

# Police Department, State of Tasmania

1898 – 2004

## Details

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The Police Department, which had offices in Liverpool Street, Hobart, was established in 1898 by the *Police Regulation Act*. In 2004, the Police Department became Tasmania Police.

The Police Department was the first police force in Tasmania to be run by the state government.

The Commissioner of Police had overall management of the Police Department.

Between 1907 and 1918, following the passage of the *Infant Life Protection Act*, the Police Department managed the foster care system established by the Act for the children of single mothers. Under this system, the mothers left their children with approved foster carers and paid them a set fee for maintenance. The Police Department employed an inspecting nurse who inspected the foster homes and advised the foster mothers. This was an attempt to reduce the high mortality rates of these infants.

Officials of the Neglected Children and Children of the State Departments used the Police to report on suspected cases of child neglect and to remove the children from their homes, especially in rural areas where the Neglected Children's Department did not have inspectors until 1915. The Police also visited prospective employers and adoptive parents and reported back to the Department. The Department's correspondence with the police over individual children is preserved in their case files.

Between 1918 and 1991, the Police Department ran the Police Watch House in Launceston and other regional gaols around Tasmania. The HM Gaols Department and its successors had oversight of the inmates. Some of those inmates were young people under the age of 18.

After the establishment of the Mental Deficiency Board in 1922, the Police also visited the guardians that the Board appointed for adults and children who had been diagnosed with an intellectual disability. Many of the children were state wards.

The Police Department investigated law breaking by children and brought them before the Children's Court.

## More info

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### Chronology

- **Police Department, State of Tasmania (1898 – 2004)**
  - Tasmania Police, State of Tasmania (2004 - current)

### Related Entries

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- [Launceston Police Watch House \(1917 - 1976\)](#)  
The Police Department ran the Police Watch House, Launceston
- [Launceston Reception Prison \(1976 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1976 - 1983

### Related Organisations

- [Neglected Children's Department, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1918\)](#)  
The Police Department assisted the Neglected Children's Department.
- [Children of the State Department, State of Tasmania \(1918 - 1934\)](#)  
The Police Department assisted the Children of the State Department.
- [HM Gaols Department \(1936 - 1944\)](#)  
The Police Department ran the Police Watch House at Launceston but the HM Gaols Department had oversight of the inmates.
- [Gaols Department \(1944 - 1959\)](#)  
The Police Department ran the Police Watch House at Launceston but the Gaols Department had oversight of the inmates.
- [Prisons Department \(1959 - 1983\)](#)  
The Police Department ran the Police Watch House at Launceston but the Prisons Department had oversight of the inmates.
- [Children's Court of Tasmania \(1905 - current\)](#)
- [Mental Deficiency Board \(1922 - 1964\)](#)
- [Neglected Children's Department, Colony of Tasmania \(1896 - 1901\)](#)  
The Police Department assisted the Neglected Children's Department.

## Resources

- Easton, Geoff, *Tasmania Police: from force to service : 1803-1999*, 1999

## Records

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### Records

- [Correspondence Relating to the Custody and Welfare of Children under Various Acts \(1887 - 1954\)](#)
  - [Police Reports, Correspondence and Associated Papers of Cases Relating to Juveniles, Heard by the Children's Court \(1941 - 1961\)](#)
  - [Police Reports Received from the Children's Court \(1941 - 1959\)](#)
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