

Scattered Branches and the Sisterhood of Women: Women's Organisations in Western Australia and South Australia, 1909- 1939

By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFA – Aborigines' Friends' Association
AFWV – Australian Federation of Women Voters
AIF – Australian Imperial Force
WPA – Women's Political Association
CWA – Country Women's Association
DTNS – District Trained Nursing Society
GFS – Girls' Friendly Society
ICW – International Council of Women
LWVSA – League of Women Voters of South Australia
MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP – Member of Parliament
NCW – National Council of Women
NLA – National Library of Australia
NUWSS – National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
SAGHS – South Australia Genealogy and Heraldry Society
SAPD – South Australian Police Department
SLSA – State Library of South Australia
SLWA – State Library of Western Australia
UK – United Kingdom
USA – United States of America
VAD – Voluntary Aid Detachment
WCTU – Woman's Christian Temperance Union
WNPA – Women's Non-Party Association
WNPPA – Women's Non-Party Political Association
WNVR – Women's National Voluntary Register
WPA – Women's Political Association
WSG – Women's Service Guild or Women's Service Guilds
WSPPA – Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association
WSPU – Women's Social and Political Union
YWCA – Young Women's Christian Association

ABSTRACT

The 1909 emergence of non-party political women's organisations in Western Australia and South Australia followed the success of women's suffrage in those colonies in the 1890s, and the subsequent achievement of nationwide suffrage by 1908. These organisations focussed on educating women to effectively use their vote and campaigned for social and political reform for women and children. They advocated for women's representation in local, state, and federal governments. However, the establishment of a plethora of voluntary patriotic organisations to support the war effort during World War One challenged these groups. The disbandment of the war-time organisations provided an opportunity for the formation of non-party non-political organisations. The thesis examines, compares and contrasts Western Australia's Women's Service Guild and the Country Women's Association, as well as South Australia's Women's Non-Party Political Association and their Country Women's Association. It demonstrates differences in the inauguration of these organisations in their respective states, each with similar objectives of securing better lives for women and children. It also seeks to answer whether the post-war organisations were indeed political despite their non-political catch cry. As well, the thesis demonstrates the significance of transnational links and the role of vice-regal women. Included is a discussion of the progression of the women's movement for equal rights with men during the nineteenth century that culminated in the rise of these women's organisations during the twentieth century. Furthermore, the examination of these organisations to the eve of the Second World War in both Western Australia and South Australia is a departure from the usual eastern states focus of histories of women's organisations and fills a gap in the historiography of women's history.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed... B A Gould.....

Date.....24 July 2021.....

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on two Australian States – Western Australia and South Australia – and how politically active and engaged women organised themselves into a range of voluntary organisations to influence and change the lives of women and children in those States. Much of the historiography for the period 1909 to 1939 has been centred on the eastern states, in particular New South Wales and Victoria. This thesis therefore seeks to redress this imbalance through an analysis of the Women's Service Guild (later Guilds), Women's Non-Party Political Association (later the Women's Non-Party Association), and the Country Women's Associations in Western Australia and South Australia. This thesis is a comparative study that examines the similarities and differences between these four organisations in the two states, with a focus on white women's political advocacy to enhance the lives of [white] women and children.

During the late nineteenth century, the emergence of the Woman Movement was a 'major political force in the Australian colonies'.¹ The origins of the Woman Movement can be found in Britain and the United States of America. Marilyn Lake suggests there were various sources of the Woman Movement in the Australian colonies that included 'literary and debating societies, women's suffrage groups, journals and clubs' and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.² The Karrakatta Club, arising from the St George Reading Circle in Perth was important for the formation of the Women's Service Guild in Western Australia. Vida Goldstein of the Victorian Women's Political Association was highly influential in South Australia. As well, Australian women in the early twentieth century were viewed internationally as pioneers of 'women's political rights' because by 1902 they had the right to vote federally, as well as the right to stand for Federal parliament. By 1908, all white women in the Australian states had been granted the right to vote in state elections.³ Lake states that '[e]nfranchisement offered a new status to women as individuals and persons; they were no longer regarded as the appendages or chattels of men'.⁴ Prior to women's suffrage, women had few political rights. For example, if they were married, they were denied property

¹ Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999, 19.

² Marilyn Lake, 'A History of Feminism in Australia', in Barbara Caine, Moira Gatens *et al* (eds), *Australian Feminism: a companion*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, 135.

³ Marian Sawer and Marian Simms, *A Woman's Place: Women and Politics in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1993, 1. This publication provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the history of women and politics in Australia. See also Clare Wright, *You Daughters of Freedom: The Australians who won the vote and inspired the world*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2018, 3. Wright refers to Australia as the 'focus of the world's attention' after granting women enfranchisement and the right to stand for parliament.

⁴ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 141.

ownership. If their marriage failed, they were denied the custody of their children.⁵ Lake notes that once suffrage was achieved, organisations initially engaged in educating women on how to vote effectively. The Woman Movement though was about more than just women's suffrage.

Feminists and the organisations they created in 1909 such as the Women's Service Guild (WSG) and the Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA), broadened their agendas to advocate not only to educate women to use their vote wisely, but also for gender equality in laws, work, health care and family life. Feminists recognised that patriarchal agencies had determined rights that often ignored the needs of women, and these included the courts, legislation, and unions.⁶ In these emergent organisations, women sought legislative changes to address inequitable situations, to attain gender equality and to better protect minors under the age of twenty-one. Education not only raised their understanding of the value of the vote, but also of the effectiveness of collective power so their voices could be heard as they attempted to address inequalities. Higher education was encouraged as it empowered women to create social policies based on their new knowledge. And they sought representation by women for women in all tiers of government.⁷ As well, they needed to grapple with concerns about the declining birth rate and the widespread perception, particularly by men, that women's primary objective was to be mothers of the future generation to preserve the White Australia ideal. Their focus was mostly white women until later in the 1920s and 1930s when these organisations expressed concerns about the treatment of Aboriginal people and advocated for the welfare and health care of Aboriginal women and children.

Feminists recognised that political parties sidelined and marginalised issues relating to their sex.⁸ Therefore, it was with a sense of urgency that these women formed their own non-party political organisations to ensure primary consideration of their political, economic, and social needs.⁹ As non-party political associations they were without affiliation to any

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶ Margaret Thornton, 'Equal Rights at Work', in Caine, Gatens, *et al*, (eds), *Australian Feminism: a companion*, 84.

⁷ Mary Spongberg, *Writing Women's History Since the Renaissance*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2002, 143.

⁸ Sawyer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 208. Refer also to Marian Simms (ed.), 'Introduction', *100 Years of Women's Politics*, Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra, 2002, 1-7. This provides an overview of the early period during the 1890s that led to the granting of federal enfranchisement for women.

⁹ See also Kay Daniels and Mary Murnane, *Uphill All the Way: A Documentary History of Women in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1980. In Part 4, 261-319, Daniels and Murnane provide excerpts from primary source material pertaining to women and politics including the WNPPA and the WSG. In addition, also refer to Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia: A Gift or a*

particular political party – this allowed them to develop their own policies that were mostly centred on women and children.

The terms ‘politics’ and ‘political’ have several meanings depending on the context of their usage. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines politics as ‘the science or study of government and the state’ as well as ‘the political ideas, beliefs, or commitments of a particular individual [or] organization [sic]’.¹⁰ Therefore, political can indicate an involvement, employment, or interest in politics. All things which affected the state, nation or the community in which one lives can be political. These early women’s organisations engaged in politics to obtain legislative and social reforms for women and children; they took an interest in Parliamentary debates that affected their sex and they focussed on educating their members on political matters at meetings and debates thus exposing them to more topics and opinions. This provided members with a greater awareness of contemporaneous issues.¹¹ Those women who were actively engaged within their organisations or involved with other institutions were therefore more likely to be politically astute, had gained experience in the management of groups, and often undertook official positions within these organisations. The disbandment of the patriotic groups in the aftermath of World War One provided new opportunities for women, and the establishment of new organisations such as the Country Women’s Associations (CWA). This becomes clear in later chapters of this thesis.

The term ‘feminism’ is complex and considered a form of politics that has evolved and continues to evolve in response to increasing challenges women face.¹² Marilyn Lake states feminism was a ‘political achievement, its ideas, its mode of doing politics and outcomes constituting an important part of Australian political history’.¹³ Lake identified five phases of feminism in Australia, the first two of which are relevant to this thesis – the Woman Movement of the 1880s and 1890s; and the Woman Citizen until the 1940s. Indigenous women were never considered in the early years of the Woman Movement.¹⁴ The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) established in Australia in the 1880s was an example

Struggle?, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992; Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994.

¹⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*,

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/view/Entry/237575?redirectedFrom=politics#eid> viewed 29 April 2015. Eugene F Miller, ‘What Does “Political” Mean?’, *Review of Politics*, 1980, Vol. 42, Issue 1, 56; Jennifer Fitzgerald, ‘What does “Political” Mean to You?’, *Political Behavior*, 2013, Vol. 35, 453. Miller added politics or political was a reference to the *polis* or state or community.

¹¹ Fitzgerald, ‘What does “Political” Mean to You?’, 470.

¹² Susan Magarey, *Passions of the first wave feminists*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2001, 4, 12.

¹³ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 16.

¹⁴ Marilyn Lake, ‘A History of Feminism in Australia’, in Barbara Caine, Moira Gatens, *et al*, *Australian Feminism: a Companion*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, 133-134.

of a women's organisation during the Woman Movement. They advocated for temperance as a means to reduce men's alcohol-fuelled violence against women, and for women's suffrage. They believed the vote would allow women to achieve further social, political and economic improvements to benefit white women.¹⁵ During the second phase, the focus shifted to women as citizens, demanding rights for mothers that included financial remuneration or maternal endowment,¹⁶ and the establishment of new political organisations such as the Women's Service Guild and the Women's Non-Party Political Association. The welfare of Aboriginal women and children was later included in their aims and objectives.

According to Barbara Caine the adoption of the term feminism instead of the Woman Movement marked a shift in feminist thought just prior to World War One. Feminism though, was not always viewed positively. Some women, like Bessie Rischbieth of the WSG, initially rejected the term instead preferring to view themselves as part of a world-wide movement for equal rights with men since it was a struggle for social, political and economic equality for women.¹⁷ Some accomplishments of feminist organisations show that their objectives had broadened since the 1880s and 1890s. Catherine Kevin noted this included raising the age of consent, seeking reforms to protect women from domestic violence, challenging traditional marriage laws that favoured men, and attempting to reduce maternal mortality as well as recognising 'women's unpaid maternal labours'. Women also became increasingly aware of sex and contraceptive practices, a shift away from traditional conjugal expectations.¹⁸ In addition, more women began to challenge patriarchal domination.

The earlier feminist organisations such as the WSG and the WNPPA were undeniably political. They formulated aims, objectives, and policies, and lobbied the government; they monitored Parliamentary debates, particularly those that concerned the well-being of women and children – they agitated both for the appointment of women on various boards and committees, and as Justices of the Peace and women police. The establishment of the largely city-based non-party political organisations laid the foundation for the emergence of later women's groups that purported to be non-political. On the other hand, the CWA organisations were rurally focussed, with the aim of reducing the isolation that these women suffered, as well as improving rural health care facilities. The CWA though, did later form Metropolitan and State branches in Western Australia and South Australia which were city

¹⁵ Magarey, *Passions of the first wave feminists*, 49.

¹⁶ Lake, 'A History of Feminism in Australia', 134.

¹⁷ Barbara Caine, 'Feminism', in Barbara Caine, Moira Gatens, *et al*, *Australian Feminism: a Companion*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, 419-420.

¹⁸ Kevin (ed.), *Feminism and the Body*, 2.

based, where important decisions were made, and the administration of the whole state's organisations took place. Although the WSG created 'branch circles' in rural locations, the early city-based organisations did not expand into those areas.

Country members were not excluded from the WNPPA, but only a few rural women appear to have joined, and those who did were mostly city dwellers with rural interests. Membership of mixed gender voluntary organisations generally saw women relegated to domestic responsibilities, an extension of their domestic roles. Joanne Scott has argued that voluntary work often intersected with domestic skills.¹⁹ Until the formation of the CWA, rural women did not have their own organisation other than as members of the women's section of other groups such as the Primary Producers' Association. It is argued that the Country Women's Associations in Western Australia and South Australia, despite claiming they were non-political, were in fact political. Notwithstanding their non-political claim, these organisations frequently lobbied or joined with other organisations to pressure the government for social reforms. Philanthropic type organisations, such as the CWA, could also be politically activist. An example was the Burra CWA lobbying the Railway Commissioner to provide a separate counter at Railway Refreshment Rooms for women, as well as requesting that a waitress be sent 'to the carriages reserved for women, to take orders from those unable to leave their seats'.²⁰ It is unknown if their action succeeded. Likewise, political activism did not preclude some philanthropic activities as demonstrated by the WSG and the WNPPA later in this thesis.

Furthermore, feminist historian Sharon Crozier-De Rosa also raises the question of whether the CWA was in fact a feminist organisation previously excluded from feminist narratives.²¹ Although rurally focussed, the CWA organisations worked for the benefit of white women and children, similar to the WSG and the WNPPA. They also lobbied parliamentarians. Their open rejection of feminism was possibly to avoid association with the militant feminists in Britain who fought for suffrage and were portrayed negatively by the Australian press as the 'shrieking sisterhood'.²² For example, in March 1935, a Ladies' Night was held at Mount Gambier under the auspices of the Rotary Club. Guest speaker, Mrs Mary Warnes, State

¹⁹ Joanne Scott, 'Voluntary Work as Work?: Some Implications for Labour History', *Labour History*, May 1998, No. 74, 1; Elizabeth Teather, 'The Country Women's Association of New South Wales in the 1920s and 1930s as a Counter-revolutionary Organisation', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1994, Vol. 18, No. 41, 67-78.

²⁰ Burra Minutes, 14 Oct 1932, SACWA Archives.

²¹ Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, 'Perhaps tea and scones are OK: the CWA and feminism today', *Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts – Papers. 1251*, University of Wollongong, <https://ro.uow.edu.au/lhapapers/1251> viewed 1 June 2021.

²² Editorial, 'The Feminist Movement', *West Australian*, 8 April 1912, 4.

President of the South Australian CWA, presented a brief history of the association, its aims, and objectives. She was most emphatic that the organisation 'was not a feminist movement'.²³ In 1996 Elizabeth Teather, who researched the New South Wales CWA organisation, concluded that it was not feminist. Teather asserted that feminists were confrontational whereas the CWA was non-combative; that feminism arose from an urban milieu, and it questioned the power structures and imbalances that existed between men and women.²⁴ Margaret Alston's 1993 dissertation argued farm women were invisible, subordinate to their husbands despite performing equal work, and they rejected feminism because it was viewed as urban centric.²⁵ Alston used feminist theory for her analysis. She suggested the CWA supported the 'domestic, subordinated role of farm women' rather than challenging the male dominated hierarchical power structures that persisted within farming and pastoral families.²⁶ Alston's study observed that feminism was rejected by country women as irrelevant, but these women remained disconcerted by their subservient status therefore suggesting otherwise. Crozier-de Rosa's conclusion that the CWA has been overlooked as a feminist group until lately may be valid and deserves additional investigation.

It becomes clear throughout the thesis that transnational influences played a significant role. In the context of the thesis, transnational refers to the 'movement of people, ideas, technologies and institutions across national boundaries'.²⁷ Everything that took place outside of Australia and had an impact on the women and the organisations examined here: vice-regal women, British and American women activists, British MP John Stuart Mill, and those Australian women who were able to travel overseas; or events such as the 1850 Salem Women's Convention in the United States of America. Their ideas influenced and shaped these organisations, either directly or indirectly. As a result, transnationalism was crucial to the establishment and maintenance of various organisations such as the WSG, WNPPA, and the Western Australian and South Australian CWA's, the infusion of ideas being necessary for these organisations' sustained success. These groups had links that extended in other countries, and members who later attended conferences held both within Australia and internationally. To clarify, the terms international and internationally are used in

²³ 'Rotary Observes Ladies' Night', *Border Watch*, 30 March 1935, 3.

²⁴ Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, 'Mandate of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 1996, Vol. 31, No. 1, 90.

²⁵ Margaret Alston, *A Study of Farm Women*, PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 1993, 114, 304-305, 325.

²⁶ Alston, *A Study of Farm Women*, 6.

²⁷ Ian Tyrrell, 'What is transnational history?', <https://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/what-is-transnational-history/> viewed 26 February 2020.

a geographical sense, referring to countries outside of Australia, and this is not synonymous with transnational.

The interwar years were not without their difficulties. The economic cost of war, issues surrounding the return of troops from the front lines, unfavourable environmental conditions, and the Great Depression together with the influenza pandemic impacted Australia and Australians. In both Western Australia and South Australia, the drought followed by the Great Depression and its attendant increase in unemployment, prompted the CWA to act by offering material assistance to rural families. In contrast to the WSG and the WNPPA, this was the CWA organisations' turning point, followed by an increase in their membership and branch formation. The earlier organisations whose principal focus was on legislative reforms that took so long to achieve if at all, paled into insignificance when immediate assistance was required by families who sought urgent support to relieve their distress. With another World War imminent, and because of their wide network of branches across the state in comparison to the WNPPA, the CWA in South Australia was in an ideal position to distribute forms for the collection of the names of women and any assistance they may have been able to provide in a national emergency. The sisterhood of women had grown through the efforts of these women's organisations as all had a similar objective, that of the well-being and care of women and children throughout the states of Western Australia and South Australia that eventually was not limited to urban settings.

Literature Review

The eastern states of Australia, particularly New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, have been the subject of much research on non-party political and non-political organisations. For example, Elizabeth Teather and Jennifer Jones have both examined the New South Wales CWA.²⁸ Meredith Foley's PhD thesis examined the women's movement in

²⁸ See Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather's articles: 'The first rural women's network in New South Wales: Seventy years of the Country Women's Association', *Australian Geographer*, 1992, Vol. 23, No. 2, 164-176; 'Remote Rural Women's Ideologies, Space and Networks: Country Women's Association of New South Wales, 1922-1992', *Journal of Sociology*, 1992, Vol. 28, No. 3, 369-390; 'The Country Women's Association of New South Wales in the 1920s and 1930s as a Counter-revolutionary Organisation', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1994, Vol. 18, No. 41, 67-78; 'Mandate of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 1996, Vol. 31, No. 1, 73-94. Also Jennifer Jones, 'Inside the CWA Rest Room', *History Australia*, 2006, Vol. 3, No. 1, 09.1-09.12; 'More than tea and scones?: Cross-racial collaboration in the Country Women's Association of New South Wales and the ethos of country mindedness', *History Australia*, 2009, Vol. 6, No. 2, 41.1-41.19; *Country Women and the Colour Bar: Grassroots Activism and the Country Women's Association*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2015. Jones's focus was on the 1950s and 1960s.

New South Wales and Victoria.²⁹ In contrast, the organisations in Western Australia and South Australia, including the CWA in those states, have received very little critical scrutiny and commentary. This thesis therefore fills this gap in the research. The thesis uses a feminist approach. As these were voluntary organisations, brief mention is made of voluntary action, the provision of philanthropy and mutual aid. Social capital is briefly discussed. Feminists sought to relieve the oppression of women, to attain equal rights with men and to gain the right to vote. The study of feminism was about more than just their achievements; it was also about their motivations, the networks they formed, and the ideas and values that guided their acts.³⁰

Earlier histories such as Miriam Dixson's *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia – 1788 to the present*, originally published in 1976; Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly's publication *Creating A Nation 1788-1990*; Anne Summers's *Damned Whores and God's Police*, originally published in 1975, and Beverley Kingston's *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, have all challenged the dominant discourse of Australian history by white males that ignored women as part of that history. These texts convey the message that women have been portrayed as of no historical significance or importance in history, they have been marginalised. Dixson has claimed that while Australia's past was 'dark and difficult, the implications were even harsher for women than for men'.³¹ Women were denied access to public and political positions and roles as these were the preserve of men, instead women being relegated to domestic duties that included childbearing and raising and caring for the household and husband. They were often mistreated and disrespected.³² Grimshaw *et al*'s publication challenges the notion that Australia as a nation began with the First World War and the sacrifices made at Gallipoli when so many Australian men were killed or injured. They added: 'Though women gave birth to the population, only men it seemed could give birth to the imperishable political entity of the nation'.³³ Women and the contributions they made to Australian history were effectively wiped from public consciousness. Men were accorded hero status.

²⁹ Meredith Foley, *The Women's Movement in New South Wales and Victoria, 1911-1938*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1985.

