

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0322

The Invergowrie Foundation

(1992 -)

Born 1 January, 1992, Victoria Australia

Occupation Philanthropic organisation

Summary

The Invergowrie Foundation is a public charitable trust. The primary focus of the Foundation is to promote and advance the education of girls and women within Victoria. The Foundation is administered by twelve Trustees. They are responsible for maintaining the assets and distributing annually the surplus funds to promote and advance education in Victoria.

Details

The history of The Invergowrie Foundation began in the post-war years of the 1920's with considerable interest among educationalists in raising the status of domestic work. In 1925, the Head Mistresses' Association established a committee, chaired by Miss Hilda Daniell, Principal of Ruyton, and including the principals of five other leading independent girls' schools – Lauriston, Rosbercon, Clyde, Stratherene and Queen's – to consider the feasibility of setting up a homecraft (or 'housecraft') hostel. Four years later, Lady Somers opened the Hostel, in Malvern Road Toorak, for students to be instructed in the art of Cookery, Household Management, Home Hygiene, Child Welfare, Laundry and Needlework.

Money, or the lack of it, was a major concern for the Hostel in those early days, as the first principal of the Hostel, Mrs May Weatherly, admitted with engaging frankness in 1933. Assistance was given, she recalled in her speech day report, by the "lovely generosity" of an anonymous donor. Some months later the same benefactor, Mr William E. McPherson and his sisters, presented their magnificent family home, 'Invergowrie,' to the Head Mistresses' Association for the use of the Hostel. Thus it was in 1934 that the Hostel was relocated to 'Invergowrie' in Coppin Grove, Hawthorn.

The new and larger premises enabled the education of full-time students, some of whom were in residence, as well as a number of part-time students. The first of its kind, the Hostel provided a course of domestic training for girls under conditions similar to those 'in the natural setting of the home.' Over 2000 students graduated from Invergowrie before the Governors decided to close the Hostel in 1973, due to the emergence of new educational pathways for young women and their impact on enrolments and the financial viability of the Hostel.

In 1992, the Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools of Victoria (formerly the Head Mistresses' Association) sold the 'Invergowrie' property and The Invergowrie Foundation was established. The proceeds of that sale were invested through a Trust and each year monies are made available for educational purposes, the primary focus of the Foundation being to promote and advance the education of girls and women within the State of Victoria.

In 2006, the Foundation had approximately 90 members.

Published resources

Book

A Woman's Place: A History of the Homecraft Hostel 'Invergowrie', Gardiner, Lyndsay, 1993

Feminine Singular: a history of the Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools of Australia, Hansen, D E and I V, 1989

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives

[Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools of Victoria - Invergowrie Homecraft Hostel](#)

[Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools of Victoria](#)

[Invergowrie Past Students Association - Invergowrie Homecraft Hostel](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood

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