

# Magistracy Departments, State of Tasmania

1804 – 1901

**Other Names:** • Magistracy Lower Courts Administration Branch

## Details

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The Magistracy Departments were individual Departments which managed the lower courts in various localities. They had their origins in the appointment of a Magistrate at Hobart and Port Dalrymple in 1804. The first system of Police Magistrates was established by Governor George Arthur in the late 1820s and early 1930s. Between then and 1901, the number of Magistracies varied over time. In 1901, following Australian federation, Tasmania became a state and the state government took over the Magistracy Departments.

Under the *Australian Courts Act* of 1828, the Governor had the power to establish courts lower than the Supreme Court, to deal with minor criminal and civil cases. Governor George Arthur used this act to establish a system of Police Magistrates. In this way, the Magistracy Departments developed as part of the growing police establishment. Soon there was a Chief and Assistant Police Magistrate in Hobart and in charge of each Police district.

In the 1890s, the Departments became one Department. However, following the *Civil Service Act* in 1900, nine magistrates from different localities claimed to be Departmental heads and after that there was more than one Magisterial Department.

Police Magistrates were full time salaried officials. In addition, there were part time honorary magistrates also known as Justices of the Peace.

## More info

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### Chronology

- **Magistracy Departments, State of Tasmania (1804 – 1901)**
  - Magistracy Departments, State of Tasmania (1901 - 1989)

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