

# Department of Community Welfare Services, State Government of Victoria

1978 – 1985

**Other Names:** • DCWS

## Details

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The Department of Community Welfare Services, State Government of Victoria, came into being in 1978. Formerly, it was known as the Social Welfare Department. In 1983, the Department of Community Welfare Services comprised the Family and Adolescent Services Division, the Youth Services Section, the Adoption Section, Residential Child Care and the Regional Services Division. In 1985, the Department was replaced by the new body, Community Services Victoria.

The Family and Adolescent Services Division was responsible for the management of reception centres and youth training centres in Victoria.

The Residential Child Care section was responsible for the 'care' of wards (about 80% of children and young people) as well as non-wards (who were placed in non-government 'care' by parents or guardians).

The Youth Services Section was concerned with preventative care for 'at risk youth'. It ran hostels for young people located in Sunshine, Ivanhoe and Thornbury. It also subsidised hostels run by the non-government sector. The Section ran Youth Welfare Services at Ascot Vale, Brunswick, Hawthorn and Windsor.

The management of foster care was transferred to the Regional Services Division in 1976. The Department had a policy of regionally based foster care programs, so that children in foster care could be placed in their local community and maintain links with family and friends.

In 1983, some significant changes were made to the Department and its policies. An annual review of wardship was introduced in February 1983. The first year of this new policy was seen by the Department as a success, evident from the reducing number of wards and an increased emphasis on returning wards to their families, or to independent living, as soon as appropriate.

In 1983, the Victorian government established a separate Office of Corrections. This led to a restructure within the Department of Community Welfare Services. From May 1983, there was a new Protective and Substitute Care Branch within the Department. The broad aims of the Branch were 'to provide a wide range of services to give care and protection to children and young people at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation – and to provide care and control of young offenders'.

This branch was responsible for foster care, provided by the Department and 25 non-government agencies. It also organised adoptions, together with eight approved adoption agencies. Its residential care was largely provided in family group homes, comprising 4 or 5 children.

In September 1983 the Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review released its Discussion Paper, which was endorsed by the Department of Community Welfare Services.

The annual report for 1983/84 reported the closure of 15 services in Victoria, as a result of the Department's 'planned progressive redevelopment of facilities ... with the aim of developing services to meet current local demands at accepted community standards'. Illoura Children's Home (run by the Department) closed in 1983. Fourteen family group homes and campus units run by non-government agencies were closed that year, with funds reallocated to new facilities.

## More info

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### Chronology

- 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)
          - Department of Health, State Government of Victoria (2021 - current)

### Related Entries

#### Ran

- [Baltara Reception Centre \(1968 - c. 1992\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Hillside Boys' Home \(1959 - c. 1985\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Illoura Children's Home \(1964 - 1984\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1984
- [Family Group Home Program \(1956 - 2000s\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Miralee Reception Centre \(1963 - 1986?\)](#)
- [The Gables \(1962 - 1985\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Western Youth Welfare Service, State of Victoria \(1975 - 1985?\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Allambie Reception Centre \(1961 - 1990\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Turana \(1955 - 1993\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Ivanhoe Girls' Hostel \(1965? - 1993?\)](#)
- [Departmental Family Group Homes, Victoria \(1956 - 2000s\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [The Gables Residential Unit 101 \(1985 - c. 1992\)](#)
- [Northcote Farm School \(1937 - 1979\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1979

- [Winlaton \(1956 - c. 1991\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Pirra Girls' Home \(1961 - c. 1980\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1980
- [Langi Kal Kal \(1965 - 1993\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Malmsbury Youth Training Centre \(1965 - 2023\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985
- [Acheron Youth Training Centre \(c. 1966 - 2008\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1982
- [Ashdene Boys' Home \(1966 - 1988\)](#)  
Date: 1978 - 1985

#### Related Events

- [Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review, Victoria \(c. 1982 - 1984\)](#)  
The Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review presented a discussion paper to the Department of Community Welfare Services in September 1983.  
Date: 1983 -

#### Related Organisations

- [The Salvation Army Westcare \(c. 1980 - 2018\)](#)  
Following the closure of the Bayswater Boys' Homes in 1980, the Salvation Army and the Department of Community Welfare Services decided to establish residential units in the western region of Melbourne.

#### Related Legislation

- [Community Welfare Services Act 1978, Victoria \(1979 - 1983\)](#)

## Resources

- Markiewicz, Anne, [The Child Welfare System in Victoria: changing context and perspective 1945-1995](#), Children Australia, 1996
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Victorian Office, [Victorian Year Book](#), 1873 - 2002. *Relevance:* 1983

## Records

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### 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 \(1955 - 1987\)](#)
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