

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE1063

## Arena, Franca

(1937 - )

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**Born** 23 August, 1937, Genoa Liguria Region Italy

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**Occupation** Parliamentarian, Women's rights activist

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### Summary

Franca Arena was born in Genoa, Italy, and migrated to Australia in 1959. She was the founding member of the Migrant Women's Association, president of the National Italian-Australian Women's Association, founder of the New South Wales Ethnic Community Council, won a Churchill Fellowship, and was Commissioner of the Education Commission of New South Wales. In 1981, she was the first woman from a non-English speaking background to be elected to the New South Wales Parliament, where she served for seventeen years. Arena resigned from the Australian Labor Party in November 1997, remaining in parliament as an Independent until her resignation from Parliament in March, 1999.

### Published resources

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

#### Book Section

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

#### Site Exhibition

Putting Skirts on the Sacred Benches: Women Candidates for the New South Wales Parliament, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2006,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/pssb/home.html>

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

### Archival resources

#### National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Franca Arena, 1959-2005 \[manuscript\]](#)

#### Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Franca Arena - papers, ca.1960-2000](#)

#### State Library of New South Wales

[Franca Arena - correspondence, 1984-1996, concerning the Women's Network](#)

### Author Details

Jane Carey

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