

State Ward Index Cards, State Children's Department and successors

1900 – 1992

Other Names: • SWICs

To access these records:

Please contact the State Records Research Centre:

Postal Address: GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Phone: 08 7322 7077

Reference Number

Website: <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/contact-us>

Quote this number to access your records: State Records of South Australia Series ID, GRS/4472

Records Location

These records are held by [State Records of South Australia \(1919 - current\)](#)

Details

State Ward Index cards, often referred to as SWICs, are among the oldest records kept by the Government relating to children in care. These index cards were created as administrative records for children when they came into the care of the State Children's Department and its successors. The cards were used from 1900 through to the early 1990s. During that time they were kept in the Central Records Branch of the Department.

Access Conditions

A Research Centre Members card, obtainable at the Archives, is required to research records held at State Records.

Although some very early records relating to children in care in South Australia are open for access, most records relating to children are subject to a 100 year restriction, particularly those which contain personal information about individuals. Written permission must be obtained from the government agency which created the record in order to access restricted material. To obtain permission a Freedom of Information (FOI) request form must be submitted to the relevant government department. State Records staff will be able to assist you with this.

Records

SWICs contain varying amounts of information. A child's 'card' can consist of a single card or a group of up to 8 cards. Most cards record the child's details such as name and date of birth and last place of residence. They may also include the names of parents, reasons for admission, lists of placements and movements between institutions and/or foster care and date of leaving care. Some provide information about absconding, medical care and schooling as well as a few brief comments on the child's care arrangements.

Unfortunately in some instances cards only provide the barest minimum of information such as the name of the child and the date of their first placement into care.

In order to preserve the original SWICs, each card was scanned into the Adoption and Family Information Service's image retrieval system software (AMS Imaging). This digitisation process has made the cards name-searchable when required. However, during the Children in State Care Inquiry, it was discovered that:

some SWICs were missing or scanned incorrectly, or that names entered into the electronic search index were incorrectly spelt. It was common to find that a scanned SWIC for one child was inadvertently appended to the scanned card image relating to another child, but only the name of one child was in the searchable index

The original cards are held at State Records and are restricted for 100 years. They are arranged in alphabetical order up to June 1982. For the years 1982/83 to 1990/91 cards are arranged alphabetically in years. Although the series is part open (ie any record older than 100 years is accessible) because the cards are arranged alphabetically, access needs to be via a Reference Officer.

The State Ward Index Card series also includes cards for some subject categories such as 'releases', 'boys with foster parents' and 'handicapped'. Cards within these categories are arranged alphabetically by name.

The index cards are laid out as follows:

Front of card, across top: (1) Name, (2) Number, (3) Age, (4) Date of birth, (5) Late place of residence, (6) Religion, (7) Parentage, (8) Court of Committal, (9) Reason for admission, (10) Date of admission. Columns follow with: (11) Date, (12) Readmitted, (13) Date of leaving, (14) Wages, (15) Where gone to. Back of card columns: (1) Date of visit, (2) Result, (3) Date of visit, (4) Result, (5) Date of visit, (6) Result, (7) Date of school report, (8) Remarks. Only dates in Date column and an initial in Result column. Notes on contents – Final entry across card in red ink if released or over-age. Some cards more detailed than others. Cards may provide information about transfers to and from institutions. Cards often provide references to other correspondence or personal files.

More info

Organisations in these records

Related Organisations

- [Barton Vale Girls' Home \(1922 - 1947\)](#)
- [The Salvation Army Boys' Home, Mount Barker \(1945 - 1982\)](#)

Held by State Records of SA. State Ward Index Cards were small cards created when a child came under the control of the Department. They contain various amounts of information. Some may relate to children who were resident at the Salvation Army Boys Home, Mount Barker

- [The Salvation Army Girls' Home, Fullarton \(1945 - 1969?\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/state-ward-index-cards/>