

# Public Health Department, State of Tasmania

1904 – 1956

**Other Names:** • Department of Public Health

## Details

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The Public Health Department was established in January 1904. Its purpose was to stop the outbreak of contagious diseases by taking control of sanitary works as well as preventing water pollution and the sale of contaminated food. The Public Health Department became the Department of Health Services in 1956.

The Public Health Department was established by the *Public Health Act* 1903 following an outbreak of smallpox in Launceston. It was located in the Chief Secretary's Office until 1934 when it acquired its own government Minister and expanded rapidly.

The Mental Deficiency Board and State Psychological Clinic, established by the *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1920, were associated with the Department.

In 1945, the *Public Health Administration Act*, also of 1945, created four Divisions of the Department. These were Public Health, Hospital and Medical Services, Mental Hygiene, and Tuberculosis.

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

The Department also ran St John's Park, and the Mental Diseases Hospital at New Norfolk, along with its successor, Lachlan Park Hospital.

## More info

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### Chronology

- Central Board of Health (1885 - 1903)
- **Public Health Department, State of Tasmania (1904 – 1956)**
  - Department of Health Services, State of Tasmania (1956 - 1989)
  - Department of Health, State of Tasmania (1989 - 1993)
    - Department of Community and Health Services, State of Tasmania (1993 - 1998)
    - Department of Health and Human Services, State of Tasmania (1998 - 2018)
    - Department of Communities Tasmania (2018 - 2022)

### Related Entries

## Ran

- [Lachlan Park Hospital \(1937 - 1968\)](#)
- [Mental Diseases Hospital, New Norfolk \(1915 - 1937\)](#)

Date: 1915 - 1937

- [Queen Alexandra Maternity Hospital \(1908 - 1999\)](#)
- [Royal Hobart Hospital \(1938 - current\)](#)
- [Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital \(1897 - 1993\)](#)
- [Devon Public Hospital \(1888 - 1958\)](#)
- [Darwin Private Hospital \(1933 - 1951\)](#)
- [Burnie General Hospital \(1951 - 1965\)](#)
- [Spencer Public Hospital \(1918 - 1965\)](#)
- [St John's Park \(1936 - 1994\)](#)

St John's Park was run by the Public Health Department.

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

In 1947, the Public Health Department took over the management of the Mothercraft Home.

Date: 1947 - 1956

- [Division of Mental Hygiene \(1945 - 1956\)](#)

## Related Organisations

- [Mental Deficiency Board \(1922 - 1964\)](#)

The Mental Deficiency Board was a satellite to the Public Health Department.

- [Meercroft Hospital \(1925 - 1958\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Association \(1917 - 1956\)](#)

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

## Related Legislation

- [The Public Health Act 1903, Tasmania \(1904 - 1935\)](#)

The *Public Health Act* 1903 established the Public Health Department.

## Resources

- Roe, Michael, *Nine Australian progressives : vitalism in bourgeois social thought, 1890-1960*, 1984

# Records

## Records

- [Correspondence Files, Public Health Department \(1940 - 1989\)](#)
- [General Correspondence-Hospital and Health Administration \(1932 - 1987\)](#)
- [General Correspondence, Department of Public Health \(1920 - 1956\)](#)

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