

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0023

Reid, Elizabeth Anne

(1942 -)

Born 3 July, 1942, Taree New South Wales Australia

Occupation Consultant, Educator, Political scientist, Public speaker, Researcher

Summary

In 1973 Elizabeth Reid became the first adviser on women's affairs to a head of state, being appointed in this capacity for Australian Labour Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Reid went on to work as an adviser, administrator, consultant, educator and researcher in an international setting on issues of women and development, health and population. She is currently based in Canberra, a Visiting Fellow, State, Society and Governance Program, College of Asia and the Pacific, at the Australian National University, and an analyst, programmer, consultant and trainer in development and humanitarian assistance.

Details

Elizabeth Reid graduated Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in Philosophy from the Australian National University, Canberra in 1965. She went on to Somerville College, Oxford University, England where she gained a Bachelor of Philosophy in 1970.

She returned to the Australian National University as a Philosophy tutor and with Murray Goot published *Women and Voting Studies: Mindless Matrons or Sexist Scientism?* in 1975, based on a paper presented to the Australasian Political Studies Association conference in 1973. She was campaign manager for an Aboriginal woman candidate in the 1972 Federal election which installed Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister.

Reid then applied and was selected as an adviser to Whitlam in the women and child welfare area. During her work with the Whitlam government, Reid oversaw the Australian Government's arrangements for International Women's Year 1975, convening the IWY National Advisory Committee. She also led the Australian delegation to the Mexico World International Women's Year Conference, 1975, and was the Australian Representative to the United Nations forum on the Role of Women in Population and Development, 1974.

Reid helped resource community initiatives and women's services such as women's refuges, rape crisis centres, women's health centres, child care, and working women's centres. She brought in new policies in equal opportunity, training, employment and housing. Reid emphasised the need for all Cabinet submissions to include an assessment of their impact on women.

From the time of her appointment, Reid and her work came under extreme pressure, both in the way of accolades and criticism. She attracted a high profile in the media, as well as the hopes, expectations, scrutiny, gratitude and criticism of feminists and women all over Australia. Political scientist Marian Sawer suggests Reid as women's adviser took on 'quasi-ministerial status', receiving more letters than anyone except the Prime Minister (Sawer, 1996). Reid resigned in October 1975, moving on to become Adviser to Princess Ashraf Pahlavi of Iran on policy formation and implementation for women (1975-76).

From this time on Reid began working in development and humanitarian assistance, both for the United Nations and in other organizations. She was the founding director and project manager of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development (1977-1979). She then worked as Principal Officer in the United Nations Secretariat for the 1980 World Conference of the Decade for Women. From 1981-1984, Reid worked for USAID and for the Peace Corps, based in Zaire, Burundi, Rwanda and Thailand. From 1985-1989 she worked as a consultant largely on HIV and AIDS strategies, education and policy in Australia, Zaire and the Pacific.

From 1989 to 1997 Reid worked out of New York in the United Nations Development Programme, originally as Programme Director for Women in Development, then as Policy Adviser to the Administrator on HIV/AIDS and Development, and from 1992 was Director of the HIV and Development Programme. In 1996 she was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. From 1998-2000 she was Resident Coordinator of the United Nations, and Resident Representative of the UNDP in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Reid has addressed many conferences as keynote speaker, and her speaking engagements and extensive publication record have been focussed particularly in the areas of HIV education and women in development.

In 2001 Reid was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for work nationally and internationally on women and on the HIV epidemic; in the same year she was also named on the Centenary of Federation Honour Role of Women: Firsts and Founders, Victoria.

Since 2002 she has worked as a Consultant to many countries, churches and other faith based organisations in the Asia Pacific region and in Africa. Her focus has been on assisting with health programs related to the treatment of HIV/AIDS. From 2002-07, she was Senior Adviser, The Collaboration for Health in PNG a Public Private Partnership for Health. From 2005 she has acted as a consultant to faith based organisations and churches in PNG and the Pacific.

From 2006-10 she served as Senior Adviser, HIV and Development, the PNG Sustainable Development Program (PNGSDP). From 2009 she has worked as an Evaluation Consultant in the Review of the national Nursing Program in Timor-Leste.

