

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE1189

## Roughsey, Elsie (Labumore)

(1923 - 2000)

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**Nationality** Australian

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**Born** 1 January, 1923, Mornington Island Queensland Australia

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**Died** 31 December, 2000

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**Occupation** Community worker, Educator, Health worker, Writer

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### Summary

Elsie Roughsey (Labumore), of Lardil descent, was born on Mornington Island in Queensland. She was taken from her parents and placed in the local mission school at the age of eight. She stayed there until World War Two, not knowing that her own brother and sister were living in the same dormitory. When the missionaries were evacuated during the war, she returned to her family and lived in the bush learning Lardil customs.

In 1946 Elsie married Dick Roughsey, then a stockman but later an artist and author. She worked as a nursing aide, teacher's assistant and voluntary community worker on Mornington Island.

In 1984 she published her autobiography, which became a best seller, and her visits to southern capitals to promote it attracted widespread media interest. She was an authority on the local history of Mornington Island and a famed maker of cottonwood dolls.

### Published resources

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

#### Book

An Aboriginal mother tells of the old and the new, Roughsey, Elsie (ed. P. Memmott and R. Horsman), 1984, <http://unicorn.aiatsis.gov.au/uhtbin/cgiirsi/OSSQgQ3EtC/258850005/9>

#### Edited Book

The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia : Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture, Horton, David, 1994

### Author Details

Leonarda Kovacic and Barbara Lemon

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