³⁰ Barbara Caine, 'Feminism', in Mary Spongberg, Barbara Caine and Ann Curthoys (eds), *Companion to Women's Historical Writing*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstock, 2005, 183. Refer also to Barbara Caine, 'Feminism', in Caine, Gatens, *et al*, *Australian Feminism: a Companion*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, 419-420.

³¹ Miriam Dixson, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia – 1788 to the present*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1999.

³² Dixson, *The Real Matilda*, 12.

³³ Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly, *Creating A Nation 1788-1990*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, Victoria, 1994, 218.

Anne Summers referred to the subordinated position of women as self-perpetuating throughout the generations.³⁴ However, World War One allowed women to break the mould of this subordination, affording them greater independence, and the ability to follow courses their foremothers had not been able, to also challenge the dominant male structures. Grimshaw *et al* refer to the emergence of the 'New Woman', but now in a world where men had gained greater status for their war efforts.³⁵ Kingston's study examined Australian women and work in the urban setting. She believed the role of women had been neglected in studies that preferred instead to honour 'masculine mateship'.³⁶ Kingston questioned the paradox of granting women the right to vote but excluding them from discussions on the basic wage that favoured men.³⁷ This thesis intends to give voices to these women and their achievements in Western Australia and South Australia, and the organisations they created. Previously, Marilyn Lake, Susan Magarey and Claire Wright have written well regarded histories of feminism in Australia, but each has gaps this thesis addresses.

Marilyn Lake's *Getting Equal: The history of Australian feminism* examines women's suffrage, equality with men, the rights of mothers, Aboriginal welfare, all issues this thesis addresses. Lake asserts that equality for women also meant admission into the world of men, reinforcing the notion that 'men's way of organising the world' was considered as 'natural', and that post-suffrage, 'parliamentary politics' remained the domain of men.³⁸ But this did not mean women did not continue to strive for social and legislative reforms. Lake asserts that the history of women had been obliterated until the feminist movement of the 1970s, with a common misconception that early feminists were viewed as not having done anything worthy. Instead, the past focussed on white men and their deeds, the history of Australia presented as white man's history, written by white men, that excluded women.³⁹ Lake's publication provides an informative overview of feminism in Australia.

However, a criticism of Lake's work is that the title suggests it is a complete history of feminism in Australia. Such a vast topic as feminism in Australia confined to a small publication is brief and selective on what it presents. Many non-party political organisations in Australia have been mentioned, including the WSG and the WNPPA, but the detail of each is necessarily brief. Lake's history covers an expansive period from the 1870s to the late twentieth century. Apart from some brief comments about the CWA, she otherwise

³⁴ Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Penguin, Ringwood, Victoria, 1994.

³⁵ Grimshaw *et al*, *Creating a Nation*, 218.

³⁶ Beverley Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, Nelson, Sydney, 1975, 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁸ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 4, 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

makes no mention of this organisation in her narrative. This thesis addresses this absence by examining women in Western Australia and South Australia, their organisations including the CWA, and their concerns and achievements. As well, there were women who were worthy leaders within their communities and organisations that have not been documented beyond the sphere of their groups. Many of those mentioned in this thesis are noted with a brief biographical entry in Appendix 1.

Susan Magarey has provided a revised history of early feminism in Australia in her publication *Passions of the first wave feminists*.⁴⁰ She too contends that misconceptions about these early feminists limited their history to the fight for suffrage. Magarey argues the attainment of female suffrage did not equate to equality between the sexes, a disappointment for those who had fought for suffrage. Like Lake, her examination of the early feminists is broad and covers all states until the late twentieth century. The CWA is not included, probably because at the time of Magarey's writing it was not even considered as a possible feminist organisation, and her publication mostly focussed on the first wave feminists from the 1880s.

Claire Wright's *You Daughters of Freedom: The Australians Who Won the Vote and Inspired the World*, published in 2018, discusses women's participation in suffrage campaigns in Britain after achieving suffrage in Australia. Wright's objective was to make this history accessible to everyone, not just academics, because it was a long-forgotten period in history. According to Wright, while people could recall the suffragettes and the Pankhurst family in Britain, few remembered or knew that Australian women had the right to vote well before British women, or that Australians such as Vida Goldstein went to England to support the suffrage campaigns. Wright seeks to redress this in her publication. She does briefly examine the suffrage campaign in South Australia and Western Australia, but her book is largely about how Australians influenced the rest of the world when they were granted suffrage.⁴¹

In addition, Zora Simic's PhD thesis, *A Hall of Selective Mirrors: Feminism, Identity and History, 1919-1969*, offers an overview of feminism during the interwar years which is of relevance to this thesis. Of particular importance is her assertion that interwar feminism was a continuity of the suffrage era.⁴² Indeed, this thesis has referred to the 1909 women's

⁴⁰ Magarey, *Passions of the first wave feminists*.

⁴¹ Wright, *You Daughters of Freedom*, 7, 50-57, 73-74.

⁴² Zora Simic, *A Hall of Selective Mirrors: Feminism, Identity and History, 1919-1969*, 31, 34-35.

organisations as remnants of this period, established following the attainment of suffrage, and the campaign to educate women to use their vote wisely.

Aside from feminism, the thesis presents several other important threads – voluntary action, and the role of vice-regal women. The women's organisations examined by this thesis were voluntary, comprised of members volunteering their time and commitment. Melanie Oppenheimer argues that it was a fundamental right of people of a democratic society to 'assemble or gather together' and form a voluntary organisation.⁴⁵ There were advantages for women who held memberships of voluntary organisations, and these included the offer and extension of friendship with others; a means to escape loneliness and the domestic sphere; a chance to meet new people beyond the realms of one's social set, as well as the acquisition of new skills.⁴⁶ Voluntary action was defined by Lord William Beveridge to mean 'private action [that was] not under the directions of any authority wielding the power of the State'.⁴⁷ Beveridge's 1948 publication *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance*, had been commissioned by the British Government as a review of Britain's social welfare system. Philanthropy and mutual aid were important aspects of voluntary action. Mutual aid – the action of helping oneself as well as others; and philanthropy – the work of others 'with a social conscience seeking to make life better for the less fortunate in society'.⁴⁸ These characteristics can be found in the organisations examined here. For example, the philanthropic activity of the CWA during the drought and the Great Depression. Or the educational classes held by the various organisations were forms of mutual aid.

Membership of organisations entailed voluntary work that was often viewed as secondary to the woman's role as wife and mother. Indeed, within these organisations the struggle by some members to separate their voluntary work from their expected domestic roles and duties is clear. As well, Joanne Scott observed that paid work did not exclude some women from membership and involvement with voluntary work. There were instances, particularly in

⁴⁵ Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Voluntary Work and Labour History', *Labour History*, 1998, No. 74, 1.

⁴⁶ Scott, 'Voluntary Work as Work?: Some Implications for Labour History', 11; Cora Baldock, 'Feminist discourses of unwaged work: The case of volunteerism', *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 27, 25.

⁴⁷ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1948, 8. For information about Lord Beveridge refer to Harris, Jose, 'Beveridge, William Henry, Baron Beveridge (1879-1863)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-31871?rskey=VOEjL5&result=1> viewed 9 March 2019.

⁴⁸ Melanie Oppenheimer and Nicholas Deakin (eds), *Beveridge and voluntary action in Britain and the wider British world*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2011, 3

the earlier organisations, of women working as teachers or in clerical positions while maintaining their membership and holding official positions in these groups.⁴⁹

A continuing thread is that of the role of vice-regal women in Australia. Often, titled ladies were involved in various voluntary organisations, many later becoming patrons of those groups including Lady Rachel Forster, wife of Australia's Governor General Sir Henry Forster from 1920 to 1925. Lady Forster, who encouraged the formation of the CWA in Western Australia and South Australia, was also patron of other groups including the National Council of Women in New South Wales, the British Red Cross Society of Australia, and the CWA of New South Wales – she is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. In earlier histories women of means were often referred to as Lady Bountiful, assisting the poor and those in need to impress others. This related more to their own self-worth and egos than for altruistic reasons. However, many did make meaningful contributions. Amanda Andrews's research has shown that vice-regal women from 1884 were more than adornments to their husbands.⁵⁰ They contributed ideas that benefitted the health and welfare of women and children, as well as the various organisations in which they became involved. Andrews's PhD thesis is limited to a case study of several vice-regal women including Lady Ishbel Aberdeen who is briefly mentioned in this thesis. She adds that there were many more examples of vice-regal women who were inspirational.⁵¹ These women were also examples of how social capital worked in our society.

This thesis also utilises Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital. Bourdieu, a late twentieth century French sociologist, had the ability to utilise works from different theorists to study and understand various forms of knowledge.⁵² Theorists which informed his beliefs included Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Blaise Pascal and Ludwig Wittgenstein.⁵³ Bourdieu's theory of social capital has been described as 'individuals gain[ing] from establishing relations with others in social networks'.⁵⁴ Bourdieu specifically described it as 'membership in a group' thus providing a 'collectivity-owned capital'.⁵⁵ Membership increased the group's ability to institute pressure or action as a collective to achieve their aims, rather than by individual

⁴⁹ Scott, 'Voluntary Work as Work?: Some Implications for Labour History', 17.

⁵⁰ Amanda Andrews, *The Great Ornamentals: New Vice-Regal Women and Their Imperial Work 1884-1914*, PhD thesis, School of Humanities, University of Western Sydney, 2004.

⁵¹ Andrews, *The Great Ornamentals*, 8.

⁵² Jen Webb, Tony Schirato and Geoff Danaher, *Understanding Bourdieu*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, 4.

⁵³ Webb *et al*, *Understanding Bourdieu*, 5.

⁵⁴ Aeron Davis, 'Forms of Capital and Mobility in the Political Field: Applying Bourdieu's Conceptual Framework to UK Party Politics', *British Politics*, 2010, Vol. 5, No. 2, 202-23.

⁵⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in Nicole Woolsey Biggart (ed.), *Readings in Economic Sociology*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2002, 286.

action which was much less effective. Networking allowed these organisations to expand and extend locally, state-wide, nationally, and transnationally, including affiliations with overseas organisations. The various organisations examined by this thesis are examples of those groups that had wider affiliations and acted as a collective that gave women a stronger voice. In the Australian context, feminist sociologist Eva Cox also claimed that social capital allowed members of organisations to collaborate in engaging with concerns and issues and coming up with solutions that were for the betterment of society. Interaction with other organisations aided this effort.⁵⁶ Cox also believed that a person's higher status in the community ensured they were more than likely to volunteer to become a member of an organisation.⁵⁷ This is evident in the groups examined in this thesis – well known and highly regarded women within communities often taking official positions in their respective organisations, for example Mary Warnes and the South Australian CWA; Bessie Rischbieth and the WSG, and Catherine Helen Spence and the WNPPA.

Joanne Scott's PhD thesis critically examined women and work including voluntary work, in Queensland during the interwar years.⁵⁸ Scott identified some prominent women within organisations as 'challenging their status as dependent wives' by making a career out of their work as volunteers, as well as exercising 'considerable power' during the course of that work.⁵⁹ Earlier examples of such women within the groups examined here include Catherine Helen Spence, inaugural president of the WNPPA, albeit for a short time until her death in 1910; her niece and co-founder of the organisation, Lucy Spence Morice; Bessie Rischbieth, influential in the WSG in Western Australia, and Mary Warnes, inaugural president of the Burra CWA and later State President of the South Australian CWA.⁶⁰ Each of these women was financially secure allowing them to pursue their involvement and roles within these organisations without the need to resort to paid work.⁶¹ Additionally, Scott's research refers to the Queensland CWA.

As well, this thesis extends the research and narratives of earlier historians and authors in the South Australian and Western Australian context. This includes work completed for

⁵⁶ Eva Cox, 'Australia: Making the Lucky Country', in Robert D Putnam (ed.), *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, 337.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 340-341.

⁵⁸ Scott, 'Voluntary Work as Work?: Some Implications for Labour History', 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁰ For additional details about these women, refer to Appendix 1.

⁶¹ Susan Magarey, 'The Private Life of Catherine Helen Spence – 1825-1910', in Graeme Davison, Pat Jalland and Wilfrid Prest (eds), *Body and Mind: Historical Essays in Honour of F. B. Smith*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2009, 195-215. Susan Magarey's chapter, however, indicates there were financial struggles for Catherine Helen Spence and her family in Adelaide.

Honours theses by Jill Margaret Prior, Vivienne Szekeres and Marie Noble. In 1966, Prior compared the WNPPA and the South Australian Housewives' Association.⁶² In 1973, Vivienne Szekeres examined the WNPPA (later known as the League of Women Voters), using oral history to trace the organisation from its inception until 1976 – this was perhaps the only detailed account at this time.⁶³ In 1983, Marie Noble examined the relationship between politics and women's culture using the WNPPA as her case study.⁶⁴ However, Martin Woods's PhD research examined several voluntary women's organisations in South Australia from 1836 until 1936 and their development, focussing on their community service. His examination of the South Australian CWA was limited to their 'connection to ... maternal and domestic responsibilities, and efficiency in the home'.⁶⁵ Handicrafts were promoted during the Great Depression as a means of increasing their self-sufficiency and efficiency such as learning to re-cover chairs rather than purchase them new when funds were limited.

Narrative histories of the WSG and the CWA organisations have been published, mostly written by members to document the history of their organisations. They are useful in providing background information, particularly in cases where primary source material has not been available. They include Bessie Rischbieth's *March of Australian Women: A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal Citizenship* of the WSG in Western Australia; Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, of the CWA in Western Australia; and Heather Parker's, *The First Fifty Years: Golden Jubilee History of the South Australian Country Women's Association*. In addition, Dianne Davidson's more critical publication *Women on the Warpath: Feminists of the First Wave* details the history and progress of the WSG.⁶⁶

⁶² Jill Margaret Prior, *Attitudes of Women In South Australia (1928-33) – the role of woman in the community as reflected in the Housewives' Association and the Women's Non-Party Association*, University of Adelaide, Honours Thesis, 1966.

⁶³ Vivienne Szekeres, *A History of the League of Women Voters in South Australia 1909-1976*, University of Adelaide, Honours Thesis, 1976. Unfortunately, tapes containing interviews by Vivienne Szekeres could not be located.

⁶⁴ Marie Nicholson, *Woman's Politics in South Australia: The Ideas of the Women's Non-Party Association 1919-1933*, Honours Thesis, Flinders University, 1983.

⁶⁵ Martin Woods, *Towards a Civil Society: Voluntary Community Service and Womanhood in South Australia, 1836-1936*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Social Sciences, Flinders University, 2000, iv.

⁶⁶ Bessie Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women: A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal Citizenship*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964; Diane Davidson, *Women on the Warpath: Feminists of the First Wave*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 1997; Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, The Country Women's Association of Western Australia, Perth, 1974; Heather Parker, *The First Fifty Years: Golden Jubilee History of the South Australian Country Women's Association*, South Australian Country Women's Association, Adelaide, 1979. Refer also to Christine Doran, *Women in Isolation: A History of the Country Women's Association in the Northern Territory 1933-1990*, The Country Women's Association of the Northern Territory, Darwin,

Scope of Thesis

The Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA) later known as the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA), ceased operation in South Australia in 1979 seventy years after its inception; it was unofficially succeeded by the Women's Electoral Lobby established in 1970.⁶⁷ In Western Australia, the Women's Service Guild, later known as the Women's Service Guilds (WSG) continued until 1997. Both the Country Women's Association of Western Australia and the South Australian Country Women's Association are still in operation today. This thesis examines these four organisations until 1939, the eve of World War Two. This spans a period from 1909 to 1939 inclusive for the WNPPA and the WSG, and from 1922, the year the CWA commenced in New South Wales, followed by branch formations in Western Australia and South Australia. One chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the period prior to 1909 which provides background information that was necessary to understand the formation of the earlier organisations such as the WSG and the WNPPA. The following Table 0.1 shows these various organisations and their dates of establishment, change of name or cessation. Although not discussed in this thesis, the Women's Electoral Lobby is included in the Table as has a brief mention in this Introduction.

1992. These are narratives that have been compiled by members of the organisations. Northern Territory organisations were commenced and mentored by the South Australian CWA.

⁶⁷ Marian Sawer and Gail Radford, *Making Women Count: a history of the Women's Electoral Lobby in Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008, 16, 258. South Australian branch of the Women's Electoral Lobby was formed in July 1972.

Table 0.1: Women's Organisations: Years Covered and Cessation or Name Change.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA	YEARS COVERED	CESSATION OR NAME CHANGE	SOUTH AUSTRALIA	YEARS COVERED	CESSATION OR NAME CHANGE
Women's Service Guild (WSG)	1909	1924	Women's Political Association	1909	1909
Women's Service Guilds (WSG)	1924-1939	1997 ceased	Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA)	1909	1917
			Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA)	July 1917	July 1939
			League of Women Voters	July 1939	1979 ceased
			Women's Electoral Lobby	1970	
CWA					
CWA of Western Australia	1924-1939	Continues	SACWA	1926-1939	Continues
(The CWA commenced in NSW in 1922.)			Burra	1926	
			State (Executive)	1929	

There is no evidence to show that Aboriginal women were early members of any of these organisations. The probability is that they were not. However, there are references in the WSG and WNPPA minutes to items which dealt with social issues involving Aboriginal women and children, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, and these are examined in later chapters. Quotations are cited as they appear in the original documents, for example, the lack of capitalisation of the first letter of Aboriginal.

Limiting the scope of the thesis from 1909 to 1939 provides several crucial periods of study. The period from 1909 to 1914 incorporates the post-suffrage years in Australia. This is followed by World War One from 1914 to 1918; and the Interwar period from 1919 to 1939 which includes the Great Depression and the prelude to the Second World War. The establishment of the CWA organisations fell within the Interwar period. In Western Australia and South Australia the CWA organisations were formed on the cusp of the Great Depression.

This thesis is geographically focussed on Western Australia and South Australia. There are references to some Eastern state organisations, as well as some internationally located organisations and persons that have relevance to this study.

Table 0.2: Some Other Organisations Mentioned in this Thesis.

NAME	INTERNATIONAL	NATIONAL	WESTERN AUSTRALIA	SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA)				1858-2000
Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV) (previously the Australian Federation of Women Societies for Equal Citizenship)			1921-1982	
Bombay Sorosis Club (Dr Emily B Ryder)	India 1889			
Girls' Friendly Society (GFS)	UK 1875		1888	1879
Housewives' Association		1915 Victoria	1920	1926
International Council of Women (ICW)	USA 1888			
Karrakatta Club			1894	
Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Club				1898
Lower North Adelaide Girls' Club (Adelaide City Mission)				1898
Mother's Union (Anglican Church)	UK 1876			1895
National Council of Women (NCW)	USA 1888		1911	1902-1908; 1920
National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) (previously the National Society for Women's Suffrage)	UK 1897			
New York Sorosis Club	USA 1868			
Social Purity Society				1882
Travellers' Aid Society				1911
Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)	USA 1874		1892	1886
Women's Franchise League			1899	
Woman's League for Political and Social Education				1895-?
Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association (WSPPA)			1925	
Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)	UK 1903			
Women's Suffrage League				1888-1895
Working Women's Trade Union				1890
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)	UK 1855 USA 1858			1884

Table 0.2 above provides the names and date of establishment of some other organisations mentioned in this thesis, many of which had a connection to the organisations listed in Table 0.1. This may have been that some women were members of an organisation in Table 0.2 as well as an organisation in Table 0.1. The date of cessation is included where known.

Methodology

This thesis uses empirical archival resources located at various repositories within Australia, although some records for Lady Forster remain at her home in England.⁶⁸ Historical sources are often fragmentary, scant and dispersed; those analysed for this thesis were no exception. The State Library of South Australia has a rich collection of primary source material for the WNPPA, known after July 1939 as the League of Women Voters under which name this material is catalogued. Minutes of meetings survive, dating from its inception in July 1909, Committee Minutes dating from August 1910, and Annual Reports from 1915 form the basis of the WNPPA research. Their newsletter, *Non-Party News*, published from July 1923 also proved to be an invaluable source that included information from national and international organisations.⁶⁹ However, financial factors prevented the *Non-Party News* from being published beyond September 1933.

