

Women's Health Association

1901 – 1920?

Other Names: • WHA

Details

The Women's Health Association formed out of the Women's Sanitary Association in 1901. They visited working-class women to teach them about sanitation and campaigned for better conditions for factory workers, better housing for the poor, and the health of children.

After 1901, the influence of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union on child welfare policy seems to have declined while that of the Women's Health Association increased. The Union were active in the 'child rescue' movement in the 1890s and their lobbying was instrumental in the passage of the Youthful Offenders, Destitute and Neglected Children's Act 1896.

The Women's Health Association lobbied for measures in the 1903 *Public Health Act* to protect the lives of illegitimate babies whose mortality rate was more than double that of babies born to married couples. When the Act failed to make provision for inspection and advice giving to women who boarded the babies of single mothers, some members of the Women's Health Association formed the Children's Protection Society to campaign for greater stringency.

In the post World War One period, the Women's Health Association campaigned for women to sit on juries and to be appointed as magistrates in cases involving women and children. The Attorney-General, WB Propsting, who drew up the 1918 *Children of the State Act*, opposed the idea to some extent, especially women sitting on juries for sex offences. However, he made provision in the Act for special women magistrates to preside in children's courts.

More info

Chronology

- Women's Sanitary Association (1891 - 1901)
 - **Women's Health Association (1901 – 1920?)**

Related Entries

Related Legislation

- [The Children of the State Act 1918, Tasmania \(1918 - 1936\)](#)
- [The Public Health Act 1903, Tasmania \(1904 - 1935\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Children's Court of Tasmania \(1905 - current\)](#)

The Women's Health Association campaigned for special women magistrates to preside over children's courts.

- [Children's Protection Society \(1903 - 1920?\)](#)
Some members of the Women's Health Association formed the Children's Protection Society.
- [Child Welfare Association \(1917 - 1956\)](#)
The Women's Health Association established the Child Welfare Association.
- [Magistracy Departments, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1989\)](#)

Resources

- Waters, Jill, [Waterworth, Edith Alice](#), The Companion to Tasmanian History, 2005
- Pearce, Vicki, [Petersen, Alicia Teresa Jane O'Shea](#), Australian Dictionary of Biography, No date

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