

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0784

Kids First Australia

(1896 -)

Born 1 January, 1896, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Welfare organisation

Summary

Kid First Australia is the trading name of The Children's Protection Society (CPS), which was founded in 1896 as the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

An initiative of the Governor's wife, Lady Sybil de Vere Brassey, its aims were to protect children from cruelty and neglect, to advance the claims of neglected, abandoned and orphan children to the general public, to co-operate with existing societies for this purpose and to enforce the existing laws for the protection of neglected children and juvenile offenders.

It was one of the few secular non government agencies in the child welfare field and it operated on the philosophy of persuading or, in the last resort, compelling parents to fulfil their responsibilities. It became the Children's Protection Society in 1971. Changes to welfare policy and legislative reform in 1985 meant a change in the Society's role but not in the objective to reduce child abuse and neglect.

In 2018 the Children's Protection Society changed its name to Kids First Australia. Kids First Australia provides support services to children, young people, and families, such as counselling, treatment and therapeutic healing for cases of abuse and neglect, youth homelessness prevention, and mentoring and education services.

Details

The Society operated through a committee of 'leisured upper-class women financing and overseeing the small salaried staff that had direct contact with the clientele'. The first object was to compel parents to discharge their duties and if it could not be done by persuasion, then they would put the law into force. Their uniformed inspectors followed up reports of 'child cruelty' by visiting the homes, issuing warnings and undertaking follow-up visits to ensure that the situation had improved. Only as a last resort did the Society exercise its statutory authority to bring such parents before the court.

In 2004 its mission is 'to provide leadership in the prevention and reduction of abuse and neglect by delivering innovative support services to children and their families, raising public awareness of the extent and impact of child abuse and neglect and to strengthen families and communities to create safe environments for children'.

In 2018 the organisation changed its name to Kids First Australia. The organisation's vision is one that acknowledges that 'all children and young people thrive in resilient, strong and safe families and communities.'

Published resources

Book

Confronting cruelty: historical perspectives on child abuse, Scott, Dorothy and Swain, Shurlee, 2002

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

Records, 1896-1985. [manuscript]

Author Details

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