

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00444

Vaughan, Grace Sydney

(1922 - 1984)

Born	1 April, 1922, Neutral Bay New South Wales Australia
Died	21 January, 1984, Nedlands Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Parliamentarian, social activist

Summary

Grace Sydney Vaughan served in the Western Australian Legislative Council from 1974 to 1980. She drew on her extensive experience as a community and social worker to campaign on issues concerned with poverty, unemployment and welfare.

Details

Grace Sydney Ingram was born in Neutral Bay in 1922, the daughter of Archibald James Ingram (postal worker) and Grace Parker Morgan. She was educated at North Sydney Girls High School, then at the University of New South Wales (Diploma of Sociology) and the University of Western Australia, where she completed a Bachelor of Arts and Masters in Social Work. She married Walter Vaughan in Sydney in 1942; they had three children. Her second marriage was to Walter Yewers in 1975.

Grace Vaughan grew up during the Depression in the 1930s, and experienced directly the poverty that resulted from her father's unemployment. Over the years she worked in a variety of capacities in the fields of social welfare and community planning, as a trainee nurse, at Sydney radio station 2UE, and as a mail contractor when her husband was out of work during the 1960s.

Vaughan moved to Western Australia in 1968, where she worked as a family welfare officer for the Department of Community Welfare, and also as a community social worker and planning consultant. She was elected to the Legislative Council to represent the Australian Labor Party for the South-East Metropolitan Province in 1974. An unfavourable redistribution of electoral boundaries contributed to Vaughan losing her seat in the 1980 election, after only one term. While in Parliament she gained a formidable reputation for speaking forthrightly on unemployment, welfare, poverty, and related social justice issues. She also spoke passionately about the State's position on abortion, and introduced a bill to decriminalise homosexuality. Vaughan, in the face of considerable opposition, was also responsible for the installation of a women's toilet off the Parliament House corridor; previously women had to go down at least one floor to use the bathroom. Grace Vaughan died suddenly after a short illness in Perth in 1984.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Journal Article

'Motherboards and Desert Sands - Stories of Australian Rural Women', Dale-Hallett, Liza and Diffey, Rhonda, 2006, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/frontiers/>

Book

We Hold Up Half the Sky: The Voices of Western Australian ALP Women in Parliament, Watson, Judyth [ed.], 1994

Edited Book

Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Vol. 2, 1930-1990, Black, David and Bolton, Geoffrey, 1990

Book Section

Making a Difference: Women in the West Australian Parliament 1921-1999, Black, David and Phillips, Harry, 2000

Site Exhibition

The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/cal-home.html>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia

[Biographical cuttings on Grace Vaughan, president of the International Federation of Social Workers, 1982-1984, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Author Details

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Created 7 October 2009

Last modified 21 November 2018