Social Welfare Branch, State Government of Victoria

1960 – 1970

Details

The Social Welfare Branch was established under the provisions of the Social Welfare Act 1960 (No.6651) which was proclaimed in stages between 6 July 1960 and 21 June 1961. The Social Welfare Branch sat within the Chief Secretary's Department and assumed all of the functions of the former Children's Welfare Department and the Penal and Gaols Branch. These administrative changes arose from a recognition of the need to concentrate on the prevention rather than the mere alleviation of social problems. In 1971, all of the Social Welfare Branch's functions were taken over by the new Social Welfare Department.

The Social Welfare Branch comprised four divisions: Family Welfare, Youth Welfare, Probation and Parole and Prisons. New sections were established to improve the Department's staff training and information collection. The Branch supervised a number of state-run institutions (reception centres, children's homes and family group homes).

The creation of the Social Welfare Branch in 1960 was accompanied by the development of new child and family welfare services in the community. The new administrative arrangements reflected an intention for the Department to take a new, rehabilitative approach to offenders and disrupted families.

The Family Welfare Division provided services to children 'requiring care and protection' (i.e., wards of the state). This Division's activities had a particular focus on work of a preventative nature. It had the following responsibilities:

> *promotion and development of family welfare, co-ordination of voluntary organizations, government departments and persons concerned with the provision of welfare services for families, control and supervision of children and young persons in need of care and protection, including foster care, adoption, wardship, infant life protection, child employment and child migrants, management and control of state institutions for the reception and treatment of children and young persons including children's homes and reception centres, provision of aftercare for children and young persons, family counselling, family assistance (financial).*

Under the Director of Family Welfare, there were four sections within the Family Welfare Division: family counselling, family assistance (i.e. maintenance collection), child care (foster care, infant life protection and child migration) and children's homes (broad supervision of reception centres and children's homes, and responsible for nearly all wards of state in Victoria).

The Youth Welfare Division provided services to young offenders, with a new emphasis on rehabilitative facilities for 'delinquents'. The establishment of this Division was significant in the history of child welfare in Victoria, with its clear separation from the services provided by the Family Welfare Division. The Youth Welfare Division's major functions were:

> *administration of youth training centres and remand centres for young offenders, classification of young offenders, treatment and rehabilitation of young offenders, after care of young offenders including accommodation in hostels and employment services, prevention of delinquency through youth work/services programs.*

The new 'divisional' structure of the Social Welfare Branch was subsequently criticised in the Norgard Report of 1976. This Report raised concerns about fragmentation of decision-making and general administration, 'especially in those sections of the Family Welfare Division which are concerned with wards of State'. The Department's 'regionalisation' program, which commenced in the early 1970s, was an attempt to address this structural issue.

The Social Welfare Act 1970 created the new Social Welfare Department, which assumed responsibility for all functions previously administered by the Social Welfare Branch.

More info

Chronology

- Children's Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria (1924 - 1960)
  - **Social Welfare Branch, State Government of Victoria (1960 – 1970)**
    - Social Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria (1970 - 1978)

Related Entries

Ran
- [Turana (1955 - 1993)](#)
  Date: 1960 - 1970
- [Winlaton (1956 - c. 1991)](#)
  Date: 1960 - 1970
- [Family Group Home Program (1956 - 2000s)](#)
  Date: 1960 - 1970
- [Departmental Family Group Homes, Victoria (1956 - 2000s)](#)
  Date: 1960 - 1970
- [Sutton Grange (1957 - 1977)](#)
  Date: 1960 - 1970
- [Hillside Boys' Home (1959 - c. 1985)](#)
  Date: 1960 - 1970
- [Sunshine Boys' Hostel (1959 - 1980s)](#)
  Date: 1960 -
- [Allambie Reception Centre (1961 - 1990)](#)
  Date: 1961 - 1970
- [Pirra Girls' Home (1961 - c. 1980)](#)
  Date: 1961 - 1970
- [Ballarat Reception Centre (1961 - 1982?)](#)
  Date: 1961 - 1970
- [The Gables (1962 - 1985)](#)
  Date: 1962 - 1970
- [Miralee Reception Centre (1963 - 1986?)](#)
- [Illoura Children's Home (1964 - 1984)](#)
  Date: 1964 - 1970

- [Langi Kal Kal (1965 - 1993)](#)
  Date: 1965 - 1970
- [Malmsbury Youth Training Centre (1965 - 2023)](#)
  Date: 1965 - 1970
- [Bendigo Reception Centre (1965 - 1966)](#)
  Date: 1965 - 1966
- [Acheron Youth Training Centre (c. 1966 - 2008)](#)
  Date: 1966 - 1970
- [Ashendene Boys' Home (1966 - 1988)](#)
  Date: 1966 - 1970
- [Baltara Reception Centre (1968 - c. 1992)](#)
  Date: 1968 - 1970

Related Legislation
- [Social Welfare Act 1960, Victoria (1960 - 1971)](#)

Resources

- Markiewicz, Anne, *[The Child Welfare System in Victoria: changing context and perspective 1945-1995](#)*, Children Australia, 1996
- Wilder, Chris, *[Submission no 257 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#)*, 2005
- *[Donella Jaggs interviewed by Jill Barnard in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project [sound recording]](#)*, 20 January 2011 - 18 February 2011

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records (1864 - current)](#)
- [Records of Victorian Adoptions (c. 1908 - current)](#)
- [Ward Index Cards (1960 - 1986)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files (1921 - 1989)](#)
- [Departmental Children's Homes Files (1955 - 1987)](#)
- [Child Migration Files (1947? - 1971?)](#)

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