Police, Cairns, 30 March 1933, QSA A/58802.
Despite the large amount of independent and corroborated evidence, the Commissioner of Police refused to inquire further into the removals. He wrote to the Home Department:

I do not think that any gain will be effected by sending an Officer of Police from Cairns to inquire into these allegations; the Police have reported on them and denied them; it will be seen that the allegations are too vague for any prospect of verification. As suggested by the Minister, the matter can be settled by the transfers of Constables Thies and Neil, as these men have apparently incurred the enmity of the people in their Division, and therefore will not be of the same use to the Department as Police who are not known, and can therefore start off with the confidence of the residents.49

Constable Alex Thies was transferred from Coen to Cloncurry on 14 December 1933. His behaviour during his time at Coen was described as “good and satisfactory”. There was no mention of the charges that had been levelled against him in his personal file, nor of the reason that he was transferring to Cloncurry. Thies resigned in 1936, citing his reason for doing so as being to go into business.50

In May of 1933, reports of the “chaining and flogging of natives” appeared in London’s Daily Mail.51 Queensland’s Home Secretary Hanlon responded by

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48 Sergeant Watson to Inspector of Police, Cairns, April 1933, QSA A/69470 and trackers statement - QSA A/58802.
49 Commissioner of Police to Under Secretary, Home Department, 23 November 1933 QSA A/58802.
50 Commissioner’s Office, Staff Files, Police Department, QSA A/41059.
51 The Daily Mail, 10 May 1933.
admitting that allegations of police brutality had emanated from the Batavia goldfields and Coen districts. He stated: “If the circumstances warranted the Government would take prompt action to protect the natives against exploitation or cruelty.”

When similar allegations appeared in the Daily Herald in June 1933 Queensland’s London-based Agent-General acted quickly. He telegraphed the Home Secretary’s Office requesting a denial of the allegations:

> To enable me to reply to representations and enquiries from certain organisations would be glad to receive official statement and if possible complete denial allegations for publication.

The publicity campaign failed, however, when the Daily Herald ran the story with the headline “Cruelty Denied before Report is Issued”. The London-based Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society picked up on the allegations published in the Daily Herald and sought further information from Queensland’s Agent-General. L.H. Pike, the acting Agent General, constantly denied any basis to the allegations.

There was no denial, however, over the use of chains for Aboriginal removees. The Brisbane correspondent for the Daily Herald reported that the use of chains was officially sanctioned, as removals could not be undertaken without them. He was supported in the federal arena where the Minister for the Interior found the use of light neck chains to be preferable to handcuffs when Aborigines were travelling under police escort.

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52 ibid.
53 Agent General Queensland to Home Secretary 9 June 1933, QSA A/69470.
54 Daily Herald, 20 June 1933.
55 L.H. Pike to Anti Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, 9 June 1933, QSA A/69470.
56 Daily Herald, 12 June 1933.
57 Cairns Post, 11 July 1935.
Aboriginal affairs throughout Australia passed a resolution that the chaining of natives was preferable to handcuffing when they were "under escort".\textsuperscript{58} This view was endorsed by one of the fathers of Australian anthropology Professor A.P. Elkin.\textsuperscript{59}

The investigation of the abuses occurring during the removal from Batavia River to Palm Island demonstrates the limits of power of the CPA to protect Aboriginal people. Even when clear evidence of abuse was available, the CPA like Aboriginal people themselves — was subordinate to the powers of the Police Commissioner and his officers. In this case there was a high level of cooperation given by the victims of this removal to the investigative process. The men and women removed were attempting to achieve a measure of justice through the limited avenues open to them. Although there was acknowledgement of the violence meted out, as part of this removal, there was no suggestion that reparations be made to those who had suffered at the hands of their "protectors".

As with many removals, the police involved made submissions to be "reimbursed" for out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the journey to Palm Island. Such claims were routine. In 1931 the wife of a police constable from Longreach made a claim for reimbursement for escorting an Aboriginal woman to Palm Island. The removal formed the first part of a holiday for the constable’s wife, and for her troubles she was granted free travel. Unhappy with this, the woman made a further claim for wages.

\textsuperscript{58}Recommendations and Remarks, 'Chaining of Natives', Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities, Canberra, April 1937, NAA A 659/1 1942/1/8104.
\textsuperscript{59} The Sun, 22 January 1947.
for the time spent on the removal. Whilst claims such as this were recommended by local police inspectors they were paid for by the Office of the CPA.

The way in which local police protectors operated in Queensland is an area requiring further investigation. It is interesting to note that in 1923 the Police Union requested that protectors be paid £10 per year plus 5 per cent of Aboriginal wages. This request was denied but provides insight into the relationship between the two departments. During the 1930s, when this removal occurred, Aboriginal Protectors received £65 per annum plus expenses incurred. Despite these being paid for by the office of the CPA, the CPA had very little real authority over local protectors. In the investigation following this removal, the Police Commissioner favoured the opinion of a local police constable over the CPA.

In his book *A Common Humanity — Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice*, philosopher Raimond Gaita argues that “we can be sure that the Aborigines will not find their Daniel Goldhagen, who recently argued that many more Germans knew of and readily participated in the Holocaust than had previously been admitted”. The evidence of this removal would suggest that, at a number of levels, ordinary Queenslanders were quite aware of the removal of Aboriginal people during the early 1930s. Tourists made frequent visits to the Palm Islands during this time. There is little doubt that these visitors understood how Aboriginal people came to be living on Palm Island. Instances of abuse such as the one detailed in this chapter also occasionally received press coverage. Anna Haebich points out the way in which

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60 CPA to Under Secretary, Home Department, QSA A/58857.
61 Under Secretary Home Department to CPA, 22 October 1923, QSA A/58857.
high level of documentation. Along with a number of relatively large files relating to the incident, part of the event was also captured photographically. Anthropologist Donald Thomson was visiting Cape York in 1932 and captured the image of chained people being marched to Palm Island. This image was not made public for fourteen years, when it appeared in *The Herald* newspaper (Melbourne) in December 1946.65

Thomson documented the capturing and incarceration of two women and three men from the Aurukun mission station. These people joined those who had already

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64 ibid., p. 87.
65 The Herald, 28 December, 1946
started on the walk from Batavia River. In a scathing attack on the superintendent of Aurukun Mission Thomson described a scene of torment and anguish:

Terrible though this picture is, it gives no idea of the misery of the scene, with the relatives of the prisoners wailing and weeping and screaming good bye to their kin – who they know from long experience they will never see again. Nor of the widows and orphans that are left at the Mission.66

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66 Donald Thomson, Unpublished Notes: December 1932, Donald Thomson Collection on loan to Museum Victoria.
Thomson’s notes reflect a continual struggle between the white missionary Mackenzie at Aurukun and many non-compliant Aboriginal people. On occasion Mackenzie exhibited firearms from the pulpit and terrorised people by firing over their heads.

There is a hidden story in the gap between the taking of Thomson’s photographs in 1932 and their public airing in the mid-1940s. Graeme Neate describes the event and the reaction of church authorities as a watershed in the life of Donald Thomson. Thomson took up the issue of the brutal treatment of Aboriginal people on Cape York with the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church when he returned to Melbourne from Aurukun. It seems that he was hoping for some discreet “correction” to the situation.67 This did not happen, and Thomson was later to be refused permission to visit Cape York by the office of the CPA in Queensland.

Conclusions

Removals such as the one from the Batavia goldfields to Palm Island during December 1932 were not rare numerically. More than 250 Aboriginal peoples were removed from the Coen Police District to missions and reserves through to the early 1970s.68 Neither were they rare in terms of brutality, the 1932 removal was not unique. In 1950 a policeman from Coen tracked twelve Aboriginal people and surprised them at gunpoint. They were marched for twenty hours non-stop to Coen.

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68 RD.
Amongst those people captured were four children and one heavily pregnant woman.\textsuperscript{69} This woman gave birth to a child shortly after the removal.

In 1936, the CPA approached the Bishop of Carpentaria regarding the removal of more people from the Coen district. The Bishop agreed to co-operate and steps began to be taken in the “drafting of the old and incapable natives of the Coen, Moreton and Batavia Districts into the Lockhart River Mission”.\textsuperscript{70} Thomson summed up the process of dispossession on Cape York in 1947:

But they were rounded up by missionaries and police — who in Queensland also act as “protectors” — and concentrated in Lockhart River Mission. Their little children — the children of happy nomadic seafarers were taken away and herded into barracks called dormitories. Deprived in this way of their children around whom their lives centred the people were obliged to settle down in camps about the mission. In this way great tracts of country and miles of coastline teeming with fish and game, have been depopulated and natives become pauperised “hangers on”.\textsuperscript{71}

Whilst the Queensland government used the term “Aboriginal protectors” the Chief of these protectors, J.W. Bleakley, spoke of “absorbing” populations into missions and reserves and local police protectors spoke of “cleaning districts of native problems”.

\textsuperscript{69} Commissioner of Police to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 19 May 1950, QSA A/58862.
\textsuperscript{70} CPA to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 15 June 1936 QSA A/3842.
\textsuperscript{71} The Sun (Sydney), 9 January 1947.
Aboriginal people were not all passive victims of these policies. The response of white officials to the policy of removal also varied. In 1940 the, police protector of Coen, in stark contrast to his counterpart of 1933 pleaded with the DNA not to remove people from Coen:

Your suggestion to send these old people is unthinkable. If you send them there they will only walk back to their own native country. Coen is their home, their native land, and at least they might be happy in the knowledge that they might die in the place where they first saw the light of day. They speak of Lockhart in terms of fever and starvation, whether true or untrue, they tremble when spoken to of Lockhart. They have been here before and came away. If you decide not to build for them, please leave the old people in their native land and surroundings. The expense in sending these poor old people to Lockhart is not justified, be it ever so small, for so sure as the sun rises they will return immediately, or if unable to return, will die of fever. I would much prefer to leave them in their present condition than to send them to Lockhart. Their present homes, be they ever so humble, are vastly preferable to sending them to Lockhart to be unhappy.\(^{72}\)

This was, however, just a small brake on the removals process; 62 people were recorded as being removed from Coen after 1940.\(^{73}\) For the removals project to

\(^{72}\) PA, Coen to DNA, 17 December 1940, Tape Transcript of document held by Professor Bruce Rigsby, University of Queensland.

succeed, it required the cooperation and support of local police constables and sergeants — those hundreds of men acting as protectors of Aboriginals.

Aboriginal people responded to removals such as this in a range of ways. Some of the people living on Cape York fled the whips and pistols of the patrolling police and missionaries. Others took on the uniform of authority and “played the game”. One of the most interesting aspects of this event is the degree to which those forced to march from Batavia River to Laura engaged in the inquiry process later held at Palm Island. Those most affected by the violence of the removal gave great quantities of oral evidence to the Office of the CPA. Just as the violence of the initial removal established a pattern of race relations between those with power and those with diminished power, so did the inquiry.

Numerous inquiries into violence and brutality have taken place on the community of Palm Island, along with other Queensland reserves and missions. Generations of white officials and Indigenous community members have grappled with the reality of a truth that recognises the original violence but cannot seem to redress the original shift in personal power.

Above all, the removal from Batavia River was an “ordinary event”. The men primarily responsible for the removal took their Christmas Dinner while terrified Aboriginal people sat nearby chained to a tree. One of the major concerns for the police involved in this removal was that they be reimbursed for the expenses incurred in the long march to Laura.
In terms of responsibility for this removal, the direct responsibility must be directed to the local police protectors. The over-arching policy and support of the populace allowed it to happen — but essentially removals were a Queensland police operation. In one sense, the way in which the basic abuse of people such as occurred in this removal was made possible was through a lack of accountability.

Abuse was possible because, in a real sense, nobody was responsible for this removal. If necessary, the local Aboriginal protectors were protected by their primary employer — the Police Commissioner. Examples where protectors subverted or ignored the removals regime highlight the great level of autonomy that each protector had. For these removals to take place, hundreds of local protectors needed to actively support the regime. The 1932 removal from Batavia River was no aberration — it was a very real example of how removals were enacted.
This chapter discusses the intersection between employment and removals. This is done through an examination of the overall pattern of removals involving employment; along with a focus on several specific examples. It is argued that the availability of labour and motivations of the local Aboriginal protector must always be considered when unraveling the reasons for removal. Employment is a major factor in the removal events detailed in this chapter.

In 1996, The Human Rights Commission ruled that between 1975 and 1986 the Queensland government had breached the 1975 Anti-Discrimination Act by under-paying Aboriginal workers. The Queensland administration was instructed to make a formal written apology and pay compensation of $7000 to each claimant. In 2002 the Queensland government announced a reparations package which would pay claimants between $2000 and $4000 on condition that a legal indemnity form was signed. Descendants of deceased workers were not entitled to claim reparation. Removals were used to enforce employment agreements and were a part of the personal cost involved in these exploitative labour arrangements. The policy of removals is inextricably linked with the taking of wages of Aboriginal Queenslanders.

Some of the stated reasons for removals which have been included in the employment category are: “will not work under agreement”, “habitually idle”, refuses employment
under agreement”, “disturbing influence on other aboriginals”, “unsatisfactory behaviour while at employment” and “absconding from employment”.¹

Kidd has emphasised the central role that Aboriginal labour played in the development of rural and remote Queensland.² Aboriginal labour and the removals system were inextricably linked. As highlighted Chapter 1 the taking of Aboriginal men, women and children for employment purposes long preceded the establishment of a formal system of removals. In 1893, W. Moody from Mungindi wrote to the Colonial Secretary asking whether a licence was necessary to employ a “half caste aboriginal boy”. He was informed that no such licence was necessary.³ Numerous other examples of official support for the unregulated use of Aboriginal labour can be found in the period of colonial history prior to 1897.⁴ Once the removals machinery had been constructed, employment intersected with the policy in a number of ways. The policy of removals greatly aided and facilitated the exploitation of Aboriginal labour through to the 1970s.

¹ Removals Registers, QSA A/64785 p. 21; QSA A/64786, pp. 12, 57; Removal Card (CPH); QSA A/55334.
³ W. Moody to Colonial Secretary, Mungindi, 4 April 1893; note on letter states: “Inform that if he is a half caste aboriginal no licence is necessary”, QSA COL/A731 93/4087.
⁴ Some examples: Young girl employed as “servant” to be sent to Sydney, QSA COL A/613 90/3775; Removal of children from their mothers – one who is employed by John Low, Nambour, QSA COL A/618 90/6637; Complaint of Aboriginal people being used as slave labour on Keppel Island, QSA COL A/636 90/11543; Aboriginal people paid in flour and tobacco rather than wages, Murray River, Cardwell, QSA COL A/677 91/12866; Taking of an Aboriginal ‘boy’ from his employer in Atherton due to ill-treatment, QSA COL A/696 92/5500; Employers should find clothes for Aboriginal employees, QSA COL/A773; 94/6895.
Figure 3.1 demonstrates that over 10 per cent of removals related to employment. This figure is arrived at by taking into account the number of “family” removals — that is spouses and children accompanying removees transported due to employment reasons. The removals regime also played a major role in delivering low-cost Aboriginal labour for a number of industries. Regarding the pastoral industry, Dawn May observed:

The zeal with which removal orders were invoked makes it easy to understand why there has never been a strike amongst Aboriginal stockmen in Queensland when similar events have occurred in both the Northern Territory and Western Australia. It was so easy to diffuse trouble by removing offenders to Palm Island.\(^5\)

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Figure 5.1 Gender Breakdown for Employment Removals

![Pie chart showing gender breakdown for employment removals: Male 67%, Female 29%, Unknown 4%]

Figure 5.1 indicates the concentration of males removed for stated reasons involving employment. This is similar to overall gender proportion for removals, which was 52 per cent male, 39 per cent female and 9 per cent unknown.\(^6\)

Fluctuations in the number of removals involving employment were often due to local factors.\(^7\) For instance, in 1911, of the 46 “employment” removals occurring, 37 were from Roma (Southwestern Queensland) to Taroom and another eight were from Bell (Southeastern Queensland) to Taroom. The establishment of the Taroom settlement in 1911 would have required a number of labourers in the building phase. Another factor to

\(^{6}\) RD.

\(^{7}\) Peak years for employment removals are 1911, 1916, 1919 and 1931. There is little in terms of policy direction or even external factors to suggest why these periods are times of increased removals involving employment.
consider is that local protectors now had an option for removal of people for refusing to work under agreements.

The peak in 1916 could also be seen as a number of local events. Twenty-three out of 98 removals were from Palm Island to Hull River. Another 22 were from Thornborough in North Queensland to the Yarrabah mission. There were also a significant number of removals to Barambah in 1916. The peak periods in 1919 and 1931 can similarly be attributed to local factors.

Figure 5.2 Employment Removals 1859–1972

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8 Rockhampton to Barambah (ten out of 98); Clermont camp and district to Barambah (fifteen out of 98). Source, RD.

9 1919 - Atherton to Yarrabah (26 out of 56); Coopers Creek Waterholes to Taroom (nine out of 56); 1931 — Cairns–Palm Island (21 out of 48): Source, RD.
Figure 5.3 shows that in 1916, the year in which removals for employment reasons peaked, they also accounted for more than one in five of the total removals for that year (23 per cent). Figure 5.4 shows that in 1915 and 1916 there was a corresponding increase in the overall number of removals and the number of removals invoking employment as a reason.

The peaks in employment related removals also had underlying causes. In 1916 labour shortages due to enlistment of men in the Australian defense forces would have added to the number of removals. Similarly the impact of the depression and a labour glut in 1931 is a contributing factor to the number of employment related removals occurring in that year.
Figure 5.4 Employment Removals and Removals Overall

Figure 5.5 Employment Agreements 1900-1950
Statistical analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine any correlation between total number of removals and total number of agreements as a function of year. This finding suggests the presence of a relationship between these two factors. This means that increases in the number of removals were associated with increases in agreements and that decreased removals were associated with decreased agreements. While causal links between removals and employment agreements cannot be conclusively linked, there can be little doubt that removals were a major part in maintaining control over Aboriginal employees.

The threat of removal was a major tool in delivering a compliant Aboriginal workforce in Queensland. A removal could be used as a disciplinary tool, as a way of crushing resistance and in many cases to enforce exploitative labour relationships. Examples cited in this chapter demonstrate how removals were also used as a way of quelling complaints about employment conditions. Removals even played a role in controlling the lives of Aboriginal people who had been “exempted” from race-based legislation in Queensland. These removals not only contributed to the control of Aboriginal people living outside of settlements and missions, but were used to contribute to a stable supply of free labour within institutions. An example of this occurred on Palm Island in 1957.

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10 Non-parametric analyses were performed after preliminary investigations indicated that the removal data had a non-normal distribution. Correlational analyses using Spearman’s rho indicated a significant positive correlation ($r = .576, p < .001$).

11 It should be noted, however, that observation of Figure 5.5 indicates that this result should be interpreted with caution, given the large amount of variation in these variables across years.
Removal and Control of Employment: the Palm Island Strike of 1957

The use of force through removals is well demonstrated in a series of events which took place on Palm Island leading up to June 1957. For some time in early 1957, there was a degree of unrest amongst Aboriginal workers on Palm Island. The basis for this unrest was poor wages. Under the 1945 Aboriginal regulations, able-bodied men could work on the mainland in the cane industry for award wages but Palm Island residents were compelled to work at least 32 hours per week on Palm Island for no pay. Access to money was also a key issue. Complaints were made about lack of access to banking facilities and the receiving of child endowment entitlements.

Prior to June 1957, there were instances when Aboriginal employees were forced to work full-time without pay on Palm Island. This treatment was seen as punishment and a method of deterring “misconduct” in employment situations on the mainland. In May 1957, the Superintendent of Palm Island was approached by a Palm Island resident with a list of demands aimed at ameliorating the harsh conditions experienced by inmates. Some of the demands included that wages be increased, that “slavery” be stamped out, that the dormitory system be abandoned and that people have freedom of movement.

The list of demands related to a wide range of basic freedoms which were denied residents of Palm Island. Some of these were a curfew system, a dormitory system

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14 ibid.
15 Superintendent Palm Island to DNA, 14 June 1957, QSA Palm Island Investigation Discontent, 3A/241.
separating parents and children, restricted areas on the island, little access to savings accounts and a general atmosphere of surveillance.\textsuperscript{16}

One of the men alleged to have been the author of a list of demands was imprisoned for 21 days after he had refused to work. In early June, a decision was made to remove the alleged organiser to the mainland. While this decision was being enacted, a group of local men freed the organizer, demanding that justice be done by the superintendent.\textsuperscript{17}

Twenty police were sent from the mainland to “restore order” and removal orders were written for six men and their families.\textsuperscript{18} One of the men was removed to Bamaga, two were removed to Cherbourg and three were removed to Woorabinda. The removal reason employed in all three cases was “disciplinary”.\textsuperscript{19}

The DNA attributed the unrest on Palm Island to the lack of employment on the mainland and the influence of the Trades and Labour Council in Townsville. It was argued that the arrival of immigrant labour had meant that 100 men from Palm Island did not work on the canefields in 1957.\textsuperscript{20} While the lack of employment at award rates certainly played a part, it was also admitted by the Native Affairs administration that the unrest on Palm Island had much broader contributing factors involving basic freedoms and the lack of opportunity for Aboriginal people to control their own lives.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] ibid.
\item[19] Removals Register, QSA A/64786, p. 84.
\item[20] DNA to Under Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, 23 August 1957, QSA Palm Island Investigation Discontent, 3A/241.
\end{footnotes}
A letter from an Aboriginal resident of Rockhampton detailed the feelings present on Palm Island:

According to the British laws we are supposed to be free citizens, and British subjects. We fly the Union Jack which represents for freedom. Freedom of want, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of fear. If we are not entitled to the four freedoms it represents we are probably classed as voiceless subjects.\textsuperscript{21}

Following the Palm Island strike, there was a change in policy direction regarding the length of time that people spent on the island. All reserve and mission superintendents were encouraged to grant inmates exemption certificates if they were willing to seek employment outside of the institution. Inmates of Palm Island who had been removed for disciplinary reasons were also to be returned to their “home missions or reserves” if their behaviour had been deemed to be satisfactory.\textsuperscript{22}

By July 1957, nineteen Palm Island men had been granted exemptions and moved to the mainland. By August of the same year 106 people had returned to their hometowns, settlements or missions.\textsuperscript{23} While the organizers of the Palm Island strike of 1957 had been removed instantly without charge, their actions brought about a loosening of the bonds which held Aboriginal people in institutions for the larger part of the twentieth century. While a few concessions were made, the exploitative labour situation remained

\textsuperscript{21} Letter from Gerami Gera’s son, Albert (n.d.) QSA Palm Island Investigation Discontent, 3A/241.
on government settlements and church missions. These were reinforced through the use of informal removals or encouragement to leave the institutions.

