

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6629

Chilly, Sue

(1954 -)

Born 1 January, 1954, Nambour Queensland Australia

Occupation Aboriginal rights activist

Summary

Sue Chilly is a staunch member of the Aboriginal rights movement, progressing reform both as an activist of groups such as the Australian Black Panthers, and as a field officer of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

Details

Please note; this entry draws substantially upon an ASIO dossier on Sue Chilly. We understand that these files often say more about the notetaker than the subject.

Sue Chilly was born in the country town of Nambour and moved to Brisbane at a young age to find work. She soon became involved in the Brisbane chapter of the Australian Black Panther Party, where she served as the Minister for Information. Within this activist group, she helped provide free medical, legal and childcare services for Indigenous Australians, and also travelled to several cities to speak at conferences on racism and inequality. She additionally participated in a protest which briefly established an Aboriginal embassy in King George Square, Brisbane.

Chilly held a number of various positions in many political groups. In 1974, she was the President of the Black Community Housing Service and the Secretary of the Queensland Committee Against the Act. She was also appointed to assist in conducting an Aboriginal education scholarship scheme and was employed by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs as a field officer. The next year, she was elected the State Secretary of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

In 1976, Chilly was a member of the Australian delegation to attend the International Tribunal of Crimes Against Women, held in Brussels. She was sponsored in this opportunity by the Australian Union of Students. At the conference, Chilly presented two papers describing how, 'By colonialism, racism and sexism, Aboriginal women's status [have] been reduced to the lowest level in the hierarchy of Australian society' ('Crimes Against Women', *Les Femmes*, 1976, p. 67). Chilly was dissatisfied with the scope of issues discussed at the conference, feeling the event to be dominated by a western European viewpoint. This sentiment would remain a common theme throughout Chilly's career as a feminist and Aboriginal rights activist, as she experienced how the lack of intersectional values of Australia's second-wave feminism and the women's liberation movement would continually serve to exclude and sideline Aboriginal women.

Archival resources

Queensland State Archives

[Chilly, Sue](#)

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra

[CHILLY, Iris Suzanne Colleen \(aka CHILLY aka CHILE, Sue \) Volume 1](#)

[CHILLY, Iris Suzanne Colleen \(aka CHILLY aka CHILE, Sue \) Volume 2](#)

[The Black Panther Party of Australia Volume 1](#)

[The Black Panther Party of Australia Volume 2](#)

[CUMMINS, Marlene](#)

National Library of Australia

[Biographical cuttings on Sue Chilly, delivered a paper at the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals](#)

Museum of Australian Democracy

[Australian Black Panthers Poster #2014-0233](#)

Author Details

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