

To remove and protect

Legislations

The state and territory government legislation on this website was originally compiled for the [Bringing Them Home Report](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html) (http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html) in documenting "the strength and struggles of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by forcible removal"¹.

The laws commence from the early nineteenth century through to modern times. The laws either applied specifically to Aboriginal children or were general child welfare/adoption laws.

Many of the specific laws cover far more than forced removal of Aboriginal children. The Acts gave a Board or agency (the Government Protector) comprehensive powers to regulate every aspect of Aboriginal people's lives – from whether they lived on reserves, worked, had wages and entitlements withheld (now known as Stolen Wages), owned land, to their personal relationships and contact with family and community.

These specific laws were largely repealed by the 1960's -1970's in response to widespread concern as to the effects of these policies. The legacy of these laws lives on today.

Protection Reports

Sir George Grey, a member of the Committee requested of the King of England: "... that measures be taken to secure to the natives of the several Colonies the due observance of justice, and protection of their rights."

However as government protectors were appointed and 'protection' laws passed, their role quickly changed from protection to the control of the lives of Aboriginal people.

This control included almost all aspects of Aboriginal people's lives with 'Protection' laws and regulations determining every aspect of their lives – from the forced removal of children, where they lived, worked, had wages and entitlements withheld (now known as Stolen Wages), owned land, to their personal relationships and contact with family and community.. These laws were in force from the 1840s (in some states) and then, after federation, well into the 1960s and even the 1970s for some states.

On 21-23 April 1937, there was a conference held of "Chief Protectors and Boards controlling aborigines in the States and the Northern Territory." The proceedings of this conference clearly detail the degree of control that the state and territory governments had over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at that time.

This digital collection contains the full text of the annual reports of all state and territory 'protection boards' and the subsequent government agencies. Each state's reports can be searched adding to their historical research value.

More states will be added as they are digitised. Thank you for your patience.

¹Dedication from the [Bringing Them Home Report](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-stolen-children-report-1997) (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-stolen-children-report-1997>)

AIATSIS acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, culture and community.

We pay our respects to elders past and present.