

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** IMP0135

## O'Brien, May Lorna

(1932 - 2020)

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<b>Born</b>	20 May, 1932, Laverton Western Australia Australia
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<b>Died</b>	1 March, 2020, Perth Western Australia Australia
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<b>Occupation</b>	Author, Educator
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### Summary

Born in Laverton, Western Australia, May O'Brien survived her removal to Mount Margaret Aboriginal Mission as a child, eventually taking up her first appointment as a teacher at Mount Margaret. After teaching for 25 years she moved into education policy, working for the Western Australia Ministry of Education and the Aboriginal Education Branch.

O'Brien was awarded the British Empire Medal on 31 December 1977 for work in Aboriginal education. For this she was also awarded the John Curtin medal. O'Brien was a delegate for Australia at the United Nations conference on Women in Denmark, 1980. She has written several children's books.

Horton (ed) (1994), *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*; WCTU (1980), *Some Aboriginal Women Pathfinders*.

### Published resources

#### Book Section

May O'Brien: Heart and soul, Byrski, Liz, 1999

#### Newspaper Article

How crows became black [review], 1992

Leadership and vision rewarded [May O'Brien], 1998

[May O'Brien - profile], 1996

[May O'Brien - biographical details], 1986

#### Report

Report to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, O'Brien, May, 1985

#### Edited Book

The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia : Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture, Horton, David, 1994

#### Book

Some Aboriginal women pathfinders : their difficulties and their achievements, Beeson, Margaret J (compiled by), [1980]

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

#### Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

## Archival resources

### **State Library of Western Australia**

[Claremont Cameos] [sound recording] : [oral histories of women teachers] / [devised by L. Hunt and J. Trotman].

[Rewriting Aboriginal history through oral history] [sound recording] / [talk given by May O'Brien].

May O'Brien papers

### **Author Details**

Clare Land

**Created** 4 October 2002

**Last modified** 14 August 2024