

Public Schools — Riverstone And District

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In the latter half of the last century, schooling for children in many districts was limited. Wealthy families could afford a governess or tutor. Others sent their children to a private school, if one existed. Many private schools were established by churches.

The Public Schools' Bill of 1866 brought denominational and former "national", now "public" schools under the control of a Council of Education. The bill required a minimum of average attendance of 30 for denominational schools, 25 for public schools. In sparsely populated areas the Act provided for the payment of teachers in privately erected small provisional schools.

Section 22 of the Education Act referring to Provisional Schools stated: *the course of instruction shall be wholly secular and all such schools shall be subject to the same controls and inspection as are preserved for Public Schools so soon as 20 children shall have been in regular attendance at any such school for 3 months the said school shall be converted into a Public School.*

In 1880 the Public Instruction Act introduced compulsory education into New South Wales for the first time. Parents with children over 6 years of age and not yet 14 were expected to send them to school or face prosecution. To enforce the Act the government appointed school attendance officers, whose task was to check on children not attending school and to launch prosecutions if necessary.

Public Schools opened in the Riverstone district as follows:

- 1868** — **Maraylya (known as North Rocks)** operated as a Provisional School till 1871. It reopened in August 1874 and became a Public school in June 1880. In 1895 its name was changed to **Forrester**. It became **Maraylya** in 1920.
- 1872** — **Vineyard** opened as a Provisional School in June 1872 & became a Public School in 1880.
- 1875** — **Rouse Hill Public School** was opened in July, 1875.
- 1883** — **Nelson Public School** was opened. It closed in August 1902, although an article in the *Hawkesbury Gazette* of September 1888 read*the public school at Nelson will be closed and (that) the new institution at Rouse Hill will be sufficiently large to accommodate the needs of the scholars in the locality...*
- 1883** — **Riverstone Public School** was opened in January, 1883.
- 1889** — **Marsden Park Public School** opened in July, 1889.
- 1895** — **Annangrove (known as Rouse Hill Road)** opened as a Public School in July 1895, became known as *Annangrove* in October 1896, closed in May 1934 and reopened in June 1947.
- 1900** — **Oakville** opened as a Public School in March 1900.
- 1919** — **Schofields Public School** opened in March, 1919.