Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE1017

BPW Australia

(1947 -)

Born	19470101
Occupation	Lobby group, Professional Association, Women's Rights Organisation

Summary

The Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women (now BPW Australia) was formed in 1947 as an umbrella body for the then six existing Business and Professional Women's Clubs across the country. The first Club had been formed in Melbourne in 1925. Membership was initially open to women holding responsible positions in a professional, business, industrial or educational organisation, and to women giving distinguished service to the community. It thus largely represented the interests of middle-class women. It is now open to women in the workforce more broadly.

The Federation was very involved in campaigning for equal pay and equal opportunities for women in employment. By 1980 the number of clubs in the Federation rose to almost 100, representing over 3500 members, although it has since declined. Since its inception the Federation has been affiliated with the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (now BPW International). The Federation continues to work to elevate the status of women generally, remove discrimination and to present the views of business and professional women to government.

It still also operates to provide a space for women's networking.

Details

Issues of equal pay and opportunity have historically been the primary concerns of the Federation, and, from the 1950s to 1960s, they brought three cases before the Commonwealth Industrial Courts on the issue of equal pay. In 1978 they brought a test case for unpaid maternity leave.

They have also been active on numerous other issues, such as: jury service for women; uniform divorce laws; removal of the marriage bar; provisions for child care; sole parent benefits; the establishment of the National Women's Advisory Council and encouraging women to a great role in politics.

It has also supported various United Nations projects and has been active in encouraging girls to continue with higher education.

As of 2004, the BPW Australia website described itself thus:

'BPW is

* a federation of affiliated Clubs and Members at Large;
* nonpartisan and promotes aims and objectives without distinctions as to race, language or religion;
* the voice of women in the paid and unpaid workforce;
* affiliated with BPW International, which is represented by Clubs and Affiliated members in over one hundred countries worldwide;
* in partnership with organisations worldwide expanding its representation to over ten million women

Vision Statement To achieve a just and equal status for women in all levels and areas of society where decisions are taken in true partnership with men, based on mutual respect, for a more balanced and peaceful world.

Mission Statement Knowledge is power, Power is a means of influencing future policies, Policies affect the lives of women, men and children.

BPW International works to develop a comprehensive framework of structures to provide the necessary education, training and opportunities for women to achieve economic independence and assume their rightful place in work and business, the professions and in all decision-making process.

BPW is the organisation for women in the workforce

Aims and Objectives
To organise business and professional women in all parts of Australia for the attainment of the following objectives:

* High standard of service in business and professions
* Stimulate and encourage in women a realisation and acceptance of their responsibilities to the community – locally, nationally and internationally
* Encourage women and girls to:
* acquire occupational training and advanced education
* use their occupational capacities and intelligence for the advantage of others as well as themselves
* Work for
* equal opportunities for women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of Australia
* the elevation of the status of women
* the removal of discrimination
* Promote world-wide co-operation between business and professional women of all ages
*To collect and present the views of business and professional women to the public, government, local authorities and business, to the Division and to the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's aims and objectives.
*To promote any other objectives in keeping with the aims which the Club considers desirable.

Activities
BPW Australia representatives actively participate in the consultative and policy process of government.
Ad hoc Committees are formed from time to time to deal with specific issues that may arise.'

Published resources

Book

Milestones? Equal Pay? Probate: The Front Runners, Buswell, Val and Chris Rapp, 1988

The first 25 years, B.P.W. Australia: The History of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Thoms, Patience R, comp, 1972

Business and Professional Women's Club, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, 1929-1979, Parry, June, 1980

Highlights of twenty-five years : North Sydney Business and Professional Women's Club, 1959-1984, 1984

The rate for the job, Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 1965

History Swan Hill B. & P.W. Club 1957-1990, 1990

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Perth : Perth : the first half century : 1946-1996, Herbert, Penny A., 1996

Our story: B.P.W. Bunbury 30th : 1969-1999, Wright, Maureen, 1999

The Business & Professional Women's Club of Wollongong: History from 25 years onwards 1978 to 1984, Harrison, Win, 1984

A bright idea : 35 years of Burnie BPW history, 1967-2002, Bingham, Iris R., 2002

From Vision to Reality: Histories of the affiliates of the National Council of Women of Victoria, 1987

Book Section
"Polite lobbying": the Australian Federation of Women Voters and its allies in the Australian post-war women's movement., Martin, Elaine, 1999

Newsletter
Australian Federation of BPW: Victorian Division news, 1977[?]-1985[?]

BPW Australia, 1949[?]-1986[?]

Federation news (Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women), 1960[?]-

Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Victorian Division. Newsletter, Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Victorian Division, 1969-1977[?]

B.P.W. News, 1961-

Bunbury B.P.W. Bulletin, 1970[?]-[?]

Newsletter (Donnybrook Business and Professional Women's Club), 1989-

BPW NSW News, 1969-

Edited Book
A history of the clubs of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Eagle, Vera J., 1976

A History of the Clubs of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Eagle, Vera J., 1985

Report
Annual report of the executive committee, 1959-1978[?]

Reports of the honorary secretary and chairman of standing committees, 1950-1979[?]

Report of the ... [Biennial] Conference of the Division of New South Wales of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 1969-1988[?]

Conference report / Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women, ... Conference of the Tasmanian Division, 1971-1988

Report of the ... conference / Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, [?]-1978

Annual general meeting and election of office bearers / The Business and Professional Women's Club of Sydney, 1956-1968

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection
Jean Fleming Arnot - personal and professional papers, 1890-1995

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Jean Arnot interviewed by Amy McGrath [sound recording]

State Library of Western Australia
Papers, 1882-1966 [manuscript]

Fryer Library, The University of Queensland
Lady Phyllis D. Cilento Papers

Archives Office of Tasmania
Records of the Hobart and Clarence Branches?Records of the Hobart and Clarence branches

Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University
Business and Professional Women's Club of Canberra Records deposit

Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women Victorian Division deposit

Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women deposit

Geelong Heritage Centre
Geelong Business & Professional Women's Club Records

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