

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0524

Victorian Medical Women's Society

(1896 -)

Born 1 January, 1896, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Membership organisation

Summary

The Victorian Medical Women's Society (VMWS), the pioneer medical women's organisation in Australia, was founded in 1896 as the Women's Medical Association, at the University of Melbourne Medical School. It was established to forge a closer relationship between medical women graduates and undergraduates and to promote the interests of medical women and further their professional development by education, research and improvement of professional opportunities. By 1898 it had evolved into a postgraduate society, with meetings held in the consulting rooms of members. In 1927 it formed part of the Australian Federation of Medical Women. It continues to promote the health and welfare of all Australians, in particular women and children.

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Details

Members of the Victorian Medical Women's Society founded the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Babies in 1896, the first hospital in Australia to be staffed entirely by women doctors. Dr Constance Stone was elected the first president of the VMWS with Dr Lillian Alexander its first Honorary Secretary. It celebrated its twenty-five year anniversary with a congress which displayed the activities of the hospital through demonstrations and lectures, and in March 1996 it marked its centenary with a conference held at the Monash Medical Centre. Although the VMWS celebrated its centenary in 1996, it is noted that its foundation meeting was held at the East Melbourne home of Dr Constance Stone on 22 March 1895. Others present included Clara Stone, Mary Page Stone, Lillian Alexander, Elizabeth and Annie O'Hara, Helen Sexton, Grace Vale and Margaret Whyte.

In addition to promoting the health and welfare of all Australians the VMWS continues to further the professional development of medical women and produces its own newsletter.

As of 2004, the VMWS:

- Holds bi-monthly meetings, at which a guest speaker presents a topic of clinical or medico-social consequence.
- Hold meeting/workshops with other groups of professional women incorporating matters of mutual interest.
- Sends a bi-monthly newsletter to members.
- Provides an annual directory of members annually to encourage professional net-working.
- Provides mentoring opportunities.

Published resources

Book

Victorian Medical Women's Society: Book of Memories, Victorian Medical Women's Society, 1996

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

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

Papers, 1912-1980. [manuscript].

Author Details

Rosemary Francis and Jane Carey

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