Separate membership rolls are not available for the WNPPA and it is doubtful whether they were maintained. However, in the first volume of minutes for this organisation, there is an alphabetical list of names, often without first name, status, or address.⁷⁰ The identification of some women has been possible, allowing the construction of brief biographies for a few who are mentioned in this thesis; some of these are included in Appendix 1. By using other resources such as the South Australian birth and marriage indexes and various state directories additional information can be found, for example, Mrs Chartier of Davenport Terrace, Wayville whose name was recorded in the list for the WNPPA. A directory entry shows AH Chartier, a warehouseman was listed at that address. From the South Australian marriage index, it was determined that Alfred Henry Chartier married Helen Mary Birks in

⁶⁸ Cook, Chris, Philip Jones, Josephine Sinclair and Jeffrey Weeks, *Sources in British Political History 1900-1951*, Volume, 2: A Guide to the Private Papers of Selected Public Servants, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1975. Lady Forster ordered the destruction of many of her papers. However, some have been retained and remain in possession of her family.

⁶⁹ League of Women Voters of South Australia (LWVSA), SRG 116/1/11, 'The Work and Achievements of the League of Women Voters of S.A.', Paper presented by Ellinor Walker at the 70th Annual meeting of the League of Women Voters of S.A., 27 July 1979; *Non-Party News*, Women's Non-Party Association, Adelaide, 12 July 1923-September 1933, SLSA.

⁷⁰ LWVSA, SRG 116/1/1, General Minutes, July 1909-October 1922, SLSA.

Adelaide during 1888.⁷¹ She was the daughter of George Napier Birks, pharmacist and follower of William Lane who established New Australia in Paraguay in the 1890s. Her mother, Helen Rosetta Birks was a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Suffrage League, and was a daughter of William Kyffin Thomas, the proprietor of the *Register* newspaper in Adelaide. Thus Mrs Chartier, who was already exposed to radical views from her parents, was not from the working-class despite initial indications. Her husband was a businessman with land holdings and was probably a warehouse proprietor rather than a warehouseman working in a warehouse. This points to the difficulties of establishing whether working class women were involved as members of these organisations. The accepted view is that many of these women were privileged, from the middle and upper classes, although the lack of detailed membership rolls calls this claim into question.

Additional names of members have been obtained from the minutes, the *Non-Party News*, and newspaper reports of the meetings albeit without addresses. Some women were better known and have been recorded elsewhere, such as in the database of teachers by Brian Condon, or the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.⁷² Other databases which have proved useful for tracing or clarifying biographical details of these women include the National Library of Australia's digitised newspaper collection on Trove, and Ancestry and Findmypast databases on-line, the latter two being subscription services.⁷³

Digitised newspapers such as those available on-line via Trove (National Library of Australia) have been invaluable as they augment the written records. Microfilmed newspapers at various libraries have also proved useful. These newspapers complement or expand on the primary records of the associations, or even provide the only record of a meeting. Reports of meetings in the early years were often published in the daily press and these align with what was recorded in the minutes. Sometimes they include additional information. For example, a report of a meeting held on 2 June 1909 to 'consider the formation of a non-party political organization [sic]' was printed in the *Register* on 4 June

⁷¹ South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), On-line Database Search, <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>, viewed 1 March 2014. Other databases such as Ancestry.com.au and findmypast.com.au provide additional information. Refer to Appendix 1 for Helen Mary Chartier (under her mother's entry, Helen Rosetta Birks).

⁷² Brian Condon, Service histories of S.A. State Teachers 1852-1960, University of South Australia, database, <http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/condon/teachers/> viewed 1 March 2014; *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/> viewed 1 March 2014.

⁷³ National Library of Australia, Trove, Digitised newspapers and more, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/> viewed 1 February 2014; Ancestry, at www.ancestry.com.au, viewed 1 February 2014; findmypast.com.au, <https://www.findmypast.com.au> viewed 1 January 2015.

1909 before the WNPPA began keeping formal minutes.⁷⁴ Some international newspapers have also been digitised and have been cited in this thesis. Their value is that they often provide previously unpublished information for some women who were otherwise silent in the records; they sometimes include relevant discussions in Editorials and letters to the editor. The digitisation of newspapers has allowed ready access to their volumes without having to travel interstate or overseas to access. Researchers though, need to be cautious in accepting some information published by the press because of possible inaccuracies, and the possible presentation of only one point of view.⁷⁵

In addition, there are other sources of information regarding the WNPPA existing in unrelated library files. The State Library of South Australia has a range of oral history files, some of which pertain to women who were once members of the WNPPA. These include several files with transcripts of interviews with Ellinor Walker, who in 1914 joined the WNPPA at the age of twenty-one, and gave the organisation's valedictory speech in 1979.⁷⁶ Other records that contain relevant information for this thesis include the *South Australian Women's Responses to the First World War J. D. Somerville Oral History Collection*, interviews conducted by oral historian Beth Robertson.⁷⁷

Digitised copies of the *Woman Voter* (1909-1919) contain references for both the Western Australian and South Australian groups, including published reports from the WSG and the WNPPA.⁷⁸ Vida Goldstein of the Victorian Women's Political Association (WPA) established the *Woman Voter* as a communication tool for the presentation of her views not only to her membership but to subscribers of the WNPPA and other organisations, to keep them informed of current news from other organisations both within Australia and internationally. This publication has been digitised and is available on Trove. It has been described as Goldstein's 'mouthpiece' during her unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament in Victoria. Articles from the *Woman Voter* were read at early meetings of the WNPPA. WNPPA members were encouraged to individually subscribe. In addition, records pertaining to Vida Goldstein have been viewed on microfilm at the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ 'Non-Party Politics for Women', *Register*, 4 June 1909, 4.

⁷⁵ For more information about digitised newspapers, refer to Paul Gooding, *Historic Newspapers in the Digital Age*, Routledge, London, 2017.

⁷⁶ Interview with Ellinor Gertrude Walker [sound recording transcription], Interviewer: Beth M. Robertson, OH 31/5, 1979, SLSA; Interview with Ellinor Gertrude Walker [sound recording transcription], Interviewer: Mary Hutchison, OH 3/4, 1981, SLSA.

⁷⁷ 'South Australian Women's Responses to the First World War,' J. D. Somerville Oral History Collection: interviews by Beth M. Robertson, OH 31, 1979, SLSA.

⁷⁸ 'Women's Political Association', *Woman Voter*, Melbourne, 1909-1919.

⁷⁹ *Vida Goldstein Papers*, MSM 118, 1902-1919, MS7865, State Library of Victoria (SLV), Melbourne.

Established on 25 March 1909, records of the Women's Service Guild (WSG) of Western Australia, later known as the Women's Service Guilds, are held at the J S Battye Library of the State Library of Western Australia in Perth.⁸⁰ There were records pertaining to some of the women involved with the WSG, including those for Bessie Rischbieth. However, not all are held in Western Australian repositories. Some records are held at the National Library of Australia in Canberra, and a few have been digitised and made available on-line.⁸¹ Where early minutes were missing, digitised newspapers have been used to fill the gap. These often contain detailed reports of meetings before the organisation published their own newsletter, *The Dawn*.⁸²

The JS Battye Library also has a collection of private manuscripts, letters and diaries that belonged to the Le Souef family.⁸³ These include hand-written diaries that were maintained by Ellen (Ellie) Grace Le Souef (nee Hagenauer) from 1880 when she was at school.⁸⁴ During my visit to the library, I viewed several of these diaries for the period that pertained to the WSG. I have cited from relevant sections.

The accepted date for the establishment of the Country Women's Association (CWA) in South Australia is 1929, although a branch at Burra had been established in late 1926.⁸⁵ Most records have been archived at the Adelaide head office located at Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town. These include the minutes of meetings, Annual Reports and copies of early Historical Documents as well as brief branch histories, the latter often written retrospectively. There may be other relevant material but owing to a current lack of indexation, these are not readily available, and access was through their archivist, Shirley Frawley, and with permission of the then current South Australian CWA President Linda Bertram.⁸⁶ The Historical Document files revealed early letters relating to the formation of a

⁸⁰ Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia Records, 1896-1959, ACC 1949A; 1909-1992 ACC 2530A, 4343A-4347A; 1931-1968 ACC 2626A, JS Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia (SLWA). There were some difficulties in locating early records, and not all were found during my visit despite assistance from the librarians. Some boxes of material were not strictly in chronological order. For example, a copy of their second annual report dated 31 March 1911 was contained within a box of material for the years 1929-1990.

⁸¹ Bessie Mabel Rischbieth, Papers and objects 1900-1967, manuscript, NLA 2004, National Library of Australia (NLA); Women's Service Guild of Western Australia, Annual Report, 1913-14, Q396.06/14, State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW).

⁸² *The Dawn* has not been digitised. This is not to be confused with Louisa Lawson's publication, the *Dawn*, published in Sydney from 1888 to 1905 which is available on the Trove portal.

⁸³ Le Souef Family Papers, MN 1391, SLWA.

⁸⁴ For biographical information regarding Ellie Le Souef refer to Appendix 1. Her diaries are contained within the Le Souef Family Papers, MN 1391, SLWA.

⁸⁵ Parker, *The First Fifty Years: Golden Jubilee History of the South Australian Country Women's Association*, 1.

⁸⁶ Lauren Gobbett, email 1 May 2014, Librarian, Flinders University and a member of the CWA.

branch at Burra and a later one at Mount Gambier. Executive Council meeting minutes were maintained from March 1930, and these formed what later became known as 'State' records. The first annual conference was held in September 1930. Annual Reports for the South Australian CWA were published, and provide a précis of meetings, business and events during the year.⁸⁷ Surprisingly, there did not appear to be any letters from Lady Rachel Forster who urged the formation of a CWA branch in South Australia.

Western Australia's Country Women's Association (CWA) was inaugurated in 1924 at Nungarin. Archival records are located at the CWA headquarters in Perth. However, Nungarin's records had not been lodged with the CWA headquarters by the time of my visit, and therefore were not available for examination. Digitised newspaper articles have filled in some of the gaps, and included reports of meetings, the foundation of new branches, and Annual Conference proceedings. Furthermore, some of Nungarin's CWA minutes had been transcribed by Patricia Howe and included in her privately published book *Henrietta*, about her grandmother Henrietta Burns, a Nungarin CWA stalwart. This book appears to only be available at the State Library of Western Australia.⁸⁸ It has proved invaluable for those records that were not available. Some microfilmed newspapers such as the *Primary Producer* have not been digitised and were viewed at the State Library of Western Australia adding to the collection of data. There were challenges associated with using older microfilm readers.

Outline of Chapters

This thesis is arranged into seven chapters and is organised chronologically into two parts. Two chapters have a thematic focus, they are Chapters Three: World War One: The Catalyst For Change, and Chapter Seven: Achievements of the Women's Organisations. Part One, which spans the years leading up to and including World War One, is divided into four chapters. Part Two is divided into three chapters and covers the years 1919 to 1939 inclusive, known as the interwar years.

In Part One, Chapter One examines the period prior to 1909 to provide contextual information that eventually led to the establishment of the WSG and the WNPPA. The chapter highlights the continuity of the different organisations that arose during this period and in which women were involved. Women's involvement in political matters, particularly of

⁸⁷ Early minutes for the Mount Gambier branch, however, were not available at the time of examination of the South Australian CWA records, instead having been retained by that branch.

⁸⁸ Patricia J Howe, *Henrietta*, P J Howe, Mundaring, Western Australia, ca 2009.

suffrage, led to the establishment of these two 1909 women's organisations. The chapter's key point is an awareness by women that they needed to be represented by women rather than by male politicians advocating for their interests.

Chapter Two presents as two case studies the establishment of the Women's Service Guild in Western Australia, and the Women's Non-Party Political Association in South Australia, together with the development of their aims and objectives. Distance becomes a factor in the relationship between the Western Australian organisation and South Australia's WNPPA. In South Australia, the establishment and development of the WNPPA was very much at the behest of Vida Goldstein and her Women's Political Association. However, Western Australia's WSG was guided by the Karrakatta Club. Prominent women such as Edith Cowan and Bessie Rischbieth in Western Australia, and South Australians Catherine Helen Spence and her niece Lucy Spence Morice, illustrate the social connectedness between women that allowed the formation of these organisations. Included in this chapter is a brief overview of State and Federal politics to provide contextual background to the establishment of these women's political organisations during this period. The platforms of both organisations are examined in detail. These give an indication of societal issues and concerns during the period from 1909 to the commencement of World War One.

Chapter Three, a thematic chapter, examines World War One as the catalyst for change not only for these organisations but for everyone in Australia. The subsequent establishment of patriotic organisations during the war provided a challenge to the existing women's organisations in terms of membership depletion. These patriotic organisations allowed women an opportunity to assist the war effort by volunteering their time. They learnt new skills that were to stand them in good stead for the new mass organisations that were formed post-World War One. Burra, South Australia, has served as an example of a country town's war effort.

The early Interwar Years, 1919 to 1929, are the focus of Chapter Four, the first in Part Two. Following the First World War, society and government were focussed on reconstruction, but there were issues with the return of able-bodied and wounded soldiers from the front lines who needed employment or hospitalisation. The WSG and the WNPPA continued to lobby for legislative reforms that benefitted women and children. As well, their focus turned to the well-being of Aboriginal women and children. During this period, most of the patriotic organisations ceased. This was a crucial period for the emergence of the new mass organisations, such as the Country Women's Associations, which declared themselves non-political. These organisations provided new opportunities for women who had previously volunteered for the patriotic groups during the war. As shown in this chapter by the different

charts, the membership of the new organisations significantly outnumbered that of the WSG and the WNPPA.

The CWA organisations in Western Australia and South Australia are presented as case studies in Chapter Five. This chapter examines the founding of the first CWA in New South Wales, which led to the establishment of branches around Australia. The role of Lady Rachel Forster, wife of Australia's Governor-General, as the instigator for the formation of the CWA in South Australia and Western Australia, is discussed.

The rise of the CWA organisations during the 1930s, as well as the decline of the earlier women's organisations, are discussed in Chapter Six. The drought, the Great Depression, its effects in both Western Australia and South Australia during this period are all examined. A brief overview of the Women's Voluntary National Register on the eve of the Second World War, and the CWA's role is included.

Chapter Seven, a thematic chapter, discusses some of the various issues these organisations were involved with, and their accomplishments. It becomes clear that legislative change was generally protracted and did not provide instant success. This contrasted to the CWA organisations that offered almost immediate assistance to families in time of need such as during the drought, or unemployment. The chapter provides examples of international conferences some members were able to attend, highlighting transnational influences and social interconnectedness.

These seven chapters offer an overview of the period from 1909 to 1939. They highlight the use of voluntary action by women as members of these voluntary organisations during this period. A new appraisal of these organisations provides greater insight and understanding, adding to the historiography of women's history.

PART A: TO 1919

CHAPTER ONE: WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AND SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS PRE-1909

'Women ... have a right, as taxpayers, and as subjects under the law, to be represented.
The laws affect them in every way.'¹

Walter James, MP,
Legislative Assembly,
Western Australia, 12 August 1896

In 1896 Western Australian parliamentarian Walter James stated that every woman had the right of recognition and representation in parliament. By then only South Australian women had gained both the right to vote in 1894 and to stand for parliament. James strongly supported women's suffrage – this was granted to Western Australia's white women in 1899. The journey to achieve women's suffrage, however, was protracted, and was only one part of the quest by women to achieve equal rights with men in the Australian colonies. White women living in a patriarchal society were rarely viewed beyond their biological roles as child bearers and carers of their children. This was despite many performing paid work, often as domestic servants during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to supplement their husbands' meagre incomes, or as the breadwinner perhaps owing to illness, desertion or death of the male head of the household. Each British colony including the Australian colonies comprised a society with customs, culture and legislation transplanted from Britain. Britain was therefore a major influence for Western Australia and South Australia even though British women did not have the right to vote until much later than their Australian sisters. Without the vote, women had no say in the laws that were made and which affected them.

Prior to 1909 there were various factors and events, both international and local, which enabled conditions of possibility that led to the establishment of the Women's Service Guild (WSG) in Western Australia and the Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA) in South Australia. However, in retrospect specific conditions can be identified as important pre-requisites for the subsequent formation of these early women's organisations. Without specific conditions the events or happenings may not have occurred, although each condition acts as a precondition, not as an absolute cause. James Elwick summarises

¹ Walter James, Western Australian Parliament, *Hansard Archive (1879-1995)*, Legislative Assembly, 12 Aug 1896, 339.

conditions of possibility as being a 'contingent historical event, an institution, or economic circumstances – they may be physical, intellectual, or cultural'.³ Elwick suggests however, there is no certainty about any of these as a factor other than that they may exist with or without the other. When examining the nineteenth century, certain events, persons and circumstances can be identified as providing the impetus for the subsequent formation of the women's organisations in the early twentieth century in Western Australia and South Australia. An examination of some of these factors and persons provides important contrast and context for the following chapters. In Britain, women were experiencing change by becoming more politically aware which subsequently influenced women in the British colonies. Vice-regal women, as well as influential Australian women who were able to travel such as South Australia's Catherine Helen Spence and Victoria's Vida Goldstein together with press reports of events in Britain and the USA, brought fresh ideas and information to the colonies. Women therefore were able to take advantage of emerging transnational networks to keep them well informed.

There are however limitations as it is impossible to identify and describe all events or factors. Instead, the following is confined to some important events which had an impact on the future for women. It is argued that favourable pre-conditions prevailed in these Australian colonies and enabled the establishment in 1909 of the WSG and the WNPPA, both examined by this thesis. Electoral franchise for women was a turning point that allowed them to focus on other reforms for the well-being of white women and children.

This chapter examines the development of women's organisations prior to 1909 in Western Australia and South Australia. The chapter introduces key early British women activists that included Mary Wollstonecraft and Josephine Butler, and supportive men such as John Stuart Mill (United Kingdom), Edward Stirling (South Australia) and Walter James (Western Australia). Some transnational events which were crucial for the establishment of the women's organisations in these states, such as the 1850 Salem conference for women in the USA, were reported in the Antipodean press suggesting the importance of the press for the dissemination of ideas. In Western Australia the Karrakatta Club, its establishment influenced by American Dr Emily Brainerd Ryder, is noted as pivotal for the formation of the WSG and is discussed. Mixed gender organisations in South Australia that preceded the establishment of the Women's Suffrage League, and the subsequent achievement of women's enfranchisement are also explored.

³ James Elwick, 'Layered history: Styles of reasoning as stratified conditions of possibility', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 2012, Vol. 43, No. 4, 620.

Western Australia is discussed before South Australia because it was colonised earlier. Brief histories of Western Australia and South Australia are presented to provide context.

Federation, the decline in the birth rate in Australia and the Harvester Judgement which had ramifications for women and equal pay are also briefly discussed. The chapter questions how women during this period effected social reforms for gender equality and equal rights.

Federation occurred on 1 January 1901; the six Australian colonies united and became states of the Commonwealth of Australia. Federation brought many changes to address the perceived increasing inefficiencies of the separate colonies. Several historians have provided a history of the federating process and the development of the Constitution. John La Nauze presents a comprehensive broad history and analysis of the complex process of Federation while the contributions of John Bannon (South Australia), and Brian de Garis (Western Australia) provide separate analyses of those states.⁴ Furthermore, John Hirst gave a detailed analysis of the federating process; his publication is considered an important narrative. He believed Federation was primarily about achieving nationhood. Peter Howell focused on the process and its effects in South Australia.⁵ Significantly, Helen Irving devoted a chapter to women in which she examined female suffrage in the 1890s, as well as the path to Federation.⁶ This literature is important because it provides greater detail about Federation, which contributes to set the framework for the creation of the women's organisations in 1909.

While not all states granted women the right to vote, all Australian white women were enfranchised federally by the *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902*. Provided they were over the age of twenty-one and had been a resident for over six months, this Act allowed white women to vote in Federal elections.⁷ To that date only two Australian colonies, South Australia and Western Australia, had given women voting rights. Additionally, in South Australia that right extended to Aboriginal women, but these women were either not informed or were actively discouraged from voting therefore effectively limiting their numbers enrolled. South Australian women were additionally given the right to stand for Parliament.

⁴ John A La Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1972; John Bannon, 'South Australia', in Helen Irving (ed.), *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, 129-185; Brian de Garis 'Western Australia', in Helen Irving (ed.), *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, 285-325.

⁵ John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000; P A Howell, *South Australia and Federation*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2002.

⁶ Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999 (originally published in 1997).

⁷ *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902*, Museum of Australian Democracy, Old Parliament House, <https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/scan-sid-163.html> viewed 11 August 2017.

Voting was an important issue, viewed as a means to effect legislative change for the benefit of women and children, giving women their own voice independent of significant males in their families. Once women's franchise was achieved in Western Australia and South Australia, women supported their interstate and overseas sisters in their pursuit of suffrage particularly as members of the WSG and the WNPPA established in 1909. Federation, however, was not the only event that had significant implications for women.