**Removed for Complaining about Employment Conditions**

Removals were also used as a way of stifling or discouraging dissent in employment situations. Removals of those making complaints over their work conditions were not only designed to remove the complainant; they were also a way of sending a message to other Aboriginal employees.

A brave Aboriginal employee at Nockatunga Station in Southwestern Queensland wrote to the local protector in 1935 complaining about unpaid wages and the harsh treatment received at the station. He said:

> Some of us are out doing the same work as the white man and we beg to state that doing the same work, we should receive the rate of pay allotted by the AWU award of £2/4/- per week.\(^{24}\)

The local protector described the man as “a liar and a loafer”, accused him of theft and recommended his removal. He said:

> In my opinion this aboriginal should be sent to the Mission as he will only

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\(^{23}\) QSA Palm Island Investigation Discontent, 3A/241.

\(^{24}\) Letter to PA, Nockatunga Station, 6 March 1935, QSA: SRS 505/1, 7A/31.
cause trouble amongst the other natives who appear to be quite satisfied.
He has a fair banking account some of which could be used for conveying
him to the mission, then there would not be any expenditure incurred by
the Government.  

The CPA approved the removal, and the man was sent to Cherbourg in 1936. Not only
was the man’s appeal denied, his removal at his own expense served as a warning to
other Aboriginal workers who questioned their wages or conditions.

Historian Dawn May has noted the “general consensus among the white population that
both the cattle industry and traditional Aboriginal lifestyle could not be accommodated
on the same tracts of land”. Furthermore, as she pointed out, the removal of Aboriginal
people to reserves was not a solution:

The paradox was that while whites were declaring that Aborigines and cattle
could not mix, the cattle industry could not exist without Aboriginal labour.

Thirty-five Aboriginal people were removed “for their own care and protection” from
Nockatunga Station to Woorabinda in 1952. They were, in fact, most of the Aboriginal
people on the station, which had been ordered to pay employees at the award rate.
Manager H.M. Lucas Hughes pleaded for the order to be rescind, saying:

25 PA Nocundra to CPA 3 May 1936, QSA: SRS 505/1, 7A/31.
26 Dawn May, From Bush to Station, (Townsville: History Department, James Cook University, 1983), p. 65.
27 ibid.
As practically all our employees are natives, this action will put us in an extremely awkward position, now that labour is so scarce and difficult to secure.  

His appeal was rejected, but the removal order was delayed for four weeks to allow the station’s cattle to be mustered for sale.

Complaints about poor wages were not the only employment factor involving removals. In a number of cases, complaints about work conditions also meant removal for Aboriginal employees.

In October 1934, the Clerk of Petty Sessions at Richmond wrote to the CPA describing the employment practices of Norman Logan of Richmond Downs station. Logan was described as “undoubtedly the hardest employer in the Richmond District”. Most white labourers refused to work on Richmond Downs. The three Aboriginal employees complained of long hours — being forced to work from 4 a.m. until 9 p.m. Complaints were also made regarding the standard and quantity of food provided to employees. An investigating constable concluded that Aboriginal employees were also not receiving

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28 Removals Register, QSA A/64786, p. 63.
29 H.M. Lucas Hughes to DNA, 8 April 1952, QSA SRS 505/1, 7A/31.
30 “It is quite a common occurrence for men badly in need of work to accept employment from him only to be forced to leave on account of the treatment received at his hands” Clerk of Petty Sessions to CPA, 23 October 1934, QSA A/ 69429.
their “pocket money”.31 A number of Aboriginal men walked off Richmond Downs preferring Palm Island to the conditions meted out there.

Despite numerous complaints made against Logan as an employer, employment agreements continued to be made with Aboriginal men from Palm Island. In 1934 an Aboriginal employee, Alex Brady, complained of conditions on Richmond Downs. Constable Alex Thies investigated the complaints and advised Logan:

I then informed Logan that the best thing he could do was to send him back to Palm Island and to get him off the place as in my opinion he was a dangerous nigger and it would not be safe for Mrs Griffiths to remain at the station alone if he happened to come about.32

Worried about Alex Brady’s “influence” on other Aboriginal employees Logan acted accordingly. Writing to the Protector at Richmond he informed him that:

I am sending (Abo) Alex Brady in on the Wool Lorry this morning. I can’t put up with him any longer, he is insolent and disobeys my orders and moreover, he is an agitator and is influencing the other three boys to be as bad as himself. He is a very difficult boy to manage with other boys.33

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31 Constable Alex Thies to CPA, 3 January 1935, QSA A/69429 This same constable had been involved in brutal assaults upon Aboriginal people removed from Batavia River to Palm Island in 1933 —see Chapter 4.
32 ibid., A. Thies to CPA, 10 June 1935.
The superintendent of Palm Island, whilst acknowledging the harshness of Logan as an employer, concluded that Brady had brought this difficulty upon himself and accordingly he was required to pay the return fare to Palm Island. This case illustrates well the power of the local protector. Despite the fact that three white men had recently left Logan’s employment due to harsh conditions, this Aboriginal man who questioned similar if not worse treatment was ignored and indeed blamed for disrupting the ongoing exploitation of other Aboriginal labourers.

When poor employment conditions included sexual abuse, removal was still favoured by local protectors as a way of dealing with the complaint. There are very few instances of employers being prosecuted for abusive behaviour in departmental files of the CPA in Queensland. From the early twentieth century, a pattern of removing employees from abusive situations was established.\(^{34}\)

In January 1935, Cornelius O’Leary, DCPA wrote to the protector at Tully, North Queensland asking him to investigate the possibility of charging a local employer with “attempting to have carnal knowledge” with an Aboriginal girl in his employ. The girl, who had been sent from the Purga Mission in southern Queensland, had written a complaint to the mission superintendent. She wrote:

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\(^{33}\) ibid., N.H. Logan to PA Richmond, 1 June 1935. Note: “boy” was a paternalistic term often used to describe Aboriginal men. This does not reflect the age of the man described in this instance.

\(^{34}\) There are many instances of this occurring while Walter Roth was Northern Protector of Aborigines in the early 1900s.
Another thing Major, I want to tell you. On Monday night, the night before I came to Hospital my employer\textsuperscript{35} insulted me, followed me into my room, and requested me to put out the light, and I told him to get out of it, or I’ll tell Sergeant Selby. He kept on worrying me and the Dirty Old Crawler said, I will put a French Letter on myself, so that you won’t get in the family way. Well look here, how do you think a person is going to put up with dirty filthy talk like that. I never told my employer, for, he said if I told, he’d shoot me, and he wouldn’t think a second time of doing it either.\textsuperscript{36}

The accusation that approaches had been made to the girl on two occasions was denied by the man involved. The local protector felt there was not enough evidence for a prosecution and the girl was returned to Purga mission. The local policeman ensured that this possible “indiscretion” would be kept from the employer’s wife.

The man is a married man having a wife and grown family with whom he is residing and at the present time they are carrying on the business of Drapers at Tully, and to date bears a good character from a Police point of view. I have not disclosed the nature of the girl’s complaint to his wife, as I consider no good purpose would be served by such action on my part at the present time.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} Name withheld to maintain confidentiality
\textsuperscript{36} DCPA to PA, Tully, 23 January 1935, QSA A/69429.
\textsuperscript{37} ibid., PA, Tully to CPA, 30 January 1935.
This case shows how local protectors were on many occasions unable or unwilling to provide Aboriginal people with protection.

**Border Crossings**

Sometimes resistance to exploitative employment arrangements brought about small victories. One of the ways in which the employment agreement regime was resisted was through crossing state borders and gaining employment in states such as New South Wales where full wages could be earned. In 1937, an Aboriginal man was removed from Dirranbandi in Southern Queensland. This man had refused to enter into employment agreements and constantly earned money on the New South Wales side of the border. In 1935, O’Leary (the DCPA) was on a tour of the district and noticed this man. O’Leary thought that the man was a “bad influence over the half caste population”, and ordered his removal to Cherbourg. He subsequently absconded from Cherbourg, but was recaptured in 1936 and sent to Palm Island. Upon reaching Palm Island, he was horrified to observe the living conditions endured by the Aboriginal population. He wrote to local newspapers and had accounts of brutal punishment, forced labour, poor health and education highlighted and published. The CPA was forced to investigate the claims, which were quickly glossed over. The man was allowed to leave Palm Island on the condition that he never returned to Queensland.38

White employers in Queensland, who often benefited from cheap Aboriginal labour, resented the movement of people from the far southwest across the border into New South Wales. In 1937, H.M. Lucas Hughes from Nockatunga Station wrote to the local
Protector of Aborigines complaining about employees moving to Tibooburra in New South Wales. On arrival, Aboriginal workers were able to have their bank accounts transferred and thereby gain access to some of their wages. They were also able to engage in employment, with wages often equal to those paid to whites. Hughes complained of his impending loss of cheap labour, saying: “Unless something is done very shortly, every native in this district will depart for Tibooburra as soon as their next holiday leave becomes due.”

Aboriginal people in the southwest also often moved to New South Wales to escape the harsh conditions of “protection” in Queensland. An example of this is the Wangkumara people from the Coopers Creek area who moved to Tibooburra in New South Wales during the 1920s. Their freedom was short-lived and they were forcibly removed to the Brewarrina mission in 1938 after complaints by one white parent.

Under the 1934 legislation the CPA could send an “Aboriginal” or “half-caste” deemed to be uncontrollable to an institution for such time as he thought fit. Similarly, any Aboriginal or half-caste person convicted of an offence against the Act could be detained in an institution for an undefined period of time. The 1934 Amendment Act, with its sweeping powers, affected many local employment situations.

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38 Acting CPA to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 19 July 1937, QSA A/58804.
39 QSA A/3946.
This climate of surveillance was very evident in the Border Rivers area. In 1935 the DCPA for Queensland conducted a patrol of the Goondiwindi, Talwood, Thallon, St George, Dirranbandi and Hebel police districts, with notes taken on the details of every “Aboriginal, Half Caste and Quadroon”. Decisions were made as to whether or not people could be exempted from the Act. The local paper commented on the report, highlighting the disciplinary role of removals:

The department much prefers that those who are working and are behaving themselves satisfactorily shall continue in their employment, but any who misbehave themselves or incur the disfavour of the local Protectors of Aborigines [the Sergeant of Police in most cases] must expect to be dealt with and be sent away for a period of correction.42

Soon afterwards a local drover was fined in the Goondiwindi Summons Court for employing an Aboriginal man without a permit. Local landholder Donald Gunn complained to his Member of Parliament about the treatment of the Aboriginal employee:

A few weeks back, a halfcaste called _________ _________ got a job with some travelling sheep. He was camped near Talwood. He left his wife and five children there while he went droving. This man in years gone by had often worked for us and was treated and paid like a white man; he did contract work and helped erect windmills etc; all his life he had been free,
but when the sheep were passing through Goondiwindi the local Protector asked to see his agreement. As he had none, the drover was fined for employing an aboriginal without agreement. ______ had to get back to Talwood the best way he could and that was walk. He refused to sign the suggested agreement because he had always before got all his money, and in any case he wanted all he could get to feed his family. When he got to Talwood he told me his trouble and asked if I would lend him a pound to buy some rations. I gave him the pound; he then harnessed up his wagonnette and he, his wife and children have gone to N.S.W. where no such unjust law prevails. This is only one case. The Protectors’ regulations along the Border are frightening them over the Border, but further inland they cannot escape.  

Aboriginal people in the Southern Queensland Border Rivers district managed to survive by evading officials and adapting their lives to the intrusions of government legislation. Some of these people fled to New South Wales and settled in communities such as Toomelah, while others lived in fringe camps and reserves until the early 1970s.

Loyalty Returned

Whilst dissatisfaction on the part of a white employer would often mean removal for person under “agreement”, satisfaction with Aboriginal employees was also sometimes an avenue by which to avoid removal.

\[42\] Goondiwindi Argus, 18 October 1935.
\[43\] Donald Gunn to P.J.R. Hilton, MLA Talwood, 15 November 1935, QSA, A/58635.
There are a number of instances when protectors and employers were able to place a “brake” on the system of removals. These brakes were due to personal relationships and the context of a particular local situation. The benefit of cheap and effective labour was on occasions appreciated by employers and this appreciation was expressed through a subversion of the removals regime. The following example shows the way in which, in individual cases, Aboriginal families could escape removal.

In 1916 an Aboriginal man named Charley Watson died at Oxford Downs station (in the Nebo district) from heart failure. The proprietor of the station, J.B. Shannon, gave the local protector some of the wages of the deceased and then offered to take a ten-year-old son and seventeen-year-old-daughter under a “work agreement” leaving the widow to look after her other two children and survive on part-time work in the local town.

The local protector advised the CPA of the widow’s attachment to her country:

I interviewed the gin Annie Watson today and find she does not relish the idea of leaving her native home and relatives at Nebo to take up her abode at Barambah.

He advocated a course of action in which Annie Watson’s children would be working in the district close to their mother and was confidant that the employers would treat the children fairly and with compassion. The Nebo protector concluded:
I do not know of any reason why Annie Watson and family should not be taken to Barambah except that they should become very discontented there, and they would have to be fed and clothed at Barambah just the same as if they were living at Nebo. Perhaps it may be well for you to give the arrangement decided upon by Annie Watson a trial before ordering the removal of the Watson family to Barambah.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1928, following the death of the mother, some members of this family were finally removed to Palm Island. The reason stated was: “Destitute, adults cannot get employment.”\textsuperscript{45}

Another example of loyalty returned occurred in 1938. In that year, the manager of Valley of Lagoons Station in the Mount Garnett district requested that a small number of old Aboriginal people be removed to Palm Island. The local protector encountered strong resistance to this removal, with two women telling him that they had been reared on the station and wanted to die there.\textsuperscript{46} The reason for the removal of another man was stated as: “For his care and protection – too old to work”.\textsuperscript{47} The station manager initiated this removal, objecting to the cost involved in providing the elderly man with rations and tobacco. On arrival at Valley of Lagoons Station, it became clear to the local protector that the elderly man had fled from the station, avoiding removal.

\textsuperscript{44} J.T. Wilkonson to CPA21 September 1916 and 13 October 1916, QSA A/20595 Letterbook of Protector of Aboriginals Nebo 1916-1931. Material also appears in Richard Buchhorn and Lilla Watson, “Records Relevant to the Lives of Sam Watson and Linda Livingstone” (Brisbane: DATSIP Library, 1996).
\textsuperscript{45} Removals Register, QSA A/64785, p. 299; Removal Card, CPH
\textsuperscript{46} PA Mount Garnet to CPA, 4 January 1937 QSA A/69444.
\textsuperscript{47} Removal Order, 28 January 1938, QSA A/69444.
The local protector reported that Valley of Lagoons station was owned by the estate of the late J.S. Love. He reported that Love had made it known that, while he was alive, “none of the old aboriginals would be allowed to be removed from the Station, and Love had desired that they be left on the Station whilst they lived, this has become known to the aboriginals who in turn desire to remain there whilst they live, and they dread the idea of leaving there to go to Palm Island or any other place”.48 The executors of the estate of J.S. Love advised the CPA that they did not desire removal, and from available records it appears that the removal order was not enacted.49

Absconding from Employment and Enforcement of Agreements

The threat of removal was well illustrated in the Boonah district of Southeastern Queensland in 1937. New regulations meant that a local Aboriginal family would lose their “exemption” status and would once again need to come under control of the Department. Chief Protector Bleakley made his intentions very clear regarding the need for the whole family to find employment:

You can inform both of them that if they do not endeavour to obtain work and retain it, that action will be taken to remove them to a Settlement.

48 PA Mount Garnet to CPA, 8April 1938, QSA A/69444.
49 CPA to Commissioner of Police, 12 August 1938, QSA A/69444.
Children of exempt persons who have left home or are out earning their own living are considered to be under the control of the Department. This would cover the _____ girls and you can also inform them that although no immediate action will be taken to remove them, if they do not obtain work within a short time their removal will be considered.\(^{50}\)

Aboriginal employees who “absconded” were seen as a threat to the smooth running of the agreement system. Removal to a settlement was seen as an effective way of squashing such resistance. In January 1935, the Protector of Aboriginals at Gordonvale complained to the Brisbane office of an Aboriginal employee absconding from employment. Removal was recommended on the grounds that this man’s presence in the district would have an adverse impact upon other employment arrangements. The local protector wrote: “As he has shown a total disregard for authority and as his conduct is likely to have a bad moral effect on the other natives in this District (some of whom are becoming restless) I recommend that he be removed to Palm Island Settlement where he no doubt would be taught discipline and to obey authority.”\(^{51}\)

The DCPA replied that Palm Island was not available for removals of adult males at the time and that the Department was reluctant to use removal for “a first offence”. Nevertheless, removal would be used to reinforce adherence to employment agreements.

\(^{50}\) CPA to Officer in Charge, Police, Boonah 23 February 1937, QSA A/69444.

\(^{51}\) PA Gordonvale to CPA, 4 January 1935, QSA A/ 69442.
I shall be glad, therefore, if you will endeavour to locate this boy, and when you have done so, impress upon him another offence in this nature will result in his immediately being sent to a Settlement and placed under strict disciplinary control. If he should then again offend, action will be taken to remove him in accordance with your recommendation.  

Local protectors were often made aware of Aboriginal people’s reluctance to sign under agreements in which they would lose entitlements to full wages. In 1924 the Windorah protector in Western Queensland reported:

As previous mentioned in my memo, “Mick Mirindi” states he will not work under Agreement, as the money is taken from him and he gets nothing in return – I may mention this was an old sore with the Abo’s here.

An example of the power of removals in terms of enforcing employment agreements occurred in the Springsure district of central Queensland in 1938. The local protector secured employment for an Aboriginal man burr-cutting for six months. The payment for this was £2 per week with only £1 being available to the man to keep his family and the remainder “banked” with the local protector. The protector reported:

When this was put to Barnes he refused to take up the job, stating that he will not work under the Aboriginal Protection Act, as he has not worked

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52 ibid., A similar threat was made to a man in the Gayndah district in September 1937. QSA A/58805.
53 PA, Windorah to CPA, 5 April 1924, QSA A/58644.
under an agreement for years and by going under the Act again he is losing his freedom. I pointed out to him that he is under the Act and which ever way it goes he will have to work under an agreement.\(^{54}\)

The man refused, and he and his family were removed to Woorabinda for refusing to work under an agreement.\(^{55}\)

**The Personal Costs of Removal**

The impact of removals compounded by lack of adequate wages is well illustrated by a letter to the CPA in 1936. A woman from the Croydon district was removed to Barambah with her mother and two brothers at the age of four. From Barambah, she was sent out to work from the age of eleven. The long hours and harsh conditions caused her to have a nervous breakdown.

After marrying and receiving an exemption, the woman continued to request that she receive the £103-7-6 which was owed to her as part of her wages. Things became difficult for her around Christmas of 1935 when her husband was out of work and she was pregnant and due to have a baby:

> The last time I drew out money was before Christmas. I wanted it to get some extra fruit and green vegetables — they are very dear in this town.

My baby was expected just before Christmas and the Doctor ordered a few

\(^{54}\) PA, Springsure to CPA. 7 January 1938, QSA A/69444.
extras. My husband was out of work at the time. The sergeant came to the house to see me. I am afraid the majority of Blackall people are very narrow-minded. Because after the Sergeant left I was asked by the people I had rented the house from to get out because they didn’t want people to know that they had someone in the house the police were after.

We had paid our rent up until the 18 of December and my baby was to be born in a week. I hunted all over Blackall trying to get a room only for a week and as long as I live I shall never forget that nightmare experience of room hunting. Everywhere I went I got the same answer and whispered but loud enough for me to hear, “Poor thing I’d like to take her in but the police have been after her and you never know.\textsuperscript{56}

The woman eventually received the money to which she was entitled. Prior to this, she had lived in sub-standard dwellings and had requested money to pay for roofing to prevent rain entering her home. This is just one example of how the initial impact of removal combined with non-payment of wages led to the pauperisation of people living on the edges of country towns in make shift camps and on reserves.

\textbf{A Question of Morality: Corinda Stations Removals 1933}

The arbitrary nature of reasons used for removals and the influence of economic factors is well illustrated by removals taking place at Corinda Station in Northwestern Queensland.

\textsuperscript{55} Removal Order, 28 January 1938, QSA A/69444.
\textsuperscript{56} Letter dated 11 June 1936, QSA A/3846.
in the early 1930s. Pressure for access to low-cost Aboriginal labour played a role in bringing about the removals of people from the district to Palm Island. Changes in legislation and personnel on the ground created a situation in which removals could take place. When attempts by a pastoral company to radically reduce the rate of pay for Aboriginal employees failed, the employer pushed to have the local Aboriginal population removed.

In March 1933, the Burns and Johnston Pastoral Company approached the CPA requesting that they be allowed to reduce Aboriginal wages on Corinda Station in the Turn-Off Lagoons district of North Queensland. The request to change the wage rate from 26 shillings per week to 18 shillings per week was based on a debt of £50000. At this time, a rise in the pastoral award meant that weekly wages for white stockmen were £2-9-0 per week. The pastoral company claimed that low cattle prices and the effects of Buffalo fly added to the necessity for a wage reduction for Aboriginal employees. This claim was disputed by the local protector, who suggested the debt carried by the station was due to mismanagement.

Despite repeated requests, the Office of the CPA rejected the request of Burns and Johnston. A familiar claim that dependants of employees were supported by the station was similarly rejected with a local observation of the extent to which the local Aboriginal population lived off wallabies, kangaroos, fish and bush honey. Burns and Johnston responded in writing, requesting the immediate removal of people living in local Aboriginal camps:
Seeing your Department cannot meet us we ask would you kindly have the Aboriginals Camp moved from Turn-Off Lagoons, and we shall be pleased to receive your reply at an early date that this is being done.\textsuperscript{58}

This request was not acceded to, as the people in question were living on vacant Crown land.

In December 1934, a new Aboriginal protector was appointed to the Turn-Off Lagoons district which included Corinda Station. The new protector almost immediately reported that there were a number of “half-caste” children living in the district. He also reported “immoral associations” between white men and Aboriginal women. He recommended the removal of “walk-about blacks” from Corinda Station.\textsuperscript{59} The DCPA supported the removal and welcomed the newly introduced 1934 amendments:

\begin{quote}
It is recognised that the Department and its Officers have been handicapped by the absence of legislative authority to deal with immoral associations between whites and blacks, but now the necessary power is incorporated in
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Burns and Johnston Pastoral Company to CPA, 25 March 1933, QSA A/58803.
\textsuperscript{58} Burns and Johnston, 16 September 1933, QSA A/58803.
\textsuperscript{59} “I consider the best way to clean up this area both from the halfcaste point of view and that of disease amongst Aboriginals is to remove all walkabout aboriginals throughout the district, and adopt some measure to effectively deal with those coming over the border as it is from that area that Venereal Disease is being spread into this district” J.W. Wilson, PA, Turn-Off Lagoons to CPA, 26 April 1935, QSA A/58803.
the Act, it is intended to take proceedings against any offender against whom the necessary evidence to sustain a prosecution can be obtained. 60

As a result 22 Aboriginal people from Corinda Station were removed to Mornington Island. The reason given was “immorality”.

