Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1158

Brownbill, Fanny Eileen

(1890 - 1948)

Born	18900428, Modewarre, Geelong district Victoria Australia
Died	19481010, Geelong Victoria Australia
Occupation	Parliamentarian, Political candidate, Politician

Summary

Fanny Brownbill was the first woman Labor Member of Parliament in Victoria. She held the Legislative Assembly seat of Geelong for ten years from 1938 until her death in 1948. In Parliament she focused on issues relating to women, children and the family.

Details

Fanny Brownbill, nee Alford was born on 28 April 1890 at Modewarre, near Geelong, daughter of James Alford, labourer and Ann Abbott, who was born in England. She was educated at local state schools and grew up in impoverished circumstances.

After working as his Housekeeper for seven years, she married James Brownbill a widower with four children on 24 January 1920. He was elected to the Victorian Parliament as member for Geelong in the same year. He represented the residents of Geelong for fifteen years from 1920 until 1932 and then from 1935 until his death in 1938. Fanny Brownbill presented herself as a candidate in the ensuing by-election for the seat of Geelong and was elected. She promoted the cause of women, children and the family during her time in parliament.

Her community activities included serving as president of the Matthew Flinders Girls' School Council, the Geelong and Western District Orphanage Ladies' Auxiliary and as a member of the Geelong Young Women's Christian Association and the Ladies' Benevolent Society. She was also a committee member of the Old Folks Home, a Justice of the Peace, a worker for the Red Cross , the Australian Comforts Fund during World War Two and other charities. She was an active member of the Latrobe Terrace Church of Christ.

She died in office in 1948 and at that time was the only female member in the Victorian parliament.

Events

2003 - 2003
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Resource Section
Brownbill, Fanny Eileen (1890-1948), Thomas, Joanne W., 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A130313b.htm

Fanny Brownbill: Victoria's first woman Labor MP, 2003,
http://www.women.vic.gov.au/web12/rwpgslib.nsf/Graphic+Files/2003_Honour_Roll/$file/2003_Honour_Roll.pdf

Journal
Parliamentary Debates, Session 1947-48. Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, 1949

Book
Biographical register of the Victorian Parliament, Browne, Geoff, 1985

Site Exhibition
Carrying on the Fight: Women Candidates in Victorian Parliamentary Elections, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cws/home.html

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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