

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE2121

## Steen, Frederika

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**Occupation** Public servant, Refugee Advocate

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### Summary

A former Canberran of the Year (1984), and Centenary Medal winner, Frederika Steen has been actively involved in community, refugee, multicultural and human rights activities for thirty years. She retired from the Department of Immigration in 2001 after a distinguished career in settlement services and three years' service as the Chief Migration Officer, in the Australian Embassy in Germany. In 1984, in response to recommendations that where possible, federal government departments should establish women's units, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs established a Women's Desk. Frederika Steen was the inaugural head of the Women's Desk between 1984-87. Her major focus, while director of the women's desk, was to provide information and build up the confidence of migrant women to 'do it for themselves' and make demands on the system.

In 2006 she is a volunteer worker at the Romero Centre in Brisbane, a group of Australians supporting refugees on temporary visas.

### Published resources

#### Book Section

Double Disadvantage: Migrant and Aboriginal Women, Sawyer, Marian, 1990

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Archival resources

#### Private Hands (These regards may not be readily available)

[Interview with Frederika Steen](#)

#### Author Details

Nikki Henningham

**Created** 13 June 2006

**Last modified** 4 September 2008

## Digital resources



**Title:** Photograph of Frederika Steen, head of the Women's Desk, Depart

**Type:** Image

**Date:** 3 May, 2023