Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE0067

National Council of Women of Australia

(1931 -)

Born	19310101
Occupation	Voluntary organisation

Summary

The National Council of Women of Australia was founded in 1931, with Ivy Moss as President, to act as an umbrella organisation for the existing National Councils of Women in each state. The first of these, the National Council of Women of New South Wales, had been formed in 1896. Like all National Councils of Women, it functions as a political lobby group, attempting to influence local, state and federal governments as well as participating in international activities through its affiliation with the International Council of Women (established in 1888 at Seneca Falls in the United States of America) which has consultative status with the United Nations.

The national Council grew out of the Federal Council of the National Council of Women, which had been established in 1924 ‘with the object of enhancing the power of the [state] Councils in dealing with matters of Australian concern.’ Later, Councils established in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory also affiliated with this national body. Until the 1940s at least, the Council was a major focal point for middle-class women’s activism.

The current aims of NCWA are:
To work for the removal of all discrimination against women and to promote the equal status of women and men in law and in fact.
To act as a link for networking and a co-ordinator between State and Territory Councils of Women.
To act as a voice or Agent of communication at national and international levels on issues and concerns of women.
To develop national policies and responsibilities on behalf of women on an Australia wide basis.
To maintain the affiliation with the International Council of Women and monitor the implementation of its plans of action and policies at national level.

Details

Each State and Territory has its own branch of the National Council of Women, and these in turn have affiliated with them a number of women’s organisations with a wide diversity of aims and goals. But the common linkage is to improve the status of and conditions for women and their families in Australia.

To ensure that Australia was accorded a National presence on the International scene, the National Council of Women of Australia was established by the State and Territory Councils in 1931 to deal with issues affecting women and their families at a National and International level.

This body was preceded by the Federal Council of the National Council of Women, 1924-31 – records of which are contained in MS 7583, NLA, (http://www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/7583.html).

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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

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

Left-wing Ladies : The Union of Australian women in Victoria 1950-1998, Fabian, Suzane and Loh, Morag, 2000

Champions of the impossible: a history of the National Council of Women of Victoria, 1902-1977, Norris, Ada, 1978

Australian nurses since Nightingale 1860-1990, Burchill, Elizabeth, 1992

Jessie Webb, a memoir, Ridley, Ronald T, 1994

Book Section
A view of the Australian consumer movement from the middle of the Web, Brown, Robin and Panetta, Jane, 2000

Making the National Councils of Women National: The Formation of a Nation-wide Organisation in Australia 1896-1931, Smart, Judith and Quartly, Marian, 2009

Journal Article
Homefires and Housewives: Women, war and the politics of consumption, Smart, Judith, 2004

Mainstream Women's Organisations in Australia: The Challenges of National and International Co-operation after the Great War, Smart, Judith and Quartly, Marian, 2012

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Joyce McConnell, 1960-1989 [manuscript]

Records of the National Council of Women of Australia, 1924-1990 [manuscript]

Records of the National Council of Women of Australia, 1936-1972 [manuscript]

Papers of Herbert and Ivy Brookes, 1869-1970 [manuscript

Papers of Margaret Reynolds, 1973-2005 [manuscript]

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection
State Library of New South Wales - Jean Arnot interviewed by Rosemary Block, 1994

Jean Fleming Arnot - personal and professional papers, 1890-1995

The University of Melbourne Archives
Norris, Dame Ada May

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Ada Norris interviewed by Amy McGrath [sound recording]

Jean Arnot interviewed by Amy McGrath [sound recording]

Margaret Davey interviewed by Amy McGrath [sound recording]

State Library of South Australia
Kathleen Hilfers : SUMMARY RECORD

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Digital resources



Title: Delegates to the 1928 Annual Meeting of the NCWA Federal Counc
Type: Image
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Type: Image
Date: 3 May, 2023



Title: NCWA conference, Brisbane 1964 - delegates in hats
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Date: 3 May, 2023



Title: NCWA Board Tasmanian Conference 1999
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Date: 3 May, 2023



Title: Getting to Know You! ICW Conference Helsinki 2000
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Date: 3 May, 2023



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