

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Organisation

**Entry ID:** AWE1017

## BPW Australia

(1947 - )

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**Born** 1 January, 1947

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**Occupation** Lobby group, Professional Association, Women's Rights Organisation

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### Summary

The Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women (now BPW Australia) was formed in 1947 as an umbrella body for the then six existing Business and Professional Women's Clubs across the country. The first Club had been formed in Melbourne in 1925. Membership was initially open to women holding responsible positions in a professional, business, industrial or educational organisation, and to women giving distinguished service to the community. It thus largely represented the interests of middle-class women. It is now open to women in the workforce more broadly.

The Federation was very involved in campaigning for equal pay and equal opportunities for women in employment. By 1980 the number of clubs in the Federation rose to almost 100, representing over 3500 members, although it has since declined. Since its inception the Federation has been affiliated with the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (now BPW International). The Federation continues to work to elevate the status of women generally, remove discrimination and to present the views of business and professional women to government.

It still also operates to provide a space for women's networking.

## Details

Issues of equal pay and opportunity have historically been the primary concerns of the Federation, and, from the 1950s to 1960s, they brought three cases before the Commonwealth Industrial Courts on the issue of equal pay. In 1978 they brought a test case for unpaid maternity leave.

They have also been active on numerous other issues, such as: jury service for women; uniform divorce laws; removal of the marriage bar; provisions for child care; sole parent benefits; the establishment of the National Women's Advisory Council and encouraging women to a great role in politics.

It has also supported various United Nations projects and has been active in encouraging girls to continue with higher education.

As of 2004, the BPW Australia website described itself thus:

'BPW is

- \* a federation of affiliated Clubs and Members at Large;
- \* nonpartisan and promotes aims and objectives without distinctions as to race, language or religion;
- \* the voice of women in the paid and unpaid workforce;
- \* affiliated with BPW International, which is represented by Clubs and Affiliated members in over one hundred countries worldwide;
- \* in partnership with organisations worldwide expanding its representation to over ten million women

Vision Statement To achieve a just and equal status for women in all levels and areas of society where decisions are taken in true partnership with men, based on mutual respect, for a more balanced and peaceful world.

Mission Statement Knowledge is power, Power is a means of influencing future policies, Policies affect the lives of women, men and children.

BPW International works to develop a comprehensive framework of structures to provide the necessary education, training and opportunities for women to achieve economic independence and assume their rightful place in work and business, the professions and in all decision-making process.

BPW is the organisation for women in the workforce

### Aims and Objectives

To organise business and professional women in all parts of Australia for the attainment of the following objectives:

- \* High standard of service in business and professions
- \* Stimulate and encourage in women a realisation and acceptance of their responsibilities to the community – locally, nationally and internationally
- \* Encourage women and girls to:
  - \* acquire occupational training and advanced education
  - \* use their occupational capacities and intelligence for the advantage of others as well as themselves
- \* Work for
  - \* equal opportunities for women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of Australia
  - \* the elevation of the status of women
  - \* the removal of discrimination
- \* Promote world-wide co-operation between business and professional women of all ages
- \*To collect and present the views of business and professional women to the public, government, local authorities and business, to the Division and to the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's aims and objectives.
- \*To promote any other objectives in keeping with the aims which the Club considers desirable.

### Activities

BPW Australia representatives actively participate in the consultative and policy process of government. Ad hoc Committees are formed from time to time to deal with specific issues that may arise.'

## Published resources

### Book

Milestones? Equal Pay? Probate: The Front Runners, Buswell, Val and Chris Rapp, 1988

The first 25 years, B.P.W. Australia: The History of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Thoms, Patience R, comp, 1972

Business and Professional Women's Club, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, 1929-1979, Parry, June, 1980

Highlights of twenty-five years : North Sydney Business and Professional Women's Club, 1959-1984, 1984

The rate for the job, Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 1965

History Swan Hill B. & P.W. Club 1957-1990, 1990

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Perth : Perth : the first half century : 1946-1996, Herbert, Penny A., 1996

Our story: B.P.W. Bunbury 30th : 1969-1999, Wright, Maureen, 1999

The Business & Professional Women's Club of Wollongong: History from 25 years onwards 1978 to 1984, Harrison, Win, 1984

A bright idea : 35 years of Burnie BPW history, 1967-2002, Bingham, Iris R., 2002

From Vision to Reality: Histories of the affiliates of the National Council of Women of Victoria, 1987

### **Book Section**

"Polite lobbying": the Australian Federation of Women Voters and its allies in the Australian post-war women's movement., Martin, Elaine, 1999

### **Newsletter**

Australian Federation of BPW: Victorian Division news, 1977[?]-1985[?]

BPW Australia, 1949[?]-1986[?]

Federation news (Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women), 1960[?]-

Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Victorian Division. Newsletter, Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Victorian Division, 1969-1977[?]

B.P.W. News, 1961-

Bunbury B.P.W. Bulletin, 1970[?]-[?]

Newsletter (Donnybrook Business and Professional Women's Club), 1989-

BPW NSW News, 1969-

### **Edited Book**

A history of the clubs of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Eagle, Vera J., 1976

A History of the Clubs of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Eagle, Vera J., 1985

### **Report**

Annual report of the executive committee, 1959-1978[?]

Reports of the honorary secretary and chairman of standing committees, 1950-1979[?]

Report of the ... [Biennial] Conference of the Division of New South Wales of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 1969-1988[?]

Conference report / Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women, ... Conference of the Tasmanian Division, 1971-1988

Report of the ... conference / Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, [?]-1978

Annual general meeting and election of office bearers / The Business and Professional Women's Club of Sydney, 1956-1968

### **Resource**

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### **Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection**

[Jean Fleming Arnot - personal and professional papers, 1890-1995](#)

### **National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection**

[Jean Arnot interviewed by Amy McGrath \[sound recording\]](#)

### **State Library of Western Australia**

[Papers, 1882-1966 \[manuscript\]](#)

### **Fryer Library, The University of Queensland**

[Lady Phyllis D. Cilento Papers](#)

### **Archives Office of Tasmania**

[Records of the Hobart and Clarence Branches?Records of the Hobart and Clarence branches](#)

### **Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University**

[Business and Professional Women's Club of Canberra Records deposit](#)

[Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women Victorian Division deposit](#)

[Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women deposit](#)

### **Geelong Heritage Centre**

[Geelong Business & Professional Women's Club Records](#)

### **Author Details**

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**Created** 17 June 2004

**Last modified** 20 November 2018