

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE26080812

Fraser, Tamara (Tamie) Margaret

(1936 -)

Born	19360228, Adelaide South Australia Australia
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Occupation	Charity worker, Philanthropist
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Summary

Tamie Fraser had not long finished school when she married a member of the Commonwealth Parliament, Malcolm Fraser, who in 1975 became the twenty-second Prime Minister of Australia. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2012.

Details

Tamara (Tamie) Margaret Fraser, the daughter of Sandford Robert Beggs and his wife Helen Karen (nee Seeck), was born in Adelaide on 28 February 1936, her first name coming from her mother's Eastern European antecedents. She grew up on her parents' grazing property 'Meringa', near Willaura, a small town in western Victoria. Educated at home by governesses, then at schools in Ararat, Tamie completed her secondary schooling as a boarder at The Hermitage in Geelong, matriculating in 1953. She spent two years at home, volunteering with the Red Cross, helping on the family's grazing property and caring for her grandmother, before meeting Malcolm Fraser in December 1955, shortly after his election as the Liberal Party member for Wannon in the House of Representatives. They were married in December 1956, when she was 20, nearly six years younger than her husband. They had four children between 1958 and 1966.

Although their base was at Nareen, in his electorate, the Frasers lived largely in Canberra (unusual at that time), building a house there in 1958 but returning to Nareen in weekends and in parliamentary recesses. Once their children were in secondary schools, they moved to South Yarra in Melbourne, apart from spending time on the farm during school holidays. They lived in The Lodge, the Prime Minister's official residence in Canberra, while Malcolm Fraser held that office.

Having entered her marriage without a keen interest in politics, she accompanied and assisted her husband in his parliamentary work, particularly during the divisive 1975 election campaign following the dismissal of the Whitlam Government, when he became ill and she had to deputise for him. She never overcame her fear of public speaking but her propensity for gaffes and her approachability were a welcome contrast to her husband's somewhat dour, aloof and austere public image.

It was during her period as the Prime Minister's wife and following a visit to the White House that she worked to establish the Australiana Fund, 'an independent fundraising body to acquire a national collection of historic artworks to enhance the décor of the four Official Residences of the Governor-General and Prime Minister'.

Following the defeat of the Fraser Government in March 1983, and Malcom Fraser's resignation from Parliament, the family returned to Nareen where Tamie resumed her family and community activities, and where she had time to devote to her garden, becoming President of the Open Garden Scheme in 1992. In 1998 they sold Nareen and settled on the Mornington Peninsula where Tamie Fraser was able again to pursue her great loves of gardening and golf.

After her husband's death in 2015 Tamie continued his legacy by becoming a patron of the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre in Melbourne. She was also patron of a number of other organisations, including Open Gardens Australia, the Old Parliament House Gardens, and the Australian Welsh Male Choir.

In the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours Tamie Fraser was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for 'service to the community through fostering the recognition and preservation of Australian artistic achievement, for initiating and promoting a range of activities to support people with disabilities, and for support of charitable, health and service groups.'

Published resources

Book

Prime Ministers' Wives, Langmore, Diane, 1992

It wasn't meant to be easy : Tamie Fraser in Canberra, Hindhaugh, Christina, 1986

Stand by your man, Mitchell, Susan, 2012

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra

[Papers of Tamara Margaret Fraser AO](#)

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Tamie Fraser, wife of the former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

National Library of Australia, Oral History Collection

[Tamie Fraser interviewed by Heather Rusden \[sound recording\]](#)

Author Details

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