The station manager on Corinda Station did not push for all of the Aboriginal people to be removed. A small number of workers were excluded from the removal order. A number of Aboriginal women worked in the garden and around the station. The practice was for them to be “sent bush” when the mailman was expected instructing them not to return until he had left. Among those encouraged to avoid the mailmen was a young girl who was reported to be poorly fed and receiving no education. This girl was expected to work on the station outside of an employment “agreement”. 61

The events on Corinda Station between 1933 and 1935 illustrate a number of things. The power for removal lay in a small number of hands. The station owners and managers could make complaints to the local and chief protector and request more than favourable labour arrangements. If these requests were not complied, with a request for removal could be made.

The local protector also had the power to endorse or refuse these requests for removal. In the first instance, during 1933 an Aboriginal protector disputed claims for lower wages

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60 DCPA, 8 May 1935, QSA A/58803.
61 Report from J.W. Wilson, PA Turn Off Lagoons, 28 October 1935 QSA A/58803.
and actively worked to prevent the removal of a number of Aboriginal people in the Turn-Off Lagoons protectorate. The local protector was supported by the CPA.

The power of local protection is further illustrated by the work of the Turn-Off Lagoons protector in 1934 to bring about the removal of the same people who had been offered a form of sanctuary in 1933. The language of morality which was code for fear of miscegenation tied in neatly with the newly introduced 1934 Amendment Act. The intersection between employment and removals is clear. Those who proved themselves useful at little or no cost to station owners could avoid removal. Those who demanded an increase in wages or made complaints about their work conditions had very little chance of remaining on a station or in a domestic situation.

**Conclusion**

From the introduction of “protective” policies in 1897, removals and employment of Aboriginal people in Queensland were inextricably linked. Removals were a central part of controlling the lives of Aboriginal people whether they were exempted from the Act, under an employment agreement, or living and working on a government-run settlement or church-run mission.

More than 10 per cent of Aboriginal people removed in Queensland were removed for employment-related reasons. The real extent of influence on Aboriginal labour lies beyond these figures and can be found in departmental removal files. These files show that removals were used as a way of breaking resistance to exploitative employment on
and off reserves and missions. On occasions when abuse of employees occurred, the victim was more often removed than the perpetrator prosecuted. Aboriginal workers often used the different state regimes to escape across borders and thereby avoid oppressive employment agreements.

Employers and local protectors had much discretionary power, and on occasions brakes were applied to the removals regime. When local decisions were made regarding removals, Aboriginal labour was often a deciding factor.

This chapter has demonstrated that Aboriginal workers lost far more than wages in Queensland from 1897 onwards. Employment-related removals caused great separation for Aboriginal people. They were separated from country, from community and from kin. The Queensland government’s 2002 reparations offer takes little account of these factors. The gap between figures and files described in this chapter is also a gap between dollars and cents and lives irrevocably changed as a result of policies of employment and forced removals. The next chapter investigates the removal of Aboriginal children in Queensland. Employment was a major factor in the separation of parent and child. It is to this subject that I now turn.
Chapter 6

Taking the Children

Introduction

The issue of the stolen generations exploded on to the Australian public scene in the wake of the release of the *Bringing Them Home* (BTH) Report in 1997. Although the issue of Aboriginal child separation had been on the public record dating back to the 1920s, this was the first time that the issue had attracted a national focus. Following the release of the report, talk back radio was dominated with discussions over who was responsible for the Stolen Generations, and letters to the editor in most daily newspapers responded to the issue in a variety of ways.

Tens of thousands of Australians signed “Sorry Books”, and organisations such as the National Sorry Day Committee were formed. Community groups sought to pressure the federal government into issuing a national apology for the role played by the government in the separation of children from their parents. The mid- to late 1990s saw the issue of the Stolen Generations become central to the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

A number of articles and books followed the release of the BTH report. These were not the first pieces of research on the topic. In 1981, New South Wales-based historian Peter
Read wrote *The Stolen Generations: The Removal of Aboriginal Children in NSW 1883-1969.* This was one of the first overviews of the policy of Aboriginal child separation to be conducted on a state basis. Read was involved in the establishment of Link-Up, an organisation committed to reuniting families which had been impacted upon through policies of child separation. A co-founder of Link-Up in New South Wales, Coral Edwards had also written on the Stolen Generations prior to the release of the BTH Report. Her research on the New South Wales experience was fleshed out through the personal story of Margaret Tucker. Tony Austin, Rowena Macdonald and Barbara Cummings had conducted research of child separation policies in the Northern Territory.

In Western Australia, Christine Choo, Pat Jacobs and Anna Haebich had also dealt with the issue of Aboriginal child separation. In Queensland, the early work of Evans was built upon by Kidd. This chapter represents the most detailed overview of the policy of Aboriginal child separation in Queensland to date.

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Criticisms

Despite the body of research which had been conducted prior to the release of the BTH, a number of conservative newspaper columnists and social commentators attacked the report and questioned the authenticity of some of the members of the Stolen Generations. There were three major criticisms of the BTH. The first was that Aboriginal people giving evidence to the HREOC Inquiry were not cross-examined to ensure that their claims were authentic. The second was that the Inquiry only listened to Aboriginal people and did not consider the evidence of European public servants and church employees involved in the policy of child separation. The third criticism was of a claim in the BTH that Indigenous child separation in Australia amounted to genocide.

A very public legal case surrounding the Stolen Generations came before the High Court of Australia in 2000. The attacks on BTH and the Gunner and Cubillo Case questioned the validity of the historical record and indeed questioned whether there was historical evidence to substantiate what had become known as the “Stolen Generations”. These attacks were not confined to newspaper columnists and commentators. In March of 2000, the federal government made a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Reference Committee ‘Inquiry into the Stolen Generation’. This report argued that the issue of the stolen generations should be viewed within the context of the prevailing

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attitudes at the time at which they occurred. It also questioned the BTH’s assumptions about the definition of the “Stolen Generation” and the numbers of children affected.\textsuperscript{9}

Some of the key propositions put forward by the Commonwealth were:

- The proportion of separated Aboriginal children was no more than 10 percent, including those who were not forcibly separated and those who were forcibly separated for good reasons, as occurs under child welfare policies today. There was never a “generation” of stolen children.

- The category of persons commonly characterised as separated (or “stolen”) combines and confuses those separated from their families with and without consent, and with and without good reason.

- The nature and intent of those events have been misrepresented, and that the treatment of separated Aboriginal children was essentially lawful and benign in intent and also reflected wider values applying to children of that era, as recorded in other official reports concerning “illegitimacy”, adoption, child welfare and institutionalisation practices throughout much of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{8} ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} ibid., pp. ii – iii.
The releasing of the BTH Report and the subsequent public attacks upon it have influenced the way that the subject of the stolen generations is dealt with by historians. A recent example of this is *Many Voices – Reflections on experiences of Indigenous child separation*.\(^{11}\) This publication, produced by the National Library of Australia with Commonwealth government support, was constructed with a different emphasis to the first recommendation of the BTH Report.\(^{12}\) Rather than a focus on Indigenous people impacted upon by the policies of separation, *Many Voices* also gave voice to European administrators, public servants and church workers involved in the separation of Aboriginal children from their families.

Importantly, some of these voices emphasised the limitations of relying on one source of evidence. Fred Chaney AO, former Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs provided an example of the limitations of “official records” in *Many Voices*:

> The second, I think, very important lesson… is how ridiculous it is to rely on the official record. This is very relevant to today, because I noted just from the media reports on the Cubillo case that there was strong reliance on the official record as to what had happened at the time.

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\(^{12}\) Recommendation 1: That the Council of Australian Governments ensure the adequate funding of adequate funding of appropriate Indigenous agencies to record, preserve and administer access to the testimonies of Indigenous people affected by the forcible removal policies who wish to provide their histories in audio, audio-visual or written form, BTH Report, p. 22.
In this case…. The official record was, of course, fraudulent and wrong. And it was easy to prove that at the time, because contemporaneous evidence was available to show that the official record was fraudulent and wrong. It’s a very difficult thing to do that 30 years later.\(^\text{13}\)

Bearing in mind the difficulty of considering evidence largely taken from an official source, this chapter endeavours to reassess the issue of the Stolen Generations in the light of archival evidence. It also seeks to test the validity and claims made by the BTH Report and consequent Submission to the Senate by the federal government. It will be demonstrated that, in the light of archival evidence for the removal and separation of Aboriginal children in Queensland, the BTH Report was measured but not exhaustive in its findings. Use of the term “genocide” has probably created more “heat”, than “light” in terms of an understanding of the Stolen Generations issue. Nevertheless, many of the criticisms of the BTH Report cannot be sustained in the light of this archival evidence.

Hal Wootten, QC, Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, highlights the importance of considering the Stolen Generations issue in its fullest context. Regarding the BTH Report, he stated:

> It didn’t try to bring out the very real problems that confronted people who were implementing policy; it didn’t give enough credit to the complexities of policies and the way they were different at different times in different places; and there was this insistence on making the highly technical legal

finding of genocide being committed between 1946 and 1980 that was procedurally in denial of natural justice, and wasn’t justified by the evidence. And I think that’s a particularly unfortunate thing, because that was a dramatic and hurtful finding that’s allowed critics to hijack the debate, and it only distracts attention from what are the real horrors of our history.\textsuperscript{14}

This chapter demonstrates that the bonds between Aboriginal children and their families and communities were broken in Queensland for over a century. These bonds were broken at times due to deliberate policy decisions to take children from their parents. During other periods of history these vital bonds were broken as the result of broader policies involving the lives of Aboriginal people. Whilst the evidence used in this chapter does not paint the whole picture it gives a very clear indication that Aboriginal family life in Queensland was impacted upon in a way that was never experienced in the wider community. To suggest otherwise is to ignore the oral and written record.

\textbf{The Nature of the Evidence: Measuring and Manufacturing Consent}

In testing the validity of claims and counter-claims surrounding the Stolen Generations, it is important to begin by analysing the nature of the evidence that will be used. One of the most difficult questions to answer regarding the separation of Aboriginal children from their families and communities is whether consent for the separation was given by the parents. In the Federal Court Case \textit{Cubillo v Commonwealth}, informed consent for

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Hal Wootten, “Stolen Generations”, \textit{Background Briefing}, Radio National, ABC, 2 July, 2000.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
the removal of Peter Gunner was taken to have occurred partly due to the evidence of the thumbprint of his mother, Topsy: 15

I, TOPSY KUNDRILBA being a full-blood Aboriginal (female) within the meaning of the Aboriginals Ordinance 1918-1953 of the Northern Territory, and residing at UTOPIA STATION do hereby request the DIRECTOR OF NATIVE AFFAIRS to declare my son PETER GUNNER aged seven (7) years, to be an Aboriginal within the meaning and for the purposes of the said Aboriginals Ordinance. MY reasons for requesting this action by the Director of Native Affairs are:

1. My son is a Part-European blood, his father being a European.
2. I desire my son to be educated and trained in accordance with accepted European standards, to which he is entitled by reason of his caste
3. I am unable myself to provide the means by which my son may derive the benefits of a standard European education.
4. By placing my son in the care, custody and control of the Director of Native Affairs, the facilities of a standard education will be made available to him by admission to St. Mary's Church of England Hostel at Alice Springs. 16

16 ibid., Judgement Section 782.
In the case, Justice O’Loughlin found that on the balance of probabilities Topsy (the mother of Peter Gunner) gave her informed consent for the separation of her son.\textsuperscript{17} Despite this O’Loughlin could not be certain that it was Topsy’s thumbprint that was on the document in question or whether she understood the content of the form.

The difficulties in using evidence such as thumbprints on forms as an indication of consent is well illustrated in the removal of Aboriginal people from Burketown to the Doomadgee Mission in 1950. In a file titled “Complaints — Transfer of Natives From Burketown to Doomadgee”, a number of forms with thumbprints are found. These forms give directly contradicting evidence highlighting the role that white administrators, employers and missionaries could play in the procuring of such documents.

On 17 January, 1950, a form with a thumbprint was submitted to the Department stating that a man named Toby Major\textsuperscript{18} and his family wished to move to the Doomadgee Mission and have their bank accounts transferred. On 21 August the same man had another letter with his thumbprint submitted to the department. This letter stated: “I do not wish to join the Doomadgee Mission. I want to stay under the Burketown Protectorate and keep my Bank in Burketown.”\textsuperscript{19} This letter had been witnessed and supported by the man’s employer, the manager of Lawn Hill station.

\textsuperscript{17} ibid., Judgement Section 787.
\textsuperscript{18} Name changed to protect identity.
\textsuperscript{19} Mr Sammon, Manager of Lawn Hill Station to PA, Burketown, 21 August 1950, QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
The Department alerted the Protector at Burketown to the fact that it had two requests from Toby Major,\(^{20}\) one asking that he and his family be moved to Doomadgee and another that they remain at Burketown.\(^{21}\) The Burketown Protector was instructed to ascertain the wishes of Toby Major.\(^{22}\) The intentions of Toby Major\(^{23}\) cannot be found in the file on removals from Burketown to Doomadgee but what is evident is a power play between the Doomadgee mission, the local protector and station owners to secure employment agreements and accompanying bank accounts.

In September 1948, a short typed message from Toby Major\(^{24}\) was forwarded to the Deputy Director of Native Affairs. The note stated:

“Dear Sir,

Just dropping you a few lines. Hoping you are all well. As it leave with us in the best of health. Please could you transfer my bank out to Doomadgee, as I have been longing to get out there. That all I wanted to ask you to do.

Thank very much. Best of wishes to all the friends on the Mission.

Yours faithfully,

Signed Toby Major\(^{25}\)

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\(^{20}\) Name changed to protect identity.
\(^{21}\) DDNA to PA, Burketown, 1 September 1950, QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
\(^{22}\) Name changed to protect identity.
\(^{23}\) Name changed to protect identity.
\(^{24}\) Name changed to protect identity.
\(^{25}\) Letter dated 13 September 1948, QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
The Protector of Aborigines at Burketown objected to this note observing that Toby Major could neither read nor write and somebody had written the note for him. The protector outlined a number of cases in which Aboriginal men had moved to Doomadgee for a “holiday” to maintain contact with their families, only to be prevented from taking up employment agreements with surrounding cattle stations. It appears that the mission was pressuring men to take up cattle work for the mission station using their families as a way of attracting them to the institution. At the same time, the local protector was actively working to prevent these men being permanently signed over to the mission which would prevent local pastoral stations accessing cheap and effective labour.

In an extraordinary exchange of claim and counter-claim the Burketown protector produced a transcript of interviews that he had conducted with local Aboriginal men. One of these transcripts gives clear insight into the role of the Doomadgee mission in separating Aboriginal children from their parents.

Question: Do you want to go to Doomadgee Thomas.27
Answer: No, I don’t want to bother to go there if I can get my girl back.

Question: How did your girl come to be there Thomas.
Answer: Well, when Mr Nuss here Flora out there for holiday and Mr Reid keep him there at school.

Question: What is the name of your girl Thomas.
Answer: Shirlene

26 DDNA. to PA, Burketown, 28 October 1948, QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
27 Name changed to protect identity. PA, Burketown to C.P.A., 20 August 1949, QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
Question: Would you and Flora like to go out there to stay and take all the rest of your children there to stay.

Answer: Ah well like Sergeant I wouldn’t like to go out there to stay but if I could get my kiddie back with us I don’t want to shift my book out there, Flora she on the station and she now miss the kiddie.

Question: Why don’t you want to take your family out to Doomadgee to stay Thomas.

Answer: It alright to go out there for holiday time for a bit of company but if they don’t send me my girl I better be there so that we all be together.\(^\text{28}\)

It was in this context that children were admitted to Doomadgee and, if above the age of five, kept in separate boys’ and girls’ dormitories. School for such children was held in the dormitories — with no desks or forms. There was no school building and equipment was badly needed.\(^\text{29}\)

What, then, emerges from the interplay between the superintendent of Doomadgee Mission and the Burketown protector in 1949? The first issue is that parental consent was not required in the separation of child and parent. That is there were no forms to be lodged demonstrating parental consent as in the Northern Territory in the mid-1950s. Families could visit Doomadgee on “holidays” and lose access to their children as they were now being “schooled”. The second issue is the way in which employment policies and the separation of children were interwoven. This issue will be further explored later in this chapter. The third issue which is highlighted by this case is the strengths and

\(^\text{28}\) ibid.
weaknesses of archival evidence. The removal of children such as Shirlene is not documented in the official removal register or annual reports for the Office of Native Affairs. This highlights the value of a study such as this which has drawn upon all available departmental files and records.

It is important to stress that, whilst large in volume, the evidence used for this chapter does not represent all available evidence. Some other available evidence includes, oral testimony and autobiography of people taken from their parents, oral testimony and biography of departmental staff and missionaries, children’s services records and personal files of the families involved. Children’s services records and personal files help by DATSIP are not available due to confidentiality and privacy issues. Oral testimony and autobiographical material have not been heavily drawn upon due to the size of this research project. Despite these limitations, the scale of research conducted provides us with a strong basis upon which to analyse the validity of the BTH Report as it relates to Queensland.

The archival record reveals that Aboriginal children have been separated from their parents in Queensland for over 100 years. During some periods, this separation was part of a deliberate policy and at other times this separation occurred due to other exploitative policies such as the use of Aboriginal labour. Assertions that child separations were similar to those for non-Aboriginal children cannot be validated from the available archival records.

29 Report to DDNA, 19 September 1949 QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
The Numbers

In order to assess the extent of Aboriginal child removal and separation, we must first begin by recognising the changing nature and definition of childhood. During the historical period studied, childhood has popularly been accepted as finishing at different ages. For example, during some periods childhood has been taken to end at fourteen years of age while at others it has been accepted as ending at eighteen years of age.

These changes in the understanding of childhood over time have not skewed the data. When children have been recorded as such in the removals register or in departmental files, they have been entered as such in the Removals Database. While the age bracket that was considered for children was birth to eighteen years children were only considered as such according to the standards of the time. For example a young man of sixteen years of age would not have been considered a child in 1880 but would have been considered a child in 1965. Ages of people removed were often not recorded, but the available evidence does show that a large proportion of those removed were children.

A total of 3230 children (28 per cent of total documented removals) were removed between 1859 and 1971. This is a much larger figure than that submitted to the HREOC Inquiry in 1996 by the Queensland government. At that time, the best available figures were an estimate of 2024 children removed between 1908 and 1971.\textsuperscript{30} The Queensland government submission stated that, of the 2024, only 249 children were not accompanied

\textsuperscript{30} DATSIP Submission to National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, cited in Haebich, \textit{Broken Circles}, p. 174.
by adults. This study has found that, of the 3230 children removed between 1859 and 1971 660 of them are documented as not being accompanied by adults. The differences in the findings of this project and the submission of the Queensland government amount to 37 per cent. They can be explained through the short time frame and resources available to the Queensland government in making its response to HREOC. DATSIP’s support for this project has been part of its commitment to carrying out the recommendations of the BTH Report. The research conducted as part of this project has uncovered many more removals and separations. The figures above are almost certainly an undercount and should be taken as an indicator of the minimum number of children removed and separated in this period.

For reasons of privacy, children removed to mainstream children’s institutions do not appear in the figures from the removal database. The statistics kept by the Children’s Services Department are drawn upon to construct an estimate of Aboriginal child separations in Queensland. Some nineteenth century orphanage records were also accessed and researched as part of this project. The difficulty in calculating the number of children separated from their parents is the number of “hidden statistics”. In order to take account of the likely shortfall I have drawn upon a range of sources to provide a cautious estimate of the total number of separated children.

31 ibid.
32 RD.
33 It is important to note that nineteenth century orphanage records were all accessed and researched as part of this project.
1. Separate Removals

These are removals of Aboriginal children where parents have not accompanied them to a government settlement or church mission. These figures have been recorded in the Removals Database and represent a bare minimum. Each of these removals is separately documented from archival material held by DATSIP. The majority of these separations are found in the removals registers, removals cards and annual reports for the department. There were 660 documented removals of Aboriginal children where they were not accompanied by their parents.

2. Internal Separations (The Dormitory System)

The HREOC Inquiry acknowledged that, in Queensland, families were generally removed together with children but on the settlements they were separated through a dormitory system. This system operated at different times on all of the government settlements and a number of church-run missions. The children who were counted in this category were not admitted or supported by the Children’s Services Department.

Consistent records of the number of children held in these dormitories do not exist. Numbers of children in dormitories are, however, mentioned in a number of files across the timespan of this study. For example, annual reports from the Aboriginal Department reveal that, between 1913 and 1932, 724 children were admitted to dormitories. The number of children held in these dormitories varied over time. Blake has calculated that in 1910 only 3 per cent of Barambah’s child population lived in dormitories but by the

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34 BTH, pp. 72–74.
35 See Table 6.2.
In the early 1930s 66 per cent of all children aged between five and fourteen were dormitory inmates.\textsuperscript{36} In 1949, 100 children over the age of five were kept in two dormitories at Doomadgee.\textsuperscript{37} In 1951, the annual report described an average of 100 girls and 35 boys being held in dormitories on Cherbourg.\textsuperscript{38} In 1971, 52 children were recorded as being kept in dormitories at Palm Island, while 53 were in separate dormitories at Cherbourg.\textsuperscript{39} Over half of the children held in the Palm Island dormitory in 1971 were not admitted through the Children’s Services Department.

In May 1950, the Director of Tuberculosis made a report to the Queensland Director General of Health and Medical Services. As part of this report, he described conditions found on the Doomadgee mission: “Doomadgee is the worst example of the dormitory system. It is here indistinguishable from slavery.”\textsuperscript{40} He recorded that all of the work of the mission, including the construction of buildings, cultivation and irrigation of the gardens (about 60 acres), as well as the domestic work of the mission, was done by the dormitory girls, who included many of mixed descent and who ranged up to 24 years of age. Girls were forbidden to leave the mission compound unaccompanied during the day and were locked up overnight. No amusements, other than hymn singing were permitted.

