

Apology to the Aboriginal People of New South Wales

2005 will mark the centenary of the Children's Court of New South Wales.

“The first separate Children's Court was held in Ormond House at Paddington from 1905 until 1911, when it moved to new premises in Albion Street Surry Hills which also housed the 'Metropolitan Shelter for Boys' “. ¹

While the Children's Court has provided a valuable service to the community, families, children and young people of NSW over the past century it is clear that some past policies and laws administered by the Children's Court may have caused injustice. The centenary of the Children's Court provides an opportune time for the Children's Court to publicly address this issue and, therefore, personally and in my capacity as the Deputy Chief Magistrate and Acting Senior Children's Magistrate, I formally apologise and say SORRY to the Aboriginal People of New South Wales for any role the Children's Court may have played in the implementation of policies which led to the “stolen generation”.

Please be assured that the Children's Court is fully committed to implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principles set out in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Helen Syme

Deputy Chief Magistrate

Acting Senior Children's Magistrate

31 August 2004

¹ The Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act was passed in 1905, “defining the powers of the Children's Court and providing that children who were neglected and uncontrollable, and juvenile offenders charged with summary and indictable offences, could all be dealt with by it. Child was defined as a boy or girl under sixteen and over five years of age. The Children's Courts were also able to employ honorary probation officers to supervise children, and had a general discretion as to the institutions to which children might be sent. The courts were to consist of 'special magistrates'. Courts of petty sessions were deprived of jurisdiction over children, but the Act explicitly preserved the powers magistrates had under the general law' - The Children's Court and Community Welfare in NSW by Rod Blackmore Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd Melbourne 1989. p.6 “The first separate Children's Court was held in Ormond House at Paddington from 1905 until 1911, when it moved to new premises in Albion Street Surry Hills which also housed the 'Metropolitan Shelter for Boys' “ in Finding History in 200 years of Child Care by Rod Blackmore Senior Children's Magistrate Prepared for the Hornsby Shire Historical Society Inc May 1995