

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0551

Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Western Australia

(1892 -)

Born 18920101

Occupation Lobby group, Religious organisation, Welfare organisation

Summary

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of Western Australia was founded in 1892, inspired by the visit of Jessie Ackerman, the second world missionary of the American Union. The group is primarily dedicated to promoting total abstinence from alcohol and other harmful drugs and all members sign a pledge to this effect. Under its broader agenda of 'home protection' and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, however, it has been involved in wide range of social and political reform activities mostly relating to the welfare of women and children. Importantly, influenced by its sister organisation in the United States, the WCTU became a major supporter of the campaign for women's suffrage in Australia as it was believed that power at the ballot box was the only way to achieve their goals. While at its most influential in the years up to WWI, the movement still continues today.

Details

The first local Union In Western Australia was formed in York, with another five soon following, and by August 1891 a Colonial Union with 155 members had been established.

As well as campaigning for restrictions on the sale of alcohol, early activities of the groups revolved around prison work, establishing a sailor's rest as well as children's and youth groups. By at least 1893 the Union also adopted the cause of women's suffrage. The Union continued to expand its activities – creating refuge homes, campaigning against gambling, smoking and other drugs, and producing education literature.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book Section

White women, Aboriginal women and the vote in Western Australia, Grimshaw, Patricia and Ellinghaus, Katherine, 1999

Book

Woman suffrage in Australia : a gift or a struggle?, Oldfield, Audrey, 1992

The strength of white ribbon : a year-by-year record of the centennial history of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Western Australia (Inc.) : ten decades of service for "God, home and humanity" 1892-1992, Henderson, Joyce R., c1992

A Feminine Temperance: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Western Australia, 1892-1900, Stewart, Michelle, 194?

Journal Article

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

Newsletter

W.C.T.U. newsletter, 1960-

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia

[Minute books, 1935-1937 \[manuscript\]](#)

[\[Interview with Nola Adams\] \[sound recording\] / \[interviewed by Laura Bryant\]](#)

[Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia records](#)

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