Post-Federation there were at least two major events that directly affected white women Australia wide. The first was a Royal Commission held in New South Wales in 1903 to investigate the declining birth rate. Aside from the economic depression and severe drought at the start of the 1890s, the declining birth rate in the Australian colonies raised concerns during this period, something which had ramifications for the newly federated states. The decline was described as 'spectacular' and led to the Royal Commission to determine the causes.⁸ Historians including Judith Allen and Neville Hicks have examined this decline.

Allen has argued that the decline in the birth rate revealed those who unequivocally supported childbirth in all circumstances, despite the challenges and economic distress it may have presented for women.⁹ Pro-natalists, mostly men, believed the cause of the birth rate decline resulted from either the 'selfishness and wickedness of women' to prevent pregnancy utilising early contraceptive practises, or by the use of various means to induce abortions.¹⁰ The Commission revealed a veil of secrecy surrounding criminal practises which included infanticide; baby farming that in many cases resulted in the death of infants through neglect; and abortion, the deliberate termination of a pregnancy as opposed to the natural physiological event that sometimes occurred.¹¹ Despite testimonial evidence indicting some women, Neville Hicks's seminal work, *'This Sin and Scandal': Australia's Population Debate 1891-1911*, indicated the Commission was unable to provide definitive answers or solutions for the decline.¹²

Equally significant in 1907, the Harvester Judgement set the basic living wage for men. A landmark test case, held by Justice Henry Bournes Higgins from 7 October to 8 November at the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Court in Melbourne, it had far-reaching implications for all women. The case dealt with determining a "'fair and reasonable' wage for

⁸ Neville Hicks, *'This Sin and Scandal': Australia's Population Debate 1891-1911*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, xv.

⁹ Judith A Allen, *Sex & Secrets: Crimes Involving Australian Women since 1880*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990, 67-73.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 68-72.

¹² Hicks, *'This Sin and Scandal'*, 157.

workers at the Sunshine Harvester Company” in Victoria.¹³ Edna Ryan and Anne Conlon noted that the wives of some working-class men had given details of household expenditure, but this had failed to make an impact on the final decision.¹⁴ The outcome was the setting of a basic wage for married or single white men. John Rickard stated the ‘minimum [wage] could not be modified or negotiated, unlike the margins paid for more skilled workers’, therefore it was to provide workers some financial security.¹⁵ Furthermore, Rickard added, the inclusion of the term ‘fair and reasonable’ into the proceedings, ‘forced others to calculate the realities of human survival’ upon which the basic or minimum wage was figured.¹⁶ Central to this was the improbable assumption all working-class men had wives and children to support, but the reality was often different. The decision bolstered the assumption that men were sole breadwinners, thus reinforcing the notion of women as dependents, and marginalised those women who performed paid work.¹⁷ This led to a continued inequality in wages between men and women and explained in part why the WSG and the WNPPA persevered in their campaign for equal pay for equal work. This decision continued the impoverishment of working-class widows, deserted wives and single women for whom work was a necessity to survive.¹⁸ It would not be for another sixty years until this was finally redressed, hence its far-reaching implications for women.¹⁹ While Federation, the Royal Commission, and the Harvester Judgement were events that had repercussions for all women, there were organisations in Britain that were influential and established branches in Australia.

Peter Gordon and David Doughan identified many voluntary women’s organisations established in Britain between 1825 and 1960.²⁰ A number of these British voluntary organisations which focussed on the well-being of women, children, the destitute and poor, were established in the Australian colonies (later known as states). Some were promoted or encouraged by vice-regal women such as the Girls’ Friendly Society and were based on their own experiences in the Imperial centre as will be shown later in this chapter. Ties with

¹³ Dick Bryan, ‘Minimum Living Standards and the Working-Class Surplus: Higgins, Henderson and Housing’, *Labour History*, 2008, No. 95, 213; Mark Hearn, ‘Sifting the Evidence: Labour History and the Transcripts of Industrial Arbitration Proceedings’, *Labour History*, 2007, No. 93, 3-13.

¹⁴ Edna Ryan and Anne Conlon, *Gentle Invaders: Australian Women at Work 1788-1974*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1975, 91.

¹⁵ John Rickard, *H. B. Higgins: The Rebel as Judge*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, 172.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁷ Allen, *Sex & Secrets*, 66; Kate Murphy, ‘Feminism and Political History’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 2010, Vol. 56, No. 1, 34; Mark Peel and Christine Twomey, *A History of Australia*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2011, 139.

¹⁸ Peel and Twomey, *A History of Australia*, 139

¹⁹ Ryan and Conlon, *Gentle Invaders*, 89.

²⁰ Peter Gordon and David Doughan, *Dictionary of British Women’s Organisations 1825-1960*, Woburn Press, London, 2001.

Britain continued long after Federation. Furthermore, Anglo-American influences were pivotal to both Britain and Australia as the following discussion shows.

Early British Pathfinders and Anglo-American Influence on Western Australia and South Australia

Individual British women and men who promoted equal rights influenced succeeding generations through their writings and political actions. While acknowledging there were many influential people that could be included, this section briefly outlines some of those who have been cited in the Australian context. One such person was Mary Wollstonecraft, born in April 1759 in Spitalfields, London and died prematurely in 1797 from complications of childbirth. She was an author and advocate of women's rights with her most important work the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* published in 1792.²¹ Wollstonecraft's early childhood experiences may have influenced this publication as she witnessed her mother abused and denigrated by her father. In the memoir of his wife, William Godwin stated Mary was not favoured by either parent.²² She had found her mother cold, perhaps unloving. These experiences shaped Wollstonecraft's views.

Feminists have celebrated Mary Wollstonecraft as an early exemplar for women in defining their rights. Australian historian Ann Curthoys suggested Wollstonecraft's publication extended across many disciplines that not only included history but 'political theory, philosophy, women's studies, [and] literary studies ...'.²³ Since the 1970s there has been renewed interest in Wollstonecraft's writings. According to Curthoys, she believed women had been socialised to 'seek male protection rather than [encouraged to] support themselves'.²⁴ While situating women within a social context, one criticism of Wollstonecraft was her failure to specifically discuss women's political rights.²⁵

Wollstonecraft viewed education as the key to women's equal rights. Her own education was described as 'meagre', something not unusual for girls at that time.²⁶ Raised in poverty, Wollstonecraft was fortunate to form a friendship with someone who had access to books, and thus set about extending her own knowledge through self-education. She subsequently

²¹ William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, J Johnson, London, 1798, 5, 7.

²² Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author*, 7.

²³ Ann Curthoys, 'Mary Wollstonecraft Revisited', *Humanities Research*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2010, 29-48.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁶ Miriam Brody Kramnick (ed.), *Mary Wollstonecraft: Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1982, 9.

established a short-lived school at Newington in London.²⁷ Wollstonecraft's writings and influence have spanned across the centuries to the present. However, she was not the only one to exert influence in support of women's equal rights. Nineteenth century Britain and America provided other proponents who were prepared to write about and campaign for women's equal rights and suffrage. Their writings and influence spread to the Australian colonies either through press reports, first-hand accounts from those who were able to travel, or those who maintained transnational links. One such influential person was John Stuart Mill.

An English philosopher, and later a British Member of Parliament (MP), Mill's writings influenced such individuals as South Australians Catherine Helen Spence and Edward Stirling MP. Mill was born in London in 1806 and died in France in 1873. Writing to Catherine Helen Spence in November 1869, Mill stated:

The movement against women's disabilities generally, and for the suffrage in particular, has made great progress in England since you were last there. It is likely, I think, to be successful in the colonies later than in England, because of the want of equality in social advantages between women and men is less felt in colonies owing, perhaps, to women's [sic] having less need of other occupations than those of married life.²⁸

Surprisingly, Mill's statement dismissed the colonies' women as requiring anything more than married life as an occupation, which suggests a divide between women living in England and those in the colonies. Mill's statement that marriage was an occupation for women was an accepted norm at the time, that women's role was primarily as wives, mothers and carers of their husbands and children. Ironically, it was the colonies which introduced women's franchise well before Britain, that is New Zealand in 1893, and South Australia in 1894. However, Mill did not live to witness this. Irrespective of the division he alluded to between English women and those in the colonies, he was a strong supporter of equal rights for women and women's franchise irrespective of their location. His writings were often cited in Australia. For example, on 9 August 1883 amendments to the *Constitution Act* that would allow women the municipal vote in the Western Australian Parliament, were debated with a Mr Simpson MP citing Mill:

The majority of the women of any class are not likely to differ in political opinion from the majority of the men in the same class, unless the question be one in which the interests of

²⁷ Kramnick (ed.), *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 10.

²⁸ Francis E Mineka and Dwight N Lindley (eds), *The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill 1849-1873*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1972, 2016.

women, as such, are in some way involved; and, if they are so, women require the suffrage as their guarantee of just and equal consideration.²⁹

Years later in 1896, women's suffrage supporter Walter James cited Mill during a Western Australian parliamentary debate, adding Mill believed sex to be 'irrelevant' in the question of women's 'political rights'.³⁰

Mill's earlier correspondence with English born social reformer Josephine Butler in 1869 had referred to women's political rights as 'securing better consideration for their interests ...'.³¹ Butler, born in 1828 and educated, married George Butler an Anglican minister in 1852. Living in a male dominated society, Butler was dismayed but not surprised to find her views ignored. She sought to improve the lives of the poor, 'the forgotten and the derelict, the outcasts of society'.³² It was to this end that Butler campaigned for improvements in the lives of the less fortunate.

On the centenary of Butler's birth in 1928, women in both Western Australia and South Australia acknowledged her as a 'pioneer advocate of an equal moral standard' thereby reflecting her transnational influence.³³ Butler had died in 1906. She had expressed concerns about women, including those who worked in prostitution, who were deprived of 'legal safeguards' and 'every guarantee of personal security'.³⁴ For her radical views, Butler was vilified by the contemporary press, Parliamentarians and the public. However, her objections to the *Contagious Diseases Act* and its amendments in Britain in the 1860s and 1870s led to its repeal in 1885.³⁵ Women suspected of being prostitutes were subjected to medical examinations that were brutal, followed by possible gaol terms. In contrast, men who engaged in sexual activity with these women were not treated similarly.³⁶ This was

²⁹ Western Australian Parliament, *Hansard Archive (1870-1995)*, Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1893, 20, <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hansard1870to1995> viewed 1 August 2017. This may have been George Simpson, Member for Geraldton 1891 to 1899 – for more details see David Black and Geoffrey Bolton, *Biographical Register of Members of Parliament of Western Australia, Volume One 1870-1930*, Western Australia Parliamentary History Project, Perth, 1990, 179.

³⁰ Western Australian Parliament, *Hansard Archive (1870-1995)*, Legislative Assembly, 12 August 1896, 340.

³¹ Marion Filipiuk, Michael Laine, and John M Robson, *Additional Letters of John Stuart Mill*, University of Toronto Press and Routledge, Toronto, 1991, Vol. 32, 204. Letter to Josephine Butler dated 22 March 1869.

³² Nancy Boyd, *Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale: Three Victorian Women Who Changed Their World*, Macmillan Press, London, 1982, 23, 31, 32, 37.

³³ 'A Social Prophet', *Register*, 13 April 1928, 8.

³⁴ Jane Jordan and Ingrid Sharp (eds), *Josephine Butler and the Prostitution Campaigns: Diseases of the Body Politic*, Routledge, London, 2003, 293.

³⁵ 'Obituary. Mrs. Josephine Butler', *Daily News*, 3 January 1907, 2.

³⁶ Judith R Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian society: Women, class, and the state*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, 2; Boyd, *Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale*, 40-41.

more about the regulation of female prostitutes, and the health predominantly of soldiers who used their services rather than any altruistic considerations for the women involved. It sought to protect men rather than women.³⁷ Butler was an advocate of higher education for women, and the *Married Women's Property Act* which received Royal assent in 1882.³⁸ Harriet Taylor Mill, wife of John Stuart Mill was a contemporary of Butler.

Strongly influenced by the events in Salem, Ohio, USA in 1850, English-born Harriet Taylor Mill penned 'Enfranchisement of Women' that was published the following year in London in the *Westminster Review*.³⁹ The *Westminster Review*, established by Jeremy Bentham in 1823, was the mouthpiece of an intellectual and radical group known as the Philosophical Radicals.⁴⁰ While there was not a formal membership roll, John Stuart Mill and his father James Mill were closely aligned to this group.⁴¹ Harriet Taylor Mill claimed that the question of enfranchisement, or the right to vote for women, and equal rights were issues raised in the USA that also had relevance for women in Britain.⁴² Her essay referred to 'organised agitation', not only about the enfranchisement of women, but equality of rights with men in 'political, civil and social' matters.⁴³ In South Australia Catherine Helen Spence considered Mill's 'Enfranchisement of Women' as having less impact than expected. Instead, Spence claimed it was 'a revival of Mary Wollstonecraft's grand vindication of the rights of the sex'.⁴⁴ Spence was a proponent of proportional representation, particularly of Thomas Hare's system for which John Stuart Mill was also an advocate.⁴⁵ Hare's system of representation provided a simple formula that was ultimately modified several times. At its most basic, it was the division of the number of electors by the number of seats to derive the electoral

³⁷ Judith R Walkowitz and Daniel J Walkowitz, "'We are not beasts of the field': Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3/4, 1973, 74.

³⁸ 'Obituary. Mrs. Josephine Butler', *Daily News*, 3 January 1907, 2.

³⁹ Harriet Taylor Mill, 'The Enfranchisement of Women (1851)', in John M Robson (ed.), *Essays on Equality, Law, and Education by John Stuart Mill*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1984, 393-415. First published in the *Westminster Review*, July 1851, originally thought to have been written by John Stuart Mill but it was Harriet Taylor Mill.

⁴⁰ John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1924, 63-64.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 63-64; Alan Ryan, 'Mill, John Stuart (1806-73)', in Michael T Gibbons (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, John Wiley and Sons, Oxford, 2015, 1.

⁴² Harriet Taylor Mill, 'Enfranchisement of Women (1851)', Appendix C, in John Stuart Mill, *Essays on Equality, Law, and Education*, University of Toronto Press, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Volume xxi, 1984, 395. Originally published in the *Westminster Review* 1851.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁴⁴ Catherine Helen Spence and Susan Magarey, Barbara Wall, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams (eds), *Ever yours, C. H. Spence: Catherine Helen Spence's an Autobiography (1825-1910), Diary (1894) and Some Correspondence (1894-1910)*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2005, 88-89.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

quotient.⁴⁶ Spence's support of proportional representation, known as effective voting, may have adversely influenced her judgement of Harriet Taylor Mill's essay. Proportional representation had become Spence's primary focus and it was for this reason that she agreed to join the WNPPA in 1909.⁴⁷

While the Salem event was for the benefit of women, its immediate importance lay in the bringing together of a group of similarly minded women to agitate for what they considered were their rights. This was evidence of a collective of women meeting to increase their power so their voices could be heard, a form of political activism and an important objective of Australia's later women's organisations. The Salem Women's Convention had its early beginnings in March 1850 when a meeting for women interested in the issues of equal rights with men was advertised in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, an abolitionist newspaper published in Ohio, USA.⁴⁸ Topics discussed included the 'political oppression' of women, women's education, and 'government and religious institutions' together with the effects of their policies on women.⁴⁹ Exact numbers of attendees are unknown but newspapers reported 'four to five hundred women present'. However, the size of the venue suggests this number may have been an exaggeration.⁵⁰ Needless to say, the convention allowed women to discuss enfranchisement as well as equal rights with men in the absence of their male counterparts. American diarist Daniel Howell Hise noted in April 1850 that the women 'did honor to their sex; cursed by the pitiful whining politicians that still persist in withholding from her, her political rights'.⁵¹ Therein lay the crux of the issue – male politicians ostensibly representing women's interests but in reality, giving them little consideration. This was an argument that would recur over the decades, eventually extending to the women's organisations in the Australian colonies. Women wanted representation of their needs and rights by women, not by men who were unable or unwilling to represent them in Parliament.

In September 1850 South Australia's *Adelaide Times* briefly reported on the convention.⁵² This event had some coverage in Tasmanian and New South Wales colonial newspapers

⁴⁶ 'The Late Thomas Hare', *Argus*, 11 May 1891, 10.

⁴⁷ 'The Late Catherine Helen Spence. An Autobiography', *Register*, 29 October 1910, 8. Spence wrote: 'Of the society also I became the first President, and the fact that on its platform was included proportional representation was an incentive for me to work for it'.

⁴⁸ Robert W Audretsch (ed.), *The Salem, Ohio 1850 Women's Rights Convention Proceedings*, Salem Area Bicentennial Committee and Salem Public Library, Salem, 1976, 17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁵¹ Daniel Howell Hise, 'Diary, 19 April 1850', cited in Robert W Audretsch (ed.), *The Salem, Ohio 1850 Women's Rights Convention Proceedings*, Salem Area Bicentennial Committee and Salem Public Library, Salem, 1976, 11.

⁵² 'Latest Foreign News', *Adelaide Times*, 21 September 1850, 8.

suggesting its transnational interest. The proceedings of this convention were the basis of Harriet Taylor Mill's essay. But there had been an earlier convention at Seneca Falls, New York in July 1848 to discuss 'the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman' of which Mill had not referred.⁵³

The convention at Seneca Falls was a precursor to the Salem event. Quaker Elizabeth Cady Stanton addressed those who attended the earlier meeting emphasising men could not speak for women; she referred to women as holding a 'degraded and inferior position all over the world'.⁵⁴ Later, Stanton congratulated the women of Salem for their Convention and affirmed that 'Man cannot legislate for us'.⁵⁵ Stanton, along with other women including Lucretia Mott and Mary Ann McClintock, both of whom were American campaigners for women's social reforms and equal rights, initiated the Seneca Falls convention.⁵⁶ Later, Stanton noted in her autobiography:

This was the initial step in the most momentous reform that has yet been launched in the world – the first organised protest against the injustice which has brooded for ages over the character and destiny of one half [of] the race.⁵⁷

However, she was displeased with the 'sarcasm and ridicule' by the press that followed the convention.⁵⁸

In England, John Stuart Mill continued to support women's electoral franchise as evidenced by his parliamentary speeches. By May 1867 he refuted the commonly held belief that politics was not women's business and affirmed his support for the right of women to enfranchisement, although he qualified that they needed to be married.⁵⁹ He believed women should be 'admitted to any employment or occupation which they are not now admitted ...'.⁶⁰ Albeit with conditions, Mill supported women's suffrage and equal rights with

⁵³ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, (eds), *History of Woman Suffrage*, Arno Press, New York, 1969, 67.

⁵⁴ The Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B Anthony Papers Project, 'Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions: Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, 19-20 July 1848', and 'Address by Elizabeth Cady Stanton on Woman's Rights September 1848', viewed <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca/html> 10 July 2017.

⁵⁵ Correspondence, Elizabeth Cady Stanton dated 7 April, cited in Robert W Audretsch (ed.), *The Salem, Ohio 1850 Women's Rights Convention Proceedings*, 37-39.

⁵⁶ Stanton, Anthony and Gage, (eds), *History of Woman Suffrage*, 67-75.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, cited in Isabel McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of South Australia, 1886-1948*, Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Adelaide, 1949, 29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁹ John M Robson and Bruce L Kinzer (eds), 'The Admission of Women to the Electoral Franchise, 20 May 1867', in *Public and Parliamentary Speeches by John Stuart Mill*, University of Toronto Press and Routledge, Toronto, 1988, 151-162.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

men. He introduced a Reform Bill in 1867 to the House of Commons supporting women's suffrage.⁶¹ Later, Mill admitted his 'advocacy of women's suffrage' was considered by others as one of his 'whims' and therefore he was not taken seriously.⁶² His Parliamentary Bills failed to succeed in gaining suffrage for women during this period. John Stuart Mill and others of his ilk were considered as "cranks" by contemporary society" because they supported causes that were viewed as unpopular, such was the feeling at the time surrounding women's involvement in politics and the political process.⁶³ In retrospect, John Stuart Mill was forward thinking for his time, and provided inspiration for many including those living in Australia.

In the period following Mill's 1867 Parliamentary efforts the formation of the first women's suffrage societies in the United Kingdom ensued. Later that same year societies amalgamated to form the National Society for Women's Suffrage, although Mill clarified that each society continued to act independently of the other.⁶⁴ These were societies established in London, Edinburgh and Manchester with Bristol and Birmingham the following year, thus indicating the women's suffrage movement had gained widening appeal across the United Kingdom.⁶⁵ Elizabeth Crawford's *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey* provides a comprehensive history of the various societies and branches together with their geographical location.⁶⁶ In 1897, the National Society for Women's Suffrage became the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). Newspapers in Australia began reporting on the activities of Mill, of the suffrage movement in the UK, and later of the NUWSS.⁶⁷ Of note, Dr Richard Pankhurst, husband of the noted suffragette Emmeline, was involved in the formation of the Manchester Society; he supported women's

⁶¹ Constance Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1967, 29.

