

Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records

1864 –

To access these records:

Please contact the Care Leaver Records Service:

Phone: (03) 9096 8449

Email: clrs@dffh.vic.gov.au

Records Location

These records are held by [Public Record Office Victoria \(1973 - current\)](#) and [Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, State Government of Victoria \(2021 - current\)](#)

Details

Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care records date back to 1864 and continue to be created in the present. The first records to be kept were Ward Registers, which assigned a number to each child who was made a ward of the state, and recorded information about them and their placements in institutions and foster care (also known as boarding out). From 1920, the state government also began to record Case Files about individual children. Former state wards (and their family members) can access their records through the Care Leavers Records Service.

Access Conditions

Restricted Access – Records containing personal or private information about children are closed to public access for a period of 99 years. Care Leavers (and their families) can access these records via the Care Leaver Records Service.

After 99 years, ward records become available to the general public on open access. For example, in 2024, ward records up to 1923 are available on open access through Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

Records

Custody of these records is split between the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and the state archives, PROV.

Ward Registers (1864 – 1965)

The [Ward Registers](#) document information about children committed to state 'care' in Victoria, from 1864 to 1965. The Registers were used to allocate a unique number to each child committed into state 'care', and comprise state ward numbers 1 through to number 84,818. The registers were maintained by the Chief Secretary's Department.

This series was initially made up of large leather bound volumes which recorded double-page entries for each child including the following information: name, sex, date of birth, native place, religion, ability to read or write, date of commitment, committing bench, date of admission, term, cause of commitment, whether parents are

living, vaccination details, previous history, where stationed, licensing out details, details re discharge and half yearly report information.

The Ward Registers are arranged numerically, by ward number. Sometimes the Registers have a code that indicates more information about a child, for example, R stands for reformatory school, C/I/S stands for Catholic Industrial School.

There are a number of 'sequences' within this series. For example, the system began registering 'neglected' and 'criminal' children in the same volume. Later, separate volumes were kept for convicted and 'neglected' children, or for different reformatories. From 1897, all children in 'care' were again registered in the same volume.

All of the Ward Registers were copied during the 1990s. Digitised records in the Ward Registers are available online from the PROV website, for entries during the open period, that is, entries created more than 99 years ago. For example, in 2024, digitised Ward Register entries up to 1923 are available on the PROV website.

Microfiche copies of the Ward Registers dated from 1864-1897 can be consulted at the State Library of Victoria, and at PROV. These include information about 'neglected' children admitted up to 23 April 1895 and convicted children admitted up to 1897.

There is also a series of indexes to the Ward Registers (Series number VPRS 6757), available at the Public Records Office of Victoria via [this link](#). The indexes are arranged alphabetically, and record the child's name and wardship number for their admission. The wardship number can then be used to look up their entry in the Ward Registers. In early years, if a child was admitted multiple times they will have multiple wardship numbers, and multiple index entries. From 1898, the Registers had an internal index at the beginning of each volume.

State Ward Case Files (1920 – c. 2001)

The Victorian government began to create [State Ward Case Files](#) around 1920. The first case file in this series is for state ward number 51,255.

For the period 1920 to 1935, there are frequent and large gaps in the files. For the period 1935 to 1961, there are relatively few gaps in the files. Around 1961, a new recordkeeping system was introduced, which created different files for children and young people, depending on whether they were the responsibility of the Family Welfare Division or the Youth Welfare division of the Social Welfare Branch. New numbering systems were introduced again in 1978 and 1986.

More info

Organisations in these records

Related Organisations

- [Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria \(1864 - 1887\)](#)
- [Reformatory for Boys \(1864 - 1893\)](#)
- [Government Reformatory for Protestant Girls \(1864? - 1893\)](#)
- [The 'Deborah' \(1864 - 1873?\)](#)
- [Sunbury Industrial School \(1865 - 1880?\)](#)
- [Geelong Industrial School \(c. 1865 - c. 1880\)](#)
- [The 'Sir Harry Smith' \(1865 - 1873\)](#)
- [Sanatory Station \(c. 1867 - c. 1868\)](#)
- [The 'Nelson' \(1868 - 1876\)](#)
- [Bendigo Benevolent Asylum Industrial School \(1868 - 1885\)](#)
- [The 'Success' \(1868 - 1873?\)](#)
- [Ballarat Industrial School \(1869 - c. 1879\)](#)
- [Royal Park Industrial School \(1875 - c. 1887\)](#)

- [Royal Park Depot \(c. 1880 - 1955\)](#)
- [Woodlands Home \(1886 - 1890s\)](#)
- [Department for Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria \(1887 - 1900\)](#)
- [Department for Neglected Children, Colony of Victoria \(1887 - 1900\)](#)
- [Kew Children's Cottages \(1887 - 2008\)](#)
- [Ballarat Probationary School for Boys, Alfredton \(1890 - 1892\)](#)
- [Kingsbury Farm Reformatory \(1893 - 1912\)](#)
- [Department for Neglected Children, State Government of Victoria \(1901 - 1924\)](#)
- [Department for Reformatory Schools, State Government of Victoria \(1901 - 1954\)](#)

The Department for Reformatory Schools maintained volumes of Annual Reports from 1900 to 1908.

