

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person

**Entry ID:** AWE0645

## Powell, Eileen

(1913 - 1997)

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**Born** 3 August, 1913, Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Died** 19 July, 1997, Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Trade unionist

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### 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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