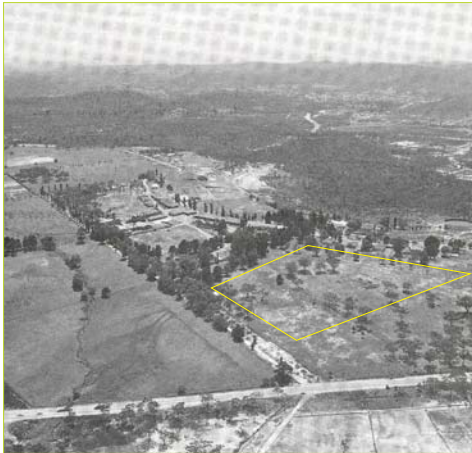


Aerial of Mount Penang c.1960s, courtesy MPJJ Historical Collection



## further reading

Godden Mackay Logan 2001, *Mount Penang Conservation Management Plan*, unpublished report for the Department of Juvenile Justice

Quinn, P. E. 2004, *Unenlightened efficiency: the administration of the juvenile correction system in New South Wales 1905-1988*, unpublished thesis, University of Sydney: <http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/623>

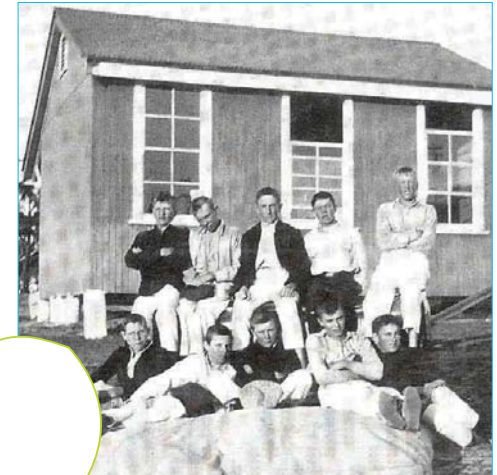
Rubie, Valerie 2003, *Sent to the mountain: a history of Mount Penang Juvenile Justice Centre 1911-1999*, Mount Penang Closure Committee, Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre, West Gosford NSW

Various activities 1973, all courtesy of State Library NSW

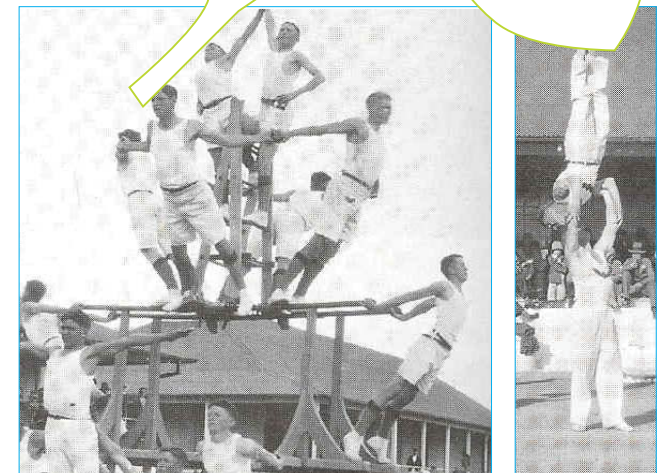


*Note: The information, photographs and quotations used in this Brochure are intended to be anonymous. They come from previous research into the heritage significance of the site. We apologise for any offence given to individuals, families or communities. Our intention was to present some of the different ways people view the heritage of the former Mount Penang Juvenile Justice Centre (not to be confused with the current Fred Baxter Centre).*

Cover images, clockwise from top : Mount Penang School 1920s and gymnastic displays c.1930, all courtesy Alan Hodgekiss



## kariong mountains high school its heritage



## background

In NSW, the care and control of offending children differed from the treatment of destitute children for most of the nineteenth century. The primary difference was that children convicted of committing criminal offences were incarcerated in adult jails until the mid 1860s.

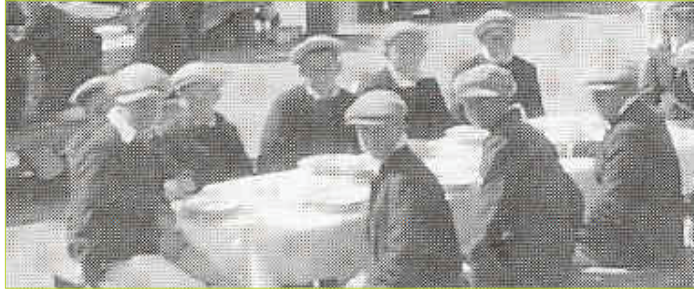
This changed when the Industrial Schools Act was passed in 1866 from which time 'juvenile offenders, as well as those thought to be in the early stages of delinquency, were increasingly detained in large congregate care institutions for juveniles instead of prisons.' From 1866 onwards, a number of reformatory institutions for destitute and delinquent children were established including the Sobraon Nautical Training Ships for Boys founded in 1891, and the Carpenterian Reformatory for Boys established in 1894 at the Brush Farm Estate in Eastwood.

The *Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act 1905* placed a different emphasis on the role of institutions to train and educate as a means to reform. Gosford Farm Home for Boys was set up under this Act.

