

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE3959

## Piddington, Marion Louisa

(1869 - 1950)

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**Born** 23 December, 1869, Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Died** 2 February, 1950, Castlecrag Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Birth Control Advocate, Eugenicist, Sex Reformer

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### Summary

Marion Piddington was a significant figure in early twentieth century eugenic debate in Australia. She took an interest in a wide range of sexual and reproductive concerns, and in the growth of sex education and contraceptive information, and was involved in the establishment of Racial Hygiene Association of New South Wales in 1926. After falling out with that organisation, she formed a rival organization, the Institute of Family Relations, in 1931.

Profoundly influenced by the work of Marie Stopes, she argued for a lifting of the stigma from unmarried motherhood in her 1923 pamphlet *The Unmarried Mother and Her Child*. In the early 1920s she was involved in the Workers' Educational Association eugenics circle, and delivered sex education lectures encouraging parents to be frank with their children on matters sexual. She believed in the right of women to sexual fulfilment in the context of marriage.

Piddington belonged to that branch of eugenic thought which came to support birth control, as a means of controlling human reproduction and thus achieving human betterment. She wrote in the late 1920s and early 1930s for *Smith's Weekly* and such journals as *Herself* and *Health and Physical Culture* on sex education and sexual morality, as well as on the need to sterilize the mentally deficient, a classic eugenicist concern.

### Published resources

#### Resource Section

Piddington, Marion Louisa (1869-1951), Curthoys, Ann, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110231b.htm>

#### Book

The Unmarried Mother and Her Child, Piddington, Marion, 1923

Tell them, or, The second stage of mothercraft : a hand-book of suggestions for the sex-training of the child, Piddington, Marion, 1926

#### Pamphlet

For whom are we building the bridge? : science of eugenics, task for community, Piddington. Marion, 1929, <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/879204>

#### Edited Book

Women in Australia : an annotated guide to records, Daniels, Kay, Murnane, Mary, Picot, Anne and National Research Program (Australia), 1977

#### Journal Article

Eugenic Reform and the Unfit, Devanney, Jean

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### **John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection**

OM64-13 Workers Educational Association of Queensland Records 1913-1932

### **National Library of Australia**

[Biographical cuttings on Marion Piddington, sex educationalist, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

### **Author Details**

Nikki Henningham

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