

# Institutional Care

1860s – 1970s

## Details

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Institutional care is a term that refers to the system of residential care for children, generally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From around the 1940s, state and territory governments in Australia began to phase out the use of large institutions for children (such as orphanages and reformatories). Other models introduced from this time included cottage Homes and family group Homes. By the 1970s, most governments had a policy of ‘de-institutionalisation’ – closing down institutions and accommodating children in out-of-Home care settings like foster care. In the context of ‘Forgotten Australians’ and Former Child Migrants, the word ‘care’ is often in inverted commas, to indicate that many people feel that ‘care’ is not a word to describe their childhood experiences in an institution.

The Aged Care Act 1997 contains this definition of institutional care:

*‘institutional care’ refers to residential care provided by a government or non-government organisation, including (but not limited to) any of the following:*

- (a) orphanages;
- (b) children’s homes;
- (c) industrial, training or farm schools;
- (d) dormitory or group cottage houses;
- (e) juvenile detention centres;
- (f) mental health or disability facilities.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Related Events

- [Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, Parliament of Australia \(2003 - 2005\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Aged Care Act 1997, Commonwealth of Australia \(1997\)](#)

### Resources

- Senate Community Affairs References Committee Secretariat, Parliament of Australia, [Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children](#), 2004

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