

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE2242

Sydney University Women's Sports Association

(1910 -)

Born 1 January, 1910, Sydney New South Wales Australia

Occupation Sporting Organisation

Summary

The Sydney University Women's Sports Association (SUWSA) was established on August 5, 1910 when twenty-four women committed to 'further the interests of sport among University women' by becoming 'full active members during the season 1911'. The action was prompted by the continual refusal of the Sydney University (men's) Sports Union, founded in 1890, to admit the women rowers, tennis and hockey players, to their membership.

Effectively, this meant that the women had no access to facilities, including University playing fields; the men did not want any 'Newtown Tarts' using the Sports Union's Oval. Consequently, the concerned women undergraduates, who included Jessie Lillingston (Street) amongst their number, decided that a united body of sportswomen, speaking as one, would have a louder voice and therefore more chance of acquiring the facilities they needed. Once incorporated, the organisation received moral and financial support from senior women in the University and some interested men amongst the lecturing staff.

From these beginnings, the SUWSA grew in membership and effectiveness, always retaining its underlying aims of :

- providing women with a democratic, balanced schedule of physical activity,
- responding to the needs of its members,
- providing facilities and equipment to support all women, not just elite athletes,
- creating opportunities for all students to exercise and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Changing social, political and economic contexts that accompanied the new millennium made it difficult for the SUWSA to continue in its historic form. The year 2002 marked the end of the SUSWA and the beginning of a new era for Sport at Sydney University. In a meeting on 3 September 2002, members agreed to combine with the Sydney University Sports Union to create a new body called Sydney University Sport. Said the Executive Director at the time, Ann Mitchell, 'some may have had regrets [about the decision] but combining resources was seen as the best way forward.'

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

Newtown Tarts: A history of the Sydney University Women's Sports Association 1910-1995, Lilienthal, Sonja, 1997

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>

Archival resources

University of Sydney, Archives

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

Author Details

Nikki Henningham

Created 2 January 2007

Last modified 20 November 2018