

Child Welfare Department, State of Western Australia

22 December 1927 – 15 June 1972

Details

The Child Welfare Department of Western Australia was responsible for the welfare of children in out of home care for much of the twentieth century. Known as the 'CWD' or 'the welfare', the department had an impact on the lives of many WA families. The CWD ran its own Children's Homes, 'placed' children in other Children's Homes or Foster Homes and organised adoptions. It licensed and inspected the places and people who were registered to provide care and kept statistics on the number of children who were in care. The CWD also had the power to bring children before the Children's Court.

The State Records Office website gives an overview of the history of the Child Welfare Department:

In 1927 the State Children Act Amendment Act was passed changing the name of the principal Act and the State Children's Department to Child Welfare Act and Child Welfare Department respectively. Responsibility for the Child Welfare function remained with the Chief Secretary until 1931 when it was passed to the Minister for Mines.

In 1934 a separate portfolio was created for child welfare. The Child Welfare Department was abolished in 1972 and its functions passed to the newly created Department for Community Welfare.

Until 1972, the Child Welfare Department shared responsibility for the 'care and control' of children who were 'Aboriginal Wards' with the Chief Protector of Aborigines, and later the Commissioner for Native Affairs and the Commissioner of Native Welfare.

Sydney Watson had been the Secretary (head) of the Child Welfare Department for its first 15 years when he retired in 1932 after 37 years service. The department's Annual Report of that year described Mr Watson's contribution as follows:

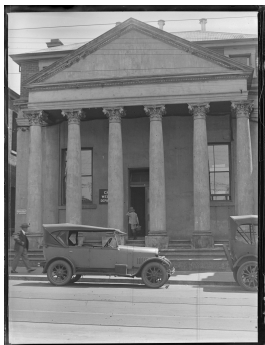
His successful efforts in improving legislation for the protection of children and those in distress, his unfailing courtesy, keen sympathy, and practical help, have won, not only well merited appreciation, but better still, have left behind as the outcome of his official career a lasting tribute of better conditions to many in need.

Gallery



Boys Behind Iron Bars

Description: This is a picture from a 1954 article in the *Sunday Times* newspaper titled 'Mt. Lawley Reception Home's Detention Methods Are Primitive - But They Have A Tough Job'. The picture shows the 'solitary confinement' wing' of the Child Welfare Reception Home at Mt Lawley, where 'delinquent' children were housed. The article condemned this practice and called for better facilities.



Child Welfare Department, Perth, 1930

Description: This is a digitised copy of an image of glass negative and is part of the Truth newspaper collection held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows the outside of the building that housed the Child Welfare Department in 1930. The image was made available by the Historical Records Rescue Consortium Project supported by Lotterywest.

More info

Chronology

- State Children Department, State of Western Australia (1 January 1917 - 22 December 1927)
 - **Child Welfare Department, State of Western Australia (22 December 1927 – 15 June 1972)**
 - Department for Community Welfare, State of Western Australia (1972 - 1985)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Government Receiving Depot \(1907 - 1935\)](#)
Date: 1927 - 1935
- [Kalgoorlie Child Welfare Cottage \(1930s - c. 1978\)](#)
- [Government Receiving Home \(1935 - 1952\)](#)
- [Tudor Lodge \(1952 - 2003\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Reception Home \(1953 - 1972\)](#)
- [Anglican Farm School, Stoneville \(1955 - 1961\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department established and managed the Anglican Farm School, Stoneville.
- [Hillston, Anglican Farm School, Stoneville \(1962 - 1969\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department managed Hillston, Anglican Farm School, Stoneville.
- [Stuart House \(1963 - 1988?\)](#)
- [Longmore Remand and Assessment Centre \(1965 - 1993?\)](#)
Date: 1965 - 1972
- [Watson Lodge \(1967 - 1984\)](#)
- [Fourteen \(1968 - 1979\)](#)
- [Bridgewater Care and Assessment Centre \(1969 - 1983\)](#)
Date: 1969 - 1972
- [Hillston, Stoneville \(1969 - 1984\)](#)
Date: 1969 - 1972
- [Nyandi \(1970 - 1997\)](#)
- [McCall Centre \(1971 - 2005?\)](#)