⁶² John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1924, 200.

⁶³ Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, 177.

⁶⁴ Mill, *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, 214.

⁶⁵ Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, 54-55; Gordon and Doughan, *Dictionary of British Women's Organisations 1825-1960*, 108. Rover indicates a discrepancy in the year the Manchester Society opened noting its First Annual Report was issued in 1868, and therefore the organisation was unlikely to have been formed in 1865 as maintained by its first secretary, Mrs Elizabeth Elmy (nee Wolstenholme).

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey*, Routledge, London, 2005.

⁶⁷ 'Women's Suffrage', *Empire*, 13 June 1868, 3; 'Franchise for Woman', *Adelaide Observer*, 27 June 1868, 11; 'Anglo-Colonial Notes', *South Australian Register*, 5 Jul 1900, 6.

franchise and drafted the *Married Women's Property Act 1870* and 1882, more of which later.⁶⁸

Much has already been written about Emmeline Pankhurst. Publications include Josephine Kamm's *The Story of Mrs Pankhurst*, June Purvis's *Emmeline Pankhurst: a Biography*, and Paula Bartley's *Emmeline Pankhurst*, which provide biographical exposés and a history of Pankhurst's involvement with the suffrage movement in Britain.⁶⁹ Pankhurst became a well-known suffragette and leader of the women's suffrage movement in England. In October 1903, she formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) which became noted for its militant campaigns in Britain.⁷⁰ She was joined by her daughters Christabel, Sylvia and Adela. Victoria's Vida Goldstein gained inspiration from the WSPU and supported the British women in their campaigns for suffrage. In 1914, Adela Pankhurst moved to Victoria, befriended Goldstein, and became an organiser for her political campaigns effectively extending her mother's influence beyond Britain.⁷¹

In Australia, the campaign for women's rights, equality and the suffrage gradually increased during the mid to late nineteenth century through membership of various voluntary organisations. The following examines both Western Australia and South Australia, providing brief histories of their foundation and progress to 1909, and the various organisations which were influential at that time.

Western Australia 1829 to 1909

Western Australia was not proclaimed a British colony until 18 June 1829. However, from December 1826 a garrison of soldiers was stationed at King George Sound (Albany) because of French maritime activity that posed a possible threat of settlement.⁷² Albany is approximately 420 kilometres south-east of present-day Perth. The Swan River Colony, later

⁶⁸ David Mitchell, *The Fighting Pankhursts: A Study in Tenacity*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1967, 20; 'Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)',

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/pankhurst_emmeline.shtml viewed 1 August 2017.

⁶⁹ Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, Routledge, London, 2002; Josephine Kamm, *The Story of Mrs Pankhurst*, Methuen, London, 1961; June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst, a Biography*, Routledge, London, 2002.

⁷⁰ Emmeline Pankhurst (nee Goulden) was born in 1858, married Richard Marsden Pankhurst in 1879. He was a lawyer twenty years her senior. After raising her children, and her husband's death, she became involved in the suffrage movement.

⁷¹ Susan Hogan, 'Pankhurst, Adela Constantia (1885-1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/pankhurst-adela-constantia-9275> viewed 11 August 2017.

⁷² Geoffrey Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia Since 1826*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 2008, 6; Les Johnson, 'Albany', in Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (eds), *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2009, 57-59.

known as Perth, was convict-free and established at the urging of Captain James Stirling, later Lieutenant-Governor Stirling, to provide land, grow produce for self-sufficiency, and undertake farming pursuits. It was a privately established settlement based on a system of land grants which were allocated according to 'the value of assets and labour introduced by settlers'.⁷³ Taking possession of another part of Australia extended British occupation in the hope of deterring others, particularly the French. Provisions and cash were in short supply during the first year of settlement. It was also marked by conflicts with Aboriginal people.⁷⁴ Some settlers moved to Australia's eastern colonies because of the severe environmental conditions. The Swan River Colony had the distinction of being the most geographically isolated of the Australian colonies, cut off from the eastern part of Australia by the vast Nullarbor Plain that separated it from South Australia.⁷⁵ There was a lack of fresh water, difficulty locating permanent water and a lack of labourers for all manual work including the digging of wells. To provide a labour force, male convicts were transported to the colony arriving 1 June 1850 – female convicts were excluded. Until then, the Swan River Colony had struggled to survive and been unable to expand due to the lack of labour. Convicts, according to Geoffrey Bolton, became Western Australia's 'economic salvation' in the 1850s, counteracting in part the attraction of the goldfields in New South Wales and Victoria.⁷⁶ New South Wales had ceased to accept convicts in 1840, yet for Western Australia they became a necessity for its progress. Approximately 10,000 male convicts were transported to the colony by 1868. In part, failed land schemes due to the harsh conditions, the lack of labourers and poor planning were to blame, as well as bad press reports in England which deterred investors and settlers to the new colony.⁷⁸ Explorers eventually pushed settlement further to the north and east of Perth into very remote and harsh territory. In 1877, a telegraph line from Adelaide to Perth 2700 kilometres away had been completed, hastening communication, and reducing the isolation between the colonies. But it would not be until 1917 that a transcontinental railway connected the eastern states to Western Australia albeit with changes of trains at borders owing to the different gauges of the line; or 1930 that the

⁷³ Pamela Statham, 'Swan River Colony 1829-1850', in C T Stannage (Ed.), *A New History of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1981, 181; Geoffrey Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia Since 1826*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 2008, 7-9.

⁷⁴ Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁸ Ian Berryman, 'Swan River mania', in Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (eds), *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Crawley, 2009, 854-855.

telephone connected the eastern states with Western Australia.⁷⁹ In the 1880s the discovery of gold boosted the colony's population and economy which up to that time relied on wool and wheat.

By then concerns were expressed about the arrival and well-being of young female emigrants to the Western Australian colony. In 1885, Ellen Barlee, a female emigration agent and social reformer in London, suggested the establishment of a Servants Home or a Register of girls. Although deemed worthy by the Western Australian Government, this was not instituted because of the costs involved.⁸⁰ Barlee, writing in November 1886 to the Australian press from England, suggested that a "Servants Home and Register" be maintained rather than forming a Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) in Perth.⁸¹ The GFS had been active in Britain since its commencement in January 1875 at Winchester, by the wives of 'senior clergy and members of the local gentry'.⁸²

Barlee believed 'very many good servants are lost to the colony from the need of further organization [sic] for their welfare', and that 'if a superior class of girls is to be sent, ... private philanthropy should intervene' in their assistance and care.⁸³ She added that a 'very nice set of girls went out in the *Hampshire*', all having 'excellent characters' with a further ship leaving for the colony in December [1886] with a 'number of servant girls'. This gives the impression of a business arrangement, in which the girls were commodities. Dyan

⁷⁹ Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 42, 65; Brian Shoesmith and Leigh Edmonds, 'Communications', in Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (eds), *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Crawley, 2009, 217-220.

⁸⁰ Refer to Parliament of Western Australia, Hansard Archive, Legislative Council, 27 July 1885, 28-38; 4 August 1885, 69-73. Also see Editorial, *West Australian*, 6 August 1885, 3; 'The Immigration Scheme', *West Australian*, 8 August 1885, 6. Miss Barlee proposed children as young as six years and up to fourteen years old, 'waifs and strays' be cared for and sent to Western Australia for training as domestic servants. However, the Government estimated it was going to cost £100 per person under the scheme compared to £20 per person to bring in female immigrants. Also, in December 1885 thirteen emigrants were listed as selected by Ellen Barlee, bound for Fremantle per the *Kapunda*. The ship sank in the Atlantic with all lives after colliding with 'a vessel unknown'. For further details see 'Terrible Disaster. Loss of the "Kapunda," With Emigrants for Western Australia', *Western Mail*, 5 February 1887, 19. Refer also to Jan Gothard, *Blue China: Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2001, 124 for additional information regarding the "Kapunda" and Ellen Barlee, and Dyan Colclough, 'Ellen Barlee' in *Child Labor in the British Victorian Entertainment Industry 1875-1914*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2016, 111-113.

⁸¹ 'Our Female Emigrants', *Western Mail*, 8 January 1887, 26. Letter dated November 1886. Ellen Barlee's brother, Sir Frederick Palgrave Barlee, was Colonial Secretary of Western Australia 1855-1875. For additional information see J H M Honniball, 'Barlee, Sir Frederick Palgrave (1827-1884)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barlee-sir-frederick-palgrave-2937f> viewed 24 October 2019.

⁸² Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, Leicester University Press, London, 2000, 41. In May 1874 in London, Mrs Mary Townsend held a meeting of Anglican women to discuss the formation of what became known as the Girls' Friendly Society (GFS). The GFS officially began on the first day of January 1875.

⁸³ 'Our Female Emigrants', *Western Mail*, 8 January 1887, 26.

Colclough has questioned whether her motives were entirely altruistic as Barlee's brother was the Colonial Secretary of Western Australia.⁸⁴ Despite Barlee's pleas, a GFS was established in Perth in July 1888.⁸⁷

Its objective was to promote Christianity, philanthropy, and social purity for the protection of unmarried girls and young women from the perils of the streets. In Britain, its focus was those girls who had moved to urban areas for work and were without friends or family supports. Julia Bush added 'social hierarchy' was present from the organisation's inception.⁸⁹ The Society provided rooms where girls could stay. The girls were given access to libraries containing suitable reading material and they learnt domestic skills. In addition, they met and made friends with other girls in similar situations. Each branch appointed Associates as overseers.⁹⁰

In Australia as in Britain, the group's focus was the welfare of single girls who arrived as new immigrants without the support of family. They required a safe place to stay. Members were single and allegedly of "virtuous character".⁹¹ It is unknown how these girls were selected, but it was believed those of high moral standards who mixed with similar girls was one way of protecting their purity and honour.⁹² Therefore the GFS provided the girls with a link to home as well as a connection with other 'immigrant women also working in the isolation of domestic employment'.⁹³ Membership was not restricted to domestic servants but included girls employed in shops and factories. Women appointed as Associates counselled and assisted the girls. Their service was voluntary.⁹⁴ The Society was a 'substitute family' for these girls.⁹⁵

It has been suggested the Anglican Church took a paternalistic role for the aid it provided these girls through the GFS while the Associates were maternalistic.⁹⁶ The Western Australian GFS provided 'mutual help and sympathy', encouragement of 'purity, thrift, dutifulness to parents, and faithfulness to employers'. It was a means to ensure the girls

⁸⁴ Colclough, *Child Labor in the British Victorian Entertainment Industry 1875-1914*, 122.

⁸⁷ 'Girls' Friendly Society', *Western Mail*, 3 December 1887, 35.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁹⁰ Gordon and Doughan, *Dictionary of British Women's Organisations 1825-1960*, 57.

⁹¹ Brian Harrison, 'For Church, Queen and Family: The Girls' Friendly Society 1874-1920', *Past and Present*, Vol. 61, No. 1, 1973, 109.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 109.

⁹³ Gothard, *Blue China*, 176.

⁹⁴ 'Editorial', *South Australian Advertiser*, 25 January 1881, 4-5.

⁹⁵ Harrison, 'For Church, Queen and Family: The Girls' Friendly Society 1874-1920', 109.

⁹⁶ Daniel Weinbren, 'The Fraternity of Female Friendly Societies', in Maire Fedelma Cross (ed.), *Gender and Fraternal Orders in Europe, 1300-2000*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, Chapter 10, 211.

came into contact with others who were of good character, as well as providing suitable 'recreation and society to its members after their work is done'.⁹⁷ This was to ensure the girls' leisure activities were met without them resorting to the streets and its temptations which could destroy their social purity, which would have implications for the rest of their lives in terms of marriage prospects, and possibly for their health and well-being. It was a means of supervising or controlling the behaviour of the girls. The GFS became involved in fundraising benefitting Anglican Churches such as at Busselton, Coolgardie and Cottesloe.⁹⁸ While the GFS was founded on Christian principles, it differed from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

Western Australia's WCTU was formed in 1892 after a visit by American Jessie Ackermann who was described as the second 'round-the-world missionary'.⁹⁹ The WCTU had been inaugurated in New South Wales in 1882, yet the visit by Ackermann was the catalyst for its establishment, providing a further example of the influence of transnational links. As the title of the organisation suggests, the WCTU's primary focus was temperance or the prohibition of alcohol, or at least limiting its sale and use to reduce instances of domestic violence and abuse of women and children mostly perpetrated by men.¹⁰⁰ The WCTU originated in the USA, founded in 1874 by American Frances Willard, who was described as a 'utopian reformer and Christian socialist'.¹⁰¹ It became a worldwide organisation not only dealing with temperance matters but moral issues as well such as 'prostitution, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and gambling'. It was at the forefront of the struggle for women's suffrage in Western Australia.¹⁰² It did not always work alone, often uniting with other organisations with similar objectives creating a greater ability to achieve their lobbying. The WCTU was not the only female organisation formed in Western Australia. The Karrakatta Club was the progenitor of the Women's Service Guild, a women's political group formed in 1909.

⁹⁷ 'Girls' Friendly Societies', *Western Mail*, 3 December 1887, 35; 'Advertising', *Daily News*, 30 July 1888, 3.

⁹⁸ Jean Seymour, *Girls' Friendly Society: A History of the Girls' Friendly Society in Western Australia from 1888-1988*, Girls' Friendly Society, Perth, 1988, 27. Seymour's book provides a history of the GFS in Western Australia and was produced for their centenary in 1988.

⁹⁹ McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers*, 14; 'Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Western Australia (1892-)', The Australian Women's Register, The National Foundation for Australian Women and the University of Melbourne, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0551b.htm> viewed 23 October 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Mrs Jamieson Williams and Mrs Andrew Holliday, *Golden Records: Pathfinders of Woman's Christian Temperance Union of N.S.W.*, John Sands Limited, Sydney, 1926, v-vi.

¹⁰¹ Patricia Grimshaw, 'Gender, citizenship and race in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Australia, 1890 to the 1930s', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 1998, Vol. 1, No. 28, 201.

¹⁰² Dianne Davidson, 'Woman's Christian Temperance Union', in Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (eds), *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Crawley, 2009, 935-936..

The Karrakatta Club

The Karrakatta Club was established following a meeting with American physician and missionary, Dr Emily Brainerd Ryder in 1894.¹⁰³ Ryder visited Australia to give public health lectures to women.¹⁰⁴ While in Perth she attended a meeting held by the St George Reading Circle, which reportedly consisted of twelve women. Ryder was so impressed by their desire to learn, and their ability to discuss what they had read, that she encouraged the establishment of what became known as the Karrakatta Club. Earlier, in 1889 Ryder had founded the Bombay Sorosis Club in India for women. She had been a member of the New York Sorosis Club established in March 1868 for professional and literary women.¹⁰⁵ It is probable the Karrakatta Club was commenced on similar lines to the Sorosis Club to which Ryder belonged. During the latter half of the nineteenth century in America, many clubs were formed, some attracting mostly middle-class women with increased leisure time as self-help and educational groups.¹⁰⁶ The Karrakatta Club was the first women's club formed in Australia.¹⁰⁷ The press reported the club was 'designed to be instrumental in helping those who wish to improve themselves intellectually ...'.¹⁰⁸ It was touted as 'unsectarian and free to all classes of womankind who care to be benefited [sic]', although it is unknown if the lady of the house and her servant both attended, and if so, whether this was on equal terms.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the club was intended 'to be educational, ethical and social'.¹¹⁰ Therefore, it was non-sectarian; aimed to educate women; intended to maintain an ethical stance; and provided social occasions for members. However, the word 'politics' is missing from these descriptions of the Karrakatta Club. Ryder added that:

A woman's club will encourage women to think things out, to come to a conclusion, and to defend their opinions and have the courage to change or hold them. ... [S]he will learn to express herself, [and] not be afraid of her own voice¹¹¹

¹⁰³ Refer to Appendix 1 for additional details about Emily Brainerd Ryder.

¹⁰⁴ 'News and Notes', *West Australian*, 7 August 1894, 5.

¹⁰⁵ Doughan and Gordon, *Women, Clubs and Associations in Britain*, 48; Sorosis Records, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, USA, <https://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/sophiasmith/mnsss336.html> viewed 28 April 2019; Lucy Abigail Brainerd, *The Genealogy of the Brainerd-Brainard Family in America 1649-1908*, Volume II, Hartford Press: Case, Lockwood and Brainard Co., 1908, 171-172.

¹⁰⁶ Robert D Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000, 149, 383.

¹⁰⁷ Monica Starke, *The Alexandra Club: A Narrative 1903-1983*, Elm Grove Press, Melbourne, 1983, x.

¹⁰⁸ 'The Karrakatta Club. Address by Dr. Ryder', *West Australian*, 23 November 1894, 6.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

Additionally, Ryder wanted women to be encouraged to 'develop original thought, act kindly, and make it pleasant for other members'.¹¹² Thus, she set the course for the Karrakatta Club that was to stand it in good stead for the establishment of the WSG fifteen years later.

The Karrakatta Club's objective was '... to bring into one working body of women of the community for mutual improvement and social intercourse', that is to unite women and enter into discussions for the purposes of their education. Edith Cowan, appointed its first secretary, stated the Club had been 'formed upon the reading circle ... to accomplish far more than merely literary work and social intercourse'.¹¹³ The Club's history, however, indicates that these were their sole objectives from 1895 until their Constitution was revised in 1923.¹¹⁴ Accordingly members studied topics of interest, and prepared papers that were then presented for discussion at their meetings.¹¹⁵ The Club was arranged initially by four Departments: Literary, Artistic, Hygiene, and Legal and Educational.¹¹⁶ In time, these Departments were re-arranged or added to, and included a Current Events Department discussing topics such as Federation and Conscription.¹¹⁷ Madeleine Onslow, the first president of the Karrakatta Club, astutely noted that once the vote for women was achieved in Western Australia, the group needed to remain in touch with current events to ensure they could make informed choices and be taken seriously; they had to stay relevant.¹¹⁸

During the struggle for women's franchise in Western Australia in the 1890s, Madeline Onslow, later Lady Onslow, wife of Alexander Onslow the Chief Justice of Western Australia (knighted in 1905),¹¹⁹ praised the work of the WCTU for its on-going efforts towards maintaining its relevance. She believed the WCTU was the only organisation that 'openly agitates for the removal of our political disabilities'.¹²⁰ Mrs Onslow noted that suffrage:

has been keenly discussed within the walls of the Karrakatta Club for Women and meets with the support and approval of a large majority of the members, but it has not been deemed expedient to carry on a campaign outside the precincts, members preferring to leave that in the hands of that very able body the W.C.T.U., as it would not, for obvious

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹³ Karrakatta Club Presidential Report 1915-16, cited in Peter Cowan, *A Unique Position: A Biography of Edith Dircksey Cowan 1861-1932*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1978, 68 & 70.

¹¹⁴ Karrakatta Club, *Karrakatta Club Incorporated History 1894-1954*, Perth, Karrakatta Club, 1954, 10.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁷ Karrakatta Club, *Karrakatta Club Incorporated History 1894-1954*, 15-16.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹⁹ E K Braybrooke, 'Onslow, Sir Alexander Campbell (1842-1908)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/onslow-sir-alexander-campbell-4334> viewed 19 February 2016. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Lady Onslow.

¹²⁰ 'Women in Westralia', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 7 August 1897, 35.

reasons be advisable to turn the club into an institution for the furtherance of political ends.¹²¹

The Karrakatta Club hierarchy left no doubt that members did not wish to actively participate in politics, rather they wanted to learn about its workings through education. However, they supported other women's organisations that were actively engaged in political activism. Mrs Onslow's statement highlights reasons for the Karrakatta Club being the progenitor of the WSG. Member Roberta Jull acknowledged in 1916 that the work of the Karrakatta Club was confined within its walls until the advent of the WSG enabled the specific discussion and wider airing of these political matters.¹²² Jull had the distinction of being the first female medical practitioner in Western Australia to set up practice. She joined the WSG and later the Western Australian National Council of Women.

Members of the Karrakatta Club were well connected which led to the success of the organisation. Aside from Madeleine Onslow, Edith Cowan and Roberta Jull there were others. These included Emily Hensman, wife of Alfred Peach Hensman, Attorney General and judge; Lady Margaret Elvire Forrest, wife of the first Premier of Western Australia, Sir John Forrest; Marion Louisa Holmes, wife of Henry Diggins Holmes, General Manager of the Bank of Western Australia, and their daughter Marion Phoebe Holmes, known as Phoebe and Janetta Griffiths-Foulkes, wife of John Charles Foulkes a solicitor, member of Parliament.¹²³ Some women were foundation members.

