

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE1016

Women's Literary Society

(1889 - 1929)

Born 1 January, 1889, Sydney

Died 31 December, 1929

Summary

The Women's Literary Society was formed in Sydney in 1889 with the object of 'mutual help in the study of general literature'. Later its activities were defined as 'searching out and bringing before the meetings such matters as shall be of interest and improvement to members. Discussion upon important topics of the day. Papers upon various matters of interest, criticism upon literary or artistic work or theories upon practical matters.' It is believed to be the first Australian women's group to meet at night.

Prominent members included Rose Scott, Maybanke Anderson and Dora Montefiore. In 1891 members of this group were instrumental in forming the Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales.

Details

All members were encouraged to present papers and discussions covered topics from Mary Woolstonecraft to socialism to 'Suggestions for the Improvement of affairs for Wage Earning Women.' In one paper, Montefiore suggested that the Society 'brought together the floating feminine intellectuality.'

By the end of 1893 it claimed 125 members and at this stage there was some conflict between members who wished to admit men and those who did not.

Published resources

Report

Annual Report/Report, Women's Literary Society, 1892-1896

Book

Rose Scott: Vision and Revision in Feminism, Allen, Judith A., 1994

Woman suffrage in Australia : a gift or a struggle?, Oldfield, Audrey, 1992

Edited Book

Women in Australia : an annotated guide to records, Daniels, Kay, Murnane, Mary, Picot, Anne and National Research Program (Australia), 1977

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Women's Literary Society - Minute book, 15 Aug. 1892 - Aug. 1893, with annual reports 1893, 1896](#)

Author Details

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