On Doomadgee, all children over the age of five were placed in the dormitories. Despite this, the government argued that on government settlements those deemed to be

\textsuperscript{37} Report on Doomadgee Mission to DDNA, 19 September 1949, QSA QS 505/1 ID/133 Box 272.
\textsuperscript{38} Annual Report 1951 pt 1, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{39} QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls Dormitory Palm Island 1/70 – 6/75.
\textsuperscript{40} Director of Tuberculosis to Director General of Health and Medical Services, 9 May 1950, QSA QS 505/1 ID33 BOX 272.
“orphans, incorrigibles and children whose parents fail to properly care for them are so housed”. 41

It is certain that dormitories were used for more than orphans, incorrigibles and neglected children. Pressure was often brought to bear on parents to place their children in dormitories for their “educational benefit” whilst they remained working thousands of kilometres away on employment agreements. Neglect was often the reason given for the placing of children in dormitories. This judgement was often based on a subjective view of the ability of Aboriginal parents to nurture and care for their children:

It has been found that many of the aboriginals are incapable of correctly caring for and controlling their children, with the result that such neglected children are accommodated in a Dormitory under the supervision and control of a Settlement Matron 42

Yet Kidd demonstrates the neglect that these children experienced when placed in dormitories:

In 1918 the government settlement at Barambah, a known frost area, had been operational for twelve years. Yet there were no cots or beds in the children’s dormitory; children still slept on the ground with one blanket under them and another for cover. Clothing was allocated twice yearly and was too meagre to keep clean. Visiting officials described the children as

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41 DDNA, 19 June 1950, QSA QS 505/1 ID33 BOX 272.
42 DCPA to Under Secretary, Home Department, 23 January 1935, QSA A/69455.
underfed and criticised the discontinuation of the daily hot meal of soup and bread. Vegetables and fruit were irregular and meat reserved for male workers. There were no normal sanitation facilities on the reserve and skin disease was rampant.\(^ {43}\)

Similar conditions existed at Palm Island and Woorabinda, where children slept in primitive conditions without mattresses or stretchers.\(^ {44}\) Adequate education and recreation for the inmates of dormitories on church-run missions or government settlements was virtually non-existent.\(^ {45}\) Haebich outlines a life of privation, regimentation and a lack of stimulus as part of the daily routine in Aboriginal dormitories across the country.\(^ {46}\)

Of greater impact than the institutionalised life of the dormitory was the impact that separation from parents had upon children. Ruth Hegarty vividly describes the pain of this separation in a girl’s dormitory in Barambah:

> I had no idea that this day was going to be the beginning of a long and sad separation. This day was to rob me of the natural bonding that existed between my mum and me, and would place me under the “care and

\(^ {44}\) ibid.
\(^ {45}\) ibid., p. 15.
\(^ {46}\) Haebich, *Broken Circles*, pp. 382 – 400.
protection" of the Queensland government, which now classified me as a neglected child.  

Over 40 per cent of the documented removals to dormitories occurred during the period when J.W. Bleakley was in charge of the Office of CPA in Queensland. Blake discusses Bleakley’s emphasis on removing mothers and their children from 1913 onwards. This was driven by his opposition to miscegenation and affected the way that dormitories were managed. On the government settlement of Barambah, for instance, this expansion caused overcrowding in dormitories. New dormitories were built and an enthusiasm for placing children in these institutions soon became apparent:

Every opportunity was used to move children from the camp into the dormitories. In 1936 when ________ died, her five children were placed in the dormitories although relatives in the camp could have cared for them. ________ and her children were placed in the babies’ home in 1928 by the Superintendent for “her own protection” after allegedly fighting with her husband. Younger inmates were sent to the dormitory for punishment. ___________ was ordered to spend “a couple of months” in the boys’ dormitory by the Superintendent “for stealing stock horses”. 

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48 There were 1615 removals to dormitories between 1913 and 1940 – see Table 6.2
50 ibid., p. 150.
Blake’s research on the Barambah dormitory system draws heavily on oral interviews and has implications for assessing the extent of Aboriginal child separation in Queensland. Instances such as those listed above are not recorded in the official removals register, and so have not been included in the estimates for this study. Kidd states that, by the mid-1930s, almost half the Indigenous population was confined on Missions and settlements. If Blake’s figure of 66 per cent of children between the ages of five and fourteen being placed in dormitories on Barambah holds for other missions and government settlements, then the proportion of children separated would be far higher than the one calculated for this study.

The tension between an ideology of segregation or separation of Aboriginal children and the cost upon the state would continue well into the twentieth century. At the gathering of state protectors and Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra in 1937, Queensland made a public stand against the notion of “biological absorption”:

At the outset, West Australia and Northern Territory urged that the future policy should be framed on the idea that the future of the aboriginal race lay in their eventual absorption into the white race. This was opposed by Queensland on social and political grounds – that they were entitled to retain their racial entity and any suggestion of removal of segregation and unrestrained intermarriage would arouse public disapproval…..In regard to Northern Territory proposal to breed out the half-caste by marriage of the

51 Kidd, in Haebich and Mellor, Many Voices, p. 251.
girls to white men, Queensland pointed out the objections, born of experience in that State.\textsuperscript{52}

The happy medium for the Queensland administration was the dormitory system. Children could be separated from the “evils” of camp life, and of Aboriginal language and culture, without the cost of a separate “half-caste” children’s institution, as used in a number of other states.

3. \textit{Industrial School / Mainstream Children’s Services Admissions}

The 1865 \textit{Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act} defined that “any child born of an aboriginal or ‘half-caste’ mother” could be deemed to be neglected.\textsuperscript{53} The first institution established specifically as an industrial school for Indigenous children was Myora Mission Station on Stradbroke Island. This school was established in 1893 but closed in 1896 following the death of an Aboriginal child after a savage beating by a white matron.\textsuperscript{54} Similar institutions continued to be used for a small number of children during the nineteenth century until the passing of the 1897 \textit{Protection Act}.\textsuperscript{55}

With the appointment of Walter Roth, the use of the industrial schools and Reformatories legislation to place children in institutions greatly increased. Yarrabah and Mapoon were registered as industrial schools to which Aboriginal children could be sent in North

\textsuperscript{52} Report on Federal Conference of Chief Protectors and Aboriginal Boards in Canberra 21 - 23 April, 1937 on Aboriginal Protection Administration, QSA A/69455.
\textsuperscript{53} Industrial and Reformatory Schools Bill, Clause 6 section 7.
Queensland, and Deebing Creek (near Ipswich) was the main institution to which children in Southern Queensland were removed.

It was not until the early 1940s that the Children’s Services Department funded places for some children held in dormitories at Palm Island, Cherbourg, Woorabinda and Purga. Not all children held in dormitories were admitted through Children’s Services. The source material for this category has been Annual Reports of the CPA and the Department of Children’s Services along with the CPH removals database.

A number of Aboriginal children were also removed to “mainstream” institutions. This category of separations is the most difficult to quantify, as there is limited information regarding these removals in the CPA files or the annual reports of the Children’s Services Department. What is clear is that these removals were often based upon racial considerations rather than evidence of neglect.

In 1903, the minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs in Queensland offered to admit “half-caste” boys to Westbrook Reformatory and gave the superintendent an opportunity of placing them in service. In 1905 the Salvation Army offered to take “half-caste” children at reduced fees on the understanding that allowances for white children would remain the same. CPA Roth fully supported such a plan.\(^{56}\) Despite the difficulty with cost, it was thought vital to separate “almost white children” from the influence of their parents.

\(^{55}\) During the nineteenth century only 43 Aboriginal children were removed using this legislation (from RD) The reasons for this will be discussed later in this chapter.
Bleakley’s annual report of 1913 also reflected this intent:

But, on the other hand, I think it is certainly desirable where an illegitimate quadroon white child is born, that it be taken from its mother as early as it is safe to do so and placed in care of the State Children Department to be brought up as a white child. Many of such children have fair hair and blue eyes, and show practically no traces of the aboriginal blood in them, and it would be a shame to leave them in the degrading atmosphere of the camp. Where conditions make it possible this is done.”

This view was placed on the national agenda in 1928 when Bleakley conducted the federal inquiry into the “general status and conditions of living of half castes and aborigines in Central and Northern Australia”.

Bleakley recommended that children “with a preponderance of European blood” be placed in European institutions. In a report to the Association for the Protection of Native Races, Bleakley outlined the Queensland regime for children who had Aboriginal and European parentage. He highlighted the fact that Queensland had no separate “‘half-caste’ homes”, but advocated the “rescuing” of “quadroon or octoroon children destined for absorption with the white communities as early as possible”. In his 1929 report, Bleakley recommended that fair-skinned children in the Northern Territory be sent to institutions where they could be

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57 Annual Report 1913, p. 11.
58 John Bleakley, “Aborigines and half-castes – North and Central Australia”, NAA A461 D300/1.
59 ibid.,
absorbed into the white community “to which they rightly belong”, and to prevent them falling victim to “the blood call”.\textsuperscript{61} This ideology was followed through in Queensland with a number of removals to “mainstream” children’s institutions throughout the twentieth century.

In 1899, a young girl from Dalby was sentenced as neglected under the 1865 Act and sent to the Deebing Creek Mission for a period of five years. Upon her arrival the superintendent of the mission observed that she was “almost white” and with the support of his committee pushed to have her removed to the Salvation Army Home for girls, where “it would be much more to her advantage to be trained with white children”.\textsuperscript{62}

During the 1930s in response to concerns over the number of “half-caste” children on Cherbourg settlement, Bleakley alluded to pressure placed on Aboriginal mothers to give up their children to the state Children’s Department.

\begin{quote}
It has been possible in a number of cases to induce the mother of a child showing marked European colouring to agree to its being placed in the State Childrens Department or a European Home but naturally most of the parents object to parting with their children and even the unmarried mother has
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60} QSA A/58853.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Haebich, \textit{Broken Circles}, p. 194; John Bleakley, “Aborigines and half-castes – North and Central Australia”, NAA A461 D300/1.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Letter to the Home Secretary, 13 February 1899, QSA A/69417 Deebing Creek, 1899.
\end{itemize}
feelings which it has been felt should not be disregarded so long as the child is not neglected.\textsuperscript{63}

As Kidd points out, by the 1970s some 40 per cent of some children’s institutions comprised Aboriginal children.\textsuperscript{64} The effects of dispossession and removal played a large role in the number of children separated from their families.

Such actions operated in the 1940s. In August of 1945, the Director of Native Affairs wrote to the Sister-in-Charge of the Church of England’s Tufnell Home asking that a young girl from Palm Island be accepted “as a white child”.\textsuperscript{65} The sister-in-charge replied positively offering to take other similar girls, as “it would be unfair for the child to remain in her present surroundings”.\textsuperscript{66}

Cases such as this were not recorded in official removals records for the Office of the CPA or DNA. Files for the DNA in 1945 detail a small number of “almost white girls” sent from Palm Island, Cherbourg and Woorabinda to the Tufnell institution. A convalescent home in Clayfield, Brisbane approached the Director of Native Affairs requesting a “light skinned ‘half-caste’or quadroon girl” for employment purposes. It

\textsuperscript{63} CPA, to Under Secretary, Home Department, 30 November 1934 QSA A/69584. This letter was written in response to a report made by the Governor of Queensland Leslie Wilson. Wilson believed that there was a great increase in “half-caste” births on Cherbourg and suggested that Aboriginal females be completely segregated and that Cherbourg be moved further away from townships.

\textsuperscript{64} An example of such an institution is the Westbrook Reformatory in the Darling Downs region of Southern Queensland; \textit{Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions}, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{65} Letter dated 10 August 1945, QSA QS 505/1 Box 460 3A/143 Palm Island Almost White Girls in Settlement.

\textsuperscript{66} Letter dated 14 August, 1945, QSA QS 505/1 Box 460 3A/143 Palm Island Almost White Girls in Settlement.
was stipulated that such girls would have to be prepared to sever all connection with the Aboriginal settlements from which they came.\(^{67}\)

The main source material for this category of child removals has been early orphanage records, annual reports of the CPA, annual reports for the Children’s Services Department and the Removals Database.

4. Employment

The taking of Aboriginal children for employment purposes was a frequent occurrence on the pastoral frontier. Robinson has estimated that at least 1300 Aboriginal children were employed in Queensland between 1842 and 1902.\(^{68}\) The only consistent set of records relating to employment of Aboriginal children is those for the employment of young girls. No reliable figures for the employment of Aboriginal boys exists so this will need to be taken into account when constructing the estimate. Roth expressed some reservations about the employment of children in 1905:

> Not a few “half-caste” children, male and female, under sixteen, have been placed under agreement with employers, but the supervision exercised over these infants is necessarily very imperfect, and incomparably inadequate, as judged by the supervision controlling State orphanage children. Aboriginal and “half-caste” children are amenable to the Education Acts, and the

\(^{67}\) QSA QS 505/1 4A/98 Administration Cherbourg ‘Almost’ white girls on settlement; 5A/80 Administration Woorabinda ‘Almost’ white girls on settlement.

employers, as “guardians” of such children are responsible for their attendance at school; provision has here and there been made that the permit to employ is conditional on school attendance. Indeed, one of my main reasons for being usually personally averse to the legal employment of “half-caste” children is, that I have no power to enforce their secular or denominational education, in the absence of which I am satisfied nothing of lasting benefit can be done with them.\textsuperscript{69}

Despite this, Aboriginal children continued to be employed through to the late 1930s.\textsuperscript{70} The best way to illustrate the effects of employment policies upon Aboriginal families is to look at individual cases.

In August 1907, a boy named George\textsuperscript{71} was sent out to employment from the Deebing Creek Industrial School. His father Jack wrote an impassioned plea to Richard Howard, asking that his son be returned from Sydney to be close to his family:

\begin{quote}
Your letter came to hand this morning about my boy. His mother and myself are still very dissatisfied, as your letter explains nothing to us. First the boy ought not to have been taken away without our sanction. We have wrote three letters in succession and have not had a reply to either. This is rather mysterious to us, as we think the boy would write us. We desire the boy to be brought back as soon as possible as we have lost one girl through
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{69} Annual Report 1905, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{70} Last mention of girls placed in employment occurs in the Annual Report, 1938.
this kind of work, and therefore have had enough. Although black in colour, our hearts go after our boys and girls, as naturally as the whites. I have influence around me and will use it, if the boy is not restored very soon. We do not mind him being in Brisbane or anywhere within our easy reach, but we will not have him out of the colony. Trusting you will endeavour to have the boy returned to save other trouble. Thanking you.

I remain yours truly

A Heart Aching Parent

George’s mother also wrote to the CPA.

In reference to _________ I his mother have heard he has been in Brisbane and gone away again and was not allowed to visit me. Now Mr Howard this is very hard upon me as I am very ill and am fretting very much over him. I don’t know of any reason why he should not be allowed to visit me as I am not bad nor drunken woman and have always stood by my boy, and now I miss him very much and long to see him which would satisfy me and would make me very much better in health for a mothers sake let me see my boy as early as you can that you may soothe my last day.

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71 Name changed to protect identity.
72 Letter stamped 21 August 1907, QSA A/69418.
From a longing mother over her son.\textsuperscript{73}

When the matter was raised on the couple’s behalf by the Superintendent of Deebing Creek he was told to discourage any correspondence between George and his parents.\textsuperscript{74}

In correspondence displaying an almost total lack of recognition for Indigenous family ties, a departmental officer wrote back to George’s father:

I can assure you that your boy will be well cared for by his employer, and possibly the person who wrote the letter for you was very kind in doing so but he or she should have explained to you that the Chief Protector is responsible by Act of Parliament for the welfare and happiness of your boy amongst others….Yourself and his mother may think that you know what is best for the boy but I can assure you that you do not, and that is why the Chief Protector is charged with the very great responsibility of protecting aborigines, mothers, fathers and children in the dealings with the white man.\textsuperscript{75}

Eventually George was returned from Sydney and went to work as a stable hand at Hendra in Brisbane. The CPA wrote to the superintendent requesting that any further correspondence between parent and child be prevented. A number of letters from George’s mother, who was dying with consumption, are found in the Deebing Creek files. In these letters she tries to get the CPA to pass on words of love and motherly advice to her son. Whether this was ever done is unclear.

\textsuperscript{73} ibid, Letter dated 14 April 1908.
\textsuperscript{74} ibid., Letter to Superintendent, Deebing Creek, 10 February, 1908.
The pain of separation of child and parent was also felt at the settlement of Woorabinda. In 1928 the Superintendent of the Woorabinda Aboriginal Settlement brought the following to the attention of the CPA. A number of women had complained to the superintendent that they were missing their children who had been sent out on employment agreements. One of the children had been forced to return to an employment agreement and the superintendent believed that white employers were preventing children from seeing their parents. He stated: “The people are deliberately keeping these children away from their parents and relations and the mother who was promised faithfully for the return of her daughter is naturally very upset about the matter.”

One of the mothers wrote personally to the CPA asking that her son be returned to her after a separation of two years:

The last time you visited this place you made me a promise before all the officials that you would see that my son _______ ______ would be home for Xmas. ______ has been away over 2 years. Mr Colledge (Woorabinda Superintendent) asked me to let him go for 12 months which I was quite agreeable. He is under 14 years of age yet and I am not satisfied he should be kept away from me so long.

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75 ibid., Letter dated 23 August 1907.
76 Superintendent, Woorabinda to DCPA, 16 July 1928, QSA A/58646.
Another woman employed in the Dirranbandi district complained bitterly of having her daughter sent out to work without her consent.\textsuperscript{78} One ten-year old girl walked 60 kilometres home from Urandangie in 1917 where she had been taken to be a nursemaid.\textsuperscript{79}

The Dalby Senior Sergeant of Police was permitted to take a young girl to Brisbane with his family in 1918 who had been made a “servant” of the sergeant when her parents were removed to Deebing Creek in 1911.\textsuperscript{80}

Examples abound of children being given orders of removal which were subsequently cancelled following the child being signed on to an employment agreement. Some of these children were as young as five years old. There are also many letters from distraught parents seeking the whereabouts of their children in employment to be found in the correspondence of the CPA.

Towards the end of 1898, the Home Secretary reported described a young girl at Deebing Creek Mission “having a complexion so fair that it is difficult to believe that she has aboriginal blood in her veins”.\textsuperscript{81} The Home Secretary authorised her immediate removal to new surroundings. Archibald Meston was only too willing to remove the young girl to his own wife’s care, where she would be engaged as a domestic servant.\textsuperscript{82}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{77} ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Letter dated 7 December 1924, QSA A/58644.
\textsuperscript{80} QSA A/58679.
\textsuperscript{81} Letter from Home Secretary, 12 December, 1898, QSA A/69417.
\textsuperscript{82} ibid.
\end{flushleft}
The girls sent to service by the CPA’s Office were targeted specifically for their racial background. This was best demonstrated in a 1907 report from the Protector of Aboriginal Females, Mrs Mary McKeown:

I believe in taking aboriginal children at an early age from Mission Stations and Aboriginal settlements to put out to service, because I noticed in my visits to Deebing Creek, that the only time that the children are away from the camps of the adult blacks is the short period of time daily spent in school and this period of time spent in school cannot counteract the evil influence of watching the adult blacks in their camp life so that the younger children at Missions and Settlements are placed out at service the better for them in after life (as we well know that children are the greatest mimics in the world, and it is far easier for them to learn wrong than right.”

Most references to girls in service are found in the annual reports of the CPA. One factor that needs to be taken into account when considering these figures is the historical use of the term “girl”. Like “boy” such a term has often been used to describe Aboriginal adult women. In this case, however, the majority of those sent to service were girls and young women.

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83 14 October 1907, Protector of Aboriginal Females to C.P.A., QSA A/4722.
Estimating the Stolen Generations in Queensland

Documented Separations

In order to arrive at an estimate of Queensland Aboriginal children separated from their parents, I first gathered all available data. This came from four main areas: (1) the Removals Database which was the most comprehensive source providing the names of children removed: where they were removed from and the destination to which they were removed. (2) figures of children removed to dormitories, mainly gathered from annual reports of the CPA and their later equivalents; (3) the number of children removed to mainstream children’s institutions, derived from annual reports of the Queensland Children’s Department (or equivalent) and annual reports of the CPA; and (4) employment figures for children came from the annual reports of the CPA. The sum total of all of this data was 9321, but this figure is far from meaningful, firstly because it reflects a number of identifiable gaps in the data, and secondly because it needs to be set against the total Aboriginal child population in order to reflect some magnitude of impact on Aboriginal children as a whole. The issue of ‘double counting’ of category and category two also needs to be considered when arriving at a legitimate estimate.

Estimate of Population

An estimate of the size of the Aboriginal children’s population for Queensland was arrived at with assistance from Dr Len Smith. The minimum Aboriginal population in Queensland was 30 000 in 1900, 22 000 in 1930 and 50 000 in 1970 — an annual average of 35 000. The estimated minimum birth rates were 2.5 per cent in 1900, 4 per
cent in 1930 and 3.5 per cent in 1970 — an average of approximately 3.3 per cent. In terms of calculating the population of all Aboriginal children between 1900 and 1970 this would mean about 1155 births a year, or about 81000 births over the 70 years.\(^8^5\)

The next step was to estimate the number of Aboriginal children already present in 1901. An estimate of the adult population in Queensland in 1901 was 27500.\(^8^6\) Drawing on the work of Gordon Briscoe\(^8^7\) in analysing Indigenous populations in Queensland and Western Australia, it was estimated that children made up 30 per cent of the total Queensland Aboriginal population in 1901. It was therefore estimated that there were already 8250 children present in 1901.

This projection, however, ignores the infant mortality rate. In the mid-1970s the rate of infant mortality for Indigenous people was slightly above 14 per cent.\(^8^8\) John Taylor points out that in recent times the Indigenous infant mortality rate has been consistently three times higher than that for the whole Australian population. A linear regression model of the Aboriginal infant mortality rate suggests a much higher figure than 14 per cent — the rate at the end of the study period. An infant mortality factor of 15 per cent across the study period brings the population figure of Aboriginal children in Queensland

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84 Dr Len Smith, Senior Fellow, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University, Canberra. (Associate Editor of the Journal of Population Research).
85 Personal Communication with Dr Len Smith.
from 1897 to 1972 to 77100. This is the size of the population that could have possibly been affected by policies of separation in Queensland.

**Estimating child removals**

To reach a sensible estimate of children separated in Queensland, a number of issues need to be taken into consideration. The first is the number of gaps that emerged due to data not being collected. These gaps were filled through projections to reach an estimate. A second issue, with regard to employment, is that the figures available were only for girls and so the number of boys sent to employment situations also needed to be factored into an estimate.

A final issue to consider is the actual number of separations. For data relating to Aboriginal children in Children’s Services institutions, statistics available often only gave the number of children present for a given year. By simply adding each year’s total, there is a possibility of counting the same separation a number of times. This important factor was also taken into consideration in arriving at a final estimate. Great care was taken in order not to inflate the estimate of separations. A methodology was selected which biased the estimate downwards, rather than upwards.

**Filling Gaps**

In filling gaps in the data, a combination of averaging the number of separations for similar years was used along with linear trending. The way in which the gaps between years was filled for mainstream, dormitories and employment was to plot the available
data on to a graph. A trendline was then added to the graph and the year missing data were plotted onto the trendline to give an estimate for the missing year. For example, the figures for employment were not available for 1934 and 1935. To calculate an estimate for these years, the employment figures between 1902 and 1938 were plotted on to a graph. A trendline was added to aid in the calculation of the estimate.

