

Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria

1864 – 1887

Details

The Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools came into being with the passage of the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864. Children who were deemed to be 'neglected' were to be sent to industrial schools. Children convicted of any offence could be sent to a reformatory school but justices had the authority to take their age and circumstances into account and to send them instead to an industrial school.

"The Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools came into being with the passage of the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864. Children who were deemed to be 'neglected' were to be sent to industrial schools. Children could be deemed 'neglected' if they were found begging, without a home or means of support, residing with thieves, prostitutes or drunkards or declared to be uncontrollable by their parents. Children convicted of any offence could be sent to a reformatory school but justices had the authority to take their age and circumstances into account and to send them instead to an industrial school.

Children in both classes of institution were to be given access to general education and industrial training, and children as young as eight were expected to work for at least part of the day in activities such as domestic work, cooking, laundering, tailoring, baking, shoe making, dairying, gardening and farming. Boys on the training ship *Nelson* and the reformatory *Sir Harry Smith* were to be trained as sailors.

Following a Board of Inquiry into the industrial schools established since the passing of the 1864 Act, the government formed a separate Industrial Schools Department, under the Chief Secretary. On 19 February 1866 George W. Duncan, the Inspector-General of the Penal Department, was appointed Inspector of Industrial Schools.

(Duncan also held the position of Inspector-General of the Penal Department. According to Jaggs, Duncan collapsed from overwork in 1878.)

Duncan's annual reports beginning in 1867 (Parliamentary Papers 1867, Vol. 4, pp.941ff) describe the functioning of the schools and the establishment and operations of his Office which is first described as a department in the report of 23 June 1876.

Royal Commissions and Inspectors General often criticised the adequacy of the arrangements for 'neglected' children under the 1864 Act. The Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline reported in 1872 about industrial and reformatory schools and the working of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*. Its report stated that the industrial school system "is hurtful to the health, the morals, and the intellectual and industrial training of the children, and tends to sink them in after-life into permanent pauperism or crime" (p.vii). The Commissioners recommended that the existing industrial school system be discontinued, and be substituted for a system of boarding out children.

This system of boarding out wards to foster homes was introduced and industrial schools were eventually abolished in the 1880s. In 1879, management of the schools was separated from the position of Inspector and placed in the hands of local committees. In addition, two Visiting Committees, of identical composition but charged separately for each class of school, were appointed to inspect and report. In 1881, management of the department was vested in George Guillaume who was appointed Secretary of the Department on 4 August of that year. A separate position of Inspector continued to be filled.

As Secretary, George Guillaume administered both the boarding out system (which replaced industrial schools) and reformatories. (Guillaume was killed in a traffic accident in 1892.)

In 1887 following the proclamation of the Neglected Children's Act (No.941) and the Juvenile Offenders' Act (No.951) responsibility for 'neglected' children was assumed by a Department for Neglected Children and a Department for Reformatory Schools assumed responsibility for convicted juveniles." (PROV entry: Agency VA 1466 Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools)

More info

Chronology

- **Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria (1864 – 1887)**
 - Department for Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria (1887 - 1900)
 - Department for Neglected Children, Colony of Victoria (1887 - 1900)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Royal Park Depot \(c. 1880 - 1955\)](#)
Date: 1880 - 1887
- [The Success \(1868 - 1873?\)](#)
- [Woodlands Home \(1886 - 1889\)](#)
- [Jika Reformatory for Boys \(1873 - 1879\)](#)
- [Sunbury Industrial School \(1865 - 1879\)](#)
Date: 1865 - 1880?
- [Government Reformatory for Girls, Coburg \(1875 - 1893\)](#)
Date: 1864? - 1887
- [Ballarat Industrial School \(1869 - c. 1879\)](#)
The Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools oversaw the administration of the Ballarat Girls' Industrial School.
Date: 1864 - 1879
- [The Nelson \(1868 - 1876\)](#)
- [Royal Park Industrial School \[Girls\] \(1875 - c.1879\)](#)
Date: 1875 - 1887
- [Geelong Industrial School \(c. 1865 - c. 1880\)](#)
- [Sanatory Station \(c. 1867 - c. 1868\)](#)
- [The Sir Harry Smith \(1865 - 1873\)](#)
- [The Deborah \(1864 - 1873\)](#)
- [Boys' Farm School, Dookie \(1882 - 1886\)](#)
- [Boys' Farm School, Macedon State Nursery \(1883 - c.1885\)](#)
- [Princes Bridge Industrial School \(1853 - 1876\)](#)
- [Ballarat Boys' Reformatory \(1879 - 1893\)](#)
- [Reformatory for Girls, Sunbury \(1865 - 1875\)](#)

Related Events

- [Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline, Victoria \(1870 - 1872\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864, Victoria \(1864 - 1888\)](#)
The Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools came into being with the passage of the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864.

Resources

- Guillaume, George; Connor, Edward C., [The Development and Working of the Reformatory and Preventive Systems in the Colony of Victoria, Australia, 1864-1890](#), 1891
- MacFarlane, Ian & Fensham, Bronwyn, [Eliza Taylor: A mother is gaoled and her children left destitute](#), Ten Victorian Women, 1999
- MacFarlane, Ian & Fensham, Bronwyn, [Marie Corrigan: a mother and her child](#), Ten Victorian Women, 1999
- Victoria. Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, *Report of the Secretary for the year ... / Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools*, 1881 - 1886
- Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, State Government of Victoria, *Report of the Inspector for the year ..., 1868 - 1879*
- Victoria. Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline., [Report \(No.3\) of the Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline: Industrial and Reformatory Schools](#), 1872

Records

Records

- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records \(1864 - current\)](#)
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