

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE0107

## D'Aprano, Zelda Fay

(1928 - 2018)

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**Born** 24 January, 1928, Carlton Victoria Australia

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**Died** 1 February, 2018

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**Occupation** Dental nurse, Feminist, Trade unionist, Writer

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### Summary

Zelda D'Aprano was an active unionist and an activist in the women's movement. She chained herself across the doors of the Commonwealth Building and later the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in Melbourne, Victoria in protest against the inadequacy of the decision on the Equal Pay case in 1969. D'Aprano was one of the initiators of the Women's Action Committee in 1970, and the Women's Liberation Movement in Melbourne in 1971. She was a member of the Australian Women's Party and was a member of the Communist Party of Australia from 1950-1971.

### Details

Doctor of Laws honoris causa, Macquarie University, 2000. Left school aged 14. Married at 16. Resumed study aged 37, and completed the Leaving Certificate in 1963. Worked as a machinist in the clothing trade. Qualified as a dental nurse in 1961 and worked in this capacity at Larundel Psychiatric Hospital for 15 years. Qualified in Chiropody in 1967. Employed as a clerk in the Meat Industry Union, and as a mail sorter at the General Post Office. D'Aprano was involved in campaigns around Equal Pay for women, the gender-bar at public bars, the Miss Teenage Quest, entitlements of pregnant workers and women's participation in left-wing and workers' movements. D'Aprano was also involved in establishing the Women's Liberation Centre in Little Latrobe St, Melbourne, and was a representative of the Women's Liberation Movement on the International Women's Year committee, 1975. She self-published an autobiography, 'Zelda: the Becoming of a Woman' in 1977; republished by Spinifex Press as 'Zelda' in 1995; Spinifex also published D'Aprano's 'Kath Williams – The Unions and the Fight for Equal Pay,' in 2001. D'Aprano has spoken in numerous forums around Melbourne, as well as on radio and at conferences and has written many articles for magazines, particularly the Women's Liberation Newsletter. In 1995 she received a Special Mention Award from the Centre for Australian Cultural Studies (Canberra) for 'An Outstanding Contribution to Australian Culture'.

### Events

#### 2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

## Published resources

### **Videorecording**

Zelda D'Aprano, Robin Hughes and Linda Kruger, 1996

### **Book**

Zelda, Zelda D'Aprano, 1995

Zelda : the becoming of a woman, Zelda D'Aprano, 1977

Human sexuality, Zelda D'Aprano, Australian Union of Students. Women's Dept. , Conference on Women and Health (1975 : University of Queensland), 1975?

Kath Williams : the unions and the fight for equal pay, Zelda D'Aprano, 2001

### **Article**

Thirty years on, how much has really changed?, Sheil, Fergus, 1999,  
<http://www.theage.com.au/daily/990628/news/specials/news5.html>

### **Edited Book**

Australian Feminism: A Companion, Caine, Barbara, Gatens, Moira et al., 1998

### **Resource Section**

Williams, Katherine Mary Isabel (1895-1975), D'Aprano, Zelda, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160657b.htm>

### **Resource**

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### **Site Exhibition**

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

## Archival resources

### **The University of Melbourne Archives**

[D'Aprano, Zelda](#)

[D'Aprano, Zelda](#)

[D'Aprano, Zelda](#)

### **State Library of Victoria**

[Papers, 1971-1987. \[manuscript\].](#)

[Papers, 1912-1980. \[manuscript\].](#)

[Papers, 1972-2001 \[manuscript\].](#)

### **National Library of Australia, Pictures Collection**

[Demonstration outside Fairlea Women's Prison, Melbourne, ca. 1970 \[picture\]](#)

### **Author Details**

Clare Land

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