- [The 'John Murray' Training Ship \(1910 - 1918\)](#)
- [Children's Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria \(1924 - 1960\)](#)
- [Bethany Babies' Home \(1928 - 1977\)](#)

Victorian Government Records relating to Wardship and Adoption contains records of adoptions organised from Bethany Babies' Home.

- [Travancore \(1933 - current\)](#)
- [Morning Star Boys' Home \(c. 1936 - 1975\)](#)

The Victorian Government Records relating to Wardship and Adoption contains records relating to residents of Morning Star Boys' Home who were wards of the state. The whereabouts of client files from the Home are not known.

- [Northcote Farm School \(1937 - 1979\)](#)
- [Janefield Colony \(1937 - 1996\)](#)
- [Pleasant Creek Colony \(1937 - 1999\)](#)
- [Moorakyn Hostel \(1942? - c. 1988\)](#)
- [Glendonald School for Deaf Children \(1951 - 1991\)](#)
- [Turana \(1955 - 1993\)](#)
- [Winlaton \(1956 - c. 1991\)](#)
- [Family Group Home Program \(1956 - 2000s\)](#)
- [Sandhurst Boys' Home \(1956 - 2016\)](#)
- [Departmental Family Group Homes, Victoria \(1956 - 2000s\)](#)
- [Sutton Grange \(1957 - 1977\)](#)
- [Hillside Boys' Home \(1959 - c. 1985\)](#)
- [Sunshine Boys' Hostel \(1959 - 1980s\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Branch, State Government of Victoria \(1960 - 1970\)](#)
- [Allambie Reception Centre \(1961 - 1990\)](#)
- [Pirra Girls' Home \(1961 - c. 1980\)](#)
- [Ballarat Reception Centre \(1961 - 1982?\)](#)
- [The Gables \(1962 - 1985\)](#)
- [Miralee Reception Centre \(1963 - 1986?\)](#)
- [Illoura Children's Home \(1964 - 1984\)](#)
- [Langi Kal Kal \(1965 - 1993\)](#)
- [Malmsbury Youth Training Centre \(1965 - 2023\)](#)
- [Bendigo Reception Centre \(1965 - 1966\)](#)
- [Ivanhoe Girls' Hostel \(1965? - 1993?\)](#)
- [Acheron Youth Training Centre \(c. 1966 - 2008\)](#)
- [Ashdene Boys' Home \(1966 - 1988\)](#)
- [Baltara Reception Centre \(1968 - c. 1992\)](#)

The Department of Human Services holds most known records related to Baltara Reception Centre.

- [Social Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria \(1970 - 1978\)](#)
- [Lady Dugan Children's Home \(1970 - 1976\)](#)
- [Hawthorn Youth Welfare Service \(1970 - current\)](#)
- [Aboriginal Youth Support Service \(c. 1973 - current\)](#)
- [Windsor Youth Welfare Service \(1973 - current\)](#)
- [Western Youth Welfare Service, State of Victoria \(1975 - 1985?\)](#)
- [Department of Community Welfare Services, State Government of Victoria \(1978 - 1985\)](#)
- [Community Services Victoria, State Government of Victoria \(1985 - 1992\)](#)
- [The Gables Residential Unit 101 \(1985 - c. 1992\)](#)

- [Nunawading Youth Residential Centre \(1991 - 1993?\)](#)
- [Health and Community Services, State Government of Victoria \(1992 - 1995\)](#)
- [Melbourne Youth Justice Centre \(1993 - current\)](#)
- [Melbourne Youth Residential Centre \(1993 - current\)](#)

Related Archival Collections

- [Bethany Community Support Records \(1896 - 2007?\)](#)

In 1977, when Bethany ceased operations as an adoption agency and babies' Victorian Government Records relating to Wardship and Adoption contains records of adoptions organised from Bethany Babies' Home.

Other Resources



Title: Pirra Children's Home - Winter Menu - 1970

Type: Image

Date: 1970

[Details](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/victorian-government-records-relating-to-wardship-and-adoption/>