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## **A Living Library Project**

# History of Children's Services

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Melbourne Municipality 1910 to 1980**

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Melbourne Municipality 1910 to 1980**



History of Children's Services  
in  
The Melbourne Municipality  
compiled from MCC Reports by Ruth Crow  
1983

Published by the Crow Collection Association as part of the 1992  
Living Library Project on the History of children's Services

Booklet Number 4.

Illustration by Simon Kneebone from "Do It Yourself Social  
Research" by Yoland Wadsworth.

History of Children's Services  
in  
The Melbourne Municipality

The main thrust of the Crow Collection Association's 1991/92 Living Library Project has been to help community organisations in the Western Metropolitan Region to plan for the twenty-first century.

However, this documents mainly consists of a chart about children's services in the Melbourne Municipality. It can be applied, in its generality, to the Western Region but no doubt the West was greatly deprived of services as compared with the Melbourne Municipality.

It may be useful to study the booklet on the "Deprived West" (in this Living Library series) to appreciate the differences between regions in the Melbourne Metropolis.

The chart is part of a document prepared by Ruth Crow for Winsome McCaughey who was elected to the Melbourne City Council in 1982 and was Lord Mayor in 1988/89. Winsome was one of the founders of Community Child Care and thus one of her first matters of concern was to improve the way local government delivered children's services.

Ruth studied all the reports of the City Health Officer (who was responsible for the Council's children's services) from the beginning of the century until the end of the 1970s.

The full report (about 20 pages) is available from the Crow Collection at the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus).

Other sets of documents in the Crow Collection which may be helpful to children's services organisations are from movements with which Ruth was associated such as the Committee for Co-ordinating Child Care in Wartime (1943..), the Coburg Education Association (1964...), Action for Adequate Child Care (1968...) and Community Child Care (1972...)

History of Children's Services  
in  
The Melbourne Municipality.  
1910 to 1980

3.

Explanatory Notes

Four Distinct Periods

This study of reports prepared by Melbourne City Council Health Committee from 1910 to 1980 showed that there were four distinct periods. Slogans used in Melbourne City Council reports have been used in this document to designate the periods.

1. From 1910...."Keeping the Well Baby Well."
2. From mid 1930..."Putting Magic in the Lives of Children."
3. From mid 1950s... "We Gather Strength as We Go."
4. From the end of the 1970s..."Parent Participation is the Key"

1. Main Concern on Physical Hygiene - "Keeping the Well Baby Well". From 1914 to the mid 1930s the main children's service provided by the Melbourne City Council was the Infant Welfare Centres (Baby Health Centres).

"Keeping the well baby well" was the slogan chosen by Dr Santlebury Brown who was the first Infant Welfare Visiting Officer for the Council. She was appointed to this position in 1920.

2. Main Concern on Mental Hygiene - "A Child Life that is Magical". From the mid 1930s to the end of the 1940s the Melbourne City Council was one of the first municipality to establish and administer kindergartens.

"A child's life that is magical" were the words chosen by Dr John Dale to popularise the idea of preschool education. Dr John Dale was the Medical Officer for Health for the Melbourne City Council during this period.

3. Main Concern to Consolidate Services - "We Gather Strength As We Go". From about 1950 to the mid 1970s was a period during which the Council consolidated its services but it was not an innovative period in the field of children's services.

"We gather strength as we go" is the Melbourne City Council's motto and applies to this period during which existing services were gradually improved.

4. Main Concern to Involve the Community - "The Opportunity to Have a Full Life" From the mid 1970s the Melbourne City Council once again asserted its pioneering capacity by involving the community in establishing a range of family support services, emphasising the need for parent participation.

"The opportunity to have a full life" was stated as one of the aims of the 1973 Melbourne City Council Strategy Plan. At the end of the 1970s the Melbourne City Council held a Community Consultation on Children's Services which set the goals for the 1980s.

### The Historic Setting

Before 1914 Although the Melbourne City Council was not directly involved in the provision of children's services until 1914 there were some creches and kindergartens in the municipal. For example, by the turn of the century charity committees had established creches (day nurseries) in North Melbourne, Carlton and in the City and in 1910 the first free kindergarten in Victoria was established by the Baptist Church in Bouverie Street Carlton.

