

# Child Welfare Association

1917 – 1956

**Other Names:** • CWA

## Details

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The Child Welfare Association formed in 1917 with the aim of reducing the high infant mortality rate. It established baby clinics throughout Tasmania to provide mothers with free information from nurses, doctors, and volunteers about child health and mother craft. Other projects included a campaign for a pure milk supply, classes to prepare school girls for motherhood, and the establishment of a Mothercraft Home in New Town. A State Council, formed in 1950, coordinated the Association's activities. In 1956, it changed its name to the Child Health Association.

On 11 June 1917, the members of the Women's Health Association met to discuss measures to curb the high infant mortality rate in Tasmania. Their first step was to hold a Child Welfare Week with exhibitions and lectures at the Town Hall including displays about children's clothing, infant feeding, feeding bottles, laundry work, mending, and the dangers of fires. Doctors gave lectures to women who wanted to be voluntary child health workers. The women sought donations and held a button day. Similar activities went on in Launceston. The Association formed on 19 September 1917.

The new Association successfully applied to the government to have a nurse appointed in the Public Health Department. She visited every home where there was a new baby to offer advice and support. The nurse worked closely with the Child Welfare Association.

The first clinic began at 138 Macquarie Street. It was open three afternoons a week. The nurse from the Public Health Department ran it with the voluntary help of committee members. A doctor from the British Medical Association attended the clinic voluntarily once a week.

The Association invited mothers to come to demonstrations on infant feeding, food preparation, making a bronchitis tent, and applying poultices.

By 1928, there were four clinics in southern Tasmania and two in the north. Devonport had a clinic by 1931.

In 1918, in order to prevent gastro-enteritis, the Association found a supply of pure milk from the dairy of R Nettlefold in Kingston. His cows were free of tuberculosis and the milk was tested daily for bacteria under the supervision of a government inspector. Special cool boxes held the milk. Since pure milk was expensive, the State government and Hobart City Council each donated £50 to the Association to assist mothers on low incomes.

The Association formed a Central Council in 1950 in order to coordinate its work more effectively throughout Tasmania. Members wanted to make sure that centres who needed the most help received it. They also wanted to negotiate with government as a state-wide organisation.

## More info

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# Chronology

- **Child Welfare Association (1917 – 1956)**
  - Child Health Association (1956 - 2023)

## Related Entries

### Ran

- [Mothercraft Home \(1925 - c. 1988\)](#)

The Child Welfare Association ran the Mothercraft Home until 1947.  
Date: 1925 - 1947

### Related Organisations

- [Women's Health Association \(1901 - 1920?\)](#)

The Women's Health Association established the Child Welfare Association.
- [Public Health Department, State of Tasmania \(1904 - 1956\)](#)

In 1949, the Public Health Department took over the management of the Mothercraft Home from the Child Welfare Association.

### Related Legislation

- [New Town Mothercraft Home Agreement Act 1949, Tasmania \(1949 - 1998\)](#)

The *Mothercraft Home Agreement Act* formalised an agreement between the government and the Child Welfare Association to transfer the Mothercraft Home to the government.

## Resources

- Waters, Jill, [Waterworth, Edith Alice](#), The Companion to Tasmanian History, 2005

# Records

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## Records

- [Branch and State Council Records \(1919 - 1991\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/child-welfare-association/>