

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE0439

## Mayo, Edith (Janet) Allen

(1915 - 1995)

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**Born** 28 April, 1915

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**Died** 31 December, 1995

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**Occupation** Community worker

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### Summary

Formerly President of the War Widows' Guild of South Australia, Janet Mayo was elected National President of the War Widows' Guild of Australia following the death of her predecessor, Jessie Vasey, in 1966.

### Details

The daughter of A. Simpson CMG, CBE who was Mayor of Adelaide at the outbreak of World War I, Janet worked with the Girl Guides' Association and the St John Ambulance Auxiliary before her marriage to Eric Mayo. They had two sons.

At just 26 years of age she became a war widow, losing her husband, a torpedo officer on the HMAS *Sydney*, when his ship was sunk in the Indian Ocean by the German raider *Kormoran* on 19 November 1941. [1]

One of the Vice-Presidents of the interim committee, Janet continued in this position when the War Widows' Guild of South Australia was launched on 21 November 1946, later becoming South Australian State President. She held this post for over 20 years. Following the death of Jessie Vasey in 1966, Janet was elected the new National President. She retired in 1977.

On 31 December 1976, Janet Mayo was appointed to the Order of the British Empire – Commander (Civil) for community service. She was awarded an OBE in 1967 for her work as National President, War Widows' Guild of Australia.

[1] *No Mean Destiny* by Mavis Thorpe Clark p. 71

### Published resources

#### Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

#### Book

No mean destiny : the story of the War Widows' Guild of Australia 1945-85, Clark, Mavis Thorpe, 1986

Greater than their knowing: a glimpse of South Australian women 1836-1986, National Council of Women of South Australia, 1986

#### Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia, 1988, Cadman, Kerith A, 1988

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### **National Library of Australia**

[Biographical cuttings on Janet Mayo, former national president of the War Widows Guild, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

### **Author Details**

Anne Heywood

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