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Broken Hill Women’s Memorial

(2001 -)

Born 20010330, Broken Hill New South Wales Australia

Summary

The Broken Hill Women’s Memorial stands as a tribute to the solidarity of Broken Hill women who supported their menfolk during union disputes in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Details

On Friday 30 March 2001, the Women’s Memorial in Broken Hill was officially unveiled by Martin Ferguson, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Transport, Infrastructure, Regional Services and Population. Standing in the town square facing Chloride Street, it was constructed by Zanon Memorials from two pieces of grey polished granite, each weighing 1.2 tonnes. The photograph of a contemporary family used in the memorial was reworked by Doug Banks.

The idea for a women’s memorial was conceived in 1986, when Broken Hill women organised financial and moral support for their men during a major industrial dispute. In June that year, 400 women marched down the main street in support of the union cause, just as Broken Hill women had done in the great strikes of 1919 and 1892. Fundraising efforts in 1986 left the women with a surplus of $1,000 after the dispute had ended, and it was decided to use those funds to erect a women’s memorial. Extra funding came from the mining union.

Upon the unveiling of the memorial, the Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union (CFMEU) president Eddie Butcher addressed the crowd. The monument was dedicated to the women of Broken Hill, he said, ‘who over the years have not been recognised for what they have contributed to the community. They were the unsung heroes as they stood by their men, through the toughest and darkest hours of mining history. Women are the backbone of Broken Hill’s society and they truly deserve the recognition that this monument will give them’.

Published resources

Thesis
Rebel Women: Women and Class in Broken Hill, 1889-1917, Bloodworth, Sandra, 1996

Newspaper Article
Celebration of Women: Recognition of Fight for Family and Community, 2001

Book
The Richest Lode: Broken Hill 1883-1988, Solomon, R.J., 2008

Site Exhibition
Unbroken Spirit: Women in Broken Hill, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/bh/bh-home.html

Archival resources

Outback Archives, Broken Hill City Library
Women's Memorial, Broken Hill

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