Related Events

- [Investigation into the Administration of the Child Welfare Department, State of Western Australia \(1953\)](#)
The Investigation into the Administration of the Child Welfare Department of Western Australia by RH Hicks made recommendations about the way the Child Welfare Department was organised, its practices and the institutions it subsidised.
Date: 1953 -
- [Select Committee into Child Migration, Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia \(June 1996 - November 1996\)](#)
- [Inquiry Into Child Migration, Parliament of Australia \(2000 - 2001\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [St Mary's Mission, New Norcia \(1848 - 1974\)](#)
The Chief Executive Officer of the Department for Community Welfare was the guardian of children at St Mary's Mission, New Norcia who were deemed to be 'native wards' or 'wards of the State'.
- [Girls' Friendly Society \(Western Australia\) \(1888 - current\)](#)
- [Chief Protector of Aborigines \(1898 - 1936\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department shared responsibility for the 'care and control' of Aboriginal children who were Wards with the Chief Protector of Aborigines.
- [Alexandra Home for Women \(1916 - 1950\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department placed young women at the Alexandra Home for Women and arranged some adoptions from the Home.
Date: 1927 - 1950
- [Unemployed Boys' Farm, Wokalup \(1932 - 1938\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department placed boys at the Unemployed Boys' Farm [Bundidup], Wokalup
Date: 1932 - 1937?
- [Wanslea Hostel \(1943 - 1946\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department may have asked that some children were placed at the Wanslea Hostel.
- [Wanslea \(1947 - 1984\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department placed children at Wanslea, and provided funding for its operations.
Date: 1947 - 1972
- [Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association \(1947? - 1970\)](#)
- [Shiloh \(c. 1949 - 1963\)](#)
All children placed at Shiloh College were referred by the Child Welfare Department.
- [The Alexandra Home for Mothers and Babies \(Inc\) and Mothercraft Training School \(1950 - 1956\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department placed children at The Alexandra Home for Mothers and Babies (Inc) and Mothercraft Training School and arranged some adoptions from the Home.
- [Kurrawang Mission \(1952 - 1984\)](#)
The Chief Executive Officer of the Department for Community Welfare was the guardian of children at Kurrawang Mission who were deemed to be 'native wards' or 'wards of the State'.
- [Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre Inc \(1956 - 1989\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department placed all children under the age of six years at Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre Inc (Ngala) from 1 September 1959 (and possibly earlier) instead of the Child Welfare Reception Home.
Date: 1956? - 1972
- [Wattle Grove Baptist Cottage \(1958 - 1963?\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department, State of Western Australia placed girls at Wattle Grove Baptist Cottage.
- [Karingal \(1966 - 1974?\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department placed children at Karingal.
- [Rangevue Hostel \(1969 - 1973?\)](#)
The Chief Executive Officer of the Department for Community Welfare was the guardian of children at who were deemed to be 'native wards' or 'wards of the State'.
- [Adoption Services, Child Protection and Family Support \(1994? - current\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [State Children Act Amendment Act 1927, Western Australia \(1927 - 1948\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department was the new name given by the *State Children Act Amendment Act 1927* to the formerly-named State Children Department.

- [Education Act 1928, Western Australia \(1928 - 1999\)](#)
The Education Act was one mechanism for bringing school-related events and behaviours into the scope of the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.
- [Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1941, Western Australia \(1942 - 1948\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Act 1947, Western Australia \(1948 - 2006\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department administered the *Child Welfare Act 1947*.
- [Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1952, Western Australia \(1952 - 2006\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department was given additional authority through the *Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1952*
- [Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1958, Western Australia \(1958 - 2004\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department was given additional authority through the *Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1958*.
- [Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1962, Western Australia \(1962 - 2004\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department administered the *Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1962*.
- [Education Act Amendment Act 1962, Western Australia \(1962 - 1999\)](#)
The *Education Act Amendment Act 1962* clarified the role of the child welfare authorities in school-related behaviour.
- [Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1965, Western Australia \(1966 - 2006\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Act Amendment Act 1964, Western Australia \(1970 - 1995\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1969, Western Australia \(1970 - 2006\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department administered the *Child Welfare Act Amendment Act 1969*.

Related Concepts

- [Commissioner for Native Affairs \(1936 - 1954\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department shared responsibility for the 'care and control' of Aboriginal children who were Wards with the Commissioner of Native Affairs.
- [Commissioner of Native Welfare \(1954 - 1972\)](#)
The Child Welfare Department shared responsibility for the 'care and control' of Aboriginal children who were Wards with the Commissioner of Native Welfare.

