

# Orphanages Act 1879, Queensland

1879 – 1911

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## Details

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The Orphanages Act 1879 (Act no. 16/1879) was an act to govern Queensland orphanages which were charged with the care, teaching and training of children whose circumstances included death of one or both parents, desertion by parents, or neglect. It was assented to on 2 October 1879 and its full title was “An Act to make better provision for the Establishment and Management of Asylums for Orphans and Deserted and Neglected Children”. The Act also provided for the boarding-out, hiring-out and apprenticing of orphanage children. This act was repealed by the State Children Act 1911 (Act no. 2 Geo.V.No.11) on the 30th of November 1911.

The Orphanages Act 1879 permitted destitute or deserted children under the age of 12 years to be sent to an orphanage and to remain there until they reached 12 years of age, unless boarded out with a ‘trustworthy and respectable person’ or hired out or apprenticed. A child could be hired out or become an apprentice at 10 years of age. At this time, the state subsidised orphanages in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville, and an inspector of orphanages was appointed. Parents or relatives of children living in these institutions were expected to contribute to their support.

The position of Inspector of Orphanages was created under the *Orphanages Act 1879*. Charles Horrocks, born in Weimar, Germany in 1844, was Inspector of Orphanages from 6 November 1884 until his death on 20 October 1896.

As Inspector, Horrocks sought and obtained government approval for the age limit for employment of orphans and children in care to be raised to twelve years. He also helped to develop the boarding out system of child protection (fostering and employment) in Queensland.

He was a delegate at the 1891 Intercolonial Charities Conference in Melbourne, representing the Queensland Government. He presented a report to government in 1891 recommending that the child protective and corrective structures in Queensland should be united in one department under a single director. The *State Children Act 1911* implemented some of Horrocks’s proposed reforms.

## More info

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### Chronology

- Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act 1865, Queensland (1865 - 1911)
  - **Orphanages Act 1879, Queensland (1879 – 1911)**
    - State Children Act 1911, Queensland (1911 - 1966)
      - Children's Services Act 1965, Queensland (1965 - 2000)
        - Child Protection Act 1999, Queensland (1999 - current)

## Related Entries

### Related Organisations

- [Holy Cross Retreat \(13 October 1889 - 1978\)](#)
  - [St Joseph's Home, Neerkol \(1885 - 1978\)](#)
  - [St Vincent's Home for Children \(1935 - 1971\)](#)
  - [Rockhampton Orphanage \(1870 - 1894\)](#)
  - [Diamantina Orphanage \(1865 - 1910\)](#)
  - [Public Instruction Department, Orphanages Branch, State Government of Queensland \(2 October 1879 - 1 December 1911\)](#)  
Public Instruction Department, Orphanages Branch administered the *Orphanages Act 1879*.
  - [St Vincent's Orphanage \(1867 - 1935\)](#)
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