Table 6.1 Trending of Data

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From this, an estimate of 83 children was made for the year 1934. This estimate was consistent with the trendline. The exercise was then repeated to come up with an estimate for 1935 of 82 children. This method was used to make estimates for dormitories, employment and mainstream categories of children separated from their parents. In the gaps from the Removals Database, a figure of three was used when the average was 2.77. In filling the gaps for dormitory figures, linear trending was used for two years either side of spaces in the data. When filling gaps for children’s institutions, an average of available figures up to 1914 was used. The reason for this was to avoid
upwardly skewing the data. With linear regression, it could be expected that the estimate would increase over time. The most complex of the “gap filling” measures was for child employment figures. The available figures were doubled to take into account boys involved in employment. Once again doubling the figure for employment was a conservative result considering that the ratio of females to males for employment-related removals was 1:2.\textsuperscript{89}

From 1934 onwards, a linear trendline was used to reconstruct the data gaps for employment-related separations, but prior to 1904 no valid trendline can be established, because linear regression analysis demonstrated a negative correlation between the variables of employment and time, meaning that use of a trendline prior to 1904 was invalid. The data was analysed on the linear regression curve and employment against time had a negative correlation. This means that using a trendline for the early years of the data set would inflate estimates prior to 1902. When all of the gaps were filled a provisional estimate of 18 313 was arrived at.

There is a strong possibility that some entries in the database separations column would also be included in the dormitory column. Considering the issue of double counting a lower limit estimate would be 17654 instances of separation. This estimate does not include children placed in foster care.

\textsuperscript{89} This ratio comes from the database which had 688 males and 301 females removed for employment-related reasons.
The estimated 17654 separations refer to children taken into and out of institutions, which means that many of them are counted twice. This error can be assessed through a personal estimate factor. The only data which give an indication of the number of children admitted and discharged from separate institutions come from the Department of Children’s Services. Table 6.5 shows that the ratio of children entering and leaving the mainstream institutions is 466:454. Based on these data, the personal estimate factor is about 0.5. Once again, this is a conservative estimate considering that all of the data collected from the removals database comprised new instances of separation.

So, taking the infant mortality rate and personal estimate factor into consideration, the estimate of separated children becomes 8827. This still does not take into account children adopted or fostered by non-Aboriginal parents. The 1994 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey found that, of the total number of Aboriginal people taken away from their natural parents, 31.7 per cent were raised by non-Aboriginal parents or foster parents.\textsuperscript{90} Using this formula, 8827 refers to about 68 per cent of all children separated from their parents. This brings the estimate to 13076 children separated from their natural families in Queensland between 1897 and 1971.

In an estimated population of 77 100 children, the proportion of children separated is estimated to be 16.9 per cent, which is about one in six children. Table 6.4 lists the upper and lower limit estimates. The upper limit estimate of 17.4 per cent assumes that there none of the database separations are counted in the dormitory statistics. The lower

limit assumes that all of the database separations are counted in the dormitory separations. The real figure would lie somewhere between the two.

Table 6.2 Documented Separations

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Source:  Removals Database, Annual Reports CPA and Children’s Services Department.
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<td><strong>3353</strong></td>
<td><strong>10729</strong></td>
<td><strong>18313</strong></td>
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Table 6.4 Proportion of Aboriginal People Affected by Policies of Separation in Queensland, 1897–1971.

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<tr>
<th>Separations</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Proportion of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17654*</td>
<td>81000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18313) (Total instances of separation)</td>
<td>(Total Population – 1897 – 1971)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8827*</td>
<td>68850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9156.5) (Number of separations taking into account personal estimate figure. (P.E. 0.5))</td>
<td>Population taking into account infant mortality rate (I.M. 0.15) (based on Taylor, 2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4249</td>
<td>8250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Estimate of number of children adopted and fostered (based on 1994 ABS Survey figure of 31.7 percent))</td>
<td>Population Present at 1901 (based on Briscoe, 2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13076*</td>
<td>77100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13406.3) (Total of separations)</td>
<td>Total population which could possibly be affected by policies of separation.</td>
<td>16.9 per cent* (17.4 per cent) (Percentage of Children affected by separation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Lower limit Estimate. These figures are based on an assumption that all of the database separations are also included in the dormitory separations. The 659 database separations have not been included in the total estimate which yields 17654 total instances of separation. This has been done to ensure that there is no double counting of instances of separation. The 16.9 per cent estimate represents the lower limit estimate and 17.4 is the upper limit. The true figure would lie somewhere between these two estimates.
Table 6.5 Rates of Admission and Release for Aboriginal Children in Queensland Institutions, 1922 – 1929

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<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Present at end of year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>1125</td>
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Table 6.6 Rates of Admission and Release for All Children in Queensland Institutions, 1879 – 1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Released</th>
<th>Total in care</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
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<td>105002</td>
<td>120920</td>
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</table>

(Source: Annual Reports of Children’s Service Department and Equivalent)

Other Estimates

All estimates of the extent of the practice of child separation have acknowledged the difficulty of accurately establishing such an estimate. Many of these estimates have been vague in nature, which has left them open to critical attacks. It is important to take into account the nature of each of these estimates. Some have been based on observations by health and other professionals; others have been based on structured interviews, while some (such as this project) have been based solely on archival evidence.

Peter Read’s Estimates

One of the first estimates of the extent of the policy of separation of Aboriginal children was made by historian Peter Read in *The Stolen Generations: The Removal of Aboriginal Children in New South Wales 1883 to 1969* in 1982.91 Read estimates the number of

91 Read who has made a great contribution to our understanding of “the Stolen Generations”, was co-founder of Link-Up, an organisation which reunites separated Aboriginal people with their families and communities.
children separated in New South Wales between 1883 and 1969 as 5625. This figure seems reasonable considering the calculations for the state of Queensland as outlined in this study. One of the shortcomings of Read’s estimate is the lack of an explanation about the method used to arrive at the final estimate. Of the ten different categories that Read uses, eight are described as “approximate figures due to lack of records”. There can be no doubting the paucity of records, but it is difficult to assess Read’s estimations when no discussion of how these figures are arrived at is provided to the reader.

In *The Lost Children* Read and Edwards make the following claim:

In Australia today there may be one hundred thousand people of Aboriginal descent who do not know their families or communities. They are the people, or the descendants of people, who were removed from their families by a variety of white people for a variety of reasons.

This is not necessarily an outrageous claim. The difficulty, once again, is that Edwards and Read provide no insight into how the figure of 100000 affected people has been reached. This difficulty was compounded in 1999 when Read revised his 1989 estimation. He wrote:

My estimation of 100000 ‘separations’ in *The Lost Children* in 1988 has been misunderstood. That’s far too high; the actual figure is actually closer

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93 ibid.
to 50000. The actual figure is closer to 50000. The 100000 actually referred to Australian citizens who, I estimated, at that time did not then identify as Aborigines but who were entitled to do so because their parent or grandparent had been removed.\(^95\)

These numbers leave more questions than answers. How has the figure of 50000 been estimated? If 100000 was the figure for the number of descendants in 1988 then what was the figure for the number of removals or separations? How was a relationship between the number of separations and the number of descendants established? In his 1999 revision of earlier estimates, Read specifically looks at the New South Wales figures and revises his 5625 figure upwards.\(^96\) It is unclear whether Read’s figure of 5625 for New South Wales\(^97\) takes into account annual “turnover” or is simply adding all available figures of children in institutions together. Read now estimates that 10000 children were separated using the number of files held by the relevant state children’s authority.

A surer figure can be estimated on the approximately 84000 files held by the NSW Welfare Service of all children in care in the period 1921, when records began, to 1985. If 15 percent of the children represented in these files were Aboriginal (which is possibly an underestimation) the number of New South Wales children would therefore be close to 10000\(^98\)

\(^95\) Peter Read, *A Rape of the Soul so Profound* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1999), p.26
\(^96\) ibid., p. 27
On the face of it, 10000 children seems quite a reasonable estimate. But again it leaves many questions. Where has the 15 per cent figure come from? How do we know that this figure holds true for the entire period? In Queensland, certain periods of time favoured removing “half-caste” children to mainstream child welfare institutions whilst at other times this was deemed an unnecessary cost to the state and they were sent to Aboriginal settlements and missions with their parents.

Read goes on to claim that the process of child removal began in New South Wales and “…probably proportionally affected more Aboriginal people than anywhere else”. Such an assertion may be valid but would need a broader state-by-state analysis before it could be taken to be reliable. To summarise: in comparison with the estimates of this study of Queensland the estimates of Peter Read seem quite reasonable. Unfortunately, the basis on which these estimates have been made is not readily available and so it is difficult to assess their overall validity. Read’s readiness to halve a figure of 100 000 to 50000 with minimal explanation diminishes the integrity of his estimates.

Estimates of the BTH Report

The estimation of the numbers of children by BTH was dealt with in just two pages, yet it was these two pages which drew most attacks from its critics. The report cites Read’s 1981 estimate of 5625 for New South Wales children removed along with a figure of 350 children entering Colebrook Home in South Australia which had been supplied by South
Australian researchers Christobel Mattingley and Ken Hampton. A small number of health surveys conducted in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and Victoria were also used. One of the more controversial of the surveys used was one by Max Kamien in Bourke, New South Wales:

Dr Max Kamien surveyed 320 adults in Bourke NSW in the 1970s. One in every three reported having been separated from their families in childhood for five or more years.

As a matter of fact, Kamien’s survey in 1971 and 1972 found that 34 per cent of those interviewed had been separated from one of their parents for more than five years. He found that only 5 per cent of males and 7 per cent of females had been separated from both parents for the same period. Kamien’s discussion of the reasons for this separation should have caused the authors of the BTH report great caution in using the figure of “one in three”:

…the main causes of separation were due to the father pursuing itinerant work on grazing, fruit and cotton growing properties, and lesser periods spent in gaol, usually as a result of drunkenness. Ten boys and fifteen girls under school leaving age were also separated from their families by admission — to either gaol or reformatories. The most common cause of separation, however, was

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100 BTH, p. 36.
101 ibid.
hospitalisation. A survey of admissions of children — under the age of five years to the Bourke District Hospital showed that 72 per cent of children were admitted on at least one occasion in the twelve months under survey (1971-1972). Of these, 16 per cent were admitted on more than four occasions.  

The way in which the HREOC report presented this data demonstrates poor judgement and a lack of rigorous academic standards in the writing of the estimates section. It could certainly be argued that the high rate of hospitalisation was due to severe impoverishment in the Bourke Aboriginal community in the early 1970s. It could also be argued that the high level of poverty was due to the ongoing historical effects of dispossession. Neither of these arguments was made in the BTH report. Although the report implied on the basis of its use of Kamien’s data that 34 per cent of those in small rural communities may have been affected by a policy of systematic child removal, this claim is based on a gross misreading of that data and cannot be justified. Moreover, the Kamien study of Bourke was specific in location and time, but it was dubious to extrapolate the one in three figure to a national estimate. The poor use of this statistic was seized upon by critics of BTH to discredit the issue of the “Stolen Generations”.  

The BTH report also cited a 1994 Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders which revealed “that 10 percent of people aged 25 and above had been removed in childhood”. The HREOC inquiry noted that such surveys could

103 ibid.
105 BTH, p. 37.
never reflect members of the Australian community whose Aboriginality was unknown — even to themselves. Nevertheless the report concluded:

Nationally we can conclude with confidence that between one in three and one in ten Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities in the period from approximately 1910 until 1970.\textsuperscript{106}

The 1994 ABS survey alerts researchers to the fact of the Stolen Generations and gathers data from across Australia. It was conducted from selected samples of 694 Census collection districts based on 1991 Census data. Approximately 135500 private and special dwellings in the selected areas were approached by the survey interviewers. Of these, 6700 dwellings were found where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations were currently living. A random sample of these dwellings was used for the purposes of the survey.\textsuperscript{107}

The key question in the survey which related to the historical practice of child separation was whether respondents were taken away from their natural family and who they were raised by. The survey found that over 10 per cent of respondents aged over 25 years reported being taken away from their natural family. The figure was less than 2 per cent for respondents aged 14 years or under.\textsuperscript{108} Regarding the question of which respondents were raised by, the survey found:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{106} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{108} ibid., (3 of 9).
\end{itemize}
Figure 6.1 Persons taken away from natural family by age, 1994

(Source – 1994 A.B.S. Health Survey)

Of the 12,500 people taken away from their natural families, 31.7 percent were raised by non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander adoptive or foster parents, 30.7 percent by missions, and 27.9 percent by orphanages or children’s homes.¹⁰⁹

The above results highlight one of the limitations of this study. The estimates of this study have been drawn solely from archival evidence. Records for adoptions, foster parents and children’s homes have not been accessed. This distinction also needs to be taken into account when considering Read’s 1999 estimate. Read’s first 5626 estimate was based on archival evidence and official government records — his 10000 estimate was based upon the number of files held by the New South Wales Welfare Service.
The difficulty in testing the one in ten proportion of the ABS survey is that it is spread over an unknown number of years. The Queensland estimates for this study have been taken over the period from 1900 to 1971.

Figure 6.1 compares responses to the question “whether taken from natural family” across the states. These results are different to what might be expected. New South Wales has a surprisingly low percentage of respondents considering Read’s claim that this state would probably have a higher proportion of separated children than any other state.\textsuperscript{110} The figure for Queensland is also surprisingly high in comparison to other states. It would have been reasonable to expect a lower figure in comparison to other states considering the fact that Queensland favoured a system of removing Aboriginal children together with their parents for a large part of the period from 1910 to the early 1970s. One of the explanations for this could be that this study has not taken into account adoptions or foster-parent arrangements.

In 1936, the Commonwealth statistician reported on statistics regarding Aboriginal people which had been forwarded by all states. This was a limited survey as it was designed to gain “detailed information concerning full-blood Australian aboriginals who were in contact with the white population i.e. who were either in employment or were living in proximity to settlements”.\textsuperscript{111} This did not take into account Aboriginal people

\textsuperscript{109} ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Read, \textit{A Rape of the Soul So Profound}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{111} Census of the Commonwealth – 30 June, 1933. (Summary relating to full-blood aboriginals) QSA A/69470.
described as “nomadic”, estimated to make up 18 per cent of the total Aboriginal population in Queensland. Interestingly, the report had one section titled “orphanhood” — which made reference to the separation of children from parents:

Of the aboriginal children recorded 15.3 per cent were stated to be bereft of one or both parents as compared with 6 per cent of the general population. In view of the general similarity of the aboriginals and white populations with respect to age constituents and average number of dependent children there is some doubt concerning the accuracy of the replies to this question. The number of aboriginal children stated as being bereft of parents may possibly include those who have been segregated from their parents. In most institutions the majority of the aboriginal children are cared for in special homes or dormitories while the parents may be living in the adjoining village or camp.”

This 9 per cent discrepancy which is suggested may be attributed to a policy of separation is all the more significant when one considers that the statistics dealt with “full-blooded” children. The Queensland situation suggests that there was a concentration on “half-caste” children in terms of separation and institutionalisation. The 1933 census data highlights the high proportion of Aboriginal children institutionalised in comparison with the general population.

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112 ibid.
113 ibid.
The 1994 ABS survey may be the only effective way of establishing the extent of child separations through adoptions and foster parent arrangements in Queensland. Prior to undertaking this study I worked as a senior researcher with the Queensland government Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions. One of the difficulties in the archival research conducted for that inquiry was to accurately document the experience of Indigenous children in state and church-run institutions. By the 1970s, some institutions were made up of 40 per cent Aboriginal children but individual details or an estimate of the number of Aboriginal children in care at any one time were very difficult to arrive at. The records of Aboriginal children in care were not kept in one collection and could only be located through a card system with tens of thousands of entries.

Federal Government Response to Estimates of Separated Children

Whether intentional or not, one effect of the federal government’s submission to the Senate Inquiry in 2000 was to publicly state that the federal government believed that “there was no stolen generation”. Regarding the estimates of numbers of “stolen” children made by the HREOC inquiry the federal government was scathing:

In fact the estimates of the extent of the removals are the weakest part of the HREOC report. They are, when analysed, based on considerably uncertain

\footnote{114 Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, p. 56.  
guestimates and shoddy research, totally inappropriate to the weight of the argument which is based on the construction of the conclusion.\textsuperscript{116}

The estimates made by the HREOC inquiry are probably the weakest part of the final report. It does not follow, however, that the conclusions drawn by the report are weakened by association. There is much evidence on the public record that at different stages of history and in different locations throughout Australia, there has been a deliberate policy of separating Aboriginal children from their parents. This separation typically has been on the basis of race or skin colour — rather than on the basis of neglect.

The submission of the federal government effectively split the numbers from the narratives. The voices of Aboriginal people which had been so prominent in the BTH report were not to be found in the federal government’s response. The opinions of a small number of conservative commentators and the questionable recollections of some former public servants were privileged over the experiences of Indigenous Australians. Manne’s excellent reading of the evidence provided by former Northern Territory patrol officer Colin Macleod highlights the lack of rigour employed by the federal government in its submission:

Enemies of BTH were highly critical of the anecdotal evidence of the 535 Aboriginal witnesses on which it supposedly relied. They had no difficulty, however, with the anecdotal evidence produced by one white patrol officer

who had left the Territory more than forty years ago at the age of twenty-four.

In truth Colin Macleod understood remarkably little about the history of Aboriginal child removal. Yet because he was singing a tune which many Australians wanted to hear, his opinions carried a very considerable and altogether undeserved weight. 117

Submissions made by the Queensland and Western Australian governments were also glossed over in the federal government’s submission. The BTH report concluded its numbers section with a brief discussion of the effects of the policies of child separation upon Aboriginal families:

In certain regions and in certain periods the figure was undoubtedly much greater than one in ten. In that time not one Indigenous family has escaped the effects of forcible removal (confirmed by representatives of the Queensland and WA Governments in evidence to the Inquiry). Most families have been affected, in one or more generations, by the forcible removal of one or more children. 118

While vague in nature and almost impossible to validate, these assertions nevertheless do hold some weight. Queensland and Western Australia are two states that have always had large Aboriginal populations. If the estimate of one in ten Indigenous children being

118 BTH, p. 37.
separated from their parents can be substantiated, then it would be reasonable to conclude that most families in one or two generations have been affected by this policy.

The arguments contained in the federal government submission regarding the use of the term “Stolen Generation” were more about fuelling a debate in the public sphere than about addressing an issue in the BTH report. The term “Stolen Generation” did not appear in the HREOC report. The Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs at the time, Senator John Herron stated:

There never was a generation of stolen children. The proportion of separated Aboriginal children was no more than 10 percent.\textsuperscript{119}

The estimate of Aboriginal children separated from their natural families in Queensland from this study amounts to generations of Aboriginal people affected by government policy. At least one in six children was directly affected, and it could be concluded that almost every family and community experienced the fear of losing their children to an institution or foster care. During the twentieth century, at times half of the state’s Aboriginal population was institutionalised.\textsuperscript{120} The 1938 annual report reveals that only 34 per cent of Indigenous children were living “outside of a supervised camp”.\textsuperscript{121} By the mid 1960s, 56 per cent of Indigenous Queenslanders were described as “state wards”.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 28 April 2000.
\textsuperscript{120} Annual reports for the Aboriginal Department show that by the 1930s almost half of Queensland’s Indigenous population was to be found on missions and settlements. Ros Kidd in Anna Haebich and Doreen Mellor, \textit{Many Voices} (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2000), p. 251.
\textsuperscript{121} Annual Report 1938.
\textsuperscript{122} Annual Report 1964, p. 3; Also in QSA A/59295.
The state of Queensland interfered in the Aboriginal child and parent relationship in a most devastating way.

The fallout over numbers involved in the frontier debates of the early 2000s bear much resemblance to — and indeed overlaps with — the arguments surrounding the issue of Aboriginal child separation in Australian history. Records are sketchy and not always complete. Early estimates have been hastily composed and then years later become the centrepiece of the historical debate. What these debates highlight is the need for rigorous research whenever estimates are made and an acknowledgement from all quarters that the human experience can never be summed up with numbers.

**The Queensland Experience**

On 30 May 1946, Acting Prime Minister Forde wrote to the premiers of each of the states regarding the issue of Aboriginal children being removed against the wishes of their parents. The London-based Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society had raised this issue with the Commonwealth of Australia, urging that legislation be introduced which prevented the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents except by order of a legal tribunal.\(^{123}\) Queensland Premier Edward Hanlon replied, informing Forde that the removal of Aboriginal children from their natural parents was not permitted in his state.\(^{124}\) He stated: “If it is found necessary in this State to remove aboriginal children in their own interests to an Aboriginal Settlement or Church Mission, action is taken to

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\(^{123}\) Prime Minister Forde to E.M. Hanlon, Premier of Queensland, 30 May 1946, QSA A/58852.  
\(^{124}\) ibid.
remove the parents to the Settlement or Mission with the children.” At face value, it would appear that Queensland differed from other states in this practice.

This section explores the Queensland experience of separation of Aboriginal children according to the archival record.

**Separations Over Time**

The separations which appear in Figure 6.2 have all been separately documented in the Removals Database. These figures do not include girls sent to employment, mainstream child welfare admissions or dormitory figures which have been used in the estimates section of this chapter. This graph gives a good indication of the pattern of a number of Aboriginal children separated from their parents over time.

Figure 6.2 reveals that, following a very small number of removals to institutions after the passing of the 1865 Act, almost no removals occurred until the 1880s. The small increase in removals between 1881 and 1884 is due to the *Government Gazette* notice ordering that “half-caste” children be arrested and sent to orphanages as neglected children. The relatively low number of removals suggests the way in which this move by the Colonial Secretary was stifled by the Police Commissioner at the time. There is a sharp increase in the number of children separated from 1900 to 1906. This is due to the introduction of the 1897 Act and the interpretation and implementation of policies under

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125 E.M. Hanlon, Premier of Queensland to Prime Minister, 31 March 1947, QSA A/58852.
126 QSA POL/J19.
Walter Roth. For this reason, it is important to look a little more closely at the approach of Walter Roth.

Figure 6.2 Aboriginal Children Documented as Separated

Walter Roth: Father of the Stolen Generations?

