

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE6441

## Bannister, Louise (Lou)

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**Occupation** Community Leader, Feminist

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### Summary

Louise Bannister has been a trail blazer since birth. Born at 26 weeks in Armidale in NSW, she was described as a 'Miracle Midget' by the media when she eventually left hospital. Her first years of life were marked by bouts of rigorous physiotherapy which seemed like torture to a toddler. Thanks to the determination of her parents, all Lou's education was in mainstream public schools.

Lou's realisation of the power of advocacy was awakened during a year at high school in Seattle where she met a fellow student with complex disabilities whose spirited approach to changing the world served as a role model, and imbued Lou with a sense of disability pride.

Several years after transferring to Canberra in 1991, WWDACT recruited Lou as a research officer to undertake the first-ever survey of women with disabilities in the ACT. A myriad of roles and project work followed, building her prominence in the community. She is now a much awarded leader in the ACT.

An effervescent personality is a key factor in how Lou interacts with everyone. She believes that a supportive style of leadership is more effective than anything hierarchical. Her feminist ideals are founded in a commitment to equity, and a belief that a diverse group of women can work together, to achieve a common goal.

Read an interview with Louise Bannister in the online exhibition [Redefining Leadership](#).

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