

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE4179

## Foster, Hilda

(1902 - 1990)

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**Born** 22 March, 1902, Melbourne Victoria Australia

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**Died** 31 December, 1990

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**Occupation** Nurse, Sunday school teacher

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### Summary

Hilda Foster was a Double Certified Nurse when, at the age of 35, she successfully applied to the board of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) to work at an outback field centre in South Australia. Born and raised in suburban Melbourne, she had been inspired by stories told to her by other missionaries about the fulfilment to be gained working amongst Aboriginal communities. Given her religious faith and nursing skills, she believed she could make a difference. She worked in Oodnadatta in South Australia for two years (1937-1939), followed by a stint in Innamincka in New South Wales in 1940-1942.

### Details

Before she became a nurse, Hilda Foster trained to be a Sunday School teacher and was a member of the Sunday School Council of Victoria. She completed first aid courses run through the Presbyterian Deaconesses Institute in Carlton, Victoria, and in 1930 successfully applied to become a trainee nurse at the Austin Hospital for Incurables, in Heidelberg. She commenced her training there in 1931, before moving to the Women's Hospital in 1933. In 1934 she had six months at the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, before returning to the Austin, where she was employed when she sat her final exams in November 1934.

Her combined skills made her a most attractive option for the Australian Inland Mission. As well as being multi-skilled as a nurse, she provided religious instruction and spiritual ministry to members of the community, some of them Aboriginal.

### Published resources

#### Conference Paper

'Joy that has no bitter springs': Sister Hilda Foster and the Australian Inland Mission 1937-1942, Wilson, John R, 1995

#### Book

Not to be ministered unto: The story of Presbyterian deaconesses trained in Melbourne, Ritchie, Catherine I., 1998

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Author Details

Alannah Croom

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