Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE0459

RAAF Association (NSW Division) – WAAAF Branch

(1946 -)

Born	19460101
Occupation	Ex-Armed services organisation

Summary

The Association began in 1946 and was founded by Miss Gwen Stark (later Caldwell). The ex-WAAAF joined the RAAFA (New South Wales Division) as associate members and in 1947 were accepted with full membership.

Details

At Air Force House in Goulburn Street, Sydney, 1946, 400 ladies attended a meeting to discuss the aims of their group and make plans for its social activities. This group was named The WAAAF General Committee with Miss Gwen Stark elected as first President and Miss Jeanne Simpson as first Secretary.

The Branch went through a few name changes until in 1971 it was resolved that the WAAAF Wing would become a branch of the RAAFA, to be known as the WAAAF Branch. It remains the WAAAF Branch today.

The aim of the Branch when formed was to maintain friendships developed during the war years and to come together to undertake social activities as well as to raise funds for welfare activities such as equipping a creche and nursery in the city where WAAAF and airmen's wives could leave their children for a few hours. That basic aim is still in place over 50 years later with the Branch maintaining support for its members and offering assistance where needed.

A quarterly newsletter, *WAAAF Chat*, is produced by the Branch and provides members with news of upcoming social and official events and reunions along with general interest items.

Originally, the Branch held Housie nights and donated all moneys raised to the Headquarters of the RAAFA, where some members are engaged in voluntary work. They attend memorial services, special church services, Anzac Day and Ex-Servicewomen's marches and annual conferences. Members also visit hospitals and institutions of care, keeping in touch with each other through home visits and Department of Veterans' Affairs meetings.

During its early years, the Branch sponsored young underprivileged women to make their debuts at the RAAFA Balls by providing them with clothes and assistance.

Members have participated, with other ex-servicewomen's associations, in helping to raise money for the building of 12 self-contained units in Friendship Court at the RSL Veterans Retirement Village, Narrabeen. Also they have contributed to and attended the dedications for the memorial in the Jessie Street Gardens in Loftus Street, Sydney, and the Ex-Servicewomen's memorial in Canberra.

The Branch took part in the 'Entombment of the Unknown Soldier' (1993), the march and luncheon held in Canberra for 'Australia Remembers' in 1995 and the Federation Parade in 2001.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Private hands (These records may not be readily available)
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Digital resources



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