

# The Public Health Amendment Act 1917, Tasmania

1917 – 1935

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## Details

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The Public Health Amendment Act 1917 also known by its full title 'An Act to further amend "The Public Health Act, 1903", and for other purposes' (Act no. 8 Geo. V no.57) reflects the advances made in medical knowledge in the early twentieth century and provides increased authority to Health Officers. This legislation was repealed in 1935 by The Public Health Act 1935 (Act no. 26 Geo V. No.43).

Australia experienced 12 major outbreaks of bubonic plague or the black-death in the early 20th century and it was three Australian medical officers who made significant inroads into understanding the ability of insects to spread disease to human hosts. Although the disease hit Sydney in New South Wales most dramatically news of the disaster no doubt spread to the other states and territories of Australia. This legislation reflects these new understandings of disease by including specific regulations on the eradication and destruction of both rats and insects.

The spread of disease from human to human was also addressed by this legislation with inclusion of a definition of the term carrier and contact. The amendment also provided regulation on the forcible return of people who had illegally left a district, and Governors were empowered to prescribe the conditions and circumstances under which people with or who had come into contact with sufferers of infectious diseases were to be treated. Any regulations of this nature made by the Governor were to be based on the advice of an Officer of the Department of Public Health, or an Officer of Health of a local authority. This amendment also legislated for the ongoing medical examinations of sufferers of infectious diseases and those who had come into contact with them.

This amendment also dealt with 'offensive' trade, and the regulation of businesses that carried out 'offensive' trade. Offensive trades is a term that was used to describe trades that caused bad smells or pollution such as tanneries.

This legislation was repealed in 1935 by The Public Health Act 1935 (Act no. 26 Geo V. No.43).

## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Amends

- [The Public Health Act 1903, Tasmania \(1904 - 1935\)](#)

### Resources

- [\*Bubonic Plague Comes To Sydney In 1900\*](#), The University of Sydney School of Medicine: Online Museum website, No date
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