

# Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children

1935 – 1988

**Other Names:** • Crippled Children's Association

## Details

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The Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children formed in 1935 to help children with physical disabilities. The Society became the Tascare Society for Children in 1988.

Crippled was a term commonly used until around the 1970s to describe people with conditions including muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, paraplegia and poliomyelitis. It was also common to refer to a person with a physical disability as a 'cripple'. In Australia, from around the 1930s, the term crippled was taken up by a range of organisations and institutions for people with disabilities.

The polio epidemics in Australia during the 1930s may have been a factor in the emergence of Societies for Crippled Children and Homes for Crippled Children during this period. As the twentieth century progressed, the term became less common, and even pejorative. By the 1970s crippled was replaced by other terms such as handicapped or disabled.

Shortly after its establishment, the Tasmanian Society for Crippled Children received a grant of £1000 from the Nuffield Trust and a loan of £200 from the Rotary Club of Hobart to conduct a survey of the numbers and locations of children with physical disabilities in Tasmania. After the survey, the Society set up a paediatric clinic for these children. It eventually went on to establish six.

Tasmania experienced a severe polio epidemic in 1937-1938, one of the biggest outbreaks recorded in the world. That year, the Society obtained a grant from Lord Nuffield to open an after-care home for children who had contracted polio during the epidemic. Known as Wingfield House, it was on the site of the old Queen's Orphan Asylum in New Town, which by then was St John's Park.

In 1943, a statement of the Society's work and aims said that:

*The Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children was formed in 1935 to co-ordinate individual efforts to assist crippled children and to draw up a comprehensive plan covering all phases necessary to establish cripples as independent and useful members of society. This scheme covered discovery and arrangements for early treatment, adequate training for, and placement in, suitable employment.*

The Society provided treatment splints for inpatient and outpatient fittings. It supplied and repaired clothing for children in bed. It also assisted with fees, clothing, books, tools, transport, accommodation, and funds for education and training. According to the Statement of its work and aims: 'The Society's main aim was to remove every barrier that might prevent crippled children from claiming one of their greatest rights – the right to work and

independence'.

In 1943, the Society convened a conference in Melbourne which led to the formation of the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, now known as National Disability Services.

## More info

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### Chronology

- **Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children (1935 – 1988)**
  - Tascare Society for Children (1988 - 2019)

### Related Entries

#### Related Organisations

- [St John's Park \(1936 - 1994\)](#)  
Wingfield House, established by the Tasmanian Spastic Association, was on the site of St John's Park.
- [St Giles' School \(1931 - 1985?\)](#)  
The Launceston branch of the Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children assisted St Giles' School.
- [Society for the Care of Crippled Children \(1937 - 1988\)](#)  
The Society for the Care of Crippled Children was an autonomous branch of the Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children.
- [Wingfield House \(1938 - 1971\)](#)  
The Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children established Wingfield House.
- [Victoria Convalescent Home \(1891 - 1959\)](#)  
The Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children provided support to the Victoria Convalescent Home.

### Resources

- Killalea, Anne, [Poliomyelitis](#), The companion to Tasmanian history, 2005
- Evans, Beth, *Rocky Bay: a short history, 1938-2000*, 2003

## Records

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### Records

- [Records of Tascare Society for Children/ Tasmanian Society for the Care of Crippled Children \(1935 - 2014\)](#)
  - [General Correspondence-Hospital and Health Administration \(1932 - 1987\)](#)
  - [General Correspondence, Department of Public Health \(1920 - 1956\)](#)
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