

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0645

Powell, Eileen

(1913 - 1997)

Born 3 August, 1913, Sydney New South Wales Australia

Died 19 July, 1997, Sydney New South Wales Australia

Occupation Trade unionist

Summary

Aged fifteen, Eileen Powell joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and remained a member for over 45 years. She trained at the Party speakers' classes in Balmain and became Assistant Secretary of the Stanmore Branch in 1929. After working for Grace Brothers (Broadway) Powell commenced work with the *Labor Daily*. From 1937 until 1944 she worked with the Australian Railways Union, New South Wales Branch. During this period Powell became an organiser for the Railway Refreshment Rooms (RRR) staff and achieved an Industrial Relations award for them. The mostly women workers were not employed directly by the Railways Department, were not covered by other awards and were dispersed throughout railway towns in New South Wales. On their behalf she appeared before the full bench of the NSW Industrial Commission and when the judgement was handed down there was a cut in the spread of hours, provisions for overtime, increased wages and the abolition of the compulsory board and lodging payments. Powell was also a member of the Council of Action for Equal Pay, the ALP Women's Central Organising Committee and the United Associations of Women.

Events

1935 - 1935

Gave evidence at the Female Wage Case in the Industrial Commission

1969 - 1969

Gave evidence at the National Wage Case which adopted the principle of equal pay for equal work

1948 - 1948

Married *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Fred Coleman-Browne

1951 - 1951

Gained Australian Labor Party preselection in the State seat of North Sydney

1928 - 1975

Joined the Australian Labor Party. Member for 47 years.

1929 - 1929

Assistant secretary of the Stanmore Branch of the Australian Labor Party

1937 - 1944

Organizer with the Australian Railway Union – New South Wales Branch

2038 - 2038

Appeared for the Australian Railway Union – New South Wales Branch before the full bench of the NSW Industrial Commission

1937 - 1948

Member of the Council of Action for Equal Pay

1977 - 1977

Awarded the Silver Jubilee Medal

Published resources

Book

Working lives : a history of the Australian Railways Union (NSW Branch), Hearn, Mark, 1959-, c1990.

Journal Article

Eileen Powell, 1913-1997 (Obituary), Webb, Rosemary, 1998

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Newspaper Article

ON THE WAY TO BEIRUT Status Of Women Commission,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18107446>

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Fred Coleman-Browne - papers, including papers of his wife, Eileen Powell, ca.1871-1968](#)

[Eileen Powell - papers, 1912-1997](#)

[Ros Bowden - interviews conducted for radio programs and documentaries, ca.1975 - 1989](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood

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