Manne has rightly described Walter Roth as a “pioneer in Australia of the policy and practice of child removal”. As Northern Protector of the Aboriginals, Walter Roth conducted a rigorous campaign to regulate the employment of Aboriginal people, especially women and children. Roth saw the removal of children employed on stations

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as the only effective way of “protecting” them. In his report for 1900, he acknowledged the vulnerable position that young girls were in:

As things are at present the majority of these female children are engaged mostly as nurse-girls, kept in a false position by being brought up as “one of the family” – a fact which will probably account for their receiving no regular wages – and then when they get into trouble are no longer wanted, but packed off to shift for themselves as best they can.\(^{128}\)

Roth believed that employers were hiding behind the fourth section of the 1897 legislation. This section deemed that “those ‘half-caste’s who at the time of the passing of the Act were not living or associating with aboriginals as children”\(^{129}\) were not deemed to be “Aboriginal”. To remedy the situation, Roth employed the 1865 industrial schools legislation endeavouring to have the children charged as “neglected”:

To circumvent the tactics of such people I was obliged to have recourse to the Reformatories Act; without the latter I could have claimed no rights whatsoever for these little waifs and strays.\(^{130}\)

Roth’s intentions were broader than protecting the vulnerable. When it came to “half-caste” children in camps he believed it imperative that they be removed to missions:

\(^{128}\) Annual Report of Northern Protector, 1900, p 7.
\(^{129}\) ibid., p. 8.
In the case of “half-caste” children, especially girls, found living in the camps, it is desirable that these, where old enough, should be removed at once to the Mission Station or Reformatory. The State takes upon itself the responsibility — a serious one, to my mind — of taking such children from their aboriginal environments.  

Removals with “neglected” as a stated reason peaked during the early 1900s, especially under the influence of Roth. Hallmarks of Roth’s period of time as CPA were attempts at segregation and removals. He vigorously used available legislation to remove children deemed to be neglected. Haebich highlights Roth’s response to a range of abuses:

Shocked by revelations of the conditions of Aboriginal child workers and guided by gendered concerns of the time, Roth determined to bring Aboriginal girls in particular under state protection and to transfer as many as possible to the care of the missions.

This concentration on Aboriginal females can clearly be seen in Figure 3.3.

Revealing the fear of miscegenation present in Roth’s thinking, he declared that, while it was possible for children in employment to on occasions remain with “reputable white

130 ibid.
131 ibid.
132 Haebich, Broken Circles, p. 310.
133 ibid., p. 302.
employers”, they could never be left with “Asiatics”. The interference in the “employment arrangements” of Aboriginal children brought the ire of local white residents and politicians in North Queensland. In August 1900, on the recommendation of Roth, two “half-caste” girls were arrested and sentenced as neglected children to detention at Yarrabah Industrial School for a period of five and seven years. The “employer” of one of these girls complained bitterly, stating that it was his intention to marry her. He enlisted the support of resident whites and the local member of the Legislative Assembly, J. Hamilton.

The removal of children, a concerted campaign by Hamilton and Roth’s passion for ethnography eventually brought about Roth’s downfall. During his time based in Cooktown, Roth conducted a great deal of ethnographic research into local Aboriginal languages and cultures. He gained access to this information by cultivating relationships with a small number of European men living in the area. These European men cohabited with local Aboriginal women and a number of “half-caste” offspring resulted. The enemies that Roth made through the removal of Aboriginal child “employees” became infuriated by the blind eye that Roth turned to his ethnographic sources.

134 ibid.
135 This file details the involved case surrounding the removal of Lizzie Johnstone. This case involved disputes between the Catholic and Anglican church authorities along with various residents in the Daintree area. QSA A/58752.
136 George and Robert Hislop were two white men living in the vicinity of the Bloomfield River District around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Both men lived with Aboriginal women and had children to them. They received a government allowance to supply rations for local Aborigines. The Southern Protector of Aborigines, Archibald Meston recommended that all allowances to the Hislops be discontinued commenting that “any man who cohabited with Aboriginal women lost the respect of all other Aborigines”. Roth allowed the Hislops to keep “half caste’ children in their houses while removing children from other white “employers” in the surrounding district.
In an article appearing in the *Brisbane Courier*, Roth acknowledged and gave tacit support to the employment of children:

Dr Roth said he had also been struck with the amount of child labour employed, particularly in the case of young boys. But so long as the employers are reputable and respectable persons, he had raised no objections being of the opinion that it is far better to keep these children in continuous employment than to allow them to go into the townships as loafers and vagrants.\(^\text{137}\)

On occasions when complaints regarding the behaviour of children in employment were made, Roth saw removal as a method of rehabilitation. In 1899, Roth wrote to the Commissioner of Police requesting that he be authorised to remove a young boy to Keppel Island, “where he could not get away, and where they will in a few years be wanting males”.\(^\text{138}\) The boy, who had been brought to the Cooktown district at the age of seven had been accused of petty theft by his employer. The application of the “birch rod” and imprisonment was not felt to be effective, but in applying to remove the boy

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Robert Hislop was a valuable source of ethnological material to Roth, and the Protector of Aboriginals was willing to overlook the issues of cohabiting and producing “half-caste” children. The vicious and public campaign against Roth had the removal of children as one of its motivating factors.

QSA Col 139 97/16399 Letter number 97/15870; QSA Col 139 97/16399, Letter number 97/11141; Report from Walter E Roth dated 15 February 1898 from Cooktown to the Commissioner of Police, QSA Col 139; Robert Hislop at Wyalla, Cooktown to the Commissioner of Police 1 July, 1897 (No Letter Number), Microfilm Frame 437–439, QSA Col 140; Report from Walter Roth in Cooktown to the Commissioner of Police, 4 March, 1898, QSA Col 142; QSA Col 142 99/7643; See the removal of Lizzie Johnstone QSA A/58752; For an account of the campaign against Roth see Haebich, *Broken Circles*, pp. 309 – 311.

\(^{137}\) *Brisbane Courier*, 26 September, 1903
Roth acknowledged that he had no legal power to do so as neglect could not be demonstrated.\textsuperscript{139}

The conflict that Roth encountered is evident in some of the police correspondence regarding removal of children. In a letter pertaining to the removal of “half-caste” children to Yarrabah in 1900 Police Sub-Inspector Garraway stated:

\begin{quote}
I also attach a copy of Return of Half Castes in my sub-District on 31\textsuperscript{st} August last, and may mention that in some cases the parent looks upon the child as adopted, and by no means can it be called “neglected” in the ordinary sense of the word.\textsuperscript{140}
\end{quote}

Despite this assertion, young girls supposedly “adopted” to families in this same district were removed to institutions upon falling pregnant to white employees.\textsuperscript{141} Roth was not oblivious to the vulnerability of Aboriginal girls in employment:

\begin{quote}
Female children are engaged mostly as nurse girls, kept in a false position by being brought up as ‘one of the family’ — a fact which will probably account for their receiving no regular wages — and then when they get into
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{138} Letter to Commissioner of Police, Cooktown, 26 May 1899, Letter Number 13348, QSA COL 143
\textsuperscript{139} ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Sub Inspector Garraway (Native Police Station Laura) to Inspector Marrett, Cairns, 29 October 1900, QSA Pol/J19.
\textsuperscript{141} Commissioner of Police, 16 October 1905, Letter number 14517, QSA Pol/J19
trouble are no longer wanted, but packed off to shift for themselves as best they can.\textsuperscript{142}

Roth didn’t always wait for legal authority to remove children to institutions:

Mapoon is the Mission Station to which hitherto we have been sending the waifs and strays from the Gulf country generally, but so far without the legal status of their being “neglected” children as defined by the Reformatories Act. This has now been remedied, an Industrial School proclaimed and Rev. N. Hey appointed its first Superintendent. The Protectors are thus able to deal summarily with the Gulf children, and the State saved all the extra expenditure of forwarding them all round the peninsula to the Aboriginal Reformatory at Cairns.\textsuperscript{143}

His determination regarding the removal of “half-caste” children was exhibited in 1904 in the Darling Downs district of Southern Queensland. He supported local police in their wish to detain “aboriginals or half castes” until an order for removal could be obtained.\textsuperscript{144} In 1904, twelve “half-caste” children were removed from Roma to Deebing Creek. Roth recommended that a few women be sent with the children to aid the police in their care of the children on the journey. Revealing his zeal for removal, Roth asked the police not to return the women to Roma. He wrote, that “unless your hands are forced do not provide

\textsuperscript{142} Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1900, p. 7.; Also cited in Haebich, \textit{Broken Circles}, p. 299.
\textsuperscript{143} Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1901, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{144} Walter Roth to Protector Dillon, Toowoomba, 19 May 1904, QSA A/58749.
any return pass. We ought to be thankful for the opportunity of getting all these breeding aboriginal women out of the district.”

By 1905, as CPA Roth was critical of the place in society of “half-caste” children in the southern section of the state. He felt that the existing legislation covering such children was inadequate and declared, “the rearing of ‘half-caste’ children amongst aboriginal children is a mistake, and tends to retrogression rather than to progress”. Roth advocated the raising of the status of male and female “half-caste” children and pushed for a move away from the holding of such children in reformatories based on larger Aboriginal settlements and missions:

I can recognise no better plan than that, in the future, all such infants taken from the camps should be brought up as white children, and not in the aboriginal mission reformatories as black ones. Legislation should be on the lines of raising, and not of lowering, their positions: and especially so, with a view of preventing the inbreeding of half-castes with full-bloods.

**Church and State**

Almost as soon as moves were made to remove Aboriginal children, the Queensland administration began to realise that this could become a cost to the state. The fear of a

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145 Margin note on letter from Protector Breene, Roma to Walter Roth, Brisbane. 30 June 1904, QSA A/58749.
146 Annual Report 1905, p. 11
147 ibid., p. 13.
“half-caste” population played a role in the passing of the 1897 Act. In 1900, CPA Archibald Meston had suggested that all children of “half-caste” mothers who were in domestic service in the Brisbane district be sent to Deebing Creek or Durundur, so that “their mothers could see them at reasonable intervals”. He disapproved of such children being sent to church-run orphanages, which would cost the state five times more than if they were on an Aboriginal reserve.148

In January 1903, Walter Roth proposed that eleven Aboriginal children being kept at St Vincent’s Orphanage, Nudgee be removed to Yarrabah:

My attention being drawn to the heavy expense entailed on the Government keeping eleven children at Nudgee, I have the honour to inform you that I have made personal application to Bishop Frodsham with the result that he will be only too pleased to come to the assistance of the Department and provide a home for these little ones at Yarrabah without any extra subsidy being granted.149

In 1904 the total amount spent on Aboriginal children in Deebing Creek, Yarrabah and Mapoon was £270 for the year — at the daily rate of 2 shillings and sixpence. This compared with £130 being spent on just eleven Aboriginal children at St Vincent’s Orphanage, Nudgee for roughly the same period (10 shillings per day).150

148 QSA A/58929.
149 Walter Roth, Cooktown, 15 January, 1903, QSA COL/143 03/5114.
150 Walter Roth to Under Secretary, Department of Lands, 9 January 1904, QSA A/4722.
time a spokesman from the Department of Lands (at that time responsible for Aboriginal Affairs in Queensland) commented:

I do not think the Govt is justified in spending 5/10 per week for the keep of aboriginal and half-caste children. I am prepared however under the circumstances to sanction payment for future at the rate of 2/6 pr week for each child up to a certain age.151

For most of the study period, Aboriginal children in mainstream institutions were paid for by the Aboriginal Department rather than by the department responsible for children’s welfare.152

While the impression of “half-caste” children being rejected by their families and communities has prevailed for a long time, it was the bonds between community and children that proved a thorn in the side of the Lutheran missionaries at Marie Yaamba Mission on the Andromache River in North Queensland. It was reported by the Brisbane Courier in October 1894 that local blacks had been in the habit of “kidnapping” “half-caste” children in the care of the mission.153 The superintendent of Marie Yaamba had sought the assistance of police to help him recover the children.

They also offered a reward to an Aboriginal man from Normanton for “recovering” the children. Members of the local tribe offered much resistance to the efforts of the mission.

The Mackay Police Magistrate commented:

151 2 May 1903, QSA A/4722.
152 QSA A/4722.
I found that the Superintendent was under the impression that no father or mother had any claim to a “half-caste” child who became the property of the State, and I imagine that it was this idea which induced him to offer a reward of Four Pounds to the Normanton boy “Smut” for the recovery of the deserters. However, the tribe resented any interference on his part, and I am informed they also threatened him with the consequences if any attempt was made to rescue them.”

With regard to the allegations of kidnapping, the Mackay magistrate found no violence or harsh treatment of the children who had been taken by their parents and relatives. The only show of force was one of the missionaries remonstrating with the local tribe to leave the children on the mission. He attributed the “exodus” of the children from the mission to the remarks by the superintendent of the mission that the children would be sent to Brisbane to be bound as servants.

The missionaries at Marie Yaamba saw control of the children as a way of gaining access to the adults. In 1891, J. Gessling, President of the German and Scandinavian Missions, wrote to the Colonial Secretary urging the government not to remove “half-caste” children. Gessling described such a move as a “dead blow” for the mission, suggesting that the trust that had been built up by the mission would be destroyed if the children

153 Brisbane Courier 26 October 1894.
154 Police Magistrate, Mackay – Report on visit of inspection to the Marie Yaamba Mission Station 24 September 1894, QSA A/58851.
155 ibid.
were to be taken away.\textsuperscript{156} On the Cape Bedford Mission, the missionary in charge, G.H. Schwarz, urged the Colonial Secretary to order the Cooktown Police to assist in returning “escaped children”.\textsuperscript{157} The reasoning was that the children were important to the work of the mission as they were the most able to accept Christianity and civilisation.\textsuperscript{158}

Even sexual abuse by white mission employees upon young Aboriginal girls didn’t cause Roth to question the wisdom of separating these children and placing them in institutional care. In March 1900, reports came to Roth’s notice of a labourer on Bloomfield mission who was acting “immorally”. Upon conducting a surprise visit to the mission, Roth found the labourer in charge of the mission and living with six Aboriginal girls. He heard evidence of the labourer interfering with the girls and subsequently asked the local police to investigate. The police did this and the labourer admitted to sexually abusing the girls. Roth’s response was to urge the Home Department to authorise him to “quietly” remove the girls to Yarrabah and Marie Yaamba missions.\textsuperscript{159} One of the missionaries at Marie Yaamba supported this idea, proposing that the young girls be married to men on his mission. Roth responded:

I do not think it desirable that their removal to Marie Yamba for the actual purpose of marriage as suggested by Rev. L. Kaibel, should be officially admitted: though of course a very rational suggestion, and one I hope to see

\textsuperscript{156} J.F. Gossling to Colonial Secretary, 28 April 1891, QSA Col/A656 91/4835.
\textsuperscript{157} Missionary in Charge to Colonial Secretary, 13 May 1893, QSA A/58928.
carried out, such admission on the part of the executive would give rise to false comments in the press and Parliament that the Government were a party to forcing gins to marry etc. etc.\textsuperscript{160}

A number of heartbreaking letters from Aboriginal parents wishing to have their children returned to them can be found in the files for the Yarrabah Mission. In 1906 one woman wrote:

I’ve got a boy the name of _________ who is in Yarrabah Mission station and I would like to have him brought back to me as I was very sick and wasn’t able to write to you and crying and fretting after my little boy….so I want to know this if you would have him brought back to me as the boy was taken away from me and Noble against our will. I don’t believe its lawful and right.\textsuperscript{161}

Another father wrote of the effects of separation upon a girl’s mother:

I wish to ask you whether _________ may be allowed to come and also be sent to me. Her mother took it to heart very much after Minnie been taken away and died shortly after. Will you be good enough to let me know whether you will have _________ sent home.\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{159} Walter Roth to the Under-Secretary, Home Department, 30 November 1900, QSA A/58928.
\textsuperscript{160} ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Letter to C.P.A., 19 December 1906, QSA A/70007.
The place of “half-caste” and “quadroon” children at Yarrabah came under scrutiny in 1910 when Cairns Police Magistrate P.G. Grant made a very public attack upon the Anglican mission. In a letter printed in Queensland newspapers, he stated:

Whilst recognising the benevolent intentions of the Mission I should prefer to see their efforts devoted entirely to the welfare of aboriginal children, and aged blacks. I think it is a painful sight to see almost white children brought up on the same level as the blacks, and the marrying of white girls to blackfellows should, I think, be discouraged.\textsuperscript{163}

In defending his views, Grant quoted from Walter Roth’s Annual Reports of 1904 in which his view of the importance of separating “half-caste” children was emphasised.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{162} QSA A/70007 Letter to Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 29 December 1906.
\textsuperscript{163} Letter to the Under Secretary, Home Department, 12 March, 1910, QSA A/69468.
\textsuperscript{164} Townsville Bulletin, 4 July 1910.
It is interesting to compare the “sites of separation” for Aboriginal children in Queensland. Figure 6.3 shows the emphasis on dormitories as a site of separation, but also the great impact that employment policies had upon Aboriginal children in Queensland.

**Turning Child against Mother**

What, then, of parental consent? Surely some of these parents were happy to give their children up for a better life? In the 1920s, a tragic case of the state breaking a child’s bond with her mother and culture was documented. In September 1923 the Gayndah stock inspector’s wife appealed to the local protector of Aborigines – that she be allowed to take a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal girl with her family as her husband was being transferred to Richmond. The PA at Maryborough contacted the girl’s mother, who
objected strongly to her daughter being taken away from the district. The CPA agreed stating that the girl’s employment agreement be cancelled.

The Protector of Aboriginals from Maryborough subsequently sent a memo stating that the stock inspector and his wife had informed him that the mother was now willing for them to take her daughter. The stock inspector’s wife claimed that the mother had previously willingly handed over her daughter, as she knew it was in her best interests. The mother wrote a number of letters and Christmas cards to her daughter — some of these acknowledging that she was in a caring situation.

Then, in February 1924, the Aboriginal mother wrote to the stock inspector’s wife querying as to why she had received no reply from her daughter. In a heartfelt plea she wrote:

I have been led to believe that you are turning my daughter against me. Although I am not dissatisfied with your past treatment during the three years she has been with you I now require her home and don’t think there is anyone as good to a child as her mother. I love my child and will stop at nothing to gain access to her and have her once more with me as I don’t like the way things are.  

The CPA’s Office investigated the Aboriginal mother’s house and found a woman of good character married to a husband who was described as a good worker. The children
were well dressed and always had food. It emerged that the mother had actually been paying the stock inspector’s wife board so that her daughter could attend school. It appeared that the young girl had not been sent to school. Despite this glowing report, the CPA believed that the Aboriginal mother was only after her daughter’s money. He instructed that the girl send her mother a few pennies and inform the mother that her daughter could not be returned while her employment agreement was in force.

In 1926 the girl had turned seventeen and wrote to the Protector of Aboriginals at Richmond applying for exemption from the *Aboriginal Act*. She wrote stating that she was viewed in the town of Richmond as the daughter of the stock inspector. The letter concluded:

> I could not possibly go back to my mother’s care where I was not properly clothed or fed and very neglected and overworked my mother and step father and brothers are black. I have not had a letter from my mother for three years. I would like to get the exemption as soon as possible.”

The exemption was subsequently granted. A mother’s relationship with her daughter had been destroyed through the use of policies of employment. A young woman’s chances of connecting with her country and culture had also been trampled upon by the actions of the state and her employer.

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166 Letter to Sergeant Walsh, Richmond, 1 September 1926, QSA A/69429.
The Bonds that Tie

Examples abound of the impact of the separation of children from their parents in the files of the CPA. One letter which depicts the complexity of human emotions on both sides was written in 1915 from China Camp, in the Bloomfield River District. W.C. Knowlton wrote to J.W. Bleakley, vividly describing the pain of separation:

I am appealing to you on behalf of the unfortunate blacks to stop this taking away of the half-castes from their mother. During the past week the Police have been here collecting the few half castes from this place and as one who has watched your public career for many years I am certain if you could be here and hear the crying and wailing of the blacks in the camp the past few nights you would stop it at once that is why knowing you as I do I venture to make this personal appeal.

If the Germans were to do the like the very people who approve of this thing would be the first to cry out about it and the papers would be full of it. I would like to mention that in this instance at any rate the two police constables who came here to take them away were very kind and did all they could to comfort the mothers and to cheer up the little ones they were taking away. And to their credit it was easy to see they did not like the job.167

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The bonds between child and parent continued to be impacted upon after the years of childhood had passed. In November 1944, an Aboriginal man who had absconded from police control wrote to the superintendent of Palm Island wishing to be reunited with his mother:

I went away to Kingaroy one day trying to get some money for myself to get some clothing for myself as I never had any of my own. I was wearing someone else’s clothing. I wanted to get some for xmas. Then I was going back home to my dear old mother. She wanted me home Sir for xmas. She never seen me for about 9 years now I wanted to go home and look after her. She got no husband to look after her no one at all she working for her self and she getting old now. So Sir if you would be kind enough to send me back home to her I’d be very thankful if you think I’d better stay here for six months or a month I’m going to kill myself.168

In June 1936, a mother from the Dalby district wrote to the Home Secretary requesting information about her daughter:

I am writing in respect of my daughter. She was sent away to the Nugee (Nudgee) convent and she has not been home since she was 15 years old. Now she has turned 19 on the 6th last May. I was promised she would be returned to me at the above age. I would like you to do something about her

168 Letter to Palm Island Mission, 5 February 1944, QSA A/55335.
for me as I am very worried and upset about her as I have not had any letter from her or the authorities for the past months.\textsuperscript{169}

The State Children’s Department wrote a margin note on the letter stating that the girl had been discharged from state control on her birthday and the department had “no further jurisdiction over her”.\textsuperscript{170} Despite this, the daughter and her mother had not escaped the reach of the office of the Protector of Aboriginals. The CPA decided that the young woman would enter a life of vice if she was returned to her mother in Dalby. He wrote to the mother stating: “your daughter ________ is in the Woorabinda Aboriginal Settlement where she is being well cared for.”\textsuperscript{171} In perhaps the cruellest twist of all, the CPA’s Office believed that the girl was not of Aboriginal descent.\textsuperscript{172}

On occasions, the intercession of local white residents bore positive results for Aboriginal families. In 1936, a resident of the Daintree district in North Queensland wrote to Edward Hanlon, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, complaining of police actions in attempting to remove a young child to Palm Island. He wrote:

\begin{flushleft}

The police have been out several times to get the child away from his foster-mother, who has been feeding him at the breast and who is becoming distraught at having constantly to run away and hide.\textsuperscript{173}
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\textsuperscript{169} QSA A/3845 Letter to Home Secretary, 5 June 1936, QSA A/3845.
\textsuperscript{170} ibid.
\textsuperscript{171} Letter from Under Secretary of Health and Home Affairs, 27 July 1936, QSA A/3845.
\textsuperscript{172} Correspondence stated that the girl’s mother was a European/South Sea Islander and the father was a European/ American Negro, QSA A/3845.
\textsuperscript{173} Mr O.R.Walker to Minister for Health and Home Affairs 10, March 1936, QSA A/3830 (The foster mother was Aboriginal).
\end{flushright}
Hanlon responded by allowing the child to remain with his foster mother.174

**The Place of Education**

Despite an official stance that all children (Aboriginal children included) were subject to the state’s *education acts* for most of the twentieth century this fundamental right was denied.175 Only four years’ schooling was available for Aboriginal children, and many received far less than this. In 1947 the Victorian Aboriginal Group wrote to the Queensland Minister for Health and Home Affairs, highlighting the fact that the government was in contravention of UNESCO’s declaration that there should be “full and equal opportunities of all” without distinction of “race, sex, language or religion”.176

On occasion, Aboriginal children were removed from situations where they were receiving an education to places where educational opportunities were severely limited. In February 1938, the Office of the CPA applied for a removal order for a family to be taken to Mona Mona Mission. The reasons stated were:

_______ refuses to accept employment under agreement, and his wife and children are not receiving proper nourishment, the children are not properly cared for by the wife, and are not receiving any education.177

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174 E.M. Hanlon, Minister for Health to O.R. Walker, 10 August 1936, QSA A/3830.
175 “In 1905 the crown solicitor confirmed the chief protector’s opinion that all Queensland children were amenable to the State’s Education Acts.”, Kidd, *Black Lives, Government Lies*, p. 19.
176 A.N. Brown to Minister for Health and Home Affairs, 8 December 1947, QSA A/58852.
The family was removed to Mona Mona but subsequently escaped. In a petition to the CPA 48 residents of the Tate Tin Mines protested the removal speaking about the contribution of the family to the local community:

_________ is a hardworking man, honest and well behaved, and daily works to produce tin for the support of his family.

Some of the members of his family are an asset to the district in finding lost horses belonging to white men, and in conveying food to outside miners. His two children are well fed and clothed and daily attend the local school. The residents of the district feel strongly about the removal of this family and this petition is an expression of their feelings and wishes on the matter.178

The two children in question were reported to have been taken from the local school in order to be removed due to lack of education.179 Local residents supported the escaped family, shielding them from the local Aboriginal protector and supplying them with rations. As Anderson has shown, at times there was a positive relationship between European tin miners and local Aboriginal tribes. It was in the interest of the local community to have Aboriginal people working in the area with a reasonable level of contentment.180 The local protector reported his frustrations to the Brisbane office,

177 C.P.A. to Under Secretary, Health and Home Affairs, 19 February 1938, QSA A/69455.
178 Petition to CPA, Tate Tin Mines via Almaden 18 May 1938, QSA A/69445.
179 B. Borghero to Minister for Public Works, 16 August 1938, QSA A/69445.
urging them to authorise the removal of the family to Palm Island where the possibility of escape would be greatly diminished.\(^{181}\)

The protector sent a message that, if the man intended for removal sent his family to Chillagoe, they could receive food and clothes and he would be free. Sympathetic local residents passed on the message. Upon the woman arriving in Chillagoe, she was detained and by the next morning the father of the family was in leg irons on his way to Palm Island.\(^{182}\) A second petition was organised by a group of local residents including the school teacher:

> We again take up with you to express our indignation at what we consider to be nothing short of an outrage on justice in the matter of the retaking of this half-caste and in leg irons.

