

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE1124

Housewives Association of New South Wales

(1918 -)

Born 1 January, 1918

Occupation Lobby group, Membership organisation, Women's Rights Organisation

Summary

The Housewives Association of New South Wales was founded in 1918 largely due to the efforts of the artist Portia Geach. Influenced by a meeting of a housewives' association she had attended in New York in 1917, on her return to Sydney she formed and was first president of a similar organisation in her own state. The Association initially aimed to educate women in the principles of proper nutrition and to combat profiteering and rising food prices. It soon broadened its interests, becoming a considerable lobbying force on issues affecting women and children generally.

Details

The Association had wide affiliations from its earliest years – including the Parks and Playgrounds Association, Health Week, National Trust of Australia, National Council of Women, Town Planners' Association, United Nations Associations of Sydney and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1928 Geach reorganised the association as the Housewives' Progressive Association. In 1938 the Housewives' Progressive Association was incorporated under the chairmanship of Eleanor Glencross with Geach a director. Their rivalry led to the expulsion in 1941 of Portia and four others, who alleged that the association had been working in cooperation with the Meadow-Lea Margarine Co. Pty Ltd. In 1947 she formed the breakaway Progressive Housewives' Association. The original organisation continued in a somewhat reduced form.

Published resources

Newsletter

The Housewife: the official journal of the Housewives' Association of N.S.W., Housewives Association of New South Wales, 1933-1982?

Journal Article

From "Thrift" to "Scientific Spending": The Sydney Housewives' Association between the Wars, Foley, Meredith, 1984

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection

[Mary Wright interviewed by Richard Raxworthy in the Labor Council of New South Wales oral history project \[sound recording\]](#)

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Australian Housewives Association of NSW - further papers, 1972-1984](#)

[Australian Housewives Association of NSW records, 1964-1985](#)

Author Details

Jane Carey

Created 9 December 2004
Last modified 9 December 2004