

Department of Community Services, State of Tasmania

1989 – 1993

Details

The Department of Community Services replaced the Department for Community Welfare in 1989. It provided housing, financial and other assistance to people with inadequate incomes, and managed corrective, mental, family and children's services, including the supervision of state wards. In 1993, it became the Department of Community and Health Services.

In July 1989, shortly after coming to power, Michael Field's minority Labor government, supported by Green Independents, restructured and enlarged the now former Department for Community Welfare by bringing together related Divisions from other Departments. The aim was to integrate these services in order to provide better outcomes for the people using them and to create a culture of social justice within the Department. The change of name to Department of Community Services reflected these new arrangements.

The Annual Report of 1989 stated that:

The year saw the creation of the new Department of Community Services by the integration of a number of related but separate Departments. This was not just a simple change in administrative arrangements, but the opportunity to develop a new organisation with a strong and vital culture based on social justice and a commitment to quality services for clients. It also enabled a coherent approach to policy development and service delivery.

The report emphasised that the principles of social justice lay behind its approach to all its activities:

Services of the Department affirm the dignity of the individual. The services are based on a belief that the best approach to reducing disadvantage is by increasing the abilities and opportunities of individuals, families and communities. Services should be affordable, accessible and appropriate to the needs of individual clients. Clients should have access to services irrespective of location, age, gender, ethnic background, Aboriginality, disability or life situation.

The new Department was made up of:

- The former Department for Community Welfare.
- The Housing Services Division of the former Housing Tasmania.
- The Corrective Services Division, including Risdon Prison, of the former Department of Law.
- Some sections of the Mental Health Services Commission, including Willow Court and community services for people with intellectual disabilities.

- The Child Protection Assessment Board. It had been established by the 1974 *Child Protection Act*. The Board had a mandate to protect children experiencing or at risk of sexual and other forms of abuse through early intervention services, by initiating court proceedings, and through community education. In 1989, the Tasmanian Task Force on Child Sexual Assault recommended that it be renamed the Child Protection Board and focus on policy coordination and development.

The Department administered the *Child Welfare Act* 1960 which meant that it was responsible for state wards and other children that came under its auspices. Children became state wards because:

- they were physically or sexually abused, or at risk of it.
- they had committed an offence.
- their families could not control them, were in serious conflict, or going through a crisis.

Children who became state wards or who the Department supervised in other ways could be placed in a number of different types of accommodation. These were foster care, approved children's Homes, which were privately run but approved by the Department, or in a family group Home. There was a special contract care scheme which was designed specifically for children with severe emotional or behavioural difficulties. The Department ran a Respite, Emergency and Short Term (REST) program. Its carers provided temporary accommodation at short notice to children under 12 whose parents could not look after them because of a family crisis or illness.

The Department of Community Services provided cheap housing and financial assistance to people with inadequate incomes. This kind of help often assisted families who in the past might have had to relinquish their children because they could not support them. The Department also assisted families through its services to tackle domestic violence. In addition, it funded non-government organisations that could provide support. These included neighbourhood houses, which were run by the local community and provided a range of services to it, child care, including occasional care, and other child related services, such as a toy library.

The Department was involved in the Commonwealth-State Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, known as SAAP, which provided emergency accommodation to homeless people. Mara House, which was for young women, some of them under the age of 18, was funded by SAAP.

The Adoption Information Service, established by the *Adoption of Children Act* 1988, was located within the Department. The Service provided information about their birth parents to adults who had been adopted. In addition, it assisted mothers who had relinquished their children. It kept an Adoption Information Register and offered counselling and advice.

In 1993, when the government amalgamated the Department of Community Services with the Department of Health Services, it became the Department of Community and Health Services.

More info

Chronology

- Department for Community Welfare, State Government of Tasmania (1983 - 1989)
 - **Department of Community Services, State of Tasmania (1989 – 1993)**
 - Department of Community and Health Services, State of Tasmania (1993 - 1998)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Ashley Home for Boys \(1926 - 1999\)](#)
Date: 1989 - 1993
- [Domestic Service Assistance Scheme - Tasmania \(1947 - c. 1989\)](#)

- [Royal Derwent Hospital \(1968 - 2000\)](#)
- [Lucinda Family Group Home \(1980 - 1986\)](#)
- [Miranda Family Group Home \(1980? - 2005?\)](#)
- [Mosley Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 1991\)](#)
- [Malmesbury Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 2009\)](#)
- [Binnowee Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - c. 2001\)](#)
- [Mardon Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 2000?\)](#)
- [Connellan Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 2005?\)](#)
- [Cornwall Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 2005?\)](#)
- [Danbury Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - c. 1987\)](#)
- [Eastville Family Group Home \(1981 - c. 1987\)](#)
- [Monomeeth Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - c. 2011\)](#)
- [Rochebank Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 2009\)](#)
- [Abermere Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - c. 2000\)](#)
- [Gilburn Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - 1985?\)](#)
- [Laroona Family Group Home \(1983 - c. 2009\)](#)
- [Naramarrindi Family Group Home \(c. 1983 - c. 2005\)](#)
- [Independent Living Unit \(1983? - 1990?\)](#)
- [Glynhyfryd Family Group Home \(1984 - 2005?\)](#)
- [Kiah Family Group Home \(1985 - c. 2000\)](#)
- [Woodlands Family Group Home \(c. 1985 - 2000?\)](#)
- [Haldon Family Group Home \(c. 1985 - 2000?\)](#)
- [Southern Parenting Centre \(c. 1989 - current\)](#)
- [Willowbend Family Group Home \(1990? - 2005?\)](#)
- [Reeve House \(1992 - 2011\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Casablanca Family Group Home \(c. 1981 - c. 2011\)](#)
- [North-West Regional Resource Unit \(1986 - 1995?\)](#)

The Department of Community Services ran the North-West Regional Resource Unit.

Related Concepts

- [Adoption in Tasmania \(c. 1920 - current\)](#)

Resources

- [Jane Monaghan interviewed by Caroline Evans for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), 30 August 2012
- *Department of Community Services: Annual Report 1989-90, 1990*

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [General Welfare Case Files \(1915 - 1994\)](#)
- [Case Files of the Child Welfare Division \(Northern Office\) \(1932 - 2003\)](#)
- [Correspondence, Applications & Associated Records Relating to the Custody & Welfare of Children \(Southern Regional Offices\) \(1950 - 1996\)](#)
- [Record Cards of Wards of the State \(1955 - 1990\)](#)
- [Record Cards of Children Organised by the Type of Order They Received \(1955 - 1990\)](#)
- [Record Cards of Children Who Have Come Under the Notice of the State But Who Are Not Declared Wards of the State \(1982 - 1990\)](#)
- [Case Files of the Child Welfare Division \(North West Office\) \(1943 - 2002\)](#)
- [Case Files of the Child Welfare Division \(North West Office\) \(1943 - 2002\)](#)
- [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)

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