

Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: PR00162

Brisbane Women’s Club

(1908 -)

Born	19080220, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Occupation	Philanthropic organisation, Women's reform group, Women's Rights Organisation

Summary

One of the oldest women's clubs in Queensland, the Brisbane Women’s Club was formed in 1908 under the sponsorship of the Queensland Women’s Electoral League. Originally called the Women’s Progressive Club, the name was changed to the Brisbane Women’s Club in May 1912. Ardent feminist and women’s rights campaigner Margaret Ogg was one of the 59 founding members.

The objectives of the club were to provide a social centre for women workers in the cause of reform and to encourage free discussion on subjects of public importance, including social, political and municipal matters. The club lobbied the Brisbane City Council and the State Government for the betterment of the community. In an effort to improve the life of rural women, the club was instrumental in the establishment of the Queensland Country Women’s Association in 1922 and the Bush Book Club in 1921. The Brisbane Women’s Club celebrated its centenary in 2008 and continues to provide a social and cultural centre with a philanthropic charter.

Details

Margaret Ogg is credited with founding the Brisbane Women's Club and it was under her guidance members became a driving force to develop Brisbane into a better place for women to live and work. The Brisbane Women's Club was a place where women were encouraged to take on leadership roles and fulfil their potential. The first club premises were in a building on the corner of Adelaide and Albert Streets. For many years contributions were made to a building fund and eventually the club bought its own building at 107 Albert Street in 1964.

The Brisbane Women's Club met every second and fourth Thursday of each month, with the second Thursday dedicated to social activities while the fourth Thursday was educational. Invited guests would present a paper at these meetings. In 1913 Margaret Ogg suggested holding frequent debates among members to encourage public speaking. The first debate was held on 3 August and the topic for discussion was 'Should Women Enter Parliament'.

During both world wars, the Brisbane Women's Club ran the War Work Circle. Members would knit and sew for refugees and soldiers and raise funds for the Red Cross. They worked in groups to weave 126 camouflage nets and make over 2500 articles of clothing. Brisbane Women's Club members served in World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War. Club members met immigrant ships at the docks to welcome and assist young girls arriving in Brisbane. They also established the Traveller's Aid Society in 1929, which assisted confused and tired travellers arriving in Brisbane to get to their accommodation or connecting plane, bus, tram or train.

The club sponsored such reforms as:

- waiting sheds for tram passengers
- numbering tram stops
- name plates on trees in the Botanical Gardens
- dating milk bottles
- erecting a shelter shed on North Quay
- installing traffic lights at busy intersections
- the supply of milk for school children
- zebra crossings outside schools
- better street lighting
- equal pay for women
- the removal of the double standard in divorce laws
- the right of women to sit on juries
- the establishment of baby clinics
- changes to laws that would allow women to be elected to local councils and to sit on governing boards
- the introduction of domestic science for schoolgirls into the Queensland school curriculum

The club had a strong connection with the National Council of Women, the Queensland Women's Electoral League, the Brisbane Lyceum Club, the Queensland Deaf & Dumb Mission, the Queensland Bush Book Club, the Mission to Seamen, the Country Women's Association and the Crèche and Kindergarten Association.

Upon Margaret Ogg's death in 1953, the club established a scholastic bursary in her memory. It was to be awarded to the girl who gained the highest marks in social studies in the Scholarship examination. In 1970 the Margaret Ogg Memorial Bursary was created for the best short story in the Warana Writer's Competition for under 18 year olds. The winner received a book prize. In 2009 the Brisbane Women's Club and Yvonne Haysom Bursary takes the form of a scholarship that is open to students of the Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University. It is valued at \$1000 and is awarded annually to a female undergraduate studying in the creative arts.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection

Annual report and financial statements / Brisbane Women's Club

28405 Brisbane Women's Club Records 1908-2013

[Newsletter] / Brisbane Women's Club.

7976 Brisbane Women's Club Records 1908-2008

28386 Dining Room of Brisbane Women's Club [Work of Art] 1930

Fryer Library, The University of Queensland

Ephemera relating to women's movement organisations

Author Details

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