

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0755

Skene, Lillias Margaret

(1867 - 1957)

Born	18670328, Smythesdale Victoria Australia
Died	19570325, Armadale Victoria Australia
Occupation	Farmer, Welfare worker, Women's rights activist, Women's rights organiser

Summary

Lillias Skene was a prominent member of numerous women’s groups and social welfare organisations in Melbourne from the early 1900s into the 1940s. She initially focussed on philanthropic work, but from the 1920s she devoted most of her energies to the Red Cross and the National Council of Women of Victoria. She was present at the inaugural meeting of the British (Australian) Red Cross on 25 August 1914 and was a member of the Victorian council from about 1920 until 1941. She became assistant-secretary of the National Council of Women in 1914, honorary secretary in 1916, vice-president in 1921 and president in 1924. In this year she also became foundation president of the federal council of the various State-based National Councils of Women.

Details

Lillias Skene was born in 1867 at Smythesdale, Victoria. She married David Skene, a sheepmaster, in 1888 and they had 4 children. The family moved several times, at one time running a dairy in Manly, before moving to Melbourne in 1906. Soon after this she joined several philanthropic and reform organisations included the Charity Organisation Society, the Lady Talbot Milk Institute and represented the Guild of Play on the National Council of Women of Victoria until the 1920s. For thirty years, from 1919, she was honorary secretary of the Women’s Hospital Committee’s board of management. In 1927 she became one of the first seven women Justices of the Peace in Victoria and played an active role in the Women Justices Association.

Events

- 1929 - State Relief Committee
- 1927 - Victorian Nursing Board

Published resources

Resource Section

Skene, Lillias Margaret (1867 - 1957), Smart, Judith, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160304b.htm>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

Stirrers with Style! Presidents of the National Council of Women of Australia and its predecessors, National Council of Women of Australia, 2013,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ncwa>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Book

Champions of the impossible: a history of the National Council of Women of Victoria, 1902-1977, Norris, Ada, 1978

A Brief history of the National Council of Women of Victoria, 1902-1945, Gillan, Helen E (comp.), 1945

A Sense of Purpose: Great Australian Women of the 20th Century, 1996

Thesis

The Acceptable face of feminism : National Council of Women, 1902-1918, Gray, Kate, 1988

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

[National Council of Women of Victoria](#)

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Minutes \[1904-1960\] \[microform\]](#)

[Records of the National Council of Women of Australia, 1924-1990 \[manuscript\]](#)

Author Details

Jane Carey

Created 19 February 2004

Last modified 29 October 2018

Digital resources



Title: Lillias Skene

Type: Image

Date: 3 May, 2023