

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0766

Carnell, Anne Katherine (Kate)

(1955 -)

Born 30 May, 1955, Brisbane Queensland Australia

Occupation Parliamentarian, Pharmacist, Politician

Summary

Kate Carnell was Leader of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Liberal Party from 1993 to 2000, ACT chief minister from 1995 to 2000, and received the Liberal Party's Distinguished Service Award in 2002. In 2006 she was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) 'for service to the community of the ACT through contributions to economic development and support for the business sector, knowledge industries and medical technology advances.'

As a pharmacist Carnell lobbied for an ACT branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and became the first woman national vice-president. She is involved at a high level in various pharmacy organisations and became the first chairperson of the Australian Institute of Pharmacy Management.

Carnell is a drug-law reformist and an advocate for a heroin trial and safe injecting rooms for Canberra. She is involved in many Canberra business and community organisations.

Details

Kate Carnell was educated at St Aidan's Church of England Grammar School in Brisbane, and graduated in 1976 with a BPharm from the University of Queensland. Growing up in a strong Liberal household, Carnell joined the Young Liberals at fifteen.

She moved to Canberra in 1977 with husband Ian and at age twenty-five she bought Red Hill Pharmacy, which she ran until 2000. As a practicing pharmacist Carnell lobbied the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to establish the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Branch, which was formed in 1988, and became its inaugural president, a position she held from 1988 to 1994. She later became the Guild's national vice-president-the first woman in its history to hold the position-which she held from 1990 to 1994.

In the early 1990s Carnell was involved in revamping the Australian Institute of Pharmacy Management and became its first chairperson, later awarded a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Pharmacy Management. She has also been chairman of the Canberra and Southern District Pharmacists Company Ltd from 1982 to 1992, and a member of the Pharmacy Restructuring Authority from 1990 to 1991. She was also a member of the ACT Pharmacy Registration Board from 1985 to 1991 and the ACT Board of Health from 1990 to 1991.

Carnell was elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly in 1992, and became leader in 1993. She was the chief minister twice during the period 1995 to 2000, and received the Liberal Party of Australia Distinguished Service Award in 2002. Her ministerial portfolios included: Tourism and the Arts in 2000; Multicultural and International Affairs and the Status of Women from 1995 to 2000; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Information Technology and Multimedia, Arts, Racing and Gaming, Treasurer from 1995 to 1999; Business and Employment from 1997 to 1998; and Health and Community Care from 1995 to 1998. Her committee service includes Social Policy, Public Accounts, Drugs and Estimates.

Breaking with Liberal conservatism and often party policy, Carnell drove an agenda of legislative reform. Her firm belief in drug law reform helped push through legislation to allow doctors to prescribe cannabis in medical research. She declared herself pro-choice and a republican. While chief minister she also pushed to raise Canberra's business and tourism profile.

Carnell has also been an outspoken advocate for a 'heroin trial', of controlled prescribed heroin to addicts, and for safe injecting places. She was the author of 'The heroin crisis: why we need courage', in *Heroin crisis: key commentators discuss the issues and debate solutions to heroin abuse in Australia* (Bookman Press, 1999).

During her time in the ACT Legislative Assembly Carnell combined her pharmacy business and politics with what became single motherhood of two children. A successful businesswoman, she tripled the turnover of the Red Hill Pharmacy within three years and bought another three pharmacies. She was vice-president of the Retail Industry and Training Council, Australian Capital Territory from 1987 to 1992.

Carnell is an Honorary Ambassador for Canberra and became the Director of the Multicultural Business Chamber of Australia Ltd in 2001. In 2002 she was deputy chair of the Red Cross 'Caring Across Canberra' Appeal, served on the National Mental Health Foundation Steering Committee, and was chairperson of Canberra District Wine Industry Association.

She has received the Paul Harris Award from Rotary and is patron of the Canberra Multicultural Council, UNIFEM, the Philippine – Australian Association of the ACT and Monaro, the Canberra City Suns Soccer Club and the Women in Information and Communication (WIC).

Since resigning as ACT chief minister in 2000, Carnell has been the chief executive of development at TransACT Communications in 2001, the director of NRMA Ltd from 2001 to 2002 and the Executive Director of the National Association of Forest Industries. In 2007 she was Chief Executive Officer of the Australian General Practice Network.

In 2008 she accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Australian Food and Grocery Council and in March 2012 assumed the role of CEO of beyondblue a national, independent, not for profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related disorders.

Events

2006 - 2006

Chief Executive Officer Australian General Practice Network

1988 - 1994

Inaugural president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Branch

2006 - 2006

Awarded Officer of Order of Australia

2008 - 2008

Chief Executive Officer Australian Food and Grocery Council

2012 - 2014

Chief Executive Officer beyondblue

1993 - 2000

Leader of the Liberal Part, Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

1990 - 1994

National vice-president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Branch

1987 - 1992

Vice-president of the Australian Institute of Pharmacy Management

2002 - 2002

Deputy chair of the Red Cross 'Caring Across Canberra' Appeal

2014 - 2016

CEO of Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)

2016 - 2016

Appointed inaugural Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

Published resources

Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia 2004, 2004

Resource Section

Carnell, Anne Katherine (Kate) (1955 -), Biographical Entry, 2003,
<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/bsparcs/biogs/P004193b.htm>

Book

Contemporary Australians 1995/96, 1995

Resource

Where are the Women in Australian science?, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre, 2003,
<http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/wisa/wisa.html>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Author Details

Ros Russell

Created 27 February 2004
Last modified 12 March 2019

Digital resources



Title: Portrait of Kate Carnell at the National Library of Australia, 26 June 2023

Type: Image

Date: 3 May, 2023