

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4171

Cowper, Robina Fordyce

(1866 - 1948)

Born	18 August, 1866, Sandridge Victoria Australia
Died	3 August, 1948, Parramatta New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Lay preacher, Magistrate, Religious Leader, Women's rights activist

Summary

Robina Cowper was a religious worker and woman's activist with a talent for public speaking. A trained teacher, she and her husband, Charles, were members of the Augustine Congregational Church in Hawthorn throughout the 1890s.

By 1901, she had become a member of the Collins Street Independent Church and became fully immersed in the administrative life of the church, becoming one of its delegates to the Congregational Union in 1912. In 1913 she was elected to the union's home mission committee and the women's home mission committee executive. She was the first woman on the Congregational Union executive committee (1922-25) and a founding member of the executive of the Congregational Women's Association in 1923.

In all her activities she advocated women's rights and this advocacy extended beyond the church. She was recognised as an energetic and effective public speaker and preacher was invited to do so regularly. She lobbied the government on a variety of social issues on social justice issues such as the need for more women in the police force, protection of children, and temperance. She was an organiser for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In 1928 she was appointed a special magistrate of the Children's Court in Melbourne, Victoria.

Cowper had dealings with representatives from all church denominations and maintained that the Congregationalists led the way when it came to the representation of women. The other denominations, apparently, were 'pickled in sex as to their ideas'.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section

Cowper, Robina Fordyce (1866 - 1948), Head, Alison, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10106b.htm>

Author Details

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