**Entry type:** Organisation
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# The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania

(1885 - )

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| **Born** | 18850101 |
| **Occupation** | Lobby group, Religious organisation, Women's Rights Organisation |

## Summary

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of Tasmania 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 Tasmania 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 continues today.

## Details

The first branch of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in Tasmania was formed in Hobart in 1885, but was very short lived. Influenced by the visit of the World’s Woman’s Christian Temperance Union missionary Mary Leavitt in 1886, three new branches were established. By 1894 there were 14 local Unions in Tasmania with a membership of 280.

In the 1890s the Hobart Branch worked with the Chinese community and prisoners and advocated broad ranging social and political reforms including women’s suffrage. During World War I they fought for early closing and distributed literature on venereal disease. For the state body, departments of work in the 1890s included scientific temperance instruction, hygiene and heredity, the franchise, legislation and petitions. They also fought for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. From the 1950s, the Union retreated from broader reform goals and concentrated their efforts directly on alcohol and drug related issues.

Record notes:
The records of individual branches are listed here. Some are contained with the records of the state body, others are separately located.

## Published resources

**Conference Paper**
A few viragos on a stump : the womanhood suffrage campaign in Tasmania 1880-1920, Pearce, Vicki, 1985

**Conference Proceedings**
Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania ... annual convention, 1893-

**Resource**
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

**Archives Office of Tasmania**
Records of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania

Minutes of convention meetings, annual and committee reports of the Womans Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania

**The University of Melbourne Archives**
Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria

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