In April 1899 the short-lived Women's Franchise League, a Western Australian organisation, was formed to promote the enfranchisement of women. Walter James MLA was called upon to address the meeting. He thanked both the WCTU and the Karrakatta Club for their support, and noted more women were becoming interested in the question of women's franchise from outside of these organisations. James suggested that the Women's Franchise League's objectives were the same as those of leagues in the other Australian colonies. While the WCTU in Western Australia campaigned for women's suffrage, the

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹²² 'History of the Karrakatta Club', *Roberta Jull Papers*, 826A 1-7, MN41, State Library of Western Australia. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Roberta Jull.

¹²³ Wendy Birman, 'Hensman, Alfred Peach (1834-1902)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hensman-alfred-peach-3756> viewed 5 November 2021; Unknown, 'Forrest, Margaret Elvire (1844-1929)', <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0327b.htm> viewed 5 November 2021; June Ogilvie, 'Holmes, Marion Phoebe (1880-1966)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/holmes-marion-phoebe-7066> viewed 5 November 2021; 'Glimpses of the Past', *Western Mail*, 30 November 1944, 30; 'Personal', *West Australian*, 11 January 1936, 14; Parliament of Western Australia, 'John Charles Griffiths Foulkes', [https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/\(Lookup\)/DC06227A9FAE68CD482577E50028A5F2?OpenDocument](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/(Lookup)/DC06227A9FAE68CD482577E50028A5F2?OpenDocument) viewed 5 November 2021.

Women's Franchise League offered an alternative to the WCTU's strong stance on alcohol.¹²⁴

A petition was prepared for presentation requesting equal franchise for women in both Houses of the Western Australian Parliament.¹²⁵ Mrs Hensman was appointed President, Lady Onslow a Vice-President, and Walter James the treasurer. Amongst council members were Edith Cowan and Roberta Jull. At the first meeting of the newly formed group, Walter James read out the constitution. As the name suggests, its primary purpose was to promote women's franchise under 'the same conditions as those which apply to men'.¹²⁶ Men however, were not excluded from the League's membership. This League proposed to form more branches, hold public meetings, and give lectures about women's franchise to their members. However, in August 1899 enfranchisement was granted to the women of Western Australia thus curtailing the League's relevance. No doubt the example of women being granted suffrage in both New Zealand and South Australia were factors for Western Australia's success despite there having been unfounded fears that granting women the vote would degrade them.¹²⁷ The following is a discussion of South Australia's early beginnings, and an outline of the various women's organisations that were established.

South Australia 1836 to 1909

South Australia was proclaimed a British colony on 28 December 1836 just over seven years after Western Australia. The foundation document granted the Aboriginal population the same 'privileges of British subjects', although this was never honoured.¹²⁸ Unlike Western Australia, the settlement of South Australia was based on land sales to fund emigration and labour, guided by a scheme devised by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. It was never a penal colony reliant on convict labour. It was a refuge for those persecuted for their political and/or religious beliefs in Britain and was settled independently to the other Australian colonies. The establishment of many dissenting churches gave it a 'distinctive religious culture' and it was later referred to as the city of churches.¹²⁹ However, the Wakefield Scheme failed. Land

¹²⁴ Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia. A Gift or a Struggle?* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, 53.

¹²⁵ 'Womanhood Suffrage. League Formed', *Daily News*, 28 April 1899, 4.

¹²⁶ 'Woman's Franchise League', *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 19 May 1899, 2.

¹²⁷ 'Women in WA', Western Australia and Federation,

http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/federation/fed/012_wome.htm viewed 8 August 2017; 'Parliament', *West Australian*, 9 August 1899, 7.

¹²⁸ Brian Dickey and Peter Howell, *South Australia's Foundation: Select Documents*, Wakefield Press, Netley, 1986, 77.

¹²⁹ Paul Sendzuik and Robert Foster, *A History of South Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018, 66

was slow to be surveyed due to both the underestimation of the work needed, and the lack of surveyors and equipment.¹³⁰

Consequently, many colonists became 'frustrated' waiting, having to utilise their capital for 'expensive imports' – in some ways this was not dissimilar to Western Australia's early years.¹³¹ The colony was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1841 due the slow progress with survey work, and over-spending by the Governor. Owing to the financial crisis, South Australia became a Crown Colony in 1842 under the control of the British Treasury.¹³² In 1842 the discovery of copper at Kapunda, at Burra in 1845, then in 1859 and 1861 at Wallaroo and Moonta, helped the coffers.¹³³ However, following the 1851 discovery of gold in Victoria, there was an exodus of people to the Victorian goldfields causing a severe shortage of European labour. In the pastoral districts, Aboriginal people became the main labour force. The subsequent withdrawal of cash almost led to a collapse of the banks. To ameliorate this situation, the Government set up an assay office for the processing of the gold into ingots, together with the establishment of a Gold Escort to safeguard its transport from Victoria.¹³⁴ In the early years of the colony German immigrants settled in the Barossa Valley and at Lobethal and Hahndorf providing South Australia with its distinctive German culture. Initially they came to escape religious persecution, and after 1840 were attracted to mining.¹³⁵ Principally, the mining communities were dominated by the Cornish. In comparison to the eastern Australian colonies, few Irish and Scots settled. By 1855 the colony was granted limited self-government. That same year Charles Todd was appointed to supervise the building of a telegraph line from Adelaide to Port Augusta. The building of telegraph lines between the colonies allowed for swifter communication that reduced the isolation of South Australia by connecting Adelaide with Melbourne and Sydney in 1858 and 1859, and with Darwin and thus Britain in 1872.¹³⁶

In September 1879 the Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) commenced in Adelaide following a meeting convened by the Governor's wife, Lady Lucy Jervois together with her daughters Lucy and Carrie.¹³⁷ This was the first GFS established in the Australian colonies and was

¹³⁰ Ronald M Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun: a History of Colonial South Australia, 1836-1900*, Peacock Publications for Southern Heritage, Adelaide, 2013, 61.

¹³¹ Sendzuik and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, 25.

¹³² Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun*, 79.

¹³³ Sendzuik and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, 45-46.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46-47, 55; Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun*, 142.

¹³⁵ Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun*, 97.

¹³⁶ Sendzuik and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, 64-65.

¹³⁷ 'Girls' Friendly Society. History of 50 Years Work', *Observer*, 14 August 1930, 49; Clara Cox Papers, PRG 394/4, *Girls' Friendly Society Diocese of Adelaide*, April 1939, SLSA; Mrs Maymon Hines, *G.F.S. in South Australia 1879-1929*, Girls' Friendly Society, Adelaide, 1930, SLSA, 5. Mrs

nine years earlier than in Western Australia. Lady Jervois was the inaugural President of the South Australian branch. In later years, referring to her diary, Lucy Jervois mentioned the early meetings commenced with a Bible Class held by her mother Lady Jervois and herself at which they '... sang familiar things and ... read to [the girls]'.¹³⁸ The Society grew from an initial forty members in September 1879, to seventy-four members by January 1881; there were also thirty-one Associates to assist.¹³⁹ In Britain, once girls married they were no longer eligible for GFS membership, but many were encouraged to join the Mother's Union, more of which shortly.¹⁴⁰ It is unknown whether this pathway was followed in South Australia or Western Australia. But the religiously based Social Purity Society was one highly influential organisation in support of women's franchise during the 1880s.

In September 1882, the Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby, Congregational minister, founded South Australia's Social Purity Society. John Colton MP became inaugural President, with Kirby as secretary.¹⁴¹ The Society was formed to deal with social evils, those issues that deviated from perceived normal moral values such as prostitution, alcoholism and crime, or anything else that sullied the idea of purity of body and mind. Objectives as documented in their annual report were:

Amendment of the laws that there might be better legal protection for the purity of young girls; by means of books and lectures, to create a more wholesome and righteous public opinion; to rescue young women from lives of degradation and sin, by restoring them to their homes, or by obtaining homes for them; and to teach young men to look upon the young women around them as their sisters, and to raise a nobler moral tone of feeling in boys and young men.¹⁴²

The Social Purity Society agitated for legislative changes that included the raising of the age of consent from twelve to sixteen in 1885, and sixteen to seventeen in 1899 thus demonstrating its political activism and success in both cases.¹⁴³

Maymon Hines was formerly Miss Lucy Harriet Emily Pizey and married the Reverend Ernest William Haymon Hines in Adelaide in 1909.

¹³⁸ Hines, *G.F.S. in South Australia 1879-1929*, 8.

¹³⁹ 'Editorial', *South Australian Advertiser*, 25 January 1881, 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ Harrison, 'For Church, Queen and Family: The Girls' Friendly Society 1874-1920', 109. For additional information on the GFS also refer to David Hilliard, *Godliness and Good Order: A History of the Anglican Church in South Australia*, Wakefield Press, Netley, 1986, 69, 93, 123.

¹⁴¹ S R Parr, 'Colton, Sir John (1823-1902)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/colton-sir-john-3247> viewed 5 August 2017.

¹⁴² Joseph Johnston, 'Letters to the Editor. The Social Purity Question', *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 17 September 1884, 3.

¹⁴³ P A Howell, *South Australia and Federation*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2002, 91; Edward Sidney Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia: The Life and Reminiscences of Joseph Coles Kirby: Christian Pioneer and Social Reformer*, Independent Press, London, 1927, 197.

Kirby had arrived from Sydney in November 1880 to take up the position as minister of the Congregational Church at Port Adelaide.¹⁴⁴ Described as a 'militant and informed temperance reformer', he was concerned with women's rights and other social issues affecting women and children.¹⁴⁵ Kirby was a supporter of the women's suffrage movement. He remained at Port Adelaide ministering to his congregation for twenty-eight years.

Reverend Edward Kiek noted Kirby was seen '[e]very afternoon ... in the town [Port Adelaide], driving in his little phaeton from door to door, ministering in one home after another', testament to his tireless work ethic.¹⁴⁶ Kirby's work included the religious and social well-being of the young. He initiated several groups such as the Young Men's Society in 1881, and later the Young Christians' Union.¹⁴⁷ He was considered a 'social and political crusader' giving lectures at the Pirie Street Methodist Schoolroom in Adelaide on topics such as vice. Among those who were present were Colton, David Murray (MP and businessman) and Charles H Goode (philanthropist and a Baptist).¹⁴⁸ Kirby delegated these men to preside at subsequent lectures. It was following these lectures that the Social Purity Society of South Australia was inaugurated. The Society had multi-denominational support.¹⁴⁹

Three years later in 1883, the *Married Women's Property Act* was assented in 1883 and followed similar Acts in Britain in 1870 and 1882. Nine years later, Western Australia introduced a similar *Married Women's Property Act 1892*.¹⁵⁰ Prior to these Acts, at the time of marriage women had no 'legal separate existence' from their husbands – they were as one, with the male retaining dominance.¹⁵¹ Marriage was viewed as a contract between a man and a woman whereupon she relinquished 'certain legal powers to the husband in return for being under his protection'.¹⁵² This was known as coverture. Her property thus became his property at marriage. Married women were not able to enter into any legal

¹⁴⁴ Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia*, 141; John Garrett, 'Kirby, Joseph Coles (1837-1924)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kirby-joseph-coles-3964> viewed 5 June 2017.

¹⁴⁵ John Garrett, 'Kirby, Joseph Coles (1837-1924)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kirby-joseph-coles-3964> viewed 5 June 2017.

¹⁴⁶ Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia*, 49-150.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁵⁰ *Married Women's Property Act 1882*, (UK); *Married Women's Property Act 1884*, (South Australia); *Married Women's Property Act 1892*, (Western Australia). See also Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-1769), <http://lonang.com/library/reference/blackstone-commentaries-law-england/bla-115/> viewed 11 August 2017.

¹⁵¹ Andrew James Cowie, 'A History of Married Women's Real Property Rights', *Australian Journal of Gender and Law*, Vol. 6, 2009, 4.

¹⁵² Cowie, 'A History of Married Women's Real Property Rights', 3.

contracts from that point on.¹⁵³ John Stuart Mill considered ‘the legal subordination of one sex to the other’ as wrong – he believed it hindered ‘human improvement’ which included equality for men and women.¹⁵⁴ He gave his support to equal rights for women and men in the UK and was the first to present a bill to Parliament in 1856 dealing with married women’s property rights. In 1870, the first British *Married Women’s Property Act* received assent but did not ‘create a system of separate property within marital relationships’.¹⁵⁵ Subsequently, the British *Married Women’s Property Act 1882* allowed married women to own ‘real or personal property as her separate property, in the same manner as if she were a feme sole’, that is, she could now retain her property upon her marriage as she had done as a single woman.¹⁵⁶ While comparable legislation in South Australia and Western Australia protected women’s real property, this did not equate to equal rights with their husbands, nor did it extend to their children if they separated or divorced.¹⁵⁷ However, these Acts were significant advances for nineteenth century women who owned or inherited property prior to their marriage, and were a step towards equal rights with men.

In April 1886 the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union was established in Adelaide six years before Western Australia’s organisation. Earlier, in March 1886 Adelaide’s local press advertised the impending arrival, and a planned meeting, with both Mr R T Booth, an American temperance lecturer, and Mrs Mary Clement Leavitt of the American WCTU.¹⁵⁸ Leavitt was referred to as the ‘first round-the-world missionary of the organization [sic]’ as she toured the world to establish the WCTU in other countries.¹⁵⁹ Following this meeting, the WCTU was established in Adelaide initially with fifty-seven members. Within three years, there were twenty-three unions (the WCTU did not refer to them as branches), and 1112 members in South Australia alone. Each union had departments with a superintendent to oversee their activities. All departments operated as ‘a vigilance committee’ aimed at monitoring the activities of public houses, young women and anything else the departments were responsible to ensure social purity.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Cowie, ‘A History of Married Women’s Real Property Rights’, 3-5.

¹⁵⁴ John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, The Floating Press, London, 1869, 1. See also *Married Women’s Property Bill*, 10 June 1868, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1868/jun/10/bill-89-second-reading> viewed 17 December 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Cowie, ‘A History of Married Women’s Real Property Rights’, 6.

¹⁵⁶ *Married Women’s Property Act 1882*, UK

¹⁵⁷ Cowie, ‘A History of Married Women’s Real Property Rights’, 7-8.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Advertising’, *Express and Telegraph*, 3 March 1886, 1.

¹⁵⁹ McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers*, 51.

¹⁶⁰ McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers*, 51, 57-58; Maurice French, *Churches and Society in South Australia 1890-1900: An Exercise in Reassurance*, MA thesis, Flinders University, 1969, 262.

Their aims were fully consistent with the Social Purity Society's objectives. Members of the WCTU were generally middle-class non-Conformist women whose religious beliefs were opposed to alcohol.¹⁶¹ These women maintained their connection with their religious affiliations during their membership. South Australia's WCTU played a major role for women's rights during the late 1880s. While a Christian organisation, it often supported other groups. Smaller organisations sometimes needed to combine with larger groups to increase their numbers for greater impact and allow their voices to be heard, especially during active political interactions such as deputations to Members of Parliament.

The WCTU was committed to the promotion of woman's suffrage and is often credited as a driving force for its success. One of the organisations they worked with to meet this goal was the Social Purity Society. At their first Colonial Convention in Adelaide in 1889 where Jessie Ackermann presided, the WCTU recognised 'the franchise [as] the symbol of freedom' and that women as 'half the members of our nation' had been deprived of the right to vote.¹⁶² In 1891 they referred to men as 'empty-headed ..., vicious ..., selfish and prejudiced', more 'interested in the liquor traffic' but in 'fear of our possessing that sword, the ballot ...'.¹⁶³ Not surprisingly, the organisation's membership did not include men. Most other organisations at that time were not gender specific. The WCTU believed women's votes would address the problem of alcohol supply and abuse.

In July 1888 the WCTU together with the Social Purity Society, established the Women's Suffrage League. Dr Edward Charles Stirling MP became its chairman; Mrs Charles (Rosetta) Birks the treasurer (her husband was the founder of an Adelaide department store, a Congregationalist, and a major financier of the new League); Mr Hector McLennan (a church elder) and Mrs Mary Lee as secretaries. Most were members of the Social Purity Society.

Mary Lee's life has been well documented by others including Helen Jones's 1994 publication *In Her Own Name*.¹⁶⁴ More recently, Denise George has re-examined Mary Lee in *Mary Lee: The life and times of a 'turbulent anarchist' and her battle for women's rights*. In addition, Cherrie de Leuien's chapter 'Irish Women in South Australia' provides a precis of

¹⁶¹ Grimshaw, 'Gender, citizenship and race in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Australia, 1890 to the 1930s', 201-202. These religions included Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptists.

¹⁶² McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers*, 38. See also 'Women's [sic] Christian Temperance Union. First Convention in South Australia', *Register*, 14 August 1889, 7.

¹⁶³ McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers*, 41.

¹⁶⁴ Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, 83-92. This provides a detailed biography of Mary Lee.

Mary Lee's life.¹⁶⁵ Briefly, Mary Lee was born in 1821 in Ireland and arrived in Adelaide a widow in 1879 with her daughter to care for her gravely ill son who died a short time later. She and her daughter remained in South Australia. Lee was well educated having formerly been a teacher in England.¹⁶⁶ She took up the cause of women suffragists in Adelaide. Lee was articulate, outspoken, and determined. For these reasons she was the ideal person to become involved with the Women's Suffrage League. Lee's experience in the Social Purity Society honed her skills in public speaking and letter writing as she frequently wrote to the press.

The League was established following Stirling's failed attempt to introduce a Bill on women's franchise to the House of Assembly.¹⁶⁷ Both men and women served on the League's Executive Council; it included the Reverend J C Kirby. However, Kirby, according to his biographer and Congregational minister Edward Kiek, ceased to attend the League's meetings as 'The League executive was not always "a happy family"'.¹⁶⁸ Kiek did not elaborate any further; it remains unclear what issues were happening during this time within the Women's Suffrage League. The League's objective was to obtain the right of women to vote. Their Constitution referred to three principles:

1. That the women of the country should have a voice in the choice of representatives to the Houses of Legislature.
2. That the qualifications entitling women to vote should be the same as those which apply to men.
3. That while woman's suffrage is desired, no claim is put forward for the right to sit as representatives.¹⁶⁹

The women's suffrage campaigns at that time focussed on gaining equal voting rights and not parliamentary representation by women. Women did not actively seek the right to sit in parliament. Ironically, South Australian women gained this right to stand for Parliament when they were granted the franchise. Mary Lee, in support of women's enfranchisement, clarified the issues by stating:

¹⁶⁵ Denise George, *Mary Lee: The life and times of a 'turbulent anarchist' and her battle for women's rights*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2018; Cherrie de Leiu, 'Irish women in early South Australia', in Susan Arthure, Fidelma Breen, Stephanie James and Dymphna Lonergan (eds), *Irish South Australia: New histories and insights*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2019, 117-130. Refer also to Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁶ Refer to the 1851 England Census, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire which shows Mary and her husband George were National School Mistress and National School Master. Per Ancestry.com.au.

¹⁶⁷ Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia*, 199; 'Women's Franchise', *Adelaide Observer*, 21 July 1888, 30.

¹⁶⁸ Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia*, 201.

¹⁶⁹ 'Woman's Suffrage League of South Australia', WCTU, Women's [sic] Suffrage League Membership card, SRG 186/108, Folder 5, SLSA.

they were no shrinking sisters for women's rights, they but asked such a modicum of political power as would assist them to redress women's wrongs – moral, social, industrial, and educational.¹⁷⁰

For Lee it was about equal rights with men that extended to the franchise as a means for women to achieve those rights that had been denied. These included the admission of women to tertiary education.

In a further document titled 'Sixteen Reasons For Supporting Woman's Suffrage', it was acknowledged women wanted the right to be consulted on laws that may affect them, a right that until then had been denied.¹⁷¹ Almost forty years earlier American Quaker and equal rights campaigner Elizabeth Cady Stanton similarly implied this at the Seneca Falls Convention.¹⁷² Men made the laws that affected everyone yet women were excluded from any input into those laws which directly affected them.

