

# Probation

c. 1905 –

## Details

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Probation refers to children or young people being committed by the Children's Court to a period of supervision by the child welfare department in their state or territory.

In New South Wales, probation was introduced in 1905 as part of the Children's Court system. It was a way of supervising children who had been charged with a crime or misdemeanour, or with neglect, but who were considered to be able to reform. Probation officers visited the child's home regularly, and ensured the family kept the home environment to a satisfactory standard. They checked that the child attended school and stayed out of trouble. Probation officers also monitored women who received boarding out allowance to care for their own children.

There were various periods of supervision, with discretion being given to the Court and/or to the Department as to what was an appropriate period for this probation to last. It was possible for a child to be placed on probation with parents or other relatives.

In Tasmania, probation officers were first appointed under sections 30 to 35 of the Children of the State Act 1918. Probation officers provided information about a young offender to the Children's Court and supervised the child or young person before and after the hearing, if the court required it.

Probation meant fewer children were taken into care, but enabled the officers of the state government departments to police the activities of families.

There were some institutions called probationary homes. These were an alternative to reformatories for children and young people.

## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Related Legislation

- [Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act 1905, New South Wales \(1905 - 1923\)](#)  
The Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act introduced probation in New South Wales.
- [Juvenile Offenders \(Probation\) Ordinance 1940, Australian Capital Territory \(1940 - 1958\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
- [State Children's Relief Department \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)
- [Dee Why Home for Boys \(1924 - 1936\)](#)
- [Manly Boys' Probationary Home \(1903 - 1924\)](#)

- [Children's Court of New South Wales \(October 1905 - current\)](#)
- [Christ Church St Laurence Welfare Bureau \(1936 - c. 1941\)](#)
- [Probationary Farm Home, Dora Creek \(1900 - 1913\)](#)
- [Probationary Farm Home, Toronto \(November 1909 - 1912?\)](#)
- [Probationary Farm Home, Rydalmere \(1891 - 1894\)](#)
- [Probationary Farm Home, Branxton \(1890s - 1915?\)](#)
- [Girls' Probationary School \(1901 - 1945\)](#)
- [Boys' Probationary School \(1900 - 1945\)](#)

#### Related Archival Series

- [Registers of Children Released on Probation, Meteor Park Orphanage \(later St Joseph's Home, Neerkol\) \(21 July, 1915 - 15 January 1930\)](#)

## Resources

- McLean, Donald, *Children In Need: An account of the administration and functions of the Child Welfare Department, New South Wales, Australia: with an examination of the principles involved in helping deprived and wayward children*, 1955
- Scrivener, Gladys, ["Rescuing the rising generation" : industrial schools in New South Wales, 1850-1910](#), 1996
- Quinn, Peter E, [Unenlightened efficiency: the administration of the juvenile correction system in New South Wales 1905-1988](#), 27 March 2006
- Howlett, Christine, [Deaths in Custody Australia: No. 3 Deaths in Juvenile Detention, 1980-1992](#), May 1993

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