

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE1117

## McCarthy, Wendy Elizabeth

(1941 - )

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**Born** 22 July, 1941, Orange New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Author, Businesswoman, Campaigner, Company director, Consultant, Educator, Entrepreneur, Femocrat, Public speaker, Teacher

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### Summary

Wendy McCarthy is an experienced businesswoman who has assumed many major leadership roles in both the public and private sectors for nearly forty years. Her first experience as a political lobbyist came about when, newly pregnant, she and her husband joined the Childbirth Education Association (CEA) in Sydney, campaigning for (amongst other things) the rights of fathers to be present at the births of their babies. Since then, she has had three children, and been an active change agent in women's health, education, broadcasting, conservation and heritage and Australian business.

Her senior executive and non-executive positions have included: CEO – Family Planning Association of Australia (1979-84); Member – National Women's Advisory Council (1978-81); Member – Sydney Symphony Orchestra Council; Director – Australian Multicultural Foundation. She has held executive and non-executive director roles in many of Australia's leading private and public institutions including Executive Director, Australian Federation of Family Planning Associations; Deputy Chair of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) for eight years; General Manager of Marketing and Communications, the Australian Bicentennial Authority; Chair of the National Better Health Program; Executive Director of the National Trust; Director Star City; Chair of the Australian Heritage Commission; and Chair of Symphony Australia. In 2005 she compiled ten years as Chancellor of the University of Canberra.

In 2013 she is Chair of Circus Oz, McGrath National Youth Mental Health Foundation and Pacific Friends of the Global Foundation. In 2010 Wendy became a Non-Executive Director to GoodStart Childcare Limited. In 2009 after 13 years of service to Plan International, she retired from her most recent role as Global Vice Chair. She is Patron of the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance.

Wendy's contribution to Australian life has been recognised in various ways. In 1989 she became an Officer of the Order of Australia for her contribution to community affairs, women's affairs and the Bicentennial celebrations and in 1996 she received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of South Australia. In April 2003 she was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal.

## Details

### Career Highlights

Chancellor – University of Canberra (1996-)

Chair – Plan International Australia (Director since 1996)

Chair – Symphony Australia (2000-)

Chair – McGrath Estate Agents (2000-)

CEO – Family Planning Association of Australia (1979-84)

Member – National Women's Advisory Council (1978-81)

Commissioner – NSW Education Commission (1981-83)

Member – NSW Higher Education Board (1980-83)

General Manager – Australian Bicentennial Authority (1985-89)

Deputy Chair – Australian Broadcasting Corporation (1983-91)

Chair – National Better Health Program (1989-92)

CEO – National Trust of Australia, NSW (1990-93)

CEO – Price Brent (commercial legal firm) (1994)

President – Chief Executive Women (1995)

Chair – Royal Hospital for Women Foundation (1995-1997)

Chair – Australian Heritage Commission (1995-98)

Chair – Clean-Up Australia Environment Foundation (1996-98)

Director – Star City Pty Ltd (1994-99)

Trustee – Adelaide Festival Centre Trust 1996 -2000

Member – Olympic Urban Design Review Panel and Olympic Public Art Committee

Member – North Limited, Environment, Health and Safety Advisory Committee

Chair – The Look of the City Committee, Sydney City Council

Member – EPAC Task Force report to Prime Minister on Australia's child care needs to the years 2010

Member – Independent Panel on Intractable Waste 1991-92

Chair – Advisory Committee WHO Kobe Centre 1999-2002

Member – Australian Advertising Standards Board

Member – Sydney Symphony Orchestra Council

Member – Australian State of the Environment Advisory Committee

Director – Australian Multicultural Foundation

Executive Director – Corporate Good Works

Executive Director – McCarthy Management Pty Ltd

## Published resources

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Book

Don't Fence Me In, McCarthy, Wendy, 2000

### Article

Profile: Wendy McCarthy, 2011

### 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>

## Archival resources

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

[Wendy McCarthy interviewed by Nikki Henningham in the Women and leadership in a century of Australian democracy oral history project \[sound recording\]](#)

### Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Pat Richardson scrapbooks relating to the Women's Electoral Lobby and women's events, 1977-2002](#)

### Author Details

Alannah Croom

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