Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE4255

Australian Inland Mission

(1912 -)

Born	19120101, Central and Northern Australia Australia
Occupation	Religious organisation, Social support organisation

Summary

In the early twentieth century, white Australians began to push settlement into remote regions in Northern Australia. Concerns about the type of society that such a harsh environment might produce were a real concern to Europeans. How could a balanced and healthy society develop in such an isolated, masculine environment? The Australian Inland Mission (AIM) was established in 1912 to help alleviate these concerns.

On the advice of some women who lived, or had lived, in the ‘outback’, a Presbyterian minister, Reverend John Flynn, travelled widely in the Northern Territory, surveying conditions in 1912 and speaking to residents who appeared to be in it for the long haul. As he visited people where he found them, nearly all men, he was concerned that community couldn’t develop unless people were prepared to bring their wives and raise their families in those remote regions.

His vision, therefore was to provide pastoral care to a range of people with a variety of needs that were significantly different to those of the metropolitan centres. Alongside that he saw the need for nursing services so that women particularly would feel safe in outback Australia. Arguably, the main reason for th establishment of the Australian Inland Mission was to provide for the well-being of women and children in remote Australia.

He facilitated this vision through the use of modern technology. He pioneered the development of radio communications in the bush, at the same time as he started to develop the outback nursing clinics, and created a network of patrol padres on the road to be there for people wherever they were found.

From 1912 the Australian Inland Mission established 15 nursing homes/bush hospitals in remote Australian locations.

Following the establishment of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977, the work of the AIM continued in the Presbyterian Church as the Presbyterian Inland Mission and in the Uniting Church as Frontier Services.

Published resources

Book
Flynn's Outback Angels: Casting the Mantle - 1901 to World War II, Rudolph, Ivan, 2001

Journal
The Outback battler : a quarterly magazine issued in bush interests, Flynn, Rev. John, 1911

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Records of the Uniting Church in Australia Frontier Services, 1897-2011 [manuscript]

Author Details
Nikki Henningham

Created 17 August 2009
Last modified 20 November 2018