**Entry type:** Organisation
**Entry ID:** AWE1016

# Women’s Literary Society

(1889 - 1929)

**Born** 18890101, Sydney

**Died** 19291231

## Summary

The Women’s Literary Society was formed in Sydney in 1889 with the object of ‘mutual help in the study of general literature’. Later its activities were defined as ‘searching out and bringing before the meetings such matters as shall be of interest and improvement to members. Discussion upon important topics of the day. Papers upon various matters of interest, criticism upon literary or artistic work or theories upon practical matters.’ It is believed to be the first Australian women’s group to meet at night.

Prominent members included Rose Scott, Maybanke Anderson and Dora Montefiore. In 1891 members of this group were instrumental in forming the Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales.

## Details

All members were encouraged to present papers and discussions covered topics from Mary Woollstonecraft to socialism to ‘Suggestions for the Improvement of affairs for Wage Earning Women.’ In one paper, Montefiore suggested that the Society ‘brought together the floating feminine intellectuality.’
By the end of 1893 it claimed 125 members and at this stage there was some conflict between members who wished to admit men and those who did not.

## Published resources

**Report**
Annual Report/Report, Women's Literary Society, 1892-1896

**Book**
Rose Scott: Vision and Revision in Feminism, Allen, Judith A., 1994

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

**Edited Book**
Women in Australia : an annotated guide to records, Daniels, Kay, Murnane, Mary, Picot, Anne and National Research Program (Australia), 1977

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

## Archival resources

**Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection**
Women's Literary Society - Minute book, 15 Aug. 1892 - Aug. 1893, with annual reports 1893, 1896

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