

# Children's Court of New South Wales

October 1905 –

## Details

---

The Children's Court of New South Wales was established in 1905, with the passing of the Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act. Children's Courts were proclaimed at Sydney, Newcastle, Parramatta, Burwood and Broken Hill. A Children's Court is a hearing, intended to ensure children receive specialist support and they are sheltered from adult courts. While children usually attend courts in specialised buildings in main centres, Children's Courts can be convened by a Children's Court Magistrate in any room of any courthouse in New South Wales.

Since 1905, Children's Courts in NSW have dealt with all matters relating to children, including offences by them, and against them. Children's Courts were the first legal method of removing children from their families and were able to place "neglected" or "delinquent" children under probation (supervision), send those convicted of offences to reformatories or industrial schools and order maintenance or boarding out payments for deserted mothers. It also made decisions about truancy, boarding out, institutionalisation and other matters. The Children's Court is still the major arbiter of decisions relating to children.

Children's Courts that operated in the past but were closed by the 1980s were in Surry Hills (Metropolitan Children's Court), Burwood, Campsie, Parramatta, Hornsby and Haberfield (Yasmar).

## Gallery

---



**Court scene Ashfield Children's Court Yasmar**

**Description:** This is a digital copy of a photograph from an album collected by Child Welfare Department officers in the late 1940s. From the collection of Leonie Knapman.

---

## More info

---

### Related Entries

#### Related Glossary Terms

- [Homefinder \(1890 - 1920s\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Deserted Wives and Children Act 1901, New South Wales \(1901 - 1964\)](#)
- [Infant Protection Act 1904, New South Wales \(1904 - 1923\)](#)
- [Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act 1905, New South Wales \(1905 - 1923\)](#)

- [Child Welfare Act 1923, New South Wales \(1923 - 1939\)](#)  
Children's Courts were regulated by the *Child Welfare Act 1923*.  
Date: 1923 - 1939
- [Child Welfare Act 1939, New South Wales \(1939 - 1987\)](#)
- [Child Welfare \(Commonwealth Agreement Ratification\) Act 1941, New South Wales \(1941 - current\)](#)
- [Child Welfare \(Further Amendment\) Act 1961, New South Wales \(1961 - 1965\)](#)
- [Child Welfare \(Commonwealth Agreement Ratification\) Act 1962, New South Wales \(1962 - current\)](#)
- [Child Welfare \(Amendment\) Act 1967, New South Wales \(1967 - 1987\)](#)
- [Child Welfare \(Amendment\) Act 1969, New South Wales \(1969 - 1987\)](#)
- [Children's Court Act 1987, New South Wales \(1987 - current\)](#)
- [Children \(Criminal Proceedings\) Act 1987, New South Wales \(1987 - current\)](#)
- [Children \(Detention Centres\) Act 1987, New South Wales \(1987 - current\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
- [Ormond House \(1884 - 1923\)](#)
- [Manly Boys' Probationary Home \(1903 - 1924\)](#)
- [Metropolitan Boys' Shelter \(1911 - 1983\)](#)
- [Metropolitan Children's Court \(1911 - 1983\)](#)
- [Bexley Boys' Home \(1915 - 1979\)](#)
- [Arncliffe Girls' Industrial Home \(1916 - 1930\)](#)
- [Royleston \(1922 - 1983\)](#)
- [Metropolitan Girls' Shelter, Glebe \(c. 1923 - 1978\)](#)
- [Dee Why Home for Boys \(1924 - 1936\)](#)
- [Gill Memorial Boys' Home \(1936 - 1980\)](#)
- [Christ Church St Laurence Welfare Bureau \(1936 - c. 1941\)](#)  
Christ Church St Laurence Welfare Bureau worked with boys who had been through Children's Courts.  
Date: 1936 - 1941
- [Christ Church Boys League Welfare Bureau \(1936 - 1950?\)](#)
- [Tahmoor Children's Home \(1941 - 1979\)](#)
- [Institution for Boys, Tamworth \(1948 - 1976\)](#)
- [Worimi Shelter \(1966 - 2000\)](#)
- [Cobham Children's Court \(1978 - 2006\)](#)
- [Bidura Children's Court \(1983 - 2017\)](#)

### Related Places

- [Ormond House \(1824 - current\)](#)  
The first Children's Court in New South Wales was convened in Ormond House and operated there until the Metropolitan Children's Court opened in Albion Street Surry Hills in 1912.  
Date: 1905 - 1912

### Related Concepts

- [Juvenile Justice \(1860s - current\)](#)
- [Probation \(c. 1905 - current\)](#)

## Resources

- Freyne, Catherine, [Tit for Tat: The Story of Sandra Willson](#), 20 November 2011
- McLean, Donald, *Children In Need: An account of the administration and functions of the Child Welfare Department, New South Wales, Australia: with an examination of the principles involved in helping deprived and wayward children*, 1955
- Scrivener, Gladys, ["Rescuing the rising generation" : industrial schools in New South Wales, 1850-1910](#), 1996
- The Glebe Society, [Heritage Buildings: Bidura, 357 Glebe Point Road](#), April 2013
- Quinn, Peter E, [Unenlightened efficiency: the administration of the juvenile correction system in New South Wales 1905-1988](#), 27 March 2006
- Howlett, Christine, [Deaths in Custody Australia: No. 3 Deaths in Juvenile Detention, 1980-1992](#), May 1993

- Patrick, Sheila, [\*Children who need foster parents' love: State gives everything except true family life\*](#), The Australian Women's Weekly, 28 May 1952
- Gretchell, Ivy May, [\*Submission 377 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care\*](#), 2005
- A special correspondent, [\*How the Treatment of Child Delinquents Fails: No Proper Scheme To Cure Warped Mentalities\*](#), Australian Women's Weekly, 10 December 1939
- [\*Patrick Sephton interviewed by Ann-Mari Jordens in the Bringing them home oral history project \(2001\)\*](#), 2001

## Records

---

### Records held by other organisations

- [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
  - [Children's Court information, Department of Juvenile Justice \(c. 1980 - current\)](#)
  - [Central Juvenile Court Index \(c. 1957 - c. 1980\)](#)
- 

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/childrens-court/>