

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE0579

## Osborne, Ethel Elizabeth

(1882 - 1968)

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**Born** 18820130, Armley, Leeds Yorkshire England

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**Died** 19681203, East Melbourne Victoria Australia

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**Occupation** Medical practitioner

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### Summary

Ethel Osborne and her husband William, who had been appointed professor of physiology and histology at the University of Melbourne, migrated to Australia in 1904. Osborne, a foundation member of The Catalysts, visited the Lyceum Club while travelling through London. At the inaugural meeting of the Lyceum Club in Melbourne she was elected vice-president. Back in England during World War I Osborne worked with the British Ministry of Munitions of War. Here she conducted investigations for the Health of Munition Workers' Committee and the Industrial Fatigue Research Board. Upon her return to Melbourne she was invited to report to the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on the conditions of employment of women workers in the clothing industry, for a case which won some workers a 44 hour week. Osborne then studied medicine at the University of Melbourne, practising at the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Children, the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital and privately. Osborne became a foundation member of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy council, serving as treasurer, vice-president and president. When the college's new premises were opened in 1927, its hall was named after her. Before retiring, in 1938, Osborne represented Australia at the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference (Honolulu 1928 and 1930), attended the Congress on Industrial Accidents and Diseases (Geneva) the International Congress of Industrial Relations (Amsterdam), the Disarmament Conference (Paris) and investigated employment problems in Yorkshire.

### Events

#### 1931 - 1931

Appointed substitute delegate to the League of Nations assembly

#### 1937 - 1937

Attended four public health congresses in England and an international congress on cancer research in Brussels

#### 1912 - 1912

Attended inaugural meeting and elected vice-president of the Lyceum Club, Melbourne

#### 1931 - 1931

Attended the Congress on Industrial Accidents and Diseases (Geneva), the International Congress on Industrial Relations (Amsterdam), the Disarmament Conference (Paris), and investigated employment problems in Yorkshire

#### 1925 - 1925

Commonwealth delegate to the international congress on industrial accidents and diseases, Amsterdam

#### 1928 - 1928

Commonwealth delegate to the international congress on industrial accidents and diseases, Budapest

#### 1910 - 1910

Foundation member of The Catalysts

#### 1912 - 1937

Foundation member of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy Council



**1923 - 1923**

Graduated MB BS from the University of Melbourne

**1931 - 1931**

Graduated with a Diploma of Public Health from the University of Melbourne

**2008 - 2008**

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

**1919 - 1919**

Invited to report to the Australian Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on the conditions of employment of women workers in the clothing industry

**1903 - 1903**

Married William Osborne at Armley Church of England and they were to have four children

**1932 - 1932**

Medicinal locum in England and substitute delegate to the League of Nations assembly

**1901 - 1901**

Obtained BSc. from Leeds University

**1915 - 1917**

President of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy Council

**1919 - 1929**

President of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy Council

**1930 - 1930**

Programme secretary and liaison officer for the League of Nations and the International Labour Office at the second Pan-Pacific Women's Conference, Honolulu

**1924 - 1924**

Published her report on the health of female workers in the printing and allied trades, commissioned by the union

**1928 - 1928**

Represented Australia at the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu

**1938 - 1938**

Retired with her husband to their property at Kangaroo Ground

**1904 - 1904**

Settled in Australia

**1910 - 1910**

Visited the Lyceum Club, London and reported back to the Catalysts group

**1921 - 1921**

Visited the United States of America and investigated industrial hygiene and medicine, women's unionism and home economics

**1927 - 1927**

When the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy new premises were opened, its hall was named after her

**1928 - 1929**

While overseas she investigated dietary departments and schools for St Vincent's Hospital

## Published resources

### Book

Degrees of liberation : a short history of women in the University of Melbourne, Kelly, Farley, 1985

A History of the Lyceum Club Melbourne, Gillison, Joan M, 1975

The Emily Mac : the story of the Emily McPherson College, 1906-1979, Docherty, James, 1981

Jessie Webb, a memoir, Ridley, Ronald T, 1994

### Book Section

Ethel Elizabeth Osborne, Langmore, Diane, 1988

### Resource Section

Osborne, Ethel Elizabeth (1882 - 1968), Langmore, Diane, 2006,

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110111b.htm>

### Edited Book

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988,

<https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20071105022623/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/78644/20071105-1315/www.200australianw>

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### The University of Melbourne Archives

[Osborne, William Alexander \(1873-1967\)](#)

### State Library of Victoria

[Records, 1912-ca. 1970. \[manuscript\].](#)

[Records, 1910-2013. \[manuscript\].](#)

### Author Details

Anne Heywood

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