

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE5755

## Mulholland, Bernadine (Bernie)

(1932 - )

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**Born** 19 July, 1932, Brisbane Queensland Australia

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**Occupation** Childbirth educator, Physiotherapist

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### Summary

Bernadine Mulholland graduated in physiotherapy from the University of Queensland in 1955. In 1964 she established the a branch of the Childbirth Education Association in Canberra, joining the Australian Physiotherapy Association in 1967. In 1968 she began Canberra's first childbirth classes. From 1969-83 she worked with physically handicapped children at the Royal Canberra Hospital (RCH) and helped establish the Hartley Centre, O'Connor, for children with cerebral palsy in 1973 working there as a physiotherapist and as its administrator (1975-78) . During the 1980s she worked at the RCH in orthopaedic and post-operative rehabilitation and from 1990-2007 in its Aged Care Unit. Since 2009 she has worked in the orthopaedics ward of the Calvary John James Hospital.

### Details

Bernadine Mulholland was born in Brisbane, Queensland, on 19 July 1932, the daughter of Bernard James O'Brien, Director of Post and Telegraphs, Queensland, and Kathleen Ann Walsh. She was educated at St Finbar's Primary School, Ashgrove, and All Hallows Secondary School, Brisbane.

In 1951 she began her physiotherapy studies at the University of Queensland and Brisbane General Hospital, graduating in 1955. That year she worked at Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital before marrying William Mulholland, an Observer in the Royal Australian Naval Fleet Air Arm, and moving to England. In 1956 she returned to Australia, living at the HMAS Albatross Naval Base, Nowra.

She moved to Canberra in 1964 where the last of her five children was born. In 1965 she formed part of a that established a Canberra branch of the Childbirth Education Association and became a member of the Australian Physiotherapy Association in 1967. In 1968 she became the first physiotherapist to conduct childbirth education classes in the ACT in the Lamaze method of natural childbirth. From 1969-83 she worked at the Royal Canberra Hospital with physically handicapped children and privately as a childbirth educator.

In 1972 she became part of a team working to establish the Hartley Centre, O'Connor, a day-care centre for the treatment and education of children with cerebral palsy and other physical handicaps. She subsequently worked there both as a physiotherapist and as its administrator from 1975-78. She facilitated the integration of handicapped children into mainstream schooling in Canberra, delivering a paper on the subject at the Australasian Physiotherapy Conference in Singapore in 1981.

During the 1980s she worked largely in orthopaedics and post-operative rehabilitation at the Royal Canberra Hospital, and from 1990-2007 in its Aged Care Unit, the first in Australia. In 2001 she was awarded the ACT Public Service Centenary Award for her work with older people. She retired in 2006, returning to work in 2008, first at the Canberra Hospital and since 2009 in the orthopaedics ward of the Calvary John James Hospital.

In 2014 she was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in and was a finalist in the ACT Senior Australian.

### Archival resources

**National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection**  
[Bernadine Mulholland interviewed by Ann-Mari Jordens](#)

**Author Details**

Ann-Mari Jordens

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