Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE1120

Federated Association of Australian Housewives

(1923 -)

Born	19230101
Occupation	Lobby group, Membership organisation, Women's Rights Organisation

Summary

The Federated Associations (later Association) of Australian Housewives was formed in 1923 and held its first national conference in 1926. Its purpose was to provide a link between the various state-based Housewives Associations. The first of these was established in Victoria in 1915. New South Wales followed suit in early 1918, South Australian and Western Australia in the 1920s and, after a couple of false starts, Canberra, Tasmania and Queensland in the 1930s. Each of these associations was broadly dedicated to representing the interests of housewives, through political lobbying as well as various efforts to help members keep their household costs down, including domestic advice and member discounts. Although their primary function was always to reduce the cost of living and to control ‘profiteering’, they very quickly proclaimed themselves to be political organisations, though always ‘non-party’. With the wider objective of gaining representation of women at all levels of government and public administration, and influencing public policy in the areas dealing with the home, women and children, their domain of interest rapidly came to include every sphere of public life, national and international.

With a combined membership of 115,000 by 1940-41, it was for a short time the largest women’s organisation in the country.

Published resources

Thesis
The Women's Movement in the New South Wales and Victoria, 1918-1938, Foley, Meredith, 1986

Newsletter
Official journal (Australian Housewives' Association), 1962-1988

Modern Housewife, 1964-1980?

Journal Article
'For the good that we can do': Cecilia Downing and feminist Christian citizenship, Smart, Judith, 1994

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria
Records, 1939-1985. [manuscript].

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection
Progressive Housewives' Association - records, 1939-1970

Author Details
Jane Carey

Created 7 December 2004
Last modified 20 November 2018