

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE1444

## Foot, Rosemary Irene

(1936 - )

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**Born** 2 April, 1936, Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Director, Politician

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### Summary

Rosemary Foot is an outstanding woman, who became the first woman to hold a leadership position in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales: she was elected to the seat of Vacluse in 1978 and re-elected in 1981 and 1984. She was appointed an AO in 1999 for her services to the community.

### Details

Rosemary Foot was born in Sydney and grew up in the country. She was educated at Frensham School, Mittagong and the University of Sydney (BA), where she lived at Women's College. She graduated in 1959, having been a director of the Women's Union 1954-55.

From 1972 she has been a company director and investor. She entered Parliament in 1978 and was in the Shadow Ministry two years later. Between 1980 and her retirement in 1986 she held shadow portfolios in Employment, Consumer Affairs, Women's Affairs, Youth and Community Services. She became Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal party in 1983, then the most senior position ever held by a woman in the Legislative Assembly of NSW. After her retirement from politics she worked in England as a management consultant 1986-88.

She has held executive positions on numerous organizations including NSW Association for Mental Health, Sydney Home Nursing Service, Australia Council, Law Foundation, Australian Institute of Political Science, NSW Tourism Commission, National Trust Conservation Fund Advisory Board, Eastern Sydney Area Health Service, Royal Hospital for Women Foundation, Library Council of NSW, CARE Australia and the Australian Heritage Commission. She has been a director of Art/Omni (New York) since 1992.

Rosemary Foot married R. P. Foot in 1960, (diss. 1972) and Bernard A. J. Arens (dec.2000). She has two daughters. Her grandfather was a Minister in the Carruthers and Wade governments.

### Published resources

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

#### Edited Book

Biographical register : the Women's College within the University of Sydney, Annable, Rosemary, 1995

#### Site Exhibition

Putting Skirts on the Sacred Benches: Women Candidates for the New South Wales Parliament, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2006,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/pssb/home.html>

### Archival resources

#### Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

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

**Author Details**

Annette Alafaci

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