

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00366

Reid, Joan Innes

(1915 - 2001)

Born	1 January, 1915, Victoria Australia
Died	7 February, 2001, Townsville Queensland Australia
Occupation	Community worker, Politician, Social worker, University tutor

Summary

Joan Innes Reid influenced many lives as a pioneering social worker and the first woman councillor (and deputy mayor) in Townsville, North Queensland. In 1953 she was the only practicing medical social worker in Queensland outside of Brisbane. Joan also actively involved herself in community work, helping to establish medical, humanitarian and cultural institutions in Townsville. In 1976 she joined the staff of the James Cook University and became the first woman to be awarded an honorary degree by the University in 1995. In 1984 Dr Innes Reid was made a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her community work and in 1989 she received life membership to the Australian Association of Social Work. The Joan Innes Reid prize in social work awarded by James Cook University is named in her honour

Details

Joan Reid spent her early life in country Victoria, raised by her mother and a large extended family. She graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1936 with a Bachelor of Arts before moving to Canada where she studied social work and completed her Masters thesis. Upon returning to Australia in 1953, Joan assumed the role of medical social worker at Townsville General Hospital. She was the only medical social worker practicing north of Brisbane, where she serviced a population of over 250,000.

Joan worked with the Queensland Country Women's Association, helping to fill the needs of homeless women – particularly those who were pregnant and unmarried. She also made fortnightly trips to Cairns to visit thoracic patients, running art and craft lessons as a form of occupational therapy. When hospital authorities observed the success of her methods, an official occupational therapy unit was established. Joan was also a major player in the 1957 creation of the North Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association (later known as Endeavour). She was also a foundation member of North Queensland Prisoners Aid Society (PAS), which promoted rehabilitation while on the inside and supported families left behind.

Frustrated by not being able to meet community needs quickly, Joan decided to run for Council, becoming Townsville's first female councillor in 1967; a part-time position so she could continue her hospital work. In 1973 she became Deputy Mayor, and a year later was appointed Townsville Council's first Social Worker. The arts remained her greatest passion, and as chair of the council's cultural committee, she was behind the establishment of the civic theatre and art gallery's, and helped set up the Townsville Museum.

Dr Innes Reid joined the James Cook University, Townsville in 1976 as a senior tutor in Behavioural Sciences. She was renowned for her life-long commitment to community development in the region and her efforts were instrumental in the introduction of the Bachelor of Social Work degree at the university, where she was employed as the first field coordinator in the social work program. Dr Innes Reid was a foundation member of the Townsville University Society in 1961. She served on a number of committees including the Council of the College of Advanced Education, the Halls of Residence Committee, and the University Ethics Committee before retiring in 1981.

A commemorative plaque honouring Joan Innes Reid's contribution to Social Work and Politics in Townsville was unveiled by Mayor Tony Mooney at a ceremony on Thursday 28 August 2003.

Published resources

Resource

Tribute to Joan Innes Reid, Thorpe, Rosamund, 2009,
http://www.jcu.edu.au/sass/swcw/JCUPRD_021264.html

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section

Dr Joan Innes Reid, Bernard Moulden, 2001,
<http://www.jcu.edu.au/div1/registry/council/reports/vcreports/VC-Report-March-2-01-web.pdf>

Dr Joan Innes Reid (1915 -2001), Grant, Heather, 2009,
<http://www.women.qld.gov.au/q150/1960/index.html#item-joan-reid>

Book Section

Joan Innes Reid (1915 – 2001), Grant, Heather, 2005

Book

Tropical odyssey : of a pioneer social worker in North Queensland / Joan Innes Reid with Ros Thorpe, Reid, Joan Innes and Thorpe, Rosamund, 1996

Site Exhibition

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Author Details

Lee Butterworth

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