

Charitable Grants Department, State of Tasmania

1901 – 1934

Other Names:

- Administrator of Charitable Relief
- CGD

Details

The Charitable Grants Department, also known as the office of the Administrator of Charitable Relief, was originally administered by the Colony of Tasmania. In 1901, following Australian federation, the newly formed state government took it over. The Department provided outdoor relief, that is, funds or food given to poor people not living in an institution. It also managed indoor relief in that it inspected and supervised charitable institutions. In 1934, it became the Social Services Department.

The Charitable Grants Department was established by the *Public Charities Act 1873*.

In 1896, following the passage of the *Youthful Offenders, Destitute and Neglected Children's Act*, a Neglected Children's Department was formed. The Charitable Grants Department was closely related to it, with the Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department also being the Administrator of Charitable Grants. In addition, he managed the Boys' Training School, the Invalid Depot in Launceston and the New Town Charitable Institution. The offices for all these activities were at the New Town Charitable Institution, on the site of the former Queen's Orphan Asylum. The first Administrator of the Charitable Grants Department was George Richardson. When he became Commissioner of the newly created Police Department in 1898, FR Seager replaced him. Seager lived on the grounds of the Institution with his wife and eight children.

Underfunding meant that Seager had only one clerk. They worked 12 hours for six days a week and on Sunday afternoons. The volume of work was so great that Seager also co-opted the help of two invalids living at the New Town Charitable Institution, assistance that he described as 'exceedingly poor and frequently unreliable'. One of the invalids could not get up out of a chair so that everything had to be handed to him. Sometimes the invalids had to work late. Seager's son, Charles, employed as a book keeper by a private company, also helped out occasionally. In 1900, a clerk's vacancy occurred. Seager pushed for Charles to be given the position, arguing that he was 'very competent and peculiarly adapted for the services required'. Charles was appointed.

In 1911/12 the Charitable Grants and Neglected Children's Departments were absorbed into the Chief Secretary's Department. Seager lost the positions of Administrator of Charitable Grants and Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department. The reasons are unclear. He may have made enemies or perhaps his competence had declined. He had been suffering from poor health for some time. If competence was the issue, Seager was not helped by the physical and social isolation of his Departments or their inadequate funding.

The Under-Secretary, HE Packer, now took over the management of the Charitable Grants and Neglected Children's Departments. Packer was a moderniser and worked to bring efficiencies into the Departments. Funding increased under his administration. In 1914, he died suddenly and was replaced by D'Arcy Addison.

In 1918, the new Children of the State Department was established under the *Children of the State Act*. The close relationship with the Charitable Grants Department continued. In 1923, the Charitable Grants Administration was accorded full departmental status taking with it the Children of the State Department.

Charles Seager had moved with the Charitable Grants and Neglected Children's Departments into the Chief Secretary's Department where he eventually became Chief Clerk. Addison found that he had a 'marked capacity' for work with children and had: 'considerably lightened the responsibilities imposed upon the Department under the Neglected Children's Act'. When the Charitable Grants Department acquired full status again, Seager became its Administrator. He retired in 1941 as the Director of the Social Services Department.

In 1930, the Charitable Grants Department took over the Labour Bureau and the State Immigration Office from the recently abolished Industrial Department.

In 1934, the name of the Charitable Grants Department was changed to Social Services Department. The following year, after the passage of the *Infant Welfare Act*, it took over the functions of the Children of the State Department.

Gallery



Queens Orphan Asylum New Town

More info

Chronology

- Charitable Grants Department, Colony of Tasmania (1873 - 1901)
 - **Charitable Grants Department, State of Tasmania (1901 – 1934)**
 - Social Services Department, State of Tasmania (1934 - 1961)

Related Entries

Ran

- [New Town Charitable Institution \(1879 - 1912\)](#)
- [New Town Infirmary \(1912 - 1934\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Neglected Children's Department, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1918\)](#)
- [Chief Secretary's Department, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1914\)](#)
- [Chief Secretary's Department and Premier's Office, State of Tasmania \(1914 - 1955\)](#)
- [Children of the State Department, State of Tasmania \(1918 - 1934\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [Public Charities Act 1873, Tasmania \(1873 - 1935\)](#)

Resources

- Parry, Naomi, [*'Such a longing': black and white children in welfare in New South Wales and Tasmania, 1880-1940*](#), 2007

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [Master Index to Case Files \(1920 - 1989\)](#)
 - [Correspondence Files \(1919 - 1998\)](#)
 - [Register of Wards of State \(1897 - 1989\)](#)
 - [Applications and Associated Correspondence for Compassionate Allowances \(1913 - 1971\)](#)
 - [General Welfare Case Files \(1915 - 1994\)](#)
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