The Council had no direct responsibility for these creches and kindergartens although it is probable that the Lady Mayoress was a patroness of some of the philanthropic committees which funded and administered such services.

From 1914 to 1930 This was the period of significant change in the role of local government for two main reasons Firstly, for the first time, the Council became responsible for a social service (Baby Health Centres) and, secondly, the Council became a custodian for money raised from taxes as well as from rateable properties.

The Baby Health Service (Infant Welfare) began in 1914 when a sanitary inspector, Mrs A. Kemp, started what was called "maternal and infant visitations" in the Melbourne Municipality. In 1921 the State Government contributed 125 pounds per annum to each health centre. This was first state government grant for a welfare service.

From 1930 to 1950 This was a period during which the popular campaigns for preschool education resulted in the 1944 Preschool Act which provided funding for the rapid expansion of kindergartens. The availability of this finance enabled the Melbourne City Council to establish and administer several municipality kindergartens. At the same time the philanthropic support for the Free Kindergartens, in the inner areas, diminished as the Victoria-wide movement for community kindergartens expanded and such support became directed to other localities.

From 1950 to 1970 This was the period of rapid suburbanisation, and fundamental changes in family life. There was a steady growth of the traditional services, infant welfare and preschool education but these were not geared to meet the needs of migrants families, families with both parents in paid employment, student parents, outer suburban families and single parents. This resulted in a considerable growth of sub-standard commercial child minding centres.

From 1970 to 1980 During this period Children's Services in the Melbourne Municipality were affected by changes in policies at the three levels of government.... Federal, State and Local:- the Federal Government's Child Care Act in late 1972, the 1972 State Government Inquiry on Preschool Child Development, and the Melbourne City Council Strategy Plan.

New ways of involving the community in establishing and administering children's services were developing during this period. The reports from the Melbourne Municipality's Consultation on Children's Services, held at the end of the 1970s, and the reports from the State Government's Consultation on Children's Services in the early 1980s used the experiences of the 1970s community child care movement to plan for the future.

