

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE3658

## Allan, Stella

(1871 - 1962)

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**Born** 25 October, 1871, Kaiapoi South Island New Zealand

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**Died** 1 March, 1962, Melbourne Victoria Australia

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**Occupation** Community advocate, Journalist, Print journalist, Women's rights activist

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### Summary

Born and educated in New Zealand, Stella Allan came to Australia in 1903 when her husband was invited to join the staff of the Melbourne *Argus*. An intelligent, well spoken woman with a keen interest in women's affairs, she was a very important figure in the establishment and management of a number of women's organisations.

In 1907 the *Argus* commissioned her to write a series of articles on the first Australian Women's Work Exhibition held in October. They aroused much interest and next year the *Argus* invited her to join its full-time staff and begin a weekly section on the particular interests of women. She adopted the nom de plume 'Vesta' and called the column 'Women to Women'. Her work was unique in an Australian daily paper at that time. Her pages extended to cover every aspect of women's affairs, children's interests and community welfare, and 'Vesta' became a household word for authoritative information and advice on such matters. In 1910 she was one of three women foundation members of the Australian Journalists' Association.

### Details

After arriving in Melbourne the Allans soon joined a large group of stimulating intellectuals. Alfred Deakin and his wife Pattie were close friends and the two women had a mutual interest in social welfare and women's affairs. Stella Allan continued writing for newspapers and joined the Women Writers' Club, succeeding Ada Cambridge as president. In 1912 she was a foundation member and later president of the Lyceum Club.

She was an original committee-member of the Victorian Association of Crèches and of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, and had much to do with the early days of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association, the Baby Health Centres Association and the Queen Victoria Hospital. She was a member of the National Council of Women, first in New Zealand and then in Melbourne, and of the Country Women's Association from its inception.

A meeting held in the Melbourne Town Hall in 1938 by representatives of all the main Victorian women's organizations paid special tribute to her work and influence.

### Events

**1970 - 1940**

## Published resources

### Resource Section

Allan, Stella May (1871-1962), Keep, Patricia, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070041b.htm>

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Edited Book

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

### Site Exhibition

The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/cal-home.html>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

## Archival resources

### National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Stella May Allan, 1907 \[manuscript\]](#)

### Author Details

Barbara Lemon and Nikki Henningham

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