*"I learnt a lot about human nature, good and bad, at Penang. Also the real impact of social disadvantage to many in our society."*

- Anonymous former staff member, GML CMP 2001

Sunday dinner c.1930s, courtesy of Alan Hodgekiss



Kariong Mountains High School is located to the west of the sandstone plateau of Penang Mountain. The High School and surrounding Central Coast area belong to the local Aboriginal people of the Darkinjung language group. 'Kariong' is said to be an Aboriginal word meaning 'meeting place'. Archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of cultural Aboriginal sites associated with the Hawkesbury sandstone plateau, such as rock engravings, grinding groove sites and shelters. Common motifs found at rock engraving sites include kangaroos, whales, fish and eels.

## introduction

The Kariong area features temperate rainforest. Trees in the vicinity of Kariong Mountains High School support hollow dependant native fauna species including nocturnal mammals such as possums and gliders, microbats and some bird species such as parrots, cockatoos and wood ducks. Mature native trees would have been logged in the area throughout the 19th century.

For most of the 20th century, the high school site and the adjacent Mount Penang Parklands were part of a much larger site that accommodated an institution for the care, control and rehabilitation of delinquent and destitute boys. Originally known as the Gosford Farm Home for Boys, the institution was established in 1911 on 681 acres of temperate rainforest at the summit of Penang Mountain, four kilometres west of Gosford. In 1946, the institution was renamed the Mount Penang Training School for Boys, reflecting a new emphasis on vocational training for rehabilitation. It became the Mount Penang Juvenile Justice Centre in 1991 but was closed and relocated to the new purpose-built Frank Baxter Centre in 1999. The Festival Development Corporation took over most the site at this time, and renamed it Mount Penang Parklands. The High School site was excised from the Festival Development Corporation in 2008. Most of the Parklands, including the Kariong High School site, are listed on the State Heritage Register.

In late 1911, a site around 80 kilometres north of Sydney was selected for a new industrial school for 'wayward boys'. It was located at Mount Penang at 'the lip of the fairly flat summit of the escarpment' and took in sweeping views of Brisbane Water to the east.

## mount penang

In mid 1912, approximately 100 boys from Brush Farm began work to build the new institution. The Gosford Farm Home for Boys was officially opened in August 1913, although construction works continued until 1922. Seventy-four boys were admitted within the first year of operation, most of them between the ages of 16 and 20. Gosford Farm Home for Boys was run as a barracks-style institution similar to its predecessor institutions the Sobraon and Brush Farm, with an emphasis on 'physical drills, training in habits of industry and useful trades, as well as sport'.

The first timber barrack buildings at the Gosford Farm Home were designed so that detainees could build them under supervision. One of the greatest obstacles in the early days was the delivery of building materials due to the remoteness and inaccessibility of the

*"The day you left they gave you a suit, a hat, and a pair of boots. When I walked out I felt great ... I got the train ... Then I threw my hat out of the window... It was great to be out. ..."*

- Anonymous former detainee, Rubie 2003



*"My time straightened me out. I was on the wrong track and so therefore it did help. I did not look sideways once I was out. There was no way that I was going back."*

- Anonymous former detainee, GML CMP 2001

Courtesy of State Library NSW



flanked the original entrance driveway to the Gosford Farm Home.

The institution was self-sufficient from its inception, with detainees providing much of their own food supplies through vegetable and orchard crops, dairying and other livestock. In addition to constructing buildings, the boys cleared land, sank wells, erected windmills, maintained electrical generators and other machinery, fabricated tools and furniture, levelled their own playing fields and dug the swimming pool. Hard physical labour was supposed to have a reformatory effect, but the approach was also a cost-cutting measure.

By the mid 1940s, Gosford Farm Home for Boys was subjected to bad press, with some labelling it as a 'finishing school' for crime' and others as a 'nursery for evil-doers ... where many criminals served their apprenticeship'. In 1946, the institution was rededicated as a school 'for the reception, maintenance, discipline, education and training of children and persons committed to such institutions'. It was renamed the Mount Penang Training School for Boys to reflect an emphasis on vocational training. The age range for boys admitted to the institution was restricted to 14 to 18 years. The population at Mount Penang more than doubled between the late 1940s and mid 1960. Mount Penang Training School for Boys changed its name again in 1991, becoming the Mount Penang Juvenile Justice Centre. It was closed and relocated in 1999.

The site of the former juvenile justice centre at Kariong is a contested place. It has different meanings to the boys and young men who were incarcerated there over the institution's almost hundred year history. For some former detainees, it has been remembered as a place of reform or redemption, while for others it was the beginning of their institutionalisation within the NSW correctional system.

Workshops, courtesy of State Library NSW



site. The Farm Home was at the summit of a mountain and could only be reached by way of a very steep bush track. The dormitory block *Carinya* and the former maintenance store immediately to the north of the High School were some of the earliest buildings on the site, built between 1912 and 1922. The cottages to the east of the school were constructed as staff accommodation. There are a number of mature trees at Mount Penang Parklands that would have been planted by the earliest residents at the Gosford Farm Home, including the plantings within the school grounds to the west which originally