> We state definitely that this man is quiet, peaceable, law-abiding and hardworking, and we know of no reason why this man should be singled out for such convict-like treatment.\(^{183}\)

Even the provision of a less than basic education did not come without costs to the parent–child relationship. In 1952, two women living in the Quilpie district in Southwestern Queensland made a request that they be allowed to accompany their children to the Cherbourg settlement so that their children could attend school. The

\(^{181}\) PA Chillagoe to CPA, 28 July 1938, QSA A/69445.

\(^{182}\) B. Borghero to Minister for Public Works, 16 August 1938, QSA A/69445.
women were told that no accommodation would be provided for them and that the children would be split up into boys’ and girls’ dormitories.\textsuperscript{184}

It is evident that Aboriginal parents wished their children to be educated, but not at the expense of loss of contact. In 1942 a police tracker and his wife approached the local protector concerning the education of their children. He reported:

Sisilia has a half caste child named Elsie age about eight or nine years whom she desires to send to the Cooktown convent for education. George is also anxious to have his stepdaughter sent to the convent and is willing to pay for her education providing the fees are not too heavy and he is able to pay from his wages. They refuse to allow the girl to go to a Mission — or any place where they cannot contact her readily.\textsuperscript{185}

Once children were placed within institutions for “educational reasons”, it was difficult for parents to gain access to them. In 1900 an Aboriginal family from Jimbour in Southern Queensland visited Fraser Island, a place where they had been detained previously. Upon leaving, they found that their daughter was to be permanently kept on the island. The local Member of Parliament, Joshua Bell, wrote to the Home Department requesting that the parents be reunited with their daughter. The Southern Protector of Aboriginals, Archibald Meston, admitted that the separation was a “breach of faith” as he

\textsuperscript{183} ibid.
\textsuperscript{184} DDNA.to Superintendent, Cherbourg, 26 February 1952, QSA QS 505/1 ID/152 box 274.
\textsuperscript{185} Names changed to maintain privacy. Sergeant Cooper to Inspector of Police, Cairns, 30 April 1942, QSA A/44857.
had promised that the family could return to Jimbour following the visit.\textsuperscript{186} Instead of returning the girl to her parents he suggested that she be removed to Deebing Creek.\textsuperscript{187}

The matron of the Fraser Island Mission, Mary Gribble, was incensed that the feelings of the parents should be taken into account when the running of the institution was considered. She presumed the Fraser Island school would be run along the same lines as the Yarrabah Mission where children were “never allowed to roam about the country.”\textsuperscript{188}

\begin{quote}
It seems most unreasonable to suppose that the Govt. have gone to the expense of buildings and teacher’s salary and then allow the children to be removed at the whim of parents whenever they choose – better not have made any change in the old regime.\textsuperscript{189}
\end{quote}

The Home Secretary agreed with Mrs Gribble, but gave in to Meston’s wish that the girl be sent to Deebing Creek.\textsuperscript{190} The “whims” of parents to make contact with their children were often totally dependent on the “whims” of the administration. In February 1903, Joshua Bell once again wrote to the Home Secretary requesting that an Aboriginal woman named Maggie employed on his station be given a railway pass to visit her daughter detained on Fraser Island. Archibald Meston commented: “Maggie has already

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\textsuperscript{186} Joshua Bell M.L.A. to Under Secretary, Home Department, QSA Col 483a Fraser Island Mission Letter 18776/1900 .\textsuperscript{187} ibid.\textsuperscript{188} ibid.\textsuperscript{189} ibid.\textsuperscript{190} ibid.\
\end{flushright}
had one trip to Fraser’s Island to see her daughter the return fare is considerable and I
would not advise it at present.”

This theme of the institution’s needs being prioritised over those of the individual was
played out constantly. The care and protection of children was often an afterthought once
issues of employment, resources and the effective running of settlements and missions
had been considered. In 1928, the superintendent of the Purga Salvation Army Mission,
wrote to Bleakley complaining that it had been a long time since they had received any
“committal cases”. Committed children received a greater rate of funding compared with
other Aboriginal children. The superintendent followed up his letter with another plea
stating: “I will be pleased to know when we are likely to get some more children I think it
is about time we got another lot …” He was advised that children would be sent “as
the opportunity offered”.

New and Hidden Removals

With the passage of the Children’s Services Act, 1965 the Department of Children’s
Services was established in Queensland. By the early 1970s, a large number of
Aboriginal children were being committed to the care of this department which was
now responsible for all children deemed to be in the care and protection of the Director of
Children’s Services. Despite this the department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs
continued to have an involvement in the custody of these children.

191 Joshua Bell to Under Secretary, Home Department, 15 February 1903, QSA COL/144 03/2443.
192 Superintendent Perren to C.P.A., 17 June 1929, QSA A/58801.
193 ibid.
In 1971 28 children were held in the Palm Island dormitory without being assessed or admitted into care by the Children’s Services Department.\textsuperscript{195} The continuing involvement of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs in the separation of children caused frustration within the Department of Children’s Services. On occasion, children were sent to Palm Island with no correspondence. A District Officer for the Children’s Services Department reported,

There have been instances of children being transferred from the Central District of the Department to Palm Island without prior advice, and such instances have caused me embarrassment...all enquiries for the admission of children to Palm Island should be referred through this District Office and I feel if this was adhered to there would be no problem of children arriving at Palm Island unannounced.\textsuperscript{196}

This was more than a bureaucratic “slip-up”, and had devastating results for the children involved. The following is the experience of one young girl caught between the cracks of the two departments.

Upon arrival at Palm Island — we were lost — we went to the Police Station – the sergeant advised as we were white children that we must have caught the wrong boat and maybe should have been on the one that went to

\textsuperscript{195} QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11  Girls dormitory and Palm Island.
Magnetic Island. He also said that no one was allowed onto Palm Island without the Superintendent’s permission. I informed the sergeant that my brother Trevor was already on Palm Island. After meeting with Trevor over at the school — we were taken into the Superintendent’s office (Mr B) and he said that we shouldn’t have been sent to the island — that there must have been some mistake. He said that he would have to look into matters and in the meantime that I would be taken to the young girls’ dormitory and that Murray would be with Trevor in the boys’ home. Mr B lost the battle to have us returned to the Orphanage at Townsville.\(^{197}\)

In the early 1970s, children could be placed in dormitories on Palm Island and Cherbourg on the recommendation of the community council or for “other” reasons.\(^{198}\) On occasion, this could mean that children were admitted because their mother “had insufficient income”.\(^{199}\) Children’s Services inspections of the dormitories on Cherbourg and Palm Island in the early 1970s give the impression of things being done “on the cheap”. A report into the Palm Island dormitory in 1971 stated:

> in the case of boys, there is little or no training at Palm Island which would benefit them, and in the case of the girls, only the older girls are given employment with the Baby Clinic and so learn some home training.\(^{200}\)

\(^{196}\) ibid., Letter from District Officer, 25 January 1974.
\(^{197}\) “Penny” in BTH, p. 88.
\(^{198}\) Forms for admission had “Children’s Services”, “Aboriginal Council” or “Other” as reasons for children’s entry to dormitories. QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls dormitory and Palm Island.
\(^{199}\) QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls dormitory and Palm Island.
\(^{200}\) Director of Children’s Services to P.J. Killoran, DAIA, 30 December 1971, QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls dormitory and Palm Island.
Inadequate staffing in the Cherbourg and Palm Island dormitories was evident, with appropriate training usually non-existent. Reports of both institutions constantly describe a “lack of warmth” and homeliness. \(^{201}\) Reports by dormitory staff were handed to the Children’s Services Department incomplete. Promises to detail social activities in the dormitories were not kept. The impression is one of tired and run-down staff and facilities.

Despite admissions of the inadequacy of staff and facilities, Charles Clark, the Director of Children’s Services, wished to continue the use of the Palm Island dormitories in the short term:

> The problems of your Department in this matter are appreciated, but on the other hand, the accommodation available to this Department, both in its own institutions and those provided by denominational bodies, is taxed to the extent that it would be difficult to place the children at Palm Island immediately in these facilities. \(^{202}\)

By this stage, “Carramar, the Receiving and Assessment Centre at Townsville had up to 50 per cent “coloured pre-school children”. It was nevertheless decided to phase out the

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\(^{201}\) QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls dormitory and Palm Island.  
\(^{202}\) Director of Children’s Services to P.J. Killoran, DAIA, 30 December 1971, QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls dormitory and Palm Island.
dormitories at Palm Island by ceasing further Children’s Services admissions from 1971.203

In the mid-1960s a small number of Aboriginal children from Queensland were placed in foster care in Melbourne.204 These children ranged in age from less than a year to sixteen years. In a confused arrangement, P. Killoran, the Director of Native Affairs in Queensland approached H.C. Giese, the Director of Welfare in Darwin, to assist in assessing prospective foster parents in Melbourne.205 In an interesting note, Giese agreed to help Killoran but cautioned:

I do not need to tell you that whatever assistance we will give will have to be given very carefully, otherwise there could obviously be some strong grounds for disapproval of our joint efforts from the Victorian authorities.206

This extraordinary arrangement meant that Northern Territory welfare officers occasionally made checks on foster placements of Queensland Aboriginal children. Once again, the Queensland Aboriginal administration was taking children from their families and communities and placing them in situations which were not monitored or properly assessed. Aboriginal children deemed to be in need of care were not being afforded the same departmental support as other Queensland children.

203 ibid.,
204 There were eight children in these arrangements in 1964. NAA F1/0 1964/2037.
205 Killoran to Giese – 26 May 1964, NAA F1/0 1964/2037.
206 Giese to Killoran – June 1964, NAA F1/0 1964/2037.
One of the antecedents of the foster proposals was the Harold Blair Aboriginal Children’s Project. This scheme, which started in the early 1960s, was designed to give Aboriginal children from Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory holidays with white families in the city of Melbourne.\textsuperscript{207} The scheme had the full support of the Queensland Director of Native Affairs, who saw the Harold Blair idea as part of the great assimilation project. This project received enthusiastic support from the southern press.\textsuperscript{208}

Killoran’s dream of expanding the holidays to full-time foster care hit a major obstacle in the form of Mr P.E. Felton, Superintendent of Aboriginal Welfare. Felton vigorously opposed the Blair project, seeing it as paternal with an “outmoded view of what assimilation mean”.\textsuperscript{209} He advocated raising economic and social standards of Aboriginal people through community development rather than individual attempts at assimilation.\textsuperscript{210} Felton’s difficulties with the proposed foster placements were more than just ideological. He feared for the lack of practical support for such a scheme:

> For instance we have no knowledge of the reasons why the children are separated from their parents and what efforts have been made to rehabilitate and rehouse the families within the local situation. We would also appreciate information of any medical problems, psychological tests or educational attainments where available. I must point out that we are not impeding the

\textsuperscript{207} Haebich, *Broken Circles*, pp. 440 – 441.  
\textsuperscript{208} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{209} P.E. Felton to Director of Native Affairs, 15 May 1963 QS 505/1 Box 107 1A/587 File 1.  
\textsuperscript{210} ibid.
future welfare of the children at Cherbourg but are in fact greatly concerned about it and are anxious that no serious mistakes shall be made.\textsuperscript{211}

Felton’s opinion was not ill-informed. He had previously written to the Director O’Leary protesting the manner in which the Harold Blair scheme was conducted. On one occasion children were placed with a highly unsuitable white family on an afternoon women’s television program.\textsuperscript{212} The Queensland Department of Native Affairs ignored the Victorian Aboriginal Department’s advice and moved on to the Social Welfare Department of the Victorian government. The reasoning for this action was the colour of the children’s skin. Killoran wrote:

Many of the children available from Queensland for placement are very light skinned and need not necessarily be generally known to be aboriginal or of aboriginal extraction, hence my approach to you, rather than to the Aboriginal authority.\textsuperscript{213}

The Victorian department also refused to be involved in the foster care of Queensland Aboriginal children, and it was in this context that an arrangement with the Northern Territory was made. Outside of the personal files of those children affected by the Harold Blair/Melbourne foster care plan, there is little information available. It is unclear just how many children were affected or for how long the scheme continued. These children form part of the hidden statistics of separations in Queensland.

\textsuperscript{211} ibid.
\textsuperscript{212} Felton to O’Leary, 5 March 1963, QS 505/1 Box 107 1A/587 File 1.
It is beyond the scope of this study to look at all children placed within the care and control of the Queensland government — for example to extend this study to include children placed within the juvenile justice system. O’Connor argues that removals in Queensland have followed three phases. The first was on the basis of their Aboriginality, — “that is they were subject to removals and institutionalization to effect the resocialization that was deemed ‘necessary’ for their own and (white) society’s sake”.

The second of O’Connor’s phases of removal was on the basis of neglect, which was “a socially constructed concept, reinforcing dominant white middle-class concepts of appropriate parenting and standards and forms of living”. The final phase of removals has been what O’Connor has termed “new removals” where Aboriginal children were removed on the basis of “criminality”, adjudicated and sentenced by the courts. In demonstrating this new phase of removals O’Connor cites the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in detention facilities.

The difficulty with O’Connor’s argument is that it imbues the state with a far greater willingness to use its resources for the welfare of Aboriginal children than that reflected in the historical record. I would argue that the first phase of removals was based on Aboriginal children’s “whiteness” rather than their Aboriginality. The belief was that “half-caste” and “quadroon children” could be rescued from the perceived evils of camp

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213 Letter to Victorian Director of Family Welfare, 13 December 1963, QS 505/1 Box 107 1A/587 File 1.
215 ibid.
216 ibid.
217 ibid., p. 208.
life and, with some assistance, lead a productive life in the lower strata of white society. In Queensland, it was felt that total separation from parents was too expensive an exercise for the state to engage in, and this was overlaid with the racial fears of miscegenation.

**Conclusion**

The difficulty with theorising over the policy and practice of Aboriginal child separation in Queensland is that an over-arching policy direction never really existed. The majority of Aboriginal children were removed with their families in the first instance. Bleakley advocated segregation from whites where possible. This was a different approach from that of other states.

Yet, from 1897 to 1971, there was also a very definite practice of separating lighter skinned children from their families. From the Aboriginal Girls Home in Brisbane in the early 1900s through to the Harold Blair holiday scheme in the 1960s there was a very real effort to cut these children’s ties with language, culture and community.

Employment agreements for children and adults was another way in which the state effectively separated Aboriginal children from their parents. In many cases, children knew their parents and knew that they were Aboriginal, but were deprived of years of parental love and cultural education. Haebich aptly sums up the Queensland situation in the twentieth century when she states:
From the turn of the century governments around Australia adopted the policy of protection which enshrined contradictory but intersecting sets of philanthropic, ameliorative, punitive and even genocidal rationales, and which resulted in a convenient ‘double speak’ of stated humanitarian concern and agendas of segregation, assimilation, genocide and profound neglect.\footnote{Haebich, \textit{Broken Circles}, p. 143.}

Across every phase of Aboriginal children’s policy, the phrase “profound neglect” rings true. Church bodies were only engaged when they could provide the veneer of care at a portion of the cost for white children. Despite the efforts of men like Roth to prevent abuse in child employment, this abuse continued to occur throughout the study period. The protection and care of Aboriginal children could never compete with the prize of cheap Aboriginal employment. Education was used as an excuse for the removal of children, but it wasn’t until 1952 that more than a Year 4 level of schooling was available to Aboriginal children.\footnote{Kidd, \textit{Black Lives, Government Lies}, p. 21.}

Much can be made of the proportion of Aboriginal children documented as separated from their parents, but this cannot be viewed outside the reality that during certain periods of time, up to half of the state’s Aboriginal children were institutionalised in large Aboriginal settlements or missions. Up to half of them had their connection with country, language and culture severely impacted upon. It must also be considered in the
context of all of the hidden statistics in mainstream institutions and employment agreements.

The difficulty of assessing consent has been discussed in this chapter. It is to be concluded that in the written record there are many many more painful examples of parents protesting the taking of their children then there are documents demonstrating consent on the part of parents. During the twentieth century, the Queensland government made deliberate attempts to separate Aboriginal children from their parents — often on the sole basis of their skin colour and cultural heritage. Efforts were made to stamp out language, spirituality and physical connection to land. All of this was done largely without the consent of, and often in spite of the resistance of, Aboriginal parents. The violence of Aboriginal child separation in Queensland will be felt for generations to come.
The forced removal of a person from one location to another is one of the most radical steps that can be taken in a civil society. From the nineteenth century onwards a number of criteria needed to be fulfilled before a person could be removed in the state of Queensland. If the removee was felt to be of unsound mind a court needed to authorize their institutionalization. If they were to be taken to a prison or similar institution they needed to be found guilty of breaking the law of the land. Queensland society had testing measures in place to ensure that personal liberty was respected except in carefully defined exceptional circumstances.

From the time of separation from the colony of New South Wales through to the early 1970s these checks and balances were often disregarded in the case of Aboriginal people living in Queensland. During the frontier period, they could be forced to move from one location to another with almost no requirement of state authority. With the implementation of the 1897 *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* public servants were given the authority to forcibly remove people. The reasons used for these removals did not need to be verified or justified – what mattered was whether the person intended for removal could be defined as an “Aboriginal”, “half-caste” or “quadroon” person under the various pieces of legislation designed to control and manipulate Indigenous lives.
The policy and practices detailed in this study could be described as “state supported violence”. Johan Olivier argues for an understanding of violence that goes beyond physical harm. He puts forward a working definition of violence as:

- Extreme force which violates the integrity of the victim
- The intentionality behind the violence, and
- A value that is ascribed to the victim.¹

Many of the removals of Aboriginal people in Queensland occurring during the twentieth century would fall within this definition of violence. The policy of removals could also be described as a form of structural violence – that is it was more than single acts of violence perpetrated by members of Queensland’s police force acting as “Aboriginal Protectors”. Olivier defines structural violence as:

violence which is not exerted by an individual but by a structure, or structures, created or perpetuated by custom or by law (Degenaar, 1980).

The structures thus created unfairly curb the freedom of subjects or discriminate unjustly against certain sections of the population.²

Much of this structural violence was justified by and masked with what could be termed a ‘narrative of the lie’.² This narrative suggested that the forced removal of Aboriginal people was not only necessary for the progress of society but also it was a policy

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² ibid., p. 4.
designed to further Aboriginal people’s interests. This narrative continued even after the last documented removal took place. In a statement to the Queensland State parliament in November 1999, a former Aboriginal Affairs minister Kev Lingard defended the forced removal of people from Mapoon in 1963. He condoned the burning down of people’s dwellings stating, “It was only a few straw huts.” The Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Senator John Herron supported Mr Lingard stating:

I think it’s time for truth, if that report is what he’s reported to have said, then you’ll have to ask him for an explanation for it….I certainly, since I’ve been in this role for three and a half years, I’ve never been politically correct. I don’t think we should be dominated by political correctness I think we should be dominated by the truth.

This thesis shows that the truth can be found in what Aboriginal administrators and protectors did, rather than what they said.

This study of removals has assisted in unraveling some of the ‘narratives of the lie’. The first and most basic of these lies emerged during the frontier period of history. This narrative held that Aboriginal people had no real ties with country. They could be moved from location to location enduring little if any hardship. The second of these lies was that Aboriginal people had little connection with each other. Children could be taken from

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5 ibid.
parents; women and men could be taken from families and wider kinship groups. On occasions it was a colonial ‘nicety’ that people be returned from where they were taken but this was not considered an absolute necessity.

The construction of a database of removals has provided a basis on which to interrogate the rhetoric used to justify policies of enforced removal. Persons removed for insanity were not taken to asylums, persons removed for health reasons were not provided with health care. In a number of cases children were removed from situations in which they enjoyed a comparatively high level of education to government settlements where the quality of education was sub-standard. Furthermore, interrogation of the official record has revealed that in many cases the underlying causes that influenced removals were not recorded on the removal order. Indeed, the official justification provided for many removals was misleading and in some cases this was deliberately so. The fluctuations in the range of official explanations provided over time to removals demonstrate that the needs and demands of the dominant society drove many of those orders. Although removals were authorized under legislation which was supposed to protect Aboriginal people, the peaks and troughs in the rate at which removals were enacted bears little relation to fluctuations in the social and economic conditions actually experienced by Aboriginal people in Queensland.

