

# Department of Public Instruction

1880 – 1915

## Details

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The Department of Public Instruction controlled reformatories, industrial schools and training vessels from 1881, until the responsibility for such institutions were transferred to the Child Welfare Department in 1923. The Public Instruction Department was created by the *Public Instruction Act* 1880. This Act removed government funding from religious schools and made it compulsory for all children aged between seven and fourteen to attend school. After the Child Welfare Department was created in 1923 the Department of Public Instruction's main involvement with child welfare was with reporting truancy. Children convicted of truancy could be removed and placed in special institutions.

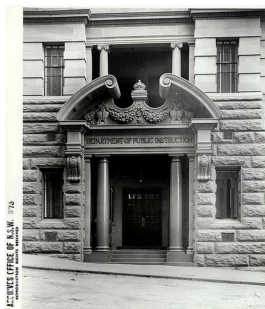
During the early years of the settlement of the Colony of New South Wales, the Governors provided support to schools. By the 1820s the Churches became organised and the State withdrew to a considerable degree until 1848 when state elementary schools were established. In 1848 education was placed under the control of two boards: the Board of National Education and the Denominational School Board. These two boards functioned concurrently until 1866 when the Public Schools Act replaced them with the Council of Education.

The Department of Justice and Public Instruction was created in 1873. With the passing of the Public Instruction Act all business of an educational nature was transferred to the control of the Department of Public Instruction. The Public Instruction Act repealed the Public Schools Act 1866, dissolved the Council of Education and provided for the cessation of all aid to Denominational Schools from 31 December 1882. In 1889, technical education was transferred to the control of the Minister for Public Instruction, being administered through the Technical Education Branch of the Department. Under the Technical Education and New South Wales University of Technology Act, 1949 a separate Department of Technical Education was established.

In 1957 the Department was renamed the Department of Education. In 1990, the name changed to the Department of School Education. In 1998, the Department was amalgamated with the Department of Technical and Further Education to become the Department of Education and Training.

## Gallery

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**Department of Public Instruction, Sydney**

**Description:** Entrance to the Department of Public Instruction Building, Sydney. This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.

## More info

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# Chronology

- Department of Justice and Public Instruction (1873 - 1881)
- Council of Education (1866 - 1880)
  - **Department of Public Instruction (1880 – 1915)**
    - Department of Education, State Government of New South Wales (1915 - 1989)

## Related Entries

### Ran

- [Brush Farm \(1803 - current\)](#)  
The Department of Public Instruction used Brush Farm House as the premises for its Carpentarian Reformatory for Boys and Brush Farm Reformatory.  
Date: 1894 - 1912
- [Biloela Industrial School, Cockatoo Island \(1871 - 1887\)](#)  
The Department of Public Instruction ran Biloela Industrial School.  
Date: 1881 - 1887
- [Shaftesbury Reformatory School \(1880 - 1904\)](#)  
The Department of Public Instruction ran Shaftesbury Reformatory School.  
Date: 1880 - 1904
- [Parramatta Girls Industrial School \(1887 - 1912\)](#)  
The Department of Public Instruction ran Parramatta Girls Industrial School until the Child Welfare Act was introduced in 1923.  
Date: 1887 - 1923
- [Brush Farm Reformatory \(1908 - 1912\)](#)  
Date: 1908 - 1912
- [Gosford Farm Home for Boys \(1911 - 1923\)](#)  
The Department of Public Instruction established the Gosford Farm Home for Boys in 1912 and operated it until the Child Welfare Act was introduced in 1923.  
Date: 1912 - 1923
- [Parramatta Girls Training Home \(1912 - 1946\)](#)  
The Department of Public Instruction ran Parramatta Girls Training Home until the Child Welfare Act was introduced in 1923.  
Date: 1912 - 1923

### Related Organisations

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)  
The State Children's Relief Board became part of the Department of Public Instruction in 1906.  
Date: 1906 -
- [State Children's Relief Department \(1881 - 1923\)](#)  
The State Children's Relief Department was part of the Department of Public Instruction  
Date: 1901 - 1915

## Resources

- Museums of History NSW, [Schools and related records](#), No date
- Museums of History NSW, [School Records Guide](#), No date
- Department of Justice, [History](#), Children's Court of New South Wales, 2012
- State Records Authority of New South Wales, [Dept of Community Services](#), No date

## Records

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### Records held by other organisations

- [School Records, Education Department \(1881 - c. 2000\)](#)
  - [School Files \(1876 - 1979\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/department-of-public-instruction/>