

# Charitable Grants Department, Colony of Tasmania

1873 – 1901

**Other Names:**

- Administrator of Charitable Relief
- CGD

## Details

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The Charitable Grants Department, also known as the office of the Administrator of Charitable Relief, was established in 1873. It provided outdoor relief, that is, funds or food given to poor people not living in an institution. The Department also administered legislation relating to the care of destitute children, including the boarding out system introduced by the Act, and the inspection and supervision of charitable institutions. In 1901, following Australian federation, Tasmania became a state and the state government took over the management of the Charitable Grants Department.

The precursor to the Charitable Grants Department began in 1862 as a system of outdoor relief. The Hobart Town Police Magistrate, William Tarleton, administered the system, with the help of the Office of the Inspector of Police. Most of the assistance went to elderly people in poverty and destitute children waiting for admission to institutions. The system led to one of the early boarding out schemes in Tasmania. Instead of sending all the children to institutions, Tarleton began paying a small fee to women living in the country to take care of the them. In 1871, he told the Royal Commission into Charitable Institutions that 45 children were already boarded out.

The Royal Commission recommended the creation of a Charitable Relief Commission to take over outdoor relief and to manage the various government-run institutions. This did not happen. Instead, in 1873, following the passage of the *Public Charities Act*, the government established the Charitable Grants Department. Its role was to manage outdoor relief and the modest boarding out scheme that the Act had set up. Tarleton was the first Administrator of the Department.

Management of outdoor relief in Hobart fluctuated between the Department and the Benevolent Society. In 1880, the government gave the Society responsibility for outdoor relief. This seems to have been an attempt to save money. The Society believed strongly that receiving charity weakened individuals' resolve to help themselves. They only gave it according to strict criteria. This resulted in a cost saving because there were fewer recipients. The Hobart Benevolent Society also took over the boarding out system temporarily in 1880. Management of that soon returned to the Department which, until 1896, ran it through volunteer boarding out committees.

The roles of the Charitable Grants Department and the Hobart Benevolent Society were not clearly defined. In particular, the Society wanted the right to admit people to institutions, which the Department refused. This led to some bad feeling. The *Charitable Institutions Act*, which was designed to protect the funds of charities, passed in 1888. The Benevolent Society refused to register under it. When the government insisted, the dispute became heated and the Department resumed control of outdoor relief in 1889.

The government employed an Inquiring Officer, whose role it was to report on children's circumstances prior to committal and to inspect foster homes. The Inquiring Officer, invariably a man, was employed by the government prior to the formation of the Neglected Children's Department and for a while afterwards. (In 1911, inspecting

nurses, professionally trained women, took over the role of Inquiring Officer.)

In 1896, following the passage of the *Youthful Offenders, Destitute and Neglected Children's Act*, a Neglected Children's Department was formed. The Charitable Grants Department relinquished the boarding out system. Even so, the two Departments were closely related, with the Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department also being the Administrator of Charitable Grants. In addition, he managed the Boys' Training School, the Invalid Depot in Launceston and the New Town Charitable Institution. The offices for all these activities were at the New Town Charitable Institution, on the site of the former Queen's Orphan Asylum. The first Administrator of the Charitable Grants Department was George Richardson. When he became Commissioner of the newly created Police Department in 1898, FR Seager replaced him. Seager lived on the grounds of the Institution with his wife and eight children.

In 1901, after the newly formed state government took control of the Charitable Grants Department, its close relationship with the Neglected Children's Department continued.

## Gallery

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**Queens Orphan Asylum New Town**

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## More info

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### Chronology

- **Charitable Grants Department, Colony of Tasmania (1873 – 1901)**
  - Charitable Grants Department, State of Tasmania (1901 - 1934)
  - Neglected Children's Department, Colony of Tasmania (1896 - 1901)

### Related Entries

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- [New Town Charitable Institution \(1879 - 1912\)](#)

#### Related Events

- [Royal Commission into Charitable Institutions, Tasmania \(1871\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Queen's Orphan Asylum \(1833 - 1879\)](#)
- [Chief Secretary's Department, Colony of Tasmania \(1882 - 1901\)](#)
- [Industrial Department, State of Tasmania \(c. 1916 - 1930\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Public Charities Act 1873, Tasmania \(1873 - 1935\)](#)

The Charitable Grants Department administered the Public Charities Act.

## Resources

- Parry, Naomi, ['Such a longing': black and white children in welfare in New South Wales and Tasmania, 1880-1940](#), 2007
- [Editorial](#), The Mercury, 29 January 1881
- [The Benevolent Society](#), The Mercury, 28 January 1881

# Records

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## Records

- [Register of Wards of State \(1897 - 1989\)](#)
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