

# Social Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria

1970 – 1978

## Details

---

The Social Welfare Department was established under the provisions of the Social Welfare Act 1970 (No.8089). The Department came into being in 1971, assuming responsibility for all functions previously administered by the Social Welfare Branch. In 1978, it became the Department of Community Welfare Services.

The Social Welfare Department's charter was to develop and coordinate a statewide network of children's and family welfare services. It commenced a regionalisation program in 1972. During this period there was a policy of 'maximum feasible regionalisation', to transform the Department from a centralised organisation to one in which most face-to-face activities, and decision-making, would be carried out in regional centres.

With the establishment of new Regions, the Central Office was to be responsible for administrative, personnel and accounting functions, as well as policy and planning.

The new rural regions were: Mallee, Wimmera, Loddon-Campaspe, Goulburn, Upper Murray, East Gippsland, Central Gippsland, Barwon, Glenelg, Central Highlands.

The Family Welfare Division was the administrative section within the Department responsible for reception centres and children's homes. The Division supervised wards of the state living in private foster care placements or approved children's Homes conducted by the various voluntary agencies.

The Department introduced a new system for funding 'approved' [i.e., non-government] children's Homes in 1976. Under this method, the Department met 90% of staff salaries and the 'per capita' rate paid to children's Homes by the state was increased.

In the annual report for 1975-76, the Director-General of Social Welfare stated that the new funding arrangements acknowledged the major role played by 'approved non-departmental organisations' in Victoria's out of home care system.

The new arrangement was borne out of a crisis in the voluntary child care sector in 1974, when organisations faced critical financial pressure to meet their rising staffing costs and provide new models of 'care'.

Another response to the financial panic of the voluntary agencies was the establishment in late 1974 of the Committee of the Enquiry into Child Care Services in Victoria.

The Enquiry (whose 'Norgard Report' was released in 1976) led to further changes within the Department. From 1976, a new Family Support Unit was funded, within the Family Welfare Division. The new Family Support Unit was an initiative arising from the 'Alternatives to Residential Care Subcommittee'.

## More info

---

# Chronology

- Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, Colony of Victoria (1864 - 1887)
- Department for Neglected Children, Colony of Victoria (1887 - 1900)
  - Department for Neglected Children, State Government of Victoria (1901 - 1924)
  - Children's Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria (1924 - 1960)
  - Social Welfare Branch, State Government of Victoria (1960 - 1970)
- **Social Welfare Department, State Government of Victoria (1970 – 1978)**
  - Department of Community Welfare Services, State Government of Victoria (1978 - 1985)
  - Community Services Victoria, State Government of Victoria (1985 - 1992)
  - Health and Community Services, State Government of Victoria (1992 - 1995)
    - Department of Human Services, State Government of Victoria (1995 - December 2014)
    - Department of Health & Human Services, State Government of Victoria (January 2015 - 2021)

## Related Entries

### Ran

- [Allambie Reception Centre \(1961 - 1990\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Northcote Farm School \(1937 - 1979\)](#)  
In 1976, the Social Welfare Department took over the administration of the Northcote Farm School from its non-denominational committee of management.  
Date: 1976 - 1978
- [Winlaton \(1956 - c. 1991\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Pirra Girls' Home \(1961 - c. 1980\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Langi Kal Kal \(1965 - 1993\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Malmsbury Youth Training Centre \(1965 - 2023\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Acheron Youth Training Centre \(c. 1966 - 2008\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Ashdene Boys' Home \(1966 - 1988\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Baltara Reception Centre \(1968 - c. 1992\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Hillside Boys' Home \(1959 - c. 1985\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Ballarat Reception Centre \(1961 - 1982?\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Sutton Grange \(1957 - 1977\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1977
- [Illoura Children's Home \(1964 - 1984\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Lady Dugan Children's Home \(1970 - 1976\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1976
- [Family Group Home Program \(1956 - 2000s\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Miralee Reception Centre \(1963 - 1986?\)](#)
- [The Gables \(1962 - 1985\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Hawthorn Youth Welfare Service \(1970 - current\)](#)
- [Aboriginal Youth Support Service \(c. 1973 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1973 - ?

- [Western Youth Welfare Service, State of Victoria \(1975 - 1985?\)](#)  
Date: 1975 - 1978
- [Windsor Youth Welfare Service \(1973 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1973 - ?
- [Turana \(1955 - 1993\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978
- [Ivanhoe Girls' Hostel \(1965? - 1993?\)](#)
- [Departmental Family Group Homes, Victoria \(1956 - 2000s\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1978

#### Related Events

- [Committee of Enquiry into Child Care Services, Victoria \(1975 - 1976\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Social Welfare Act 1970, Victoria \(1971 - 1978\)](#)
- [Social Welfare \(Administration\) Act 1977, Victoria \(1977 - 1983\)](#)

## Resources

- Markiewicz, Anne, [The Child Welfare System in Victoria: changing context and perspective 1945-1995](#), Children Australia, 1996
- [Annual report: Social Welfare Department](#), 1960 - 1978
- Liddell, M., [Submission no 313 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), February 2003

## Records

---

### Records

- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records \(1864 - current\)](#)
  - [Records of Victorian Adoptions \(c. 1908 - current\)](#)
  - [Ward Index Cards \(1960 - 1986\)](#)
  - [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)
  - [Departmental Children's Homes Files \(1955 - 1987\)](#)
- 

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/social-welfare-department/>