

# Magistracy Departments, State of Tasmania

1901 – 1989

**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. After 1905, they included the children's courts. In 1989, the Magistracy Departments became part of the Law Department.

In 1907, when the government produced its first formal list of Departments, the Magistracy Departments were all linked together under the Sheriff and Gaols Department. However, this was only temporary, and in 1912, four separate Departments emerged based on geographical regions. The numbers continued to fluctuate between one and four. In the late 1960s, there were three Magistracy Departments, one each for the south, north, and north-west of the state.

Police Magistrates were full time salaried officials but in addition there were part time honorary Magistrates also known as Justices of the Peace. Various acts established Courts of Petty Sessions which took over the minor criminal cases. A Police Magistrate or two Justices of the Peace could preside over these. The Justices of the Peace attached to the Magistracy Departments were not part of the public service. However, the full time Police Magistrates, who were legally qualified, did belong to the service.

In 1905, the *Youthful Offenders, Destitute and Neglected Children's Amendment Act* established children's courts. As with other courts below the level of the Supreme Court, Police Magistrates or two honorary Justices of the Peace presided over them. In 1918, after a campaign by the Women's Health Association for women magistrates to preside over children's courts, the *Children of the State Act* provided for one or more special Magistrates for the courts, which opened the way for women. In their absence, a Police Magistrate or two Justices of the Peace could officiate.

## More info

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### Chronology

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

### Related Entries

#### Related Legislation

- [The Children of the State Act 1918, Tasmania \(1918 - 1936\)](#)
- [Youthful Offenders Destitute and Neglected Children's Amendment Act 1905, Tasmania \(1905 - 1918\)](#)

#### **Related Organisations**

- [Children's Court of Tasmania \(1905 - current\)](#)
- [Women's Health Association \(1901 - 1920?\)](#)
- [Sherriff and Gaols Department, State of Tasmania \(1901 - 1924\)](#)
- [Law Department, State of Tasmania \(1983 - c. 1992\)](#)

## Records

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### Records

- [Records of Cases Heard in Children's Court, Tasmania \(1906 - 1986\)](#)
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