



World War II Schools close in Queensland

Queensland History Week
23 - 27 May 2022



**QUEENSLAND
HISTORY WEEK**
23-27 MAY 2022

PROUDLY PRESENTED BY
QUEENSLAND HISTORY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



WWW.QHTA.COM.AU
#QLDHISTORYWEEK

Above:

Children dig air raid trenches at Ascot State School in Brisbane.

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/extras/ww2/fightingathome.htm>

Right:

The brick bomb shelters built on one side of Elizabeth Street in 1942.

(Supplied: State Library of Queensland)

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-12/brisbane-wwii-air-raid-shelters-uncovered-by-developers/9750304>



Stories of Queensland - WWII Schools Close

Early in 1942, Queensland Premier Forgan Smith ordered all Queensland coastal schools to close. Fears of a Japanese invasion saw children out of school for almost four months, and many boarding students evacuated to nearby temporary classrooms, or inland towns. When schools re-opened in March, those along the coast were required to have slit-trenches and air raid shelters on site, some of which were built with the help of parents and past students. Attendance at school was still optional until the end of the war and students up to grade 6 attended only morning classes. Teachers were taught first aid techniques and evacuation drills were practised.

Many school buildings were used by the military during the closure, some as barracks and some as hospitals.

Meanwhile, air raid shelters were being built in Brisbane city centre. Senior Research Librarian at the State Library of Queensland, Christina Ealing-Godbold, commented in an ABC interview that back in 1939, Brisbane as a 'sleepy place' had viewed air raid shelters as 'just not necessary'. But by 1942 things had changed. "By 1944 we had 275 brick or concrete structures, [including] pillboxes right down the middle of Elizabeth Street in the city, but there were many more in back gardens and parks, and every school had to have one."

Today 20 air raid shelters are listed on the Queensland Heritage Register, including a collection of 4 in Fortitude Valley.

Thinking Activity

School Closures - Covid and WWII

- What was the **same or similar** about these situations?
- What may have been **different**?

Extra for experts

- What happened to your school in WW2?
- Have you seen any of the air raid shelters in Brisbane city centre? Read this article from Queensland State Archives for more information.
<https://blogs.archives.qld.gov.au/2021/04/21/brisbanes-air-raid-shelters/>
- How was your community impacted by WW2?

References

<https://www.ozatwar.com/locations/schools@war.htm>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/council/media-releases/largest-group-of-air-raid-shelters-now-heritage-listed>

<https://www.mustdobrisbane.com/visitor-info-arts-culture-history/air-raid-shelters-teneriffe>

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/extras/ww2/fightingathome.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_End_State_School

<https://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/homefront/children-in-wartime#:~:text=the%20Brisbane%20skies.-,Queensland%20schools%20at%20war,the%20end%20of%20summer%20holidays.>

<https://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/homefront/children-in-wartime#:~:text=the%20Brisbane%20skies.-,Queensland%20schools%20at%20war,the%20end%20of%20summer%20holidays.>