

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0773

Dalgarno, Ann Patricia

(1909 - 1980)

Born 1 January, 1909

Died 6 May, 1980, Canberra Australian Capital Territory Australia

Occupation Community advocate, Nurse, Politician

Summary

Ann Dalgarno was the only female member of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Advisory Council, serving from 1959 to 1967 as a Liberal Member and from 1970 to 1974 as an Independent. She also ran the Nursing Service Agency.

She was a major advocate for Canberra's women, youth, the physically handicapped, and the disadvantaged. She was an active member or leader of around twenty-two community organisations.

Details

During her thirty-two years in Canberra Ann Dalgarno was a major advocate for women, youth, the physically handicapped, the disadvantaged and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in general.

Dalgarno moved to Canberra in 1948 with her husband Kenneth. A triple-certificated nurse, from 1954 she administered the Nursing Service Agency twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week from her Red Hill home. The service placed nurses in homes of private patients.

Loneliness upon moving to Canberra led her to attend a meeting of a women's branch of the Liberal Party which launched her interest in politics. She was the successful Liberal Party candidate for the Canberra Community Hospital Board, a position she held from 1955 to 1959, and she became the only female member of the ACT Advisory Council, from 1959 to 1967 as a Liberal Member and from 1970 to 1974 as an Independent.

By 1965 Dalgarno was a Justice of the Peace, president of the Red Hill-Griffith-Narrabundah-Kingston-Manuka Progress Association, president of the ACT Branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation, convenor of the South Canberra women's debating team, and a member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association.

This dedication to community saw the *Canberra Times* describe her as 'the most active woman in public life in Canberra', and in 1966 Dalgarno stated 'I'm a member of 22 different organisations in Canberra, and not just in name either; I work for all of them'.

She became president of the Wives and Widows of Public Servants and Servicemen's Association and a member of Zonta. She also became a life member of the Canberra Debating Union as well as its vice-president.

In 1965 Dalgarno received a letter from Prince Philip, after she publicly responded to his description of Canberra as 'a city without a soul'.

As an Independent, Ann Dalgarno ran her 1970 political campaign on a platform of community facilities for teenagers, welfare and accommodation for the elderly, transport and a teacher training college for the ACT, and strong action against communism. Some of these included ideas she brought back from her overseas visits, such a monorail system on Northbourne Avenue. She also proposed legislation to redress exorbitant or unfair rent or service charges.

Her commitment to these issues led her to become the first chairman of the Emergency Housing Committee, formed in 1973 and to convene the Foundation for Youth in the early 1970s.

She lectured first-year Australian National University students on 'Sex and responsibility' in 1969, and in 1972 was the author of the self-published children's book *The bored duck*.

Nearing her retirement from ACT Advisory Council Dalgarno took a stand about the under-representation of women in politics and declared in 1972 that there were no women in the House of Representatives and that it was time this changed. She was concerned at the reluctance of women to take an active political role and advocated the establishment of a League of Women Voters in the ACT.

Despite her commitment to Canberra she wrote a submission to the 1974 Inquiry into Self-Government for the ACT. stating there had been 'NO community demand for a form of local government ...' and there was 'NO evidence that residents ... would be any better of under local government'.

In 1977 she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for valuable community service, and was awarded a Silver Jubilee Medal.

Dalgarno and her husband had two children.

Events

1959 - 1967

Liberal member of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Advisory Council

1970 - 1974

Independent member of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Advisory Council

1955 - 1959

Liberal member of the Canberra Community Hospital Board

Published resources

Resource

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>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Ann P. Dalgarno, 1955-1980 \[manuscript\]](#)

Author Details

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