

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE2225

City Girls' Amateur Sports Association

(1918 - 1935)

Born 1 January, 1918, Sydney

Died 31 December, 1935

Occupation Sporting Organisation

Summary

The City Girls' Amateur Sports Association (CGASA) was established in Sydney, New South Wales, in 1918 to provide a mechanism by which the young working women of Sydney could participate in organised sport. Founding members, Eleanor Hinder and Margaret Thorp, used the experience and networks they developed while working as welfare officers at large department stores (Farmers and Anthony Hordens) to establish the association, which thrived throughout the 1920s. Membership suffered as the depression hit in the 1930s and the CGASA accumulated debts, but in its heyday, over fifty clubs were affiliated with the organisation, representing a cross section of 'city girls' from small and large businesses in the service and manufacturing industries.

Details

One of the most interesting experiments in Australia of recent years, in meeting the wide need for organized recreation of the younger girls in Industry, has been the overwhelming response to the City Girls' Amateur Sports Association in Sydney,' wrote Margaret Thorp, co-founder and president of the association.

A self governing body of working young women, the idea of the CGASA was conceived of in 1918, when the female employees of six city businesses attempted to hold an Inter Firm Sports Meeting. A short time later, several of the local physical culture clubs joined to entertain a visiting American Physical Culturalist. 'From these enthusiastic gatherings, representing so many groups of city girls,' continued Margaret Thorp, 'it was borne in upon the committee, that the girls of Sydney were only waiting for a Sports Association to be formed.'

So Margaret Thorp and Eleanor Hinder drew upon their experience and resources as welfare officers employed by Anthony Horden and Farmer's department stores (respectively) to establish the CGASA. 'Through the formation of an independent organization for girls working in any factory, store, office or in domestic employment,' wrote Thorp, 'all could participate in team games and competition matches, and a community code of health and comradeship be realized, with a high standard of sport and service, enriching and re-creating the life of the City girl.'

The CGASA began with twelve affiliated business house clubs. Year by year it doubled its affiliations. In 1923 there were fifty-three affiliated clubs, touching large and small business and manufacturing houses where hundreds of girls were employed.

Each affiliated club paid an annual affiliation fee of 10/-, each member paid 2/- for her yearly membership badge. The cost of running the competitions was kept to a minimum as dances and fetes were organised throughout the year to raise funds.

Published resources

Book

1929-1989: 60 Years of Netball in New South Wales, Dunbar, Judy, 1989

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>

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

[Religious Society of Friends \(Quakers\) in Australia - papers concerning Margaret Watts, 1914-1982](#)

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

University of Sydney, Archives

[Papers of the Sydney University Women's Sports Association](#)

Author Details

Nikki Henningham

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