

**Entry type:** Organisation

**Entry ID:** AWE0215

## Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.

(1922 - )

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**Born** 19220101, Sydney Australia

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**Occupation** University club/society, Women,Ãs advocacy

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### Summary

The Australian Federation of University Women (AFUW) was initiated in 1920, and formally established at the inaugural conference held in Sydney in September 1922. In December 2009 the AFUW changed its name to the Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc (AFGW) to better represent the broadening of the organisation's membership parameters.

AFGW is an umbrella organisation for the state-based Federations of Graduate Women and provides a means for national organisation of these bodies working for the advancement and well-being of women and girls through education. As one of the members of the International Federation of University Women (an organisation which holds consultative status with the United Nations and its specialised agencies), AFGW has a voice through IFUW on international matters regarding protection of human rights and the status of women and girls.

Amongst other things, the activities of the AFGW have involved the setting up of committees for special projects; the lobbying of Government departments; the presentation of submissions to Government; and the holding of conferences, originally biennially, later triennially. The AFGW also administers a number of fellowships, which are awarded to further the studies of successful applicants. Over the years, the AFGW has been involved in a number of important issues relating to the education and employment of women. Activities have included campaigns to obtain equal pay and equal employment opportunities for women and to eliminate discrimination against women in both education and the workforce.

## Details

In September 1920, graduate women in Sydney formed the Sydney University Women Graduates' Association (SUWGA). Other states were quick to respond. The University of Queensland Women Graduates' Association was established at a meeting in September 1920 and the Victorian Women Graduates' Association in November 1920. During 1920-21, graduate women in South Australia and Tasmania indicated an interest in linking up with their interstate counterparts in the formation of the AFUW.

The AFUW was formally established at the inaugural conference held in Sydney in September 1922, which was attended by 75 women, representing every state except Western Australia. Mrs Frances Thorn of the Victorian association was elected as AFUW's first President, with Mrs Muscio elected as Vice-President. The Western Australian Association of University Women was formed in 1923 and the Canberra Association of Women Graduates in the 1944. At its peak in the 1930s, the Federation's membership was some 6500, representing the great majority of all the women university graduates then living in Australia.

Renamed in 2009 as the Australian Federation of Graduate Women, the AFGW is a longstanding member association of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW). Miss Louisa Macdonald and Mrs Mildred Muscio were Australian representatives at the first IFUW conference, held in London in 1920, where the aim of the International Federation was laid out in the Constitution as being 'To promote understanding and friendship between the university women of the nations of the world, and thereby to further their interests and develop between their countries sympathy and mutual helpfulness.' Over the years, the IFUW has been involved in a number of initiatives related to improving the working and living conditions of women around the world. In addition to its involvement with women's issues specific to Australia, the AFGW also adopts IFUW initiatives and applies them at a national level.

The version of the AFGW Constitution ratified in June 2013 sets out the following Mission, Vision and Objectives for the organisation:

### Mission:

AFGW is the national voice of graduate women working for the advancement and wellbeing of women and girls through education.

### Vision:

AFGW members view education as essential for:

- Empowering women
- Reducing poverty
- Improving health
- Supporting human rights
- Maintaining human security
- Building peace.

### Objectives:

AFGW will unite graduate women in Australia to work in friendship, cooperation and understanding with each other and the IFUW network of sister graduates worldwide to:

- Promote equitable educational opportunities and lifelong learning.
- Improve the status and wellbeing of women and girls.
- Encourage women and girls to be active leaders and decision makers in all spheres of public and private life.
- Inspire and support women graduates to put their education and professional training to the service of the local, national and international community.
- Promote the Vision of AFGW amongst all people, irrespective of their gender, age, race, nationality, religion, political opinion, sexual orientation or other status.

## Published resources

### Edited Book

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

### Book

Degrees of liberation : a short history of women in the University of Melbourne, Kelly, Farley, 1985

By Degrees: A history of the Australian Federation of University Women 1922-1985, Nash, Heather A., 1985

### Newsletter

Bulletin, 1934-1997

Newsletter, 1960-1991

### Conference Proceedings

Indigenous education and the social capital : influences on the performance of indigenous tertiary students, Australian Federation of University Women. Conference, Roz Walker et al, 1998?

Lifelong learning : effecting change in a global society : seminar proceedings of the 31st Triennial Conference, Adelaide 17-20 April 2000, Australian Federation of University Women. Conference (31st :, 2000 : Adelaide, S. Aust.), 2000

Papers presented at the Diamond Jubilee Conference of the Australian Federation of University Women, Canberra 24-29 January 1982., Australian Federation of University Women. Diamond Jubilee Conference (1982 : Canberra, A.C.T.), 1982

Employment opportunities for women : proceedings of the Seminar held at the University of New South Wales on 13th August, 1965., Seminar on Employment Opportunities for Women (1965 : University of New South Wales), 1965

AFUW conference papers., Australian Federation of University Women, 2003-,  
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/history/publications/AFUWPapers/index.html>

### Journal

Occasional paper, Australian Federation of University Women, 1924?-1930

### Book Section

"Polite lobbying": the Australian Federation of Women Voters and its allies in the Australian post-war women's movement., Martin, Elaine, 1999

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Joyce McConnell, 1960-1989 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Jessie Street, circa 1914-1968 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Helen Crisp, 1939-1983 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Records of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women, 1922-2012 \[manuscript\]](#)

### State Library of South Australia

[Mayo family : SUMMARY RECORD](#)

[Interview with Elma Sandford-Morgan \[sound recording\] Interviewer: Aileen Bond](#)

[Letter signed by Helen Keller to the Australian Federation of University Women, and book entitled 'The Silent Storm: A Story of Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller' by Marion Marsh Brown and Ruth Crone](#)

### Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Eleanor M. Hinder - papers, 1837-1963, together with the papers of A. Viola Smith, ca. 1850-1975](#)

[Kathleen M. M. Sherrard papers, ca. 1918-1975](#)

### Fryer Library and Department of Special Collections

[Australian Federation of University Women Records](#)

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