Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1542

Dwyer, Catherine Winifred (Kate)

(1861 - 1949)

Born	18610613, Tambaroora New South Wales Australia
Died	19490203, DarlinghurstDarlinghurst New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Activist, Teacher

Summary

Catherine Winifred (Kate) Dwyer was one of the most prominent women in New South Wales in the early twentieth century. An avid Labor activist, Dwyer stood for election for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly for Balmain in 1925.

Details

Catherine (Kate) Dwyer was born on 13 June 1861 at Tambaroora, New South Wales, the second daughter of Joseph and Ann Golding. She was educated at Hill End Public School and became a pupil teacher in 1880, holding positions in country schools until 1887.

She married another teacher, Michael Dwyer, and in 1894 they moved to Sydney, where she became prominent in the Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales and campaigned for the vote for women. She co-founded the Women's Progressive Association in 1901 and, with her sisters Annie and Belle Golding, worked for the rights of women in all spheres. She was a fine public speaker and a prolific writer on questions of interest to women. She was the first president of the Women's Organising Committee of the Political Labor League from 1904, and a member of the State Labor Executive in1905.

Kate Dwyer worked tirelessly to improve the working and living conditions for women and for a minimum female wage. In 1911 she assisted A. B. Piddington on the royal commission into female and juvenile labour and from 1911-13 she sat on the royal commission of enquiry into food supplies. She represented the Women Workers Union (which she had helped to form) on Wages Boards and in the 1920s she was on conciliation committees. She opposed conscription in 1916 and 1917.

Kate Dwyer was a fellow of the Senate of the University of Sydney from 1916 to 1924, and from 1910 was a member, later vice president of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales. In 1921 she was one of the first women to be appointed a justice of the peace. She was on the boards of two hospitals for women and children, and a trustee of the King George V and Queen Mary Jubilee Fund for Maternal and Infant Welfare. She was a life long member of the Labor Party.

Kate and Michael Dwyer had three sons and two daughters.

Published resources

Resource Section
Dwyer, Catherine Winifred (Kate) (1861-1949), Gallego, Viva, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080412b.htm

Edited Book
200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988,
https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20071105022623/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/78644/20071105-1315/www.200australianwo

Site Exhibition
Putting Skirts on the Sacred Benches: Women Candidates for the New South Wales Parliament, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2006,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/pssb/home.html

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of New South Wales
SUFFRAGE Group, 1902.

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