In 2006 the Australian National University awarded her a Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa.

She is currently Executive Trustee, Serendipity Educational Endowment Fund (SEEF) for the education of children touched by the HIV epidemic in PNG and Board Member of Oxfam Australia.

Events

2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Book

Sisters in Suits: Women and Public Policy in Australia, Sawer, Marian, 1990

Getting Equal: the History of Australian Feminism, Lake, Marilyn, 1999

The Feeling of Infinity: Fourth Kenneth Myer Memorial Lecture, Reid, Elizabeth, 1993

AIDS: a time to care, a time to act: a policy discussion paper, Reid, Elizabeth, 1988

AIDS and Development: Implications for Australian Non-Government Aid Agencies, Reid, Elizabeth, 1988

Women and Voting Studies: Mindless Matrons or Sexist Scientism?, Reid, Elizabeth and Goot, Murray, 1975

Edited Book

Australian Feminism: A Companion, Caine, Barbara, Gatens, Moira et al., 1998

Who's Who in Australia 2002, Herd, Margaret, 2002

HIV and AIDS: The Global Inter-Connection, Reid, Elizabeth (ed.), 1995

A decade of Mary Owen dinners, Waterfield, Dorothy, 1995

Conference Proceedings

Proceedings of the WHO/Australian Inter-Regional Ministerial Meeting on AIDS, Reid, Elizabeth (ed.), 1987

Book Section

The child of our movement: a movement of women, Reid, Elizabeth, 1987

Creating a policy for women, Reid, Elizabeth, 1986

Women and the new international economic order: a critique, Reid, Elizabeth, 1977

Re-thinking Human Rights and the HIV Epidemic: A Reflection on Power and Goodness., Reid, Elizabeth, 2010,

<http://epress.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Civic+Insecurity%3A+Law%2C+Order+and+HIV+in+Papua+New+Guinea/5631/c>

Ela's Question, Reid, Elizabeth, 2010,

<http://epress.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Civic+Insecurity%3A+Law%2C+Order+and+HIV+in+Papua+New+Guinea/5631/e>

Resource

Victorian Women's Roll of Honour: Women Shaping the Nation, 2001,

<https://herplacemuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2001-Honour-Roll-Booklet.pdf>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Conference Paper

Femocrats and Ecorats: Women's Policy Machinery in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Sawer, Marian, 1996,

[http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/\(httpPublications\)/D1A254C22F3E5CC580256B67005B6B56?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/(httpPublications)/D1A254C22F3E5CC580256B67005B6B56?OpenDocument)

Resource Section

Elizabeth Reid Women's Advisor to the Australian Government: The Life of Elizabeth, Renwick, Emma, 2017,

<https://womenshistorynetwork.org/elizabeth-reid-womens-advisor-to-the-australian-government/#more-7684>

Reading Generalised HIV Epidemics as a woman, Reid, Elizabeth, 2011,

<http://ssgm.bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/1420/reading-generalised-hiv-epidemics-woman>

Site Exhibition

Women Who Caucus: Feminist Political Scientists, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2017,

<http://womenustralia.info/exhib/caucus/>

From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,

<http://www.womenustralia.info/exhib/ldkg>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,

<http://www.womenustralia.info/leaders>

Report

A preliminary survey of migrant women in the clothing trade, Brown, Katrina and Storer, Des, 1974

Journal Article

Reading as a Woman: Understanding generalised HIV epidemics., Reid, Elizabeth, 2010

Embracing Disruptions, Responding to Uncertainties, Valuing Agency: Situating a Feminist approach to social protection., Reid, Elizabeth, Waring Marilyn, Enriquez Corina Rodriguez and Shivdas, Meena, 2012

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Elizabeth Reid 1963-1981 \[manuscript\]](#)

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection

[Elizabeth Reid interviewed by Sara Dowse](#)

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra

[National Advisory Committee files, single number series with 'W/NAC' \(Women's/National Advisory Committee\) or 'NAC' prefix](#)

Author Details

Clare Land, Rosemary Francis and AWAP Project Team

Created 12 September 2000

Last modified 12 September 2017

Digital resources



Title: Elizabeth Reid

Type: Image

Date: 3 May, 2023