

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE5763

## Austin, Jean Phyllis Mary

(1930 - 2023)

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**Born** 1 January, 1930, Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Died** 3 January, 2023, Sydney New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Lawyer, Public servant

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### Summary

In 1982, Jean Austin became one of the most senior women in the Commonwealth Public Service: after almost three decades of service (during which she had acted as principal legal officer (common law) and then assistant deputy crown solicitor), Austin had attained the position of deputy crown solicitor in New South Wales. Austin attended Fort Street Girls' High School and then went to the Deputy Crown Solicitor's Office where she was engaged as a typist. She was appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the State of New South Wales in 1953.

Although she had originally wanted to be a surgeon, the relevant courses were overseas, and so she decided to study law, doing so on a part-time basis at the University of Sydney between 1950 and 1954. Her academic achievements saw her awarded the George and Matilda Harris Scholarship in both the second and third year of her degree. She graduated with a Bachelor of Laws in 1955 and was subsequently admitted to the Bar. She did not, however, practise as a barrister, believing that the better briefs – for women practitioners – were in the Crown Solicitor's Office (now the Australian Government Solicitor). Austin was a Committee member of the Women Lawyers' Association of New South Wales. In 1978 she was awarded an MBE for public service in the field of law.

### Published resources

#### Site Exhibition

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

#### Author Details

Marina Loane

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