Chart on history of Children's Services  
in  
The Melbourne Municipality

Date	Service	Comment
	<u>Before Council involvement</u>	
1890	3 creches in Melb Muni.: City, Carlton and North Melbourne.	13 creches in Victoria, est. by philanthropy
1910	Bouverie Street, Kindergarten opens in Carlton	First Vic. Free Kinder. Main support : Baptists
	.....	
1914/35	<u>"Keeping the Well Baby Well".....</u>	<u>Physical Hygiene</u>
1914	MCC starts "Maternal & Infant Visitations" by a sanitary inspector (Mrs A. Kemp)	Service used existing staff. First Council "welfare" service in Victoria.
1916	Baby Health Centres proposed Free milk distributed.	Centres aim to protect children from infectious disease.
1919	Pneumonic 'flu epidemic, 8,678 recorded attacks, 464 deaths (34 under 5 yrs). High incidence of scarlet fever, typhoid, diphtheria in children.	Public concern over infectious diseases
1919	Baby Health Centre est. by MCC	One of the first in Victoria.
1920	Dr Vera Scantlebury (Brown) appointed MCC Medical Officer for MCC Health Centres	First appointment of such an officer in Victoria
1920	Health Centre est. in North Melb. and Kensington Municipal Buildings and at RWH in Carlton	Financial support from MCC... buildings plus 100 pounds per annum.
1920	Baby Health Centre Assoc Formed.	First coming together of Municipal Council Welfare Services. MCC donated 1500 pounds from Tram Board surplus.
1920	Fourth MCC Centre opened at 680 Rathdowne St Nth Carlton	1,830 babies enrolled at MCC Baby Health Centres
1921	State Govt grant 125 pounds to each health centre.	First State Govt funding of a municipal health service.
1924	Diphtheria Prevention Campaign, MCC appoints Dr Anne Hensley (342 cases with 9 deaths) disease rate of 3.35 per 1000.	First school inspections by Council Health Officers.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1925	Poliomelitis Prevention Campaign MCC appoints Dr Jean McNamara, 13 cases and 2 deaths recorded.	MCC initiated a Victoria-wide campaign... Second example of co-op between Councils.
1925	State Govt. gave Councils 1 pound for 1 pound they used for polio prevention.	Second example of State Govt. funding municipal services.
1929	Nursery School opened at Princes Hill Primary in Carlton. .....	Initiated by the mothers' story-telling group.
1935/50	<u>"Child's Life that is Magical".....</u>	<u>Mental Hygiene</u>
1938	MCC Plans for Kinder. in North Melb.	MCC Est. first municipal preschool in Australia.
1938	MCC, State and C.wealth Govts plan "model preschool centre".. Lady Gowrie in Carlton. Plans propose clustering Baby Health, dental and preschool etc	First C.wealth involvement in children's services First clustering of children's services in Australia.
1939 acted	MCC research on child weight and height for evidence on need for child endowment	First time a Mun. Council as an advocate. Research pub. by AMA and United Nations.
1940	MCC forms an Advisory Council on children's services	First municipality based children's services in Victoria.
1943	There were 16 kinders. in Melb. Mun. (2 FKU. 12 Church kinders and Lady Gowrie). A very high proportion of total kinders	the MCC assisted the Church and FKU kinders....building renovations, medical checks, etc
1944	State Govt. Preschool Act	Legitimised Councils establishing kinders.
1944	Maternal and Child Hygiene Branch of the Vic. Dept of Health established.	Supervisory staff to assist planning and maintaining kinders.
1945	Increase in kinders. in MCC to 19 Hopetoun built, Fawkner Park planned.	Grants from State Govt on "per head" basis facilitated expansion.
1946	Council awarded 2 scholarships for kinder. training.	Ensured trained staff for MCC kinders.
1946	Camp Pell Emergency Housing. over 1000 children in temporary army hut accommodation in Royal Park.	Council appointed a visiting nurse (Sr Kier).Great shortage of services, over crowded schools in Nth Melb.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1950/70	<u>"We Gather Strength as We Go".....</u>	<u>Consolidation of Services"</u>
1954	Council treats over 300 cases of impetago, scabies, pediculosis at Camp Pell.	Plans to close Camp Pell
1956	MCC Home Help Service started	For mothers with young children, elderly etc.
1957	MCC accepts full resp. for 3 existing Day Nurseries. (Creches)	These 3 creches (Cariton, Nth Melb and Ethel Neilson were established in 1890s
1958	Decreasing population inner areas. 42 % Infant Welfare reg. moved out MCC area, 26 moved in.	Main causes :- jobs decentralised, urban gentrification, HCV demolitions.
1959	Increase in migrant residents	59.5 % children born on MCC with one or both parents not British born.
1959	Centre for occasional care opened in the city centre.	Eventually accommodated 100 children
1960s	Large HCV estates in Carlton, Nth Melb., Flem., and Kens.,	Preschool Centres on all HCV estates by end of 1960s.
1969	Council takes full respons. for Princes Hill Nursery	Est. 1929 by Educ. Dept. (see above 1929).
	.....	
1970/80	<u>"An Opportunity for a Full Life.....</u>	<u>Community Participation"</u>
1970	Family planning Clinic in Kens.	Joint effort by Family Plan. Assoc. and Queen Eliz Centre.
1972	Vic. Consultation on Pre-school Child Development	Input from wide range of community organisations, as well as councils and pre-school organisations.
1972	MCC Family Day Care Service started.	Municip. supervisor appointed 1973
1972	C/wealth Govt passes Child Care Act.	Federal Office of Child Care opened
1972	Special Child Care Centre at Debney Park, Flem.	Aim to help one parent families.
1973	Child Care Co-op opened at Women's House in Ken.	A new type of service part funded by C/wealth.
1973	MCC prepares Strategy Plan	Participation in planning for the first time.

8.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1976	MCC forms Community Plan. Grps. (to prepare neighbourhood action plans on based on Strat. Plan	Plans included human services Grps continued to 1981.
1976	MCC Health Dept report on community participation.	Council staff encouraged to participate in local planning
1976	"Home Makers Group at Arnion House, Nth Melb.	Relieving family stress and helping "children at risk". (MCC/ RCH co-op).
1977	MCC supports Early Childhood Development Projects (focus on health screening)	Recognition of need to co-ordinate child. services .. Inter-disciplinary team.
1979	Start of MCC Consultation on Children's Services.	Widespread neighbourhood participation. Six Reports.
1980	MCC approves the six reports of the Consultation.	Flem. Ken. Nth Melb. Carlton Plus Decen/part & General Rs.
1980	Children's Services Develop. Officer in Ken. and Flem.	These CSDOs serviced city-wide services
1980	MCC dismissed by State Govt.	
1981	MCC forms Central Children's Committee	Reps. local orgs, plus city-wide orgs. (Child Protection etc) plus MCC staff.
1982	MCC re-installed.	Crs with experience and commitment to children's services elected.
1983	Public Meeting to launch Melb Munci. Assoc. of Comty.-based Children's and Youth's Services. (MACYS)	Main aim of MACYS to strengthen the neighbourhood base and to co-ordinate child/youth services.

