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Stolen Generations - Summary

The practice of removing Indigenous children from their families had begun in the earliest days of European settlement, when children were used as guides, servants and farm labour. The first 'native institution' at Parramatta in 1814 was set up to 'civilise' Aboriginal children.

The Aborigines Protection Board was established and oversaw the mass dislocation of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands onto reserves and stations. Aboriginal girls in particular were sent to homes established by the Board to be trained for domestic service.

In 1909 the Aborigines Protection Act gave the Aborigines Protection Board legal sanction to take Aboriginal children from their families. In 1915, an amendment to the Act gave the Board power to remove any child without parental consent and without a court order.

It is not known precisely how many Aboriginal children were taken away between 1909 and 1969, when the Aborigines Welfare Board (formerly the Aborigines Protection Board) was abolished, due to poor record keeping and the loss of record.