

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE4107

## Darling, Elaine Elizabeth

(1936 - 2019)

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<b>Nationality</b>	Australian
<b>Born</b>	6 June, 1936, Brisbane Queensland Australia
<b>Died</b>	30 August, 2019, Sunshine Coast Queensland Australia
<b>Occupation</b>	Parliamentarian, Teacher

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### Summary

A member of a strong Australian Labor Party family, Elaine Darling was the first woman from Queensland to be elected to the House of Representatives in the Australian Parliament in 1980. She was the fifth woman elected to the House of Representatives, and the second female Labor member of that House. She represented the electorate of Lilley until her retirement in 1993.

When Elaine Darling first arrived in parliament in 1980, as one of three women elected, the custom was still to refer to parliamentarians as a collective as 'The Honourable Gentlemen of the House.' When the Speaker of the House, Billy Sneddon, called the House to order, he asked the Honourable Gentlemen to sit. Elaine Darling remained standing and, when asked to explain herself, said 'Mr. Speaker, I am no gentleman'. That custom changed, and slowly, progressively, others did too.

### Details

Elaine Darling was educated at the University of Queensland before becoming a teacher. She rose to the role of assistant to the Director of the Brisbane Kindergarten Training College.

Her father, Jack Melloy, was a long serving member of the Australian Labor Party and member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. Her daughter, Vicki Darling, was a Member of the Queensland House of Assembly from 2006 – 2012.

### Published resources

#### Book

They spoke out pretty good: politics and gender in the Brisbane Aboriginal Rights Movement 1958-1962, Darling, Elaine, 1999

#### Journal Article

They spoke out pretty good: the leadership of women in the Brisbane Aboriginal rights movement, 1958/ 1962, Darling, Elaine, 1996

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Author Details

Rosemary Francis and Nikki Henningham

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