Report on Children's Services in Melbourne Municipality  
1980

Extracts from Recommendation B (page 5)

"Inadequacies are not only due to gaps and poor co-ordination." ....  
 "existing services are unable to provide the kind of help when it is needed"....  
 "During the 1970s a number of reports identified the fact that much of the best welfare assistance is provided outside of what is conventionally understood as the welfare system.".....  
 "for a large proportion of families there is little alternative to the conventional system"....  
"The involvement of the community in every aspect of children's services is the key strategy for this policy of resurrounding the family with supportive relationships of neighbours, and friends of their own choosing." (emphasis in the report).

Crow Collection Association  
Victoria University of Technology

Living Library Project on History of Children's Services

Funded by the Lance Reichstein Charitable Foundation

Sept. 1991 to May 1992

Booklets Published as Background Material.

1. The History of the Carlton Refuge from 1850s to 1920  
First published 1920
2. Two Articles about Health of Women and Children :-  
"The Neglected Children's Aid Society"  
First published 1911  
and  
"The After Care Home and the District Nurses".  
First published 1925
3. Two Documents about Attitudes to Slums  
"Slum Babies and Slum Mothers"  
First published about 1914  
and  
"You can't lift every baby out of the slums  
The Slum Abolition Movement in the 1930s
4. History of Children's Services in Melbourne Municipality  
1910 to 1980
5. "Bread and Treacle Diet"  
Extracts from documents of the 1930s.
6. "Mothers must Work To Win"  
Photos and leaflets from the Brunswick Children's  
Centre, 1943.
7. "The Deprived West/ The Determined West" an extract from a  
report by Ruth and Maurie Crow, first published 1972.
8. Creating Community in the Neighbourhood - Neighbourhood  
Houses in the Western Region", transcript of a tape by  
Meredith Sussex, 1978.
9. History of the Tweddle Baby Hospital, by Kathleen  
Codogonotto  
First published 1992
10. The past, present and future - Community Development in  
the Western Region, a report by Louise Gianville, 1992
11. "Magic in the Lives of Children, Participation in the  
Lives of their Parents" report prepared by Christine  
Carolan and Sheila Byard, 1992.
12. Kit on Federal Funding of Children's Services.

### About the Project

The Lance Reichstein Charitable Foundation funded the Crow Collection for a Living Library Project on children's services in the Western Region.

A Project Steering Committee has assisted the project worker (Christine Carolan) who has worked with providers of children's services teachers and students in the Region.

The project resulted in the production of a video which includes information on the history of child care, a kit about the way children's services are funded, a series of booklets describing community movements which resulted in initiating some of the present children's services and a display of photos of some of the people who have helped to establish these services in Melbourne's Western Region

A seminar on May 22nd 1992 marked the end of this project but the video and publications can be used well into the future.

### About the Collection

Ruth Crow and her late husband, Maurie were involved in movements on urban issues from the mid 1930s. Over the years they built up an extensive collection of documents :- books, pamphlets, posters, photos and working papers.

In 1990 the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus) invited Ruth to donate the collection to the VUT Library.

The Crow Collection includes documents written and/or used by groups and individuals committed to social change. This store of information from the past is being used to generate ideas about the future.

A Crow Collection Association has been formed and incorporated. One of its aims is to enhance the comprehensiveness and accessibility of the Collection through Living library Projects.



The Crow Collection

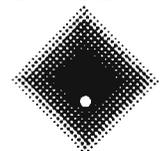
For more information, contact

Crow Collection Association  
Urban Studies Unit

Victoria University of Technology (Footscray)  
PO Box 14428 MMC,  
Melbourne 3000

Phone: (03) 688 4754, Fax: (03) 688 4805

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*This kit has been funded by the Lance Reichstein Charitable Foundation*