

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE6080

## Norris, Thelma Jessie

(1921 - 1977)

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| <b>Born</b>       | 1 January, 1921   |
| <b>Died</b>       | 31 December, 1977 |
| <b>Occupation</b> | Health scientist  |

### Details

Thelma Jessie Norris took her BSc in 1943 at the University of Melbourne and joined the Commonwealth Department of Health, then Relfshauge, himself a notable University of Melbourne graduate. In 1936 she had won a Junior Scholarship, awarded by the Victoria Girls' School Intermediate Year. The school, founded in 1928 and renamed Preston Girls' Secondary College, closed despite some

After graduation she joined the Commonwealth Public Service and the *Australian Women's Weekly* reported:

When Thelma J. Norris, B.Sc., of Melbourne, rang doorbells in house-to-house survey throughout Australia, her object as member of budgeting and diet. She has now been appointed to the food and agricultural section of UNO to study diet of peoples of member nations

The work submitted for the MSc which she was awarded in 1960 when she had returned to Australia gives an indication of her research for the Food and Agriculture Organization. It encompassed the technique and interpretation of dietary surveys, a nutrition survey of Tasmania covering status in the spring of 1945 and autumn of 1946, a nutrition survey in Uganda from 1955 to 1957 as well as a study of anaemia in children in Helena in February and March 1958.[3]

Thelma Norris's most influential publication for the Food and Agriculture Organization, published as part of its nutritional studies series including Borneo and Kenya, where she was stationed during the Mau Mau uprising of 1952 to 1960. Her nephew recalled her amusement at her firing it. He also remembered her wonderful presents of tribal drums and spears – they did not always meet with parental approval.

[1] Henrietta Cook. 'Girls' School Set to Close as Enrolments Fall Away'. *Age*, 4 July 2013, <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/girls-school-set-to-close-as-enrolments-fall-away>.  
Vow to Fight to Keep Preston Girls Secondary College Open'. *Northcote Leader*. 9 July 2013, <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/north/students-vow-to-fight-to-keep-preston-girls-secondary-college-open/news-story/960e5a0a>

[2] 'Interesting People'. *Australian Women's Weekly*. 24 May 1947: 10. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article46464554>

[3] Thelma J. Norris. *Dietary Surveys: their technique and use in nutritional status studies*. Thesis (MSc) University of Melbourne, De

[4] T. Norris. *Dietary Surveys: their technique and interpretation*. Washington: FAO, 1949. F.A.O. nutritional studies no. 4.

## Published resources

### **Book**

40 Years 40 Women: Biographies of University of Melbourne Women, Published to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the International Year of Women, Flesch, Juliet, 2015,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/4040/>

### **Author Details**

Juliet Flesch

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