

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: IMP0031

Cardell-Oliver, Annie Florence Gillies

(1876 - 1965)

Born	11 May, 1876, Stawell Victoria Australia
Died	12 January, 1965, SubiacoSubiaco Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Politician

Summary

Florence Cardell-Oliver became the first woman in Australia to be appointed to a cabinet or ministry when made Western Australian Minister for Health, Supply and Shipping in 1949.

Details

Born Annie Florence Wilson on 11 May 1876 at Stawell Victoria, to Johnston and Annie (née Thompson) Wilson, Florence (as she preferred to be known) married David Sykes Boydan and they travelled to England. Her husband died on 5 September 1902. Later she married Arthur Cardell-Oliver (15 December 1902), and they had two sons. The family migrated to Western Australia and Arthur Cardell-Oliver registered as a doctor in 1912.

During the First World War Florence Cardell-Oliver spoke at recruitment meetings for the armed services. Her husband, an honorary captain in the Army Medical Corps Reserve, joined the Australian Imperial Force, and served in England before requesting his appointment be terminated. He then set up a medical practice in South Melbourne and retired in 1924 due to ill health. The family travelled to England where he died on 15 September 1929.

Florence Cardell-Oliver returned to Western Australia and became vice-president of the State Branch of the Nationalist Party. Defeated in 1934 for the House of Representative seat of Fremantle she was elected to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly as the member for Subiaco. On 1 April 1947 she was appointed honorary minister without portfolio and on 5 January 1948 honorary minister for supply and shipping. Florence Cardell-Oliver became the first woman in Australia to attain full cabinet rank when she was appointed minister for health on 7 October 1949. She remained in these positions until the defeat of government in 1953 and retired in 1956.

Florence Cardell-Oliver died on 12 January 1965 in Perth and she is buried beside her husband (Arthur) in St Columb Minor churchyard, Newquay, England.

She was appointed to the Order of the British Empire (Dames Commander) on 3 June 1951 for service to the state of Western Australia as Minister of Health.

Events

2051 - 2051

Created Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE)

1936 - 1956

Member of the Legislative Assembly for Subiaco, Western Australia

1947 - 1953

Honourary Minister for Supply and Shipping, Western Australia

1949 - 1953

Honourary Minister of Health, Supply and Shipping, Western Australia

Published resources

Book

Reflections : profiles of 150 women who helped make Western Australia's history; Project of the Womens Committee for the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of Western Australia, Popham, Daphne; Stokes, K.A.; Lewis, Julie, 1979

Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver : a study of a parliamentarian, Brown, R K, 1984

No ordinary lives: pioneering women in Australian politics, Jenkins, Cathy, 2008

So Many Firsts: Liberal Women from Enid Lyons to the Turnbull Era, Fitzherbert, Margaret, 2009

Book Section

Cardell-Oliver : biography of a politician., Black, David, 1990

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

Resource Section

Cardell-Oliver, Dame Annie Florence Gillies (1876-1965), Black, David, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A130406b.htm>

Edited Book

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

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

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia

[Papers, 1936-1956 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver \[picture\]](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 24 April 2002

Last modified 5 June 2018