

# Mental Hygiene Act of 1938, Queensland

1938 – c. 1962

URL: [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/qld/hist\\_act/mhao19382gvn21245/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/qld/hist_act/mhao19382gvn21245/)

## Details

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The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938 required active treatment for the mentally ill. It also attempted to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness by changing words such as “lunatic”, “imbecile”, “insane” and “asylum”, to “mentally sick”, “mental illness” and “mental hospital”. The Act allowed for voluntary admission to mental hospitals and set out the powers of the Public Curator in modern language. The full title for this act was “An Act to consolidate and Amend the Law relating to the Care, Treatment, and Control of Mentally Sick Persons” (Act no. 2 Geo VI, No.21). The next major piece of legislation relating to Mental health in Queensland was the Mental Health Act 1962 (Act no.46/1962).

The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938 attempted to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness by changing words such as “lunatic”, “imbecile”, “insane” and “asylum”, to “mentally sick”, “mental illness” and “mental hospital”. However, the term continued to be used in the Annual Reports of the Department of Health and Home Affairs and the Department of Health up until the late 1960s.

## More info

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### Chronology

- **Mental Hygiene Act of 1938, Queensland (1938 – c. 1962)**
  - Mental Health Act 1962, Queensland (1962 - 1974)
    - Mental Health Act 1974, Queensland (1974 - 2000)
      - Mental Health Act 2000, Queensland (2000 - current)

### Related Entries

#### Related Organisations

- [Willowburn Mental Asylum \(1867 - 1953\)](#)

The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938 required the provision of more active treatment for the mentally ill. It also attempted to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness through the introduction of what was considered less offensive terms for the mentally ill.
  - [Ipswich Mental Hospital \(1938 - 1964\)](#)
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