

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00840

Dietrich, Laurene

(1951 -)

Born 6 December, 1951, Mildura Victoria Australia

Occupation Community worker, Feminist

Summary

After an early career in teaching, Laurene Dietrich moved into the area of community development, working on a number of projects which reflected her commitment to social justice and equity, particularly in regard to rural women. She was the first equal opportunity officer at the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University, and was employed to work on the organisation of the First International Women in Agriculture Conference

Details

In 1994 Laurene Dietrich, having worked to set up a student association at Ballarat School of Mines, was working at Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, setting up a photography competition for entries reflecting the work of women agricultural workers. She had met Anna Lottkowitz, of the Rural Women's Network, while organising International Women's Day celebrations, and at her suggestion, was employed to organise the flights and accommodation of women who came to speak at the First International Women in Agriculture Conference and for whom sponsorship had been found. She also organised their post-conference visits to Australian farms. Prior to this, Laurene had researched and written a report on South Australian women's attitude to tertiary education for Roseworthy Agricultural College. She had also been the Project Worker employed by Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault for the 'Best Practice in Ararat' project, which aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of health workers in confronting sexual assault, and worked with the disadvantaged schools program.

During the conference, Laurene took the informal photographs which grace many publications, and now form part of the archival record of the Conference. As a member of CVWiA, she did the same for the 1997 Bendigo Women on Farms Gathering.

Overseen by researcher Ruth Liepins, Laurene compiled the post conference evaluation, based on questionnaires filled out at the conference, and also mailed after three months. The evaluation, published in 1995 as *Agents for Change: Farming for our Future*, had to be both readable to the attendees, and useful as research for the purposes of lobbying for change.

Since the conference, Laurene has been involved in a number of projects in the area of community development, social justice and equity, focussing on rural women. In the late 90s she headed a Vic Health funded project in the small town of Macarthur, working with rural women on, amongst other projects, access to childcare. In June 1998, with fellow Central Victorian Women in Agriculture member Joy Chambers, she convened a Link-up Conference at the YMCA in Melbourne, over the weekend of the Second International Conference in Washington, so that rural Victorian women could speak to their delegates in America. More recently she had been state co-ordinator of the Victorian Public Tenants Association. She is now resident in south-eastern Victoria, and is involved in revitalising the Women's Action Collective and increasing its appeal.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Report

Agents For Change: Farming for our Future, Dietrich, Laurene (ed.), 1995

Journal Article

There's No Full-On Rape Here: Confronting Violence Against Women in a Country Town, Laurene Dietrich and Robyn Mason, 1998,

<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=624632502701804;res=IELHSS>

Site Exhibition

Brilliant Ideas and Huge Visions: ABC Radio Australian Rural Women of the Year - 1994-1997, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2011,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/rwya/rwya-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 Laurene Dietrich, 1990-1994 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Records of the Gippsland Women's Network, 1994-2006 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Audrey Drechsler, 1979-2009 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Mary Salce, 1976-2007 \[manuscript\]](#)

The University of Adelaide Archives

[Correspondence and Report on Attitudes of South Australian Women to Tertiary Education by Laurene Dietrich](#)

Author Details

Janet Butler

Created 18 March 2010

Last modified 24 April 2017