

Lunacy Department, State Government of Western Australia

1903 – 1934

Details

The Lunacy Department was the government organisation established as a result of the *Lunacy Act 1903*. The department was responsible for the administration of the Act and for mental health hospitals and services. During these years it was common to place children with intellectual and other disabilities in mental health institutions. The Department ran four institutions: Claremont Hospital for the Insane and its sub-institutions Whitby Falls, Stromness (returned soldiers), and Greenplace. The Inspector General for the Insane was the head of the Lunacy Department and also the Superintendent of Claremont. In 1934 the responsibilities of the Department were transferred to the Mental Hospitals Department.

The administration of the Lunacy Department was examined by the Royal Commission into Lunacy in 1921-22. Western Australia was found to be out of step with the other States because in WA 'the Inspector General takes part with the superintendent in the administration and management of the Claremont institution.'

The lack of oversight of the Inspector General concerned the Commissioners, who suggested that regulations be drafted to ensure that the newly-created Board of Visitors could provide an effective 'second managerial authority' in the Department. Recognising the need for the Inspector General and the Board of Visitors to 'co-operate in every particular', the Inspector General should be either the Chair of the Board or their 'Chief Executive Officer'. The Inspector General lived and worked in the grounds of Claremont Hospital.

More info

Chronology

- **Lunacy Department, State Government of Western Australia (1903 – 1934)**
 - Mental Hospitals Department, State Government of Western Australia (1934 - 1954)
 - Mental Health Services, State Government of Western Australia (1954 - 1984)
 - Health Department, State Government of Western Australia (1984 - current)

Related Entries

Ran

- [Fremantle Asylum \(1857 - 1909\)](#)
Date: 1903 - 1909
- [Whitby Falls Hospital \(1897 - 1972\)](#)
Date: 1903 - 1934
- [Claremont Mental Hospital \(1903 - 1972\)](#)
Date: 1903 - 1934

- [Greenplace \(1914 - 1979\)](#)
Date: 1914 - 1934
- [Heathcote \(1929 - 1994\)](#)

Related Events

- [Royal Commission in Lunacy, State of Western Australia \(28 September 1921 - 21 September 1922\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [Lunacy Act 1871, Western Australia \(1871 - 1903\)](#)

Resources

- [The Bentley Case](#), The West Australian, 23 April 1938
- [Bentley case](#), The West Australian, 5 May 1938

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/lunacy-department/>