However, not all groups were in support of women gaining the franchise. Gawler's newspaper, the *Bunyip*, was quite clear about its beliefs when its editorial expressed:

Politics hardens the heart, sours the temper, and causes neglect of needful duties. If the two heads of the house are engaged in such pursuits, what must the results be in such a home?¹⁷³

Another correspondent further questioned the ability of women to find the time to learn and understand the political system and cast an informed vote. The correspondent believed 'a large proportion of the female sex are unfit for the proper performance of their social and domestic duties' and questioned how they would find the time to understand politics.¹⁷⁴ It was difficult for women to discard these stereotypes attributed to their gender. In both examples of media denigration, the dominant ideology was that women remain in the domestic sphere. Politics was long considered men's business only. For many women, domestic duties were considered a full-time occupation.¹⁷⁵ However, concerns continued to be raised about working women.

In January 1890 the Working Women's Trade Union was formed with the assistance of the Trades and Labor Council in Adelaide. This union addressed the problem of 'sweating' in the clothing trades. Sweating referred to work that was poorly paid, of long hours, and mostly

¹⁷⁰ 'Women's Suffrage. Meeting in Adelaide', *Evening Journal*, 21 July 1888, 6.

¹⁷¹ 'Sixteen Reasons For Supporting Woman's Suffrage', WCTU, SRG 186/108, Folder 5, SLSA.

¹⁷² The Seneca Falls Convention has previously been discussed in this chapter.

¹⁷³ 'Woman's Suffrage', *Bunyip*, 27 July 1888, 2.

¹⁷⁴ 'To the Editor', *South Australian Weekly Chronicle*, 3 August 1888, 7. The correspondent signed as Hackney.

¹⁷⁵ P A Howell, *South Australia and Federation*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2002, 87.

performed by women as outwork, that is done at home.¹⁷⁶ Unemployment during the economic depression of the 1890s served to generate fear, something which employers used to their advantage, ill-treating employees who in turn were concerned they would lose their jobs if they complained. Raelene Frances publication provides an historical account of this decade which is applicable to other Australian colonies. Frances suggested the threat of unemployment was a 'form of discipline' which employers used to control their employees.¹⁷⁷ The rules of the Victorian Tailoresses' Union were produced for consideration and possible adoption by the proposed women's trade union in South Australia.¹⁷⁸ Membership was open to 'female operatives, assistants, and apprentices'.¹⁷⁹ Women uniting to achieve their aims was a recurring theme throughout the thesis, and the establishment of the Working Women's Trade Union was no exception.

The formation of this women's union set a precedent in South Australia heralding 'a new era in the history of the labour movement'.¹⁸⁰ It was acknowledged that women who united together as a group had greater chances of effecting reforms than they did as individuals. Outworkers were isolated, unable to 'discuss their common grievances or band together in pursuit of better wages and conditions' unlike the factory worker.¹⁸¹ Mary Lee became secretary of the union, with Augusta Zadow treasurer.¹⁸² Zadow was German born in 1846. She had been a tailoress in London and married in 1871. Her husband was a 'tailor and political refugee from Germany'.¹⁸³ The Zadows emigrated to Adelaide from London in 1877. Because of her experience in the tailoring business in London, Augusta Zadow quickly became well informed about the working conditions of girls and women in the clothing trade and factories in Adelaide.

To assist underprivileged women during the economic depression of the 1890s, the Working Women's Trade Union provided them with material so they could 'make garments for sale'.¹⁸⁴ This may have been an initiative of the aforementioned Augusta Zadow. Her

¹⁷⁶ Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun*, 375; Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates, *Women at Work in Australia: From Gold Rushes to World War II*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, 6.

¹⁷⁷ Raelene Frances, *The Politics of Work: Gender and Labour in Victoria, 1880-1939*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, 41.

¹⁷⁸ [No title], *Advertiser*, 6 January 1890, 5.

¹⁷⁹ 'The Sweating System', *Adelaide Observer*, 11 January 1890, 30.

¹⁸⁰ 'Labour Organizations', *Evening Journal*, 18 February 1890, 2.

¹⁸¹ Frances and Scates, *Women at Work in Australia*, 6.

¹⁸² Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun*, 375.

¹⁸³ Jones, *In Her Own Name*, 106-109.

¹⁸⁴ Gibbs, *Under the Burning Sun*, 375.

obituary noted she often went hungry so the poor who came to her office for help received a meal and firewood, adding that Zadow:

took a prominent part in the movement to provide food and clothing for the distressed Destitute Women and Children's League. The Working Women's Trades Union Office was for the time turned into a shop. Materials were purchased and given out to starving women to be made up, and the garments were then sold. In this way many a poor creature had her most pressing needs provided for, and many a household had reason to bless the money secured for work done for this movement.¹⁸⁵

The union worked to prevent 'sweating'. Following the *Factory Act 1894*, Zadow became the first female inspector of factories.¹⁸⁶ Part of the inspector's role was to address any concerns the girls had at work, as well as safety issues.¹⁸⁷ However, the Act referred to businesses with six or more employees. Some factory owners deliberately kept their numbers of employees below this figure to avoid being affected by the Act.¹⁸⁸ This Act only applied to Government factories.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the Act did not cover outwork, that is work performed at home, and which was most likely part of the 'sweating system'.¹⁹⁰

Lady Audrey Tennyson, wife of South Australia's Governor, was so concerned with the issue of sweating that she implored her husband to discuss with the Government about any possible action.¹⁹¹ In July 1899, the Premier, Mr Kingston sent a female inspector to Government House to discuss sweating. Although they were poorly paid, the Inspector told Lady Tennyson that as the girls got 'their evenings, Saturday afternoons & Sundays, for pleasure', they were willing to do the work.¹⁹² In contrast to servants this time off was generous.¹⁹³ This was cold comfort for Lady Tennyson but she could do little else.

A letter to the *Woman's Sphere* in 1901 confirmed sweating continued in Victoria, and given the paper's distribution network, this was probably true of the other states. Sweating was not limited to private industries. Women received pay inadequate to 'live on and lead a

¹⁸⁵ 'Death of Mrs. A. Zadow', *South Australian Register*, 9 July 1896, 6.

¹⁸⁶ 'Government Gazette', *South Australian Chronicle*, 2 March 1895, 21. The Act was assented 21 December 1894.

¹⁸⁷ Jones, *In Her Own Name*, 109.

¹⁸⁸ Jones, *In Her Own Name*, 267.

¹⁸⁹ *Factories Act 1894*, South Australia.

¹⁹⁰ Margaret Allen, Mary Hutchison and Alison Mackinnon, *Fresh Evidence, New Witnesses*, South Australian Government Printer, Adelaide, 1989, 196

¹⁹¹ For information about Lady Tennyson refer to P A Howell, 'Tennyson, Audrey Georgiana Florence (1854-1916)', <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tennyson-audrey-georgiana-florence-13214> viewed 1 June 2021.

¹⁹² Lady Audrey Tennyson and Alexandra Hasluck (ed.), *Audrey Tennyson's Vice-Regal Days*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1978, 44-45. Although Lady Tennyson referred to the Inspector as Mrs Milman, it was more than likely to have been Agnes Milne who replaced, as Factory Inspector, Augusta Zadow when she died in 1906.

¹⁹³ Howell, *South Australia and Federation*, 89.

respectable life'. Justice (the letter writer) believed 'equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex', should be one factor that women ought to campaign for once they received the vote. She added:

It is not only in the sewing trade that women are sweated; in every branch of work they take up, with the exception of the medical profession, the same thing applies. The sweating carried on in the Government departments where women are employed is notorious.¹⁹⁴

Clearly Joseph Coles Kirby supported equal pay for equal work when he added that gender should not 'be made a pretext for longer hours and lower remuneration'.¹⁹⁵ It became obvious that some women saw the granting of women's suffrage as the key to effect changes in their working and social conditions. But in reality, this change was not as automatic as anticipated once suffrage was granted. There was still a long road ahead for women. On 18 December 1894 just three days before the assent of the *Factory Act 1894*, suffrage was finally granted to South Australian women including Aboriginal women.¹⁹⁶

Following the WCTU's Sixth Annual Convention held in Adelaide, the President Mrs Elizabeth Webb Nicholls circularised Members of Parliament requesting their support for the Adult Suffrage Bill that would ensure women were given the vote.¹⁹⁷ Women's franchise was finally granted together with the right to sit in Parliament the latter an unexpected bonus.¹⁹⁸ Not only this, but women were granted the ability to cast postal votes if unable to travel to the voting area or were unwell, a concession that was not extended to men. These last two points were deliberate attempts by some politicians to prevent the passing of the Bill, but which failed to disrupt its passage.¹⁹⁹

WCTU President Mrs Elizabeth Nicholls, and the Corresponding Secretary Mary J George, sent a congratulatory letter from their Quarterly Colonial Executive Meeting, giving thanks for the passage of the Adult Suffrage Bill, noting the date would be 'a memorable day in the

¹⁹⁴ Justice, 'Letter to the Editor', *Woman's Sphere*, April 1901, 68. The *Woman's Sphere* was commenced by Vida Goldstein, suffragist in Victoria. It attracted articles and interest from contributors in the various Australian colonies.

¹⁹⁵ J C Kirby, 'Women's Trade Unions', *Advertiser*, 2 January 1890, 6.

¹⁹⁶ Vicki Crowley, 'Acts of Memory and Imagination: Reflections on Women's Suffrage and the Centenary Celebrations of Suffrage in South Australia in 1994', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 16 (35), 2001, 225-226.

¹⁹⁷ Letter from E W Nicholls 9 Oct 1894, Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), SRG 186/887, SLSA. For brief biography of Elizabeth Nicholls refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁹⁸ The Act was known as the *Constitution Amendment Act 1894* and assented 18 December 1894 just three days before the *Factory Act 1894*.

¹⁹⁹ Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, 166.

history of South Australia'.²⁰⁰ Catherine Helen Spence expressed the sentiments of the women of South Australia when she wrote: 'The hearts of all friends of Equal Rights in this Province of South Australia are pretty cheerful at this Christmastide' because of the successful passage of the bill.²⁰¹ Nicholls, while not the inaugural WCTU President, held this position from 1889 to 1897, and again from 1906 to 1927. She became National President of the WCTU from 1894 to 1903.²⁰² As well, Nicholls was a member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA) by virtue of being a delegate representing the WCTU. The WNPPA is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

There were many other organisations which commenced during this period, some were Christian based and focussed on women and girls, and others established by vice-regal women. In South Australia the Mother's Union of the Diocese of Adelaide provides an example of those organisations.

The Mother's Union was inaugurated in August 1895. Described as an 'admirable institution' whose '... objects are to uphold the sanctity of marriage, and to awaken in mothers a sense of responsibility', it was for married women of the Anglican faith.²⁰³ Bible reading, and prayer formed its foundation.²⁰⁴ An English movement with its origins in 1876, it was founded by Mary Sumner, wife of the archdeacon of Winchester. Initially members met informally, but as the popularity of the organisation increased by 1885, meetings were held as organised parish gatherings. In Adelaide in late 1894, Mrs Frances Stow (widow of Justice Stow) suggested the formation of the Mother's Union.²⁰⁵ However, this did not take place until the following year when the new Bishop, John Reginald Harmer, and his wife Dorothy arrived in Adelaide. Dorothy Harmer had aristocratic social connections that included links with Lady Victoria Buxton, wife of South Australia's new Governor, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton.²⁰⁶ The press described Lady Buxton as an 'intelligent supporter of numberless charities and a

²⁰⁰ Letter from E W Nicholls and Mary J George, WCTU, SRG 186/887, SLSA. For a brief biography of Mary George, refer to Appendix 1.

²⁰¹ Catherine Helen Spence, 'South Australia's Victory for Adult Suffrage', *Canadian Magazine*, May-October 1895, 276. Letter dated 29 December 1894.

²⁰² McCorkindale, *Torch-Bearers*, 172.

²⁰³ 'Town Talk and Topics', *Port Adelaide News and Lefevre's Peninsula Advertiser*, 22 November 1895, 1.

²⁰⁴ Brian Dickey, *Not Just Tea & Biscuits: The Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Adelaide 1895-1995*, The Mothers' Union, Adelaide, 1995, 3, 7.

²⁰⁵ 'Personal', *Advertiser*, 26 December 1914, 15. Frances Mary Stow died in 1914 at North Adelaide. Her husband, Randolph Isham Stow, had been an MP in 1861, and Attorney-General 1861-1865. He died in 1878 age 49. For his obituary see 'The Late Mr. Justice Stow', *Express and Telegraph*, 17 September 1878, 2.

²⁰⁶ Dickey, *Not Just Tea & Biscuits*, 1-3; David Hilliard, 'Harmer, John Reginald (1857-1944)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/harmer-john-reginald-6566> viewed 10 August 2017.

strong evangelical' in England, experience from which South Australian charities would benefit during the Governor's term of office.²⁰⁷ Of the GFS, in May 1896 Bishop Harmer stated:

The Girls' Friendly Society has within the last year been supplemented by the formation of a Branch of the Mothers' Union, under the Presidency of Lady Victoria Buxton. Already fifteen Branches have been started since its inauguration. The objects of this Union are – (1) To uphold the sanctity of marriage; (2) To awaken in mothers a sense of their great responsibility as mothers in the training of their boys and girls the future fathers and mothers of England; and (3) to organize [sic] in every place a band of mothers who will unite in prayer and seek by their own example to lead their families in purity and holiness of life. To state these objects is to give the highest testimonial to the usefulness of the Society.²⁰⁸

Lady Victoria Buxton became the Mother's Union's inaugural President. Her position was not a token gesture because in March 1896 she addressed a meeting at Stirling East near Adelaide where women met to discuss the formation of a new branch.²⁰⁹ Lady Victoria was another example of a vice-regal woman whose blend of personal experience, knowledge and the incorporation of ideas from overseas were utilised to benefit South Australian women.

As well her involvement with the Mother's Union, in 1898 Lady Victoria with the support of the Anglican Church founded the Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Club. The club aimed:

to provide rooms where factory girls and others might meet for amusement and instruction – the only other playground for these girls is the street. The Club keeps them from this, and the undesirable companions they would inevitably find there.²¹⁰

The Club offered dressmaking and cooking classes, 'singing, reading, writing, and fancy work' as well as 'dancing and games ... in moderation'. Bible classes were held weekly as well as on Sundays.²¹¹

A similar club, the Lower North Adelaide Girls' Club, offered in addition to skill based or religious activities, physical development classes such as 'clubswinging and dumbbell exercises'.²¹² However, the Girls' Club was established by the Adelaide City Mission rather than the Anglican Church.²¹³ Both Clubs, judging by their activities, aimed to keep girls off

²⁰⁷ 'The New Governor of South Australia', *Express and Telegraph*, 15 May 1895, 3.

²⁰⁸ 'The Anglican Synod', *Adelaide Observer*, 9 May 1896, 44.

²⁰⁹ 'General News', *Adelaide Observer*, 21 March 1896, 12.

²¹⁰ The Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Club, *The Kookaburra Cookery Books of Culinary and Household Recipes and Hints*, The Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Club, Adelaide, 1911. Also refer to George W E Russell, *Lady Victoria Buxton A Memoir with some account of her husband*, Chas J Thynne & Jarvis, London, 1918.

²¹¹ 'Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Clubs', *South Australian Register*, 5 July 1899, 7.

²¹² 'Lower North Adelaide Girls' Club', *Evening Journal*, 4 August 1905, 2.

²¹³ 'Girls Club at Sussex Street', *Register*, 13 December 1905, 6.

the streets, provide some education and religious instruction, thus in theory ensuring these girls maintained their social purity. While these groups had a Christian basis, other organisations also benefitted women, particularly those who were working. Before the WNPPA was established in 1909 Catherine Helen Spence was involved in several organisations.

In August 1895 in South Australia, Spence, and her niece Lucy Spence Morice inaugurated the Woman's League for Political and Social Education. The previous experience of both women in managing organisations was reflected in this process. The League's formation followed shortly after the June 1895 dissolution of the Women's Suffrage League once enfranchisement for women had been attained.²¹⁴ The new League's main objective was to educate women to utilise their vote effectively, and to support the interests of all women and children. Press reports confirmed that the League had been established to enable all women irrespective of class or political affinity 'for purposes of self-education'. Education allowed women to gain knowledge so they could use the vote to their advantage rather than following the voting patterns of their husbands or fathers.²¹⁵ The *Evening Journal* further revealed that they did 'not wish to unite with any of the existing political bodies' thus they maintained a non-party stance.²¹⁶

Morice was to later reflect that the League arose out of a 'discussion circle' and 'came into being with radical ideals and soon met with the disapproval of conservative-minded brothers and husbands, which caused the withdrawal of most of its first leaders'.²¹⁷ It was still too early for many women to feel comfortable asserting themselves within a male dominated society – many remained beholden to their husbands and family. At the inaugural meeting, Mrs Elizabeth Webb Nicholls presided while Catherine Helen Spence presented a paper titled "Our Political Responsibilities".²¹⁸ It was these women who later became leaders of the WNPPA, THE non-party political organisation. Morice later added the League 'did not flourish very well after the first enthusiasm passed, and when Vida Goldstein came to me on a visit we turned it into the Non-Party Political Association' thus confirming its role as the predecessor of the new organisation in 1909.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ 'Woman's [sic] Suffrage League Dissolved', *South Australian Chronicle*, 22 June 1895, 22.

²¹⁵ 'The Woman's Vote', *Evening Journal*, 23 August 1895, 2.

²¹⁶ 'The Woman's Vote', *Evening Journal*, 23 August 1895, 2.

²¹⁷ Elisabeth George, 'Early Adelaide Memories. Votes – and How We Used Them. Told by Lucy Morice', *Mail*, 21 August 1943, 13.

²¹⁸ 'Reform Notes. By a Member of the Adelaide Writing Circle', *Quorn Mercury*, 30 August 1895, 4.

²¹⁹ 'Our Adelaide Women of Interest', *Daily Herald*, 28 June 1913, 5.

While the concept of non-party politics – an interest in politics without being affiliated to a political group – was the basis of this organisation, the League failed after a couple of years. Historian Helen Jones argued the League ‘never gained a popular following’ despite the efforts of Spence and Morice.²²⁰ It is therefore more than likely the conceptualisation of the League was resurrected as the Women’s Political Association in South Australia in 1909 (later renamed the Women’s Non-Party Political Association or WNPPA), and that it was strongly influenced by the Women’s Political Association of Victoria. This is further discussed in Chapter Two. After the League’s failure, Catherine Helen Spence was encouraged to establish a South Australian National Council of Women.

The National Council of Women (NCW) was an organisation founded in America in 1888 for the representation of women. It became affiliated with the American International Council of Women (ICW) whose President was Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, wife of the Governor-General of Canada.²²¹ Lady Aberdeen subsequently urged the formation of an NCW group in both Tasmania and South Australia. Catherine Helen Spence explained that:

During my many visits to Melbourne and Sydney I had been much impressed with the influence and the power for good of the local branches of the world-famed National Council of Women. I had long hoped for the establishment of a branch in South Australia and was delighted to fall in with a suggestion made by the Countess of Aberdeen ... through Lady Cockburn [wife of the Agent General in London], that a council should be formed in South Australia.²²²

The inaugural meeting of the South Australian branch of the NCW took place on 24 September 1902. Catherine Helen Spence was duly elected as one of the Vice-Presidents.²²³ However, not all was well with the new organisation. Spence noted:

There was so apparent a disinclination to touch “live” subjects that interest in the meetings dwindled, and in 1906 I resigned my position on the executive in order to have more time to spare for other public work.²²⁴

²²⁰ Helen Patricia Jones, *Women's Education in South Australia: Institutional and Social Developments, 1875-1915*, PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, 1980, 288.

²²¹ Caoimhghin S Breathnach and John B Moynihan, ‘The Frustration of Lady Aberdeen in her Crusade against Tuberculosis in Ireland’, *Ulster Medical Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 1, 2012, 38. Lady Ishbel Aberdeen’s life has been well documented – refer to Amanda Andrews, *The Great Ornamentals: New Vice-Regal Women and Their Imperial Work 1884-1914*, PhD thesis, School of Humanities, University of Western Sydney, 2004, and Veronica Strong-Boag, *Liberal Hearts and Coronets*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2015.

²²² ‘The Late Catherine Helen Spence. An Autobiography’, *Observer*, 3 December 1910, 3.

²²³ Barbara J Pitt, *The History of the National Council of Women in South Australia 1902-1980*, National Council of Women of South Australia Adelaide, 1986, 2; ‘National Council of Women’, *Register*, 20 September 1902, 6.

²²⁴ ‘The Late Catherine Helen Spence. An Autobiography’, *Observer*, 3 December 1910, 3.

