

The “Half Caste Act” (Australia)

The Half-Caste Act of 1886 was introduced to “provide protection and management of the Aboriginal natives” in Victoria (state in South Australia). This was a continuation of the Aboriginal Protection Act, which controlled the lives, including marriage, family life, employment, and residence, of the Indigenous Australians. It took away children from their families to educate them in the European system. The 1886 Act affected ‘half-castes’, or Aboriginal children of mixed descent. The children considered less than ‘full blooded’ Aboriginal were removed from the reserves, and forced to assimilate into European society. These half-casts were rejected by both the Aborigines and the white population. They were sent to foster families in rural areas, where they were ‘prepared’ for introduction into white society. The aim was to ‘breed out’ these half-cast Aborigines, to make Australian society ‘more civilised’. The separation from their families caused great pain, anger, and therefore protest. This contributed to the “stolen generation”.