

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE2245

## O'Donnell, Phyllis

(1937 - 2024)

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<b>Born</b>	1 January, 1937, Sydney New South Wales Australia
<b>Died</b>	6 November, 2024, Pottsville New South Wales Australia
<b>Occupation</b>	Surfboard Rider

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### Summary

In 1964, at the age of twenty-seven, Phyllis O'Donnell won the first ever world championship in women's surfing. For her efforts, apart from the glory, she won \$250, a surfboard and numerous packets of cigarettes.

When she entered the sport, it was dominated by men, some of whom, she recalls, would take aim at her while she was paddling out to catch waves. She is delighted how far the sport has come and how the position of women in it has improved. 'The girls, especially on the pro circuit, are absolutely fantastic.'

The Ma Bendall/Phyllis O'Donnell Memorial Interclub Contest with other women's clubs is competed for once a year.

### Events

#### 1964 - 1964

Phyllis O'Donnell won the inaugural women's World Championship Surfing Title at Manly Beach

### Published resources

#### Resource

Surfing into the Olympics, The Sports Factor, 2006,  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/sportsfactor/stories/2006/1743137.htm>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

#### 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>

### Author Details

Nikki Henningham

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