Resources

- [Denis Hayden interviewed by Crienda Fitzgerald in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), 2011
- [Tony Costa interviewed by Rob Willis in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), 11 May 2010
- [Anthony Brennan interviewed by Christine Choo for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project](#), February 2012
- [Keith Maine interviewed by John Bannister in the Bringing them home oral history project \(1999\)](#), 31 March 1999
- Department for Community Development, *History of the Department to 2004*, 2004
- [AU WA A38 - Child Welfare Department](#), State Records Office of Western Australia - Organisations & People, 2015
- [Labour of Love](#), The West Australian, 23 January 1941
- [Mt. Lawley Reception Home's Detention Methods Are Primitive - But They Have A Tough Job](#), Sunday Times, 15 August 1954
- [Where the Little Wards of the State are Drafted](#), Sunday Times, 18 August 1935
- [Their Home a Garage](#), The Daily News, 19 February 1947
- [Happy and Carefree Natures Caught By the Cameraman In These Studies of Young Western Australians](#), Sunday Times, 5 February 1939
- [Western Australian Government Gazette No. 29](#), Western Australian Government Gazette Online Archive, 20 March 1970
- [Western Australian Government Gazette No. 33](#), Western Australian Government Gazette Online Archive, 6 April 1970
- Crouch, RW, [Adoption of Children](#), The West Australian, 20 October 1928
- Whittington, Vera, *Sister Kate: a life dedicated to children in need of care*, 1999
- Knight, Ivor Alan, *Out of darkness : growing up with the Christian brothers*, 1998

- Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia, [Submission No 55 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), July 2003
- Maison, Barbara, [Submission No 97 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 14 July 2003
- Mofflyn, [Submission No 160 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), August 2003
- Peterson, Margaret, [Submission No 172 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 11 September 2003
- Manning, Lorna, [Submission No 184 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 19 August 2003
- Wilder, Chris, [Submission No 257 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 17 March 2005
- Carruthers, Geoffrey, [Submission No 287 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 23 December 2003
- Name withheld, [Submission No 319 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 17 March 2005
- Foster, Darren J, [Submission No 347 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 3 April 2004
- Davis, Syd, [Submission No 414 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 15 July 2004
- Thomas, Ivy, [Submission No 483 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 1 November 2004
- MacDonald, Sue, [Submission No 129 to the Senate Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 2012
- Maczkowiack, Kathleen, [Submission No 55 to the Senate Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices](#), 2012
- [Child Welfare Will Be On Modern Lines](#), The West Australian, 5 August 1954. *Relevance:* 'Child Welfare Will Be On Modern Lines' reported that the Child Welfare Department was being reorganised and that Mr McCall would be the new Director

Other Resources



Title: Moss Report Implementation [Excerpt] - Case Histories

Type: Image

Date: 18 March 1955

[Details](#)

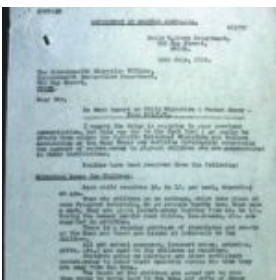


Title: Moss Report Implementation [Excerpt] - Health Examinations

Type: Image

Date: 21 April 1955

[Details](#)



Title: Moss Report Implementation [Excerpt] - Methodist Homes for Children

Type: Image

Date: 12 July 1954

[Details](#)

Records

Records held by other organisations

- [Records of the Department of Child Protection and Family Support, and predecessors \(1894 - current\)](#)
- [Hillcrest Records \(1912 - 1974\)](#)
- [Papers, 1912-1965 \[Irene Stahl, Boarding Out Committee Victoria Park\] \(1933 - 1965\)](#)
- [Methodist Home for Children: reports and general correspondence \(Volume 1 of 2\) \(15 November 1923 - 18 July 1942\)](#)

Restricted records relating to the Methodist Homes for Children are held at item 1924/0755 v1 in the State Records Office of Western Australia.

Date: 1927 - 1942

- ["Care for Children - Committees \(Boarding Out Committee \(Perth and District\)\) - Agendas, Minutes and Working Papers - JULY 1908 to MAY 1935" \(25 August 1908 - 19 May 1936\)](#)
- [Form Manual \(1955? - 1972?\)](#)
- [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)

Item B415 of the Child Endowment correspondence files relates to the Child Welfare Department, Western Australia

- [Former Child Migrants Referral Index \(1913 - 1968\)](#)
- [Client Files, Child Protection and Family Support \[and its predecessors\] \(1921 - current\)](#)
- [Family Information Research System \(1921 - current\)](#)
- [Former Child Migrants Blue Index Cards \(1947 - 1968\)](#)
- [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)

Records of the Child Welfare Department are held in Series 3172 at the State Records Office of Western Australia.

- [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)

Files created by the Child Welfare Department are held in this series at the State Records Office of WA.

- [Administration Files - South West District Office \[S.D. Sequence\] \(1949 - 1976\)](#)
- [Indentures \(Guardianship\) \(1947 - 1960\)](#)
- [Correspondence Files - Kalgoorlie Office \(1964 - 1970\)](#)
- [Files - General \(1899 - 1987\)](#)
- [Administration Files - Roebourne Office \[A.S.D. Sequence\] \(1951 - 1973\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/child-welfare-department-2/>