Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE0753

GFS Australia

(1879 -)

Born	18790101
Occupation	Religious organisation

Summary

Originally known as the Girls' Friendly Society, GFS Australia began as a local branch of the Girls' Friendly Society founded in England in 1875 by Mary Townsend. This was an Anglican Church group which formed to give maids and female domestic staff spiritual guidance and social activities for their days off. The Society later also functioned in part as an employment agency. The first local Australian branch was formed in Adelaide in 1879, with branches being established in all states by 1901. It aimed to facilitate friendship between ladies (Associates) and working girls (members). Associates would help find members jobs and encourage them in Christian behaviour. By 1910 there were 329 members in Sydney. The activities of local groups varied considerably. However, in its early days, branches generally held meetings for working girls and several also ran hostels to provide them with accommodation. More recent programs have included camps and leadership courses. The Society no longer focuses solely on girls. As of 2004, its stated aims were 'to minister to children, youth and their families', and there were 14 branches of the Society across all Australian states.

Published resources

Journal Article
For the upholding of womanhood : Melbourne's interwar hostels for 'business girls', O'Hanlon, Seamus, 1999

Report
Annual report /Girls' Friendly Society

Book Section
Anglicanism and Gender Issues, O'Brien, Anne, 2002

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Australian Historic Records Register
Girls' Friendly Society, Ballarat Diocesan Council: community organisation records

Anglican Church Diocese of Grafton
North Grafton Girls Friendly Society, Grafton Cathedral Parish, Anglican Church of Australia

State Library of Western Australia
Minute books, 1893-1967 [manuscript]

[Collection of material relating to the Girls Friendly Society]

Archives Office of Tasmania
All Saints Parish - Church of England Records

Minutes of meetings of the Girls' Friendly Society

Girls Friendly Society

Minutes from various Church meetings

St John the Baptist Goulburn Street minutes of meetings of Girls Friendly Society 5 Feb 1907-11 Feb 1928

Baptism, Marriage, Burial and Administrative Records

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection
R 381 Lady Musgrave Lodge Committee Records

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