The lies that Aboriginal people were “bad”, “mad” and “carried disease” underpinned many removals. The results of this study severely call into question the validity of individual reasons used for removals. It cannot be believed that there was an outbreak
of “discipline” problems for Aboriginal people when the number of related removals jumped from 30.6% in 1914 to 50.7% in 1915. Similarly there is no evidence to suggest that there was an Aboriginal health crisis which meant that the number of health related removed jumped from 16.6% in 1941 to 42.7% in 1944. Very few people were recorded as “voluntary” removals and the level of choice open to those who did move to missions and reserves was very minimal.

Those administering the aftermath of the removals also had an interest in justifying them:

Minister Katter described previous measures such as forced removals and the denial of wages as “… arguably a necessity if the people of this State were ever going to catch up to the living standards of the rest of the Australian community.”

This study has shown how the policy of removals played a role in slowing the possibility of Aboriginal Queenslanders having a standard of living approaching their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

For this reason it is important that the true nature of removals not be lost in arguments over definitions of genocide or similar matters. A recent debate over the background of the word ‘terra nullius’ is a case in point. Historian Henry Reynolds has been attributed with expanding the meaning of the term and its meaning within the context of the

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European settlement of Australia. Whatever the outcome of this debate research projects such as this underline the historical fact of dispossession. Keith Windschuttle in his reading of the lead up to the establishment of a policy of removals in Queensland has ignored the reality of power in colonial Queensland. Humanitarians and missionaries concerned about the treatment of Aboriginal people were always on the margins of colonial power. The arguments posed by those advocating on behalf of Aboriginal people were as concerned with the taking of Indigenous lands as they were with the taking of Indigenous lives. Arguments for measures to be taken regarding Aboriginal people were almost entirely subordinate upon the wants and needs of the colonial economy. The 1897 legislative framework was successfully introduced because it combined maximum control of Aboriginal lives with minimum expenditure and the benefit of a cheap and available source of labour.

Aboriginal labour was crucial to the expansion of a number of industries in Queensland. Removals and the threat of removals was one way in which the supply of Aboriginal labour was maintained through the twentieth century. Employment agreements caused major dislocation and dispossession of Queensland’s Aboriginal population. It has been beyond the scope of this thesis to thoroughly deal with the effects of employment agreements and this is an area requiring further research.

Arguments around the meaning of words such as “genocide” or “terra nullius” adopt a quasi legal framework in which original acts of aggression can be ignored if definitions can be shown to be wanting. For this reason the loss of the Federal Court Case Cubillo v

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7 Michael Duffy, Counterpoint, “Terra Nullius – The History Wars” ABC Radio National, 16 August 2004
Commonwealth was celebrated in some quarters. The finding that the removal of two Aboriginal children occurred with parental consent and was therefore “legal” was somehow equated with a vindication of past policies. The majority of removals detailed in this thesis were “legal”, but this simply means that the state of Queensland instituted laws which made it possible to steal the freedom of an individual based upon their racial background.

From the implementation of so-called protective legislation in 1897 CPA’s implemented the policy of removals in various ways. One of the first CPA’s Walter Roth was pressured by Northern settlers to allow local employment arrangements to continue. As a result he was one the least interventionist of the chief protectors. The major removalist was John W. Bleakley. Bleakley’s views on race impacted greatly upon Queensland’s Aboriginal population. The 1930s represented the period of greatest incarceration of Aboriginal people with the 1934 Amendment Act representing the high water mark of eugenicist management of the population in Queensland.

While the Chief Protectors played a significant role in the way in which a policy of removals was implemented they were also reliant on local protectors. Removals from the Coen district of Cape York in the early 1930s shed some light on the nature of the relationship between the office of the CPA and the Commissioner of Police. The removals project could never have been implemented without the willing assistance of hundreds of local police officers acting as ‘protectors’. With the state of Queensland covering such a vast area local police officers were the eyes and ears of the CPA. There
are some instances of local protectors preventing the removal of Aboriginal people but almost no cases of the CPA ignoring his local protector’s advice. When abuse of Aboriginal people’s basic rights occurred the CPA was only able to offer protection at the discretion of the Commissioner of Police. Brutal methods of removal were rarely checked by local protectors’ superior officers.

**Numbers and Narratives**

This study has combined over-arching numbers and patterns of removal with individual narratives of separation and dispossession. The use of narratives has highlighted the complexities of removal. The number of repeat removals and evidence of absconding from employment agreements, settlements and missions shows a degree of resistance from Aboriginal people in Queensland. Stories of extraordinary journeys taken by individuals over thousands of kilometres deserve to be celebrated as part of our national story. Far from being a case of ‘helpless victims’ being transferred from one location to another the policy of removals was resisted by Aboriginal people in a range of ways. People adopted aliases, crossed state borders, wrote letters of protest and worked with amenable local protectors to avoid removal.

In 2002 the Australian Film “Rabbit Proof Fence” struck a chord with many Australians as they relived the extraordinary journey of three Western Australian Aboriginal children taken from their mother during the 1930s. Publicity for the film in the United States came under attack from Queensland Federal M.P. Peter Slipper. Slipper believed that a poster claiming that Aboriginal children were taken from their parents every week
between 1905 and 1971 was misleading. The estimate provided by this study suggests that between 1897 and 1971 approximately four Aboriginal children were separated from their natural family each week. The fact that this figure is only for the state of Queensland makes the Rabbit Proof Fence publicity claims quite conservative.

On the whole previous estimates of the extent of removals of adults and children in Queensland have proven to be fairly accurate considering the access of data available to this study. The numbers drawn from this study confirm what historians of race relations in Queensland have long argued and what Aboriginal people have known. Removals were a tool of control rather than a measure of compassion.

The success of the film *Rabbit Proof Fence* was not due to the power of the numbers of Aboriginal children separated but rather to the power of the narrative. As audiences engaged with the film they were able to empathise with the characters. It opened the possibility of a shared story of the past rather than the history of ‘the other’. This thesis has drawn on the lessons of historical method used in convict studies. The human experience has not been lost in a cloud of numbers. The narratives of case studies have illustrated the experience of removal while the numbers generated have provided an insight into the workings of racial policy in Queensland.

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8 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 May 2002.
A criticism of “casting Aboriginal people as victims” is often leveled at studies such as the one undertaken here. The argument put is that casting Aboriginal people as ‘victims’ and concentrating on injustices of the past is disempowering and is part of a conspiracy to continue a form of ‘separatism’ in Australia. In a comparative study of historical restitution Elazar Barkan deals with the issue of history creating an identity through “victimization”. Barkan poses a question regarding history, victims and perpetrators. If the writing of history can cause a problem through casting a group of people as victims then it follows that there are also perpetrators. What is the consequence for the perpetrators and descendants of the perpetrators if history is written so as to avoid any implied involvement or responsibility for past injustices? Barkan advocates a ‘discourse of restitution’ where memory and historical identity can be revisited in a way that both can share.

Ann Curthoys highlights the difficulty that a narrative which posits settlers as agents of dispossession has in being received as part of a nation’s foundational story:

the contest over the past is perhaps not between positive and negative versions, but between those which place white Australians as victims,

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9 Eg. “In order to move forward (so its believed), the habit of seeing Aborigines as victims needs to be broken; one way of doing this is to re-evaluate parts of history where their victimhood might have been exaggerated.” Michael Duffy, “Truth, Statistics and Massacres”, Courier-Mail, 23 September 2000.
11 ibid.
struggling heroically against adversity, and those which place them as aggressors, bringing adversity upon others.\textsuperscript{12}

In saying this it is recognized that “victims” have a cherished place in the popular foundational stories of Australia. The beginning of this study compared the methodologies employed in studying convicts with those used to gain a better understanding of race relations. Curthoys argues that a foundational story in Australian history is the story of the convicts expelled from their homeland. The convict, the pioneer and the explorer all form part of what she terms a victimological narrative.\textsuperscript{13}

It is hoped that with a maturing of our understanding of the past there might be room for Aboriginal people in this victimological narrative. That the bravery of those Aboriginal employees who refused to sign exploitative employment agreements will be celebrated. That the elderly Aboriginal people who favoured death over institutionalization will be honoured. That the escape plans and epic journeys back to country will be remembered. But most importantly of all that the suffering that took place as a result of the policy of removals was not the suffering of ‘the other’, ‘the outsider’ but was the suffering of fellow Australians. Once this realization is made the possibility exists for all of us to work together to remedy the toxic residue of removals which continues to wreak havoc in Queensland Aboriginal communities today.

As emphasised at the beginning of this study the particular incident of removals is as important in an understanding of this aspect of Queensland history as the overarching number and pattern of removals over time. In an article detailing the history of the Woppaburra people from Keppel Island in Central Queensland Michael Rowland argues that the smaller narrative should not be lost in any debate over numbers:

> it is not a unique story; similar stories could be told of other island and mainland populations on the Queensland coast. It may serve to tell these stories as individual narratives, since they certainly highlight a level of suffering not disclosed by debates about numbers or words.  

This study of removals is also a valuable reminder of Indigenous presence in Queensland and indeed Australia. During the mid to late 1990s debates surrounding the recently passed *Native Title Amendment Act* were volatile in central and western Queensland. A number of European residents of towns and pastoral properties claimed that Aboriginal people had never lived in the district. Some of this was based on a belief that a lack of access to water would have meant an absence of Indigenous presence in the area.

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13 ibid., p. 8.
15 For example in 1998 some pastoralists in the Charleville district argued that Aboriginal people had not sought access to their pastoral lease for 120 years. Issues of frontier violence and the structural violence of removals were not canvassed in this context. “On the Front Line”, *Courier-Mail*, 28 February 1998.
This study of removals clearly shows that Aboriginal people were removed from almost every location in the state. It is crucial that Aboriginal removals become a part of Queensland’s foundational story.
Appendix I

A Brief Overview of Removals Policy

1859-1865

Pastoral expansion and the accompanying violence of Native Police and some white settlers on the frontier caused great dislocation of Aboriginal populations. No formal apparatus of removal existed, but in a number of cases Aboriginal men, women and children were taken as domestic servants, native police troopers, stockmen etc. In this period, missionary activity had little impact on the number of people removed overall.

1865–1897

The 1865 *Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act* meant that children deemed to be neglected and under fifteen years of age could be removed to a specific institution. Section 7 of this Act stated that any “child born of an Aboriginal or ‘half-caste’ mother” could come under the definition of a neglected child.¹ In 1881 the Colonial Secretary, A.H. Palmer, instructed Benches of Magistrates and Police that all “half-caste” children were to be removed as “neglected” using the 1865 *Industrial Schools Act*. There was resistance from the Police Force and also Aboriginal parents. Relatively few children were actually removed as a result of the 1865 legislation. The establishment of the Commission for Aborigines in 1874 brought about the proposal for a system of protectors and reserves, but there was still no legislative framework for removals.

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1897–1905

The 1897 *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* brought about a system of racial controls which Kidd describes as the most comprehensive of all Australian colonies and later states.\(^2\) The Act applied to all people who were defined as “Aboriginal”. Those coming under the Act could be removed to a designated reserve or from one reserve to another. Under the provisions of the Act, an Aboriginal person could also be kept within the limits of the reserve.\(^3\) In 1899, the state was divided into North and South Protectorates, with 37 locations in North Queensland and 63 in Southern Queensland.\(^4\) Two of the early Chief Protectors, Archibald Meston (south) and Walter Roth (north), responded in different ways to the removals section of the Act. Roth concentrated on the removal of ““half-caste”” children while Meston boasted of the savings that removals brought to the government.\(^5\) The 1901 amendment broadened the removal clause to allow people to be removed to a reserve within the same district or any other district.\(^6\)

1906–1913

In November 1905, Regulations for “Maintaining Discipline and Good Order on a Reserve” were introduced. These regulations meant that anybody absconding from a reserve after being removed there could be sentenced to three months’ imprisonment.
The same sentence could be applied to a person aiding a removee to escape.\textsuperscript{7} There were few legislative changes affecting removals during this period. Chief Protector Richard Howard was less inclined to remove people, favouring their absorption into areas of unregulated labour.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{1914–1940}

This period of time saw the greatest number of removals. Following the appointment of Chief Protector John Bleakley, there was a growth in the number of reserves or settlements that people could be removed to. The number of protectorates was consolidated with a reduction from 100 to 60 in 1916.\textsuperscript{9} The fear of miscegenation and perceived growth of a “half-caste” population dominated the thinking of the time. The 1934 \textit{Amendment Act} extended the definition of “half-caste” sweeping a large number of people under government control.

This Act had far reaching powers. Protectors could now enforce medical examinations for suspected contagious diseases. Section 21 of the new Act gave the minister responsible the power to incarcerate any “aboriginal” or “half-caste” who in his opinion was uncontrollable. They could be held in the institution for such time as the minister felt fit.\textsuperscript{10} Uncontrollable was taken to mean “a menace to the peace, order and proper management of an institution”.\textsuperscript{11} Section 25 of the 1934 \textit{Amendment Act} stipulated that

\begin{flushleft}
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\textsuperscript{7} Regulations for Maintaining Discipline and Good Order Upon A Reserve, Clause 10, Home Secretary’s Department, Brisbane 9 November 1905.
\textsuperscript{8} Ros Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 278.
\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Queensland Government Gazette}, Vol CVII 16 September, 1916, No. 102.
\textsuperscript{10} McQuorqodale, \textit{Aborigines and the Law}, p. 58; \textit{Queensland Government Gazette} No. 3, 3 January 1935: An Act to Amend the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts in certain particulars, and to Enable the Establishment and Carrying on of an Aboriginal Industries Board; and for other purposes.
\textsuperscript{11} McCorquodale, \textit{Aborigines and the Law}, p. 58.
\end{flushleft}
any “Aboriginal” or “half-caste” person convicted of an offence under the Act may be held in an institution at the minister’s discretion and for such time as he felt necessary.\textsuperscript{12}

The wide-ranging powers of this Act and the number of people included in its sights meant an increase in the number of removals. All exemptions to the Act were rescinded and all “half-castes” needed to reapply providing medical evidence that they did not have contagious diseases.\textsuperscript{13} A surveillance of the Aboriginal population for issues of health and discipline dominated the push for removals from 1934 onwards.

The 1939 \textit{Aboriginal Preservations and Protection Act} continued the removal clause of previous Acts but also made the Director of Native Affairs (previous CPA) the legal guardian of every Aboriginal child under the age of 21.\textsuperscript{14} The Director of Native Affairs now had increased powers to remove and detain Aboriginal people on reserves.\textsuperscript{15} Under section 21, a protector was given the authority to remove Aboriginal people camped within or about to camp within the limits of a township. Removals continued through to the outbreak of the World War II.

\textbf{1940–1963}

A number of removals from North Queensland were made during the war years. The most notable of these “war emergency measures” was the removal of people from Cape Bedford to Woorabinda in Central Queensland in 1942. By the late 1940s, close to 40 per cent of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lived on

\textsuperscript{12} ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} Cornelius O’Leary, Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines Circular to all protectors of Aboriginals and Superintendents of Government Settlements and Missions, QSA POL 9H/I.

missions and settlements. The number of removals declined towards the 1960s. The policy of assimilation was adopted and a large number of residents were encouraged to leave settlements during this time. This was partly as a cost-cutting measure and also a response to overcrowding on settlements such as Palm Island. From the 1940s onwards pressure was applied to a number of families on Palm Island to transfer to other settlements. A number of people also made applications to be transferred to other locations.

1963–1971 and Beyond

During this period the Department of Native Affairs continued to encourage “suitable families” to leave settlements. A small number of removals continued to take place. The majority of these involved issues of control and were of prisoners whose gaol terms had expired. Rather than being released, they were returned to institutions managed by the Department of Native Affairs. External factors still played a role in removals — a good example of which was the removal of people from Mapoon to Bamaga in 1963.

The language of the Aborigines’ and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965 differed from previous legislation, but the power to remove remained. Aboriginal people who came under the Act were now termed “assisted Aborigines” and were “transferred” rather

15 ibid.
16 ibid., p. 256.
17 ibid.
18 Acting Superintendent Palm Island to Director of Native Affairs: “People are continually arriving at the Settlement under removal orders and I am afraid that something will have to be done immediately, either to stop new arrivals for some time or make further accommodation to house them.” 10 June 1941, QSA QS 505/1 3A/25 Parts 1 and 2, Box 437.
19 QSA QS 505/1 3A/25 Parts 1 and 2, Box 437 Transfer Palm Island Natives
20 149 people applied to be transferred from Palm Island in 1945: QSA QS 505/1 3A/25 Parts 1 and 2, Box 437 Transfer Palm Island Natives.
than “removed”.\textsuperscript{21} For the first time, the possibility existed for people issued with a “transfer” or removal order to appeal to an outside authority. A person was able to request that a stipendiary magistrate suspend the “transfer” and make a determination on the order. While the possibility of overturning an order existed, the prior action taken by the Department was deemed to be lawful no matter what the outcome was.\textsuperscript{22}

The \textit{Aborigines Act} of 1971 introduced a system of permits for residents and visitors to Aboriginal reserves. All people needed permission to visit or reside on a reserve, and this permission could be revoked by a local Aboriginal council or the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. Residents could leave a reserve but a permit was required to return.\textsuperscript{23} By 1970 there were only eleven official removals recorded and the last two took place in 1971.\textsuperscript{24} While the official removal of adults ceased in the early 1970s, over 100 Aboriginal children continued to be held in dormitories on Aboriginal reserves in 1971.\textsuperscript{25} The Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs had the power to remove these children until 1979.\textsuperscript{26}

The rhetoric of separatism was always tempered by the reality of the need for Aboriginal labour in Queensland. The tension between the ideology of separatism and the pragmatism of exploitative labour arrangements would be played out for most of the twentieth century. Between 1911 and 1940, there were approximately 7164 people removed to missions and reserves. During the same period of time, 18 867 people were

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act of 1965}, Section 34, 307. \\
\textsuperscript{22} ibid., Section 35. \\
\textsuperscript{23} Kidd, “Regulating Bodies”, p. 598. \\
\textsuperscript{24} Removals Register, QSA A/64786, p. 106. \\
\textsuperscript{25} QSA QS 505/1 Box 498 3B/11 Girls Dormitory Palm Island 1/70 – 6/75. \\
sent from the main government-run settlements on employment agreements. These work agreements call into question the reality of a true policy of separatism. They were only made possible through the policy of removals. Removals formed the cornerstone of Aboriginal policy in Queensland — not just because of the numbers of people directly affected but also because of the power that the threat of removal carried.

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27 Source: Annual Reports showing number of work agreements for Barambah/Cherbourg, Taroom/Woorandinda and Hull River/Palm Island. The removals comes from the RD. This number of work agreements does not include the tens of thousands of agreements occurring outside the settlements and reserves. These were also enforced with the threat of removal.
The Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Persons from the Central Region 1859-1971

Number of Persons Removed

- 2,000 +
- 1,500 to 2,000
- 1,000 to 1,500
- 500 to 1,000
- 100 to 500
- 50 to 100
- 0 to 50
The Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Persons from the Cape York Region 1859-1971

Number of Persons Removed

- 2,000 +
- 1,500 to 2,000
- 1,000 to 1,500
- 500 to 1,000
- 100 to 500
- 50 to 100
- 0 to 50

The map illustrates the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons from the Cape York Region between 1859 and 1971. The arrows indicate the direction of removal, and the color intensity corresponds to the number of persons removed, with darker colors indicating a higher number of individuals.
The Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Persons from the Torres Strait Region 1859-1971

Number of Persons Removed
- 2,000 +
- 1,500 to 2,000
- 1,000 to 1,500
- 500 to 1,000
- 100 to 500
- 50 to 100
- 0 to 50
Appendix 3

Documented Removals 1895 - 1971

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Agreements expire at end of present year.
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**Case**
*Lorna Cubillo and Peter Gunner v The Commonwealth of Australia* (Action No. 14 and 21 of 1996), Federal Court of Australia, 30 April 1999, Judgment Sections 260, 310, 787, 788, 838, 1246,


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<td><em>Native Labourers Protection Act</em> (48 Vic No. 20)</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td><em>Pacific Island Labourers Amendment Act</em> (50 Vic No. 6)</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td><em>Justice Act</em> (50 Vic No. 17)</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td><em>Pacific Island Labourers Extension Act</em> (55 Vic No. 17)</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td><em>Leprosy Act</em> (56 Vic No. 2)</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td><em>The Aboriginals Protection and Prevention of the Sale of Opium Act</em> (61 Vic No. 17)</td>
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<td>1899</td>
<td><em>The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act</em></td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td><em>The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act</em> (2 Edw 7 No. 1)</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td><em>State Children Act</em> (2 Geo V No. 11)</td>
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Mornington Island Dormitories REP Box 720
Mitchell River Girls’ Dormitory REP Box 1103
Palm Island Boys’ and Girls’ Dormitory REP Box 498
Palm Island Dormitory Food Supplies REP Box 465
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1A/494 — Pts 1, 2 and 3 Holidays with White Families Box 93
1A/367 — Children’s Holiday Box 77
1A/587 — Pts 1–5 Holiday Scheme Aboriginal Children in Melbourne Box 107
1A/451 — Admin General Adoption of Coloured Children Box 88
3A/43 — Palm Island Almost White Girls on Settlement Box 460
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3A/308 — Admin Palm Island — Removals to Fantome Island Box 490
6A/9 — Aurukun Mission Removals Box 678
IF/218 — Admin T.S. Transfer of Islanders to Mainland Box 353
3A/182 — Admin Palm Island Transferred Children Box 471
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ID/42 — Admin Complaint and investigations — Mt Garnett Box 259
ID/429 — Admin Complaints and investigation — Gordonvale Box 294
ID/6 — Complaints and Investigations — Port Douglas Box 253
ID/85 — Admin Protectorates — Complaints Yungaburra Box 266
6B/24 — Hopevale — Complaints and investigations Box 692
6L/16 — Purga Mission — Complaints by Tom S Dwyer and Others Box 732
1A/144 — Admin General — Complaints — Immorality — Beaudesert Box 40
1A/238 — Admin General — Complaints Re Admission Aboriginals — Fantome Island Box 60
1C/40 — Complaints Against Half Castes Leaving Settlement Box 226
1D/116 — Administration — Living Conditions Bundaberg Box 271
ID/139 — Administration — Complaints and investigations — Nambour (1941) Box 273
ID/14 — Complaints and investigation — Silkwood Box 257
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6J/24 — Mona Mona Mission Removals (1953) Box 719
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6K/20 — Mornington Island Transfer Box 723
9M/65 — Bamaga Transfer Box 874
7A/10 — Protectorates Coen — Relief Box 739
10A/11 — Foleyvale Transfer Box 895
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1A/576 — Transfer of Naurans Box 104
1F/44 — Administration Torres Straits Evacuation, Coloured People Other than Islanders and Aboriginals
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ID/96 — Coen Removals Box 122
ID/158 — Camooweal Box 123
ID/165 — Complaints and Investigations Coen Box 123
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