

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person

**Entry ID:** AWE1041

## Hinder, Eleanor Mary

(1893 - 1963)

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**Born** 1 January, 1893

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**Died** 31 December, 1963

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**Occupation** Scientist, Welfare worker

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### Summary

Eleanor Mary Hinder (1893-1963) was a pioneer in the field of industrial welfare in Australia with her appointment as Superintendent of Staff Welfare for the department store, Farmer & Co. Ltd, in Sydney during WWI. She later achieved international prominence in this field. From 1926 to 1928, Hinder assisted in the development of the new industrial department of the National Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association of China, in Shanghai. She held the position of Chief of the Industrial and Social Division of Shanghai Municipal Council from January 1933 until August 1942, when the Japanese occupation of Shanghai forced her repatriation to Britain. Hinder's next appointment, from December 1942 to October 1944, was to the International Labour Organisation, in Montreal where she served as Special Consultant on Asian Questions., and she subsequently held several other positions with the United Nations. Outside of her professional life, Hinder was also involved with a numbers of women's organisations.

## Details

Eleanor Hinder broke new ground in industrial welfare in Sydney before she went abroad to develop her expertise in this field, and to administer humanitarian and technical programmes in China and Southeast Asia. She was born at Maitland, N.S.W., into a family of pioneer pastoralists and teachers on her father's side. In her later years Hinder discovered she also had American forbears of pioneer New England stock through her maternal line. She was educated at West Maitland Girls' High School and Sydney University (B.Sc., 1914). During World War I she served as Assistant Mistress of Science at North Sydney Girls' High School and lectured concurrently in the University's Tutorial Classes, continuing in the latter position until 1924. From 1919 to 1925 she was Secretary of the Sydney University Women Graduates' Association, in which capacity she was instrumental in organising the Australian Federation of University Women and arranging its affiliation to the International Federation of University Women (I.F.U.W.).

Over the same period Hinder was Superintendent of Staff Welfare for the department store, Farmer & Co. Ltd, in Sydney. She was co-founder of the Sydney City Girls' Amateur Sports Association, established to provide recreation and organised sport for women in business and industry. In 1923 she had been granted a year's leave from Farmer's to study industrial welfare work overseas. Her first time abroad, she visited Shanghai, Japan, Canada, the United States, England, Switzerland and Norway. Her itinerary included attending the I.F.U.W. Convention in Oslo, a conference of industrial welfare workers in France, and visiting the International Labour Office (I.L.O.) in Geneva. She returned to Sydney in October 1924.

At the invitation of the National Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association of China, Hinder assisted in the development of its new industrial department in Shanghai from 1926 to 1928. She was engaged in efforts towards the amelioration of industrial conditions, particularly for women and child factory workers. During this time she met Addie Viola Smith, U.S. Assistant Trade Commissioner in China and Secretary of the Joint Committee of Shanghai Women's Organizations; the pair became lifelong friends.

After serving as Organizing Programme Secretary for the First Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu in 1928, Hinder returned to Australia. In October 1929 she attended the Kyoto Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations as a member of the Australian delegation. In March 1930 she rejoined the Y.W.C.A. of China as International Education Officer, becoming engaged in research and writing, including a series of articles in the North China Daily on the recently promulgated Chinese Factory Act. Later she assisted the Chinese sociologist Dr Chen Ta in an examination of this legislation, carried out under the auspices of the Employers' Federation of Shanghai.

During the first half of 1932 Eleanor Hinder travelled to the United States, England and Switzerland to observe new methods of factory inspection and to study new labour legislation. In July that year she accepted an offer from the Shanghai Municipal Council, the governing body of the International Settlement, to develop a division to be concerned with working conditions. She held the position of Chief of the Industrial and Social Division of Shanghai Municipal Council from January 1933 until August 1942, when the Japanese occupation of Shanghai forced her repatriation to Britain.

Hinder's next appointment, from December 1942 to October 1944, was to the I.L.O. in Montreal where she served as Special Consultant on Asian Questions. In November 1944 she was seconded to the British Foreign Office to be its representative on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (U.N.R.R.A.) Technical Committee on Welfare for the Far East in Shanghai, and to advise on labour matters. She was associated with U.N.R.R.A. until the close of its China operations in January 1948.

She was then requested by the Foreign Office to join its staff as British Liaison Officer for U.N. activities in the Far East, which position she held until March 1951. She had been a member of the British Delegation at the inaugural Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (E.C.A.F.E.) in Shanghai in June 1947, attending each succeeding Session, with one exception, until the Seventh Session in February 1951. In May 1950 she had been a member of the British Delegation at the first meeting at ministerial level in connection with the Colombo Plan convened at Lapstone, N.S.W.. Hinder was appointed O.B.E. a month later.

In August 1951 Hinder was appointed to the staff of the Technical Assistance Administration of the United Nations, serving as Chief of the Project Planning Division, and from February 1953 to 1955 as Chief of the Office for Asia and the Far East. In 1955 she visited the U.S.S.R. as adviser to a study tour of senior Indian Government officials to observe development and training in water and power, agriculture, forestry, mining and other fields. In 1956 she administered the U.N. programme of technical assistance for Latin America. From 1957 to 1959 she was in the service of the U.N. Statistical Office, responsible for organising and administering a special programme of assistance to Asian governments in connection with their 1960-1961 censuses of population and of agriculture. From 1960 to 1961 she was Coordinator of Technical Assistance Programmes under the Statistical Office.

Eleanor Mary Hinder died on 10 April 1963 in San Francisco while en route to the U.N. to take up another short-term appointment.

## Published resources

### **Edited Book**

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

### **Site Exhibition**

She's Game: Women Making Australian Sporting History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2007,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html>

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

### **Resource Section**

Hinder, Eleanor Mary (1893 - 1963), Foley, Meredith and Radi, Heather, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090310b.htm>

Watts, Margaret Sturge (1892 - 1978), Rutledge, Martha, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160604b.htm>

### **Resource**

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

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

[Eleanor M. Hinder - papers, 1837-1963, together with the papers of A. Viola Smith, ca. 1850-1975](#)

### **National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection**

[Papers of Ruby Rich, 1943-1948 \[manuscript\]](#)

### **Author Details**

Jane Carey

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