

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0525

National Council of Women of Western Australia

(1911 -)

Born 1 January, 1911

Occupation Voluntary organisation

Summary

The National Council of Women of Western Australia was founded in 1911, largely due to the efforts of Lady Edeline Strickland (wife of the Governor of Western Australia) who became its first president. It is a non-party, non-sectarian, umbrella organisation for a large and diverse number of affiliated women's groups in Western Australia.

It functions as a political lobby group, attempting to influence local, state and federal government. The Council has supported a wide range of social reform activities, particularly those related to education and to women's, children's and family welfare. While not an overtly feminist organisation, it provided a major focus for, predominantly middle-class, women's activism until at least the 1940s. Unlike many other states, however, the Council had strong competition from the Women's Service(s) Guild of Western Australia for leadership of the women's movement.

Its initial aims were:

1. 'To establish a bond of union between the various affiliated societies.
2. To advance the interests of women and children and of humanity in general.
3. To confer on questions relating to the welfare of the family, the State and the Commonwealth.'

Details

Like all National Councils of Women, it operates through a standing committee system whereby specific issues are brought before the Council and, if there is general agreement that a question should be taken up, a subcommittee is established to investigate the matter.

Among the groups affiliated with the Council in the 1910s were the: Women's Service(s) Guild; Woman's Christian Temperance Union; Karrakatta Club; British Immigration Association; Metropolitan Women's Workers' Union; Children's Protection Society; Ministering Children's League; Western Australian Trained Nurses Association; Girls' Friendly Society and the Mothers' Union. Among the earliest issues to attract the Council's attention were: free kindergartens; women's health; school medical services; prison reform; provision for domestic science in schools and the university; venereal diseases bill; film censorship; women jurors; women police; anti-gambling legislation.

Current affiliated organisations include the : Zonta Club of South Perth; Young Women's Christian Organisation of WA' War Widows Guild; Nation Council of Jewish Women; Australian Federation of University Women; Catholic Women's League; Guides WA; Home Economics Association of WA; Soroptimists International; State Women's Council of the Liberal Party.

Published resources

Book

The Spirit lives on, 1911-1999, Sher, Noreen, 1999

Women on the warpath : feminist of the first wave, Davidson, Dianne, 1997

Journal Article

War, Sexuality and Feminism: Perth's Women's Organisations 1938-1945, Reekie, Gail, 1985

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia

National Council of Women of Western Australia records, 1911-2001

Papers, 1881-1959 [manuscript]

Papers, 1882-1966 [manuscript]

Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia records

Papers, 1877-1951 [manuscript]

Report to the Child Endowment Commission, 1926 [manuscript]

Private hands (These records may not be readily available)

National Council of Women of Western Australia Records

Author Details

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