She added 'earnest women ... had hoped to find in [the NCW] a means for the social, political, and philanthropic education of the women of South Australia'.²²⁵ By 1909 the organisation was no longer in existence in South Australia, although remained in operation in the other states.²²⁶ It is clear Spence was disappointed by the failure of the NCW to continue in South Australia. Journalist Elizabeth wrote in February 1909 that:

Some time ago a 'National Council of Women' existed in Adelaide, composed mainly of society ladies, with, I believe, Lady Way at their head; and all I can remember the council doing was to make a mild stir in connection with dancing halls. Enquiry proved that the halls were, on the whole, quite decently conducted; so, having fired their abortive shot, which was hardly of a national character, the council dispersed, adjourned, or faded into oblivion.²²⁷

As early records for the NCW have not been found Elizabeth's claims cannot be verified. Only three years later after Catherine Helen Spence resigned from the executive of the NCW in South Australia, the WNPPA was established. It remains unclear what had changed during that time to make women more receptive to a new politically focussed women's organisation. But if Elizabeth's claims were true, the NCW failed to embrace a broad section of women and their concerns.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided necessary contextual information to understand reasons for the formation of the non-party political women's organisations in 1909. The citing of several examples of pre-conditions indicates their importance for the subsequent development of the 1909 organisations. As well, transnational links played crucial roles in the development of women's organisations in Australia, and more specifically Western Australia and South Australia. These links together with vice-regal women and others who had the means to travel were critical for the dissemination of knowledge from the Imperial centre to the Australian setting. The role of the local press was important in providing a means of communicating relevant international news relating to women such as the Salem Women's Convention. With a transplanted British society, Britain's influence in Australia remained well into the twentieth century, supplemented by some American events and people. Not only this but the Karrakatta Club in Western Australia with its strong American influence led to the formation of the Women's Service Guild. In South Australia, Catherine Helen Spence and her niece Lucy Spence Morice were at the forefront of women's organisations and important

²²⁵ Spence and Magarey *et al*, *Ever yours*, C.H. Spence, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2005, 199.

²²⁶ Judith Smart and Marian Quartly, 'The National Council of Women of Victoria Suffrage and Political Citizenship 1904-14', *Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol. 79, No. 2, 2008, 225.

²²⁷ 'Woman's View', *Herald*, 27 February 1909, 11.

for the formation of the Women's Non-Party Political Association, influenced by their friendship with Vida Goldstein in Victoria.

The comparative study of Western Australia and South Australia clearly shows that Western Australia was a geographically isolated British colony from the eastern Australian colonies, separated by the Nullarbor Plain, a vast inhospitable area. This isolation was in part relieved by the establishment of the telegraph line in 1877 that allowed some communication with the eastern colonies. Even though Western Australia was proclaimed seven years before South Australia, some organisations such as the Girls' Friendly Society and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union were established well after those in South Australia, perhaps reflecting Western Australia's isolation and the difficulties of communication between the Australian colonies. South Australia was therefore influenced by events in eastern Australian colonies because of their closer proximity. It was not until the rail line in 1917 that improved travel time, and the telephone service in 1930 that communication between these colonies and Britain was reduced from months to hours. This was not quite as easily afforded to Western Australia owing to their remoteness, and the tardiness of communications, leading to a delayed response in establishing various organisations on similar lines to the eastern Australian colonies.

Women's suffrage, equal rights and education were long-standing issues. Women wanted to be represented politically by women and this was a long recurring theme. There were some influential men who were supportive as women strove to attain electoral franchise and equal rights. Nineteenth century organisations in these colonies, apart from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, were mixed gender. In time, women realised the value of their own organisations separate to men. Suffrage appears to have been the turning-point when women's only organisations developed. It is significant too, that in the late 1880s women began to take roles as Treasurers in organisations, traditionally positions taken by men, particularly in a mixed gender group. This suggests an increasing awareness of their own capabilities, but a necessity in an all-women's organisation.

The following chapter examines the establishment of the Women's Service Guild in Western Australia and the Women's Non-Party Political Association in South Australia in 1909. Both furthered the cause of women's equal rights, the utilisation of their vote, and the care and well-being of women and children although this did not necessarily include Aboriginal women until later.

CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN'S NON-PARTY POLITICAL ACTION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Women were much criticised when they essayed [sic] to enter the field of politics, but women may well take their share in housekeeping of the state, without neglecting their own houses.¹

Catherine Helen Spence
July 1909.

In 1909 at the first meeting of the newly formed Women's Political Association in Adelaide (later known as the Women's Non-Party Political Association), Catherine Helen Spence asserted women were more than capable of becoming involved in politics owing to their experience in maintaining their households. Spence likened involvement in politics to housekeeping and argued that it was something from which women ought not to have been excluded. Men, fearing women would neglect their home duties, were anxious of a change in the social order if women were allowed to take a part in politics. Politics had always been considered the realm of men only. Women had always been equated with the wife, the mother, and the performance of domestic duties.² They were often derided for not having the knowledge of, or the capacity to understand politics. Yet Catherine Helen Spence challenged this notion. Her own background included becoming the first female political candidate in the Australian colonies, albeit unsuccessfully, when she stood for the Federal Convention in 1897.³

The earlier organisations such as the Karrakatta Club, the Women's Franchise League in Western Australia, and the Social Purity Society and the Women's Suffrage League in South Australia were crucial for the emergence of the Women's Service Guild (WSG) and the Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA). Additionally, the examination of women's involvement in movements for equal rights and suffrage during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provides context to the formation of the WSG and WNPPA in the early twentieth century.

¹ League of Women Voters South Australia (LWVSA), 19 July 1909, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, State Library of South Australia (SLSA).

² Jill Julius Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: The historical construction of femininity in twentieth century Australia*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, 153-154.

³ Susan Eade, 'Spence, Catherine Helen, (1825-1910)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/spence-catherine-helen-4627> viewed 1 June 2019. Also refer to Appendix 1.

This chapter focuses on these non-party political organisations' vital first years from 1909 to 1914, the start of World War One. It argues these organisations allowed women to meet and express their political thoughts without the influence of men, and to provide strong feminist voices to advance the cause of women. The distance between Perth and Adelaide, separated by the Nullarbor Plain, was over 2900 kilometres. This may have been a factor explaining the differences in the genesis of these organisations given the communication difficulties between both states. This was an important period as it was eight years post Federation and five years before the start of the First World War. By 1909 all white Australian women had electoral franchise for both state and Federal elections.

Following on from the suffrage campaigns, there was an availability of women with leadership skills vital for the establishment of the new organisations. Women, like Catherine Helen Spence, had gained experience in earlier associations before membership of these non-party political organisations. As well, some maintained their membership of other groups. Many were socially well-connected and had transnational links that were to bode well for the new organisations. Aside from encouraging women to use their vote wisely, these organisations focussed on other issues that affected women and children.

After federation in 1901, Australia's political climate was turbulent – there were a total of nine Prime Ministers between 1901 and 1914.⁴ Margaret Fitzherbert summarised this period as one of 'swiftly called elections and a number of short-lived governments, along with sudden changes in [party] allegiance by Members of Parliament'.⁵ There was a change in the Federal Government in early June 1909 with Alfred Deakin appointed Prime Minister. This was Deakin's third term having been elected in 1902 as Australia's second Prime Minister after the nation's first incumbent Edmund Barton.⁶

In South Australia, the sudden death in office on 31 May 1909 of Premier Tom Price left a void that was filled by Archibald Peake from 5 June 1909. Price had been Premier since 26 July 1905.⁷ This was Peake's second term as Premier but would not be his last. He again

⁴ Mark Peel and Christina Twomey, *A History of Australia*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011, 135.

⁵ Margaret Fitzherbert, *Liberal Women Federation to 1949*, The Federation Press, Annandale, 2004, 3.

⁶ Parliament of South Australia, 'Premiers of South Australia', <https://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Members/Ministers/Pages/PremiersofSouthAustralia.aspx> viewed 10 November 2015.

⁷ Parliament of South Australia, 'Premiers of South Australia', <https://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Members/Ministers/Pages/PremiersofSouthAustralia.aspx> viewed 10 November 2015.

filled the position from 14 July 1917 until his death in office on 6 April 1920.⁸ In Western Australia, Sir John Forrest was Premier from 1890 to 1901 giving the state relative political stability during that period.⁹ While those years were buoyed by the gold boom, after 1905 the gold mining industry went into decline.¹⁰ Wheat and wool became the new commodities with the opening up of cheap land, the construction of railways to service these newly opened areas, and the extensive road-building to the east of Perth.¹¹ By 1909 another seven premiers had followed Forrest.¹² Despite having gained the vote at both state and federal level, women continued to feel unrepresented politically.

While some women recognised the need for a woman rather than a man to best represent their political interests, there appears to have been a reluctance for them to pursue this until the establishment of the non-party political associations. These organisations also addressed the issue of female representation in public positions and in parliament. Lobbying parliamentarians, collaborating with other organisations to give them a stronger voice when sending delegations to the Premier or other members of parliament, educating the public, and raising members' awareness of what was happening to women and children both nationally and internationally were all part of their strategy. The absence of a male dominated hierarchy in the non-party political organisations provided women with the freedom to discuss concerns that affected women and children without restraint.

Non-party political groups also attracted women who believed in the importance of educating other women to use their right to vote effectively. As well, they campaigned for equal rights and pay with men, and wanted involvement in discussions and action about other social issues. Members of these organisations became politically aware, politicised other women, and used political activism in support of social reforms and legislative change. But to be

⁸ ABC, 'Past Premiers of South Australia', <http://www.abc.net.au/elections/sa/2006/guide/premiers.htm> viewed 10 November 2015; South Australian Parliament, 'Hon Archibald Peake, Former Member of Parliament Details', <http://www2.parliament.sa.gov.au/formermembers/Detail.aspx?pid=3913> viewed 1 March 2016.

⁹ Parliamentary Library of Western Australia, 'Premiers of Western Australia. The Fast Facts on the Premiers of Western Australia', [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/intranet/libpages.nsf/WebFiles/Fact+Sheets+HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia/\\$FILE/HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/intranet/libpages.nsf/WebFiles/Fact+Sheets+HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia/$FILE/HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia.pdf) viewed 18 February 2016.

¹⁰ David Black, 'Party Politics in Turmoil, 1911-1924', in C T Stannage (ed.), *A New History of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1981, 381.

¹¹ F K Crowley, *A Short History of Western Australia*, Macmillan & Co Ltd., Melbourne, 1962, 59, 79. Crowley refers to land having been opened up in the south-western districts and the eastern goldfields.

¹² Parliamentary Library WA, 'Premiers of Western Australia. The Fast Facts on the Premiers of Western Australia', [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/intranet/libpages.nsf/WebFiles/Fact+Sheets+HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia/\\$FILE/HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/intranet/libpages.nsf/WebFiles/Fact+Sheets+HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia/$FILE/HN4a+Premiers+of+Western+Australia.pdf) viewed 1 March 2016.

effective, these organisations needed to maintain their membership numbers to remain viable. These organisations allowed women as members to disseminate their message widely. Therefore, the establishment of women's non-party political associations was important, but their membership was mainly limited to the city and suburbs, with some exceptions.

The Women's Service Guild: Establishment Of The Organisation

In 1909 the Western Australian press announced the formation of the Women's Service Guild (WSG) had taken place on Friday 25 March in Perth. Reports stated it was a 'fairly large and representative meeting of women' and the first minutes indicate that thirty-six women were present.¹³ The meeting was chaired by Welsh-born Lady Gwyneforde James, wife of Sir Walter James (knighted in June 1907), a former Premier of Western Australia.¹⁴ Australian born Sir Walter had also been the state's Agent-General in London for a short period after his time as Premier; he was well known as a supporter of women's suffrage in the 1890s and has previously been referred to in Chapter One.¹⁵ Early officers of the new organisation included Lady James as President, Bessie Rischbeith an inaugural vice-president, Edith Cowan, Janetta Griffiths-Foulkes, Amelia McDonald, Helen King and Roberta Jull – most were members of the Karrakatta Club.¹⁶ Figure 2.1 provides photographs of several of these women. Jull later confirmed the Women's Service Guild 'took up much of the work ... the Karrakatta Club had been doing'.¹⁷ Rischbieth referred to a need to ensure the effective use of the women's vote in order to obtain social reforms for

¹³ 'Notes of the Week', *Western Mail*, 17 April 1909, 32.

¹⁴ 'Obituary. Lady James, O.B.E., Of Perth', *Advertiser*, 12 November 1938, 16; 'Lady James, O.B.E.', *Age*, 12 November 1938, 32; 'Latest Cables. Honors', *Moree Gwydir Examiner and General Advertiser*, 29 June 1907, 2. For more details about Elenora Marie Gwynefred/Gwyneforde/Gwynefryd James (nee Hearder) refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁵ Sir Walter James had been Premier and Attorney General of Western Australia from July 1902 to August 1904. Refer to 'Walter Hartwell James' 'Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia',

[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/\(Lookup\)/DC29F4DEB8B5DBD7482577E50028A67C?OpenDocument](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/(Lookup)/DC29F4DEB8B5DBD7482577E50028A67C?OpenDocument) viewed 1 November 2020.

¹⁶ Photograph, 'Karrakatta Club Executive Committee in Queen's Hall Rooms', William Street, Perth, 1900 by Greenham and Evans, 1998B, SLWA. Names on the back of the photo were Miss J A Nisbet, Mrs Richard Sholl, Miss Elsie Onslow, Miss Helen Ferguson, Mrs Beasley, Mrs George Leake, Mrs J C G Griffiths-Foulkes, Lady Onslow, Dr Roberta Jull, Mrs H D Holmes, Mrs Edward Paget Thurston.

¹⁷ National Council of Women, Western Australia branch, *Minutes Special Meeting Called by Desire W.S.G. October 1916 and Executive Minutes*, Oct. 1916-1917-18-part 1919 – (June), 1389A/4, State Library of Western Australia (SLWA). Amelia McDonald's surname also noted as MacDonald. For brief biographical details of some of these women, refer to Appendix 1.

women and children.¹⁸ The WSG also discussed ways to counter the 'alarmingly high infant mortality rate' in Western Australia, and decided on a campaign for a women's hospital.¹⁹



Figure 2.1: Four foundation members of the WSG. Lady James, *The Home: an Australian Quarterly*, 7(1), 1 January 1926, 53; Bessie Rischbieth, *Western Mail*, 23 August 1928, 6; Edith Cowan, *Sydney Mail*, 30 March 1921, 20; Roberta Jull, *Western Mail*, 9 May 1929, 4.

Edith Cowan believed it was important 'to form an organisation of women to deal with matters relating to women on non-party lines', stressing the need for an organisation wholly independent of men.²⁰ Not only this but Bessie Rischbieth stated the organisation had allowed discussion between women 'without party bias, on matters that affect all homes and all citizens' and to duly carry out necessary work and political pressure to achieve these aims.²¹ Cowan suggested the inclusion of women in the WSG from 'all the different organisations & to work amicably together in the interests of women & children & the general Community'.²² Those interests were outlined as:

1. Equal pay for women & men for the same work
2. Equal Guardianship of Children
3. Prevention of overlapping of charitable works
4. Women Doctors in Public Service Fed[eral] & State
[and] Women as lawyers
5. Women on Hospital & School Boards, etc.²³

While the list emphasises an interest in the affairs of women, items four and five also indicate the importance of appointing women to a range of public positions. The third point

¹⁸ Bessie M Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, Paterson, Brokensha Pty Ltd, Perth, 1964, 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁰ Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia (WSG), '1st Minutes of Meeting held Friday March 25th, 1909', MN 826, ACC 7750A, Box 27, SLWA.

²¹ Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, 11.

²² WSG, '1st Minutes of Meeting held Friday March 25th, 1909', MN 826, ACC 7750A, Box 27, SLWA.

²³ *Ibid.*

however suggests the need for liaison between charitable organisations to avoid an overlap of work, but achieving this may have been difficult because many organisations were undertaking similar activities during this period. Without an umbrella organisation, it was inevitable this overlap would occur, and the WSG recognised this was an issue that required discussion and action. The following broad platform was proposed by Mrs Stanway-Tapp:

To support from the standpoint of women any movements to protect, uplift, and defend humanity.
To be loyal citizens of State, Commonwealth, and Empire.
To seek public good and not personal advantage.²⁴

At the foundation meeting the group moved to decide on a name. The Women's Service Guild was unanimously accepted and adopted as '... the one that met with most favour'.²⁵ There is no record of any alternative names having been discussed but it is clear from this statement that others had been considered. Thus, the Women's Service Guild was inaugurated. Perhaps the brevity of their manifesto reflected the speed with which the organisation was established. In time this would be amended, extended, and refined. The second meeting of the WSG was held on Friday 2 April 1909. It was agreed that all members of the Guild had to exercise their right to vote irrespective of their political views.²⁶

Edith Cowan chaired the meeting with twenty-six women present, suggesting that the other ten who had attended the first meeting had either chosen not to become members, or were unable to be there. Mrs Madge Cort requested membership and sought permission to have 'a short account of the Guild & its aims' sent to the British newspaper, the *Woman Worker*. The Guild was agreeable provided they sighted the report before it was submitted to the newspaper.²⁷ This newspaper was a publication of the National Federation of Women Workers, a group established in England in 1906 to rally women against 'the sweated industries and in their fight for the working wage'.²⁸ 'Sweated industries' referred to work that was generally undertaken in the home, was poorly paid, and workers were over-worked.²⁹

²⁴ 'Notes of the Week', *Western Mail*, 17 April 1909, 32.

²⁵ WSG, '1st Minutes of Meeting held Friday March 25th, 1909', MN 826, ACC 7750A, Box 27, SLWA.

²⁶ WSG, 'Minutes of 2nd meeting held on Friday April 2nd [19]09', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 27, J S Battye Library, Perth, Western Australia.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Working Class Movement Library, The Woman Worker, <http://www.wcml.org.uk/> viewed 30 October 2015. Sweated industries were considered as clothing and footwear trades that involved long working hours with poor pay.

²⁹ Clementina Black, *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage*, Duckworth, London, 1907, 1. Sweating has also been discussed in Chapter One.

The first issue was published in September 1907.³⁰ The relevance of women's issues in Australia interested British women, as well as the links between Australia and England, is shown by this early interest in providing information about the WSG to an English publication.

By early July 1909, less than four months after their inauguration, the WSG arranged an evening Conference of Women at their Hay Street headquarters in Perth.³¹ It was resolved to invite two women delegates from all groups associated with the WSG, although these groups were not specifically named. Letters were sent to various organisations to encourage their participation.³² The conference, held from 6 to 13 July, included two delegates from each of eighteen willing but unnamed organisations and with which Guild members were already associated. The first Annual Report of March 1910 contained an account of the event. The report also noted the WSG had a membership of fifty-three women.³³ During the discussion of the aims of the Guild, it was stated that '[p]ersonal feelings, party prejudice, [and] class distinction should find no place in the policy of this guild'.³⁴ Members were urged to increase their knowledge of social and economic affairs and undertake 'personal sacrifice' to help achieve the aims of the organisation.³⁵

In April 1910 the Annual Report indicated the WSG actively engaged with other organisations to organise a deputation to the Premier urging the establishment of a Maternity Home. This had been discussed earlier at the Conference.³⁶ Also, the need for a District Nurse in the Claremont area was a further discussion point. Consequently, the Claremont District Nurse Society was formed; reports indicated Cottesloe had planned to follow.³⁷ As well, a further nine resolutions resulting from the Conference were printed and circulated to Parliamentarians for their comment and action. They included the Home of Mercy's suggestion that the Criminal Code was amended to ensure those who committed

³⁰ Working Class Movement Library (WCML), <https://www.wcml.org.uk/our-collections/object-of-the-month/the-woman-worker-september-1907-volume-1-number-1/> viewed 1 January 2020.

³¹ WSG, 'Women's Service Guild about 1909', ACC No. 7750A, MN826, Box 30, 1927-1990, SLWA. Undated paper reported that at a meeting of the WSG it was decided to hold a Conference of Women on 6 July at 5 Melba Chambers, Hay Street. This box of documents was disorganised despite being labelled 1927 to 1990.

³² WSG, ACC 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, 1927-1990, SLWA.

³³ WSG, Report of the Women's Service Guild For the Year Ending March 31st, 1910', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, SLWA.

³⁴ 'Women's Service Guild. Annual Meeting', *West Australian*, 19 April 1910, 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ WSG, 'Report of the Women's Service Guild For the Year Ending March 31st, 1910', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, SLWA. The establishment of the maternity hospital is also discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

offences against women and children were given the lash on the day of imprisonment and on the day before they left prison. As well the Subiaco Women's Social and Political League requested that 'aliens', that is those who were not British subjects, who were guilty of offences against Western Australian laws be deported, although they did not specify which laws. They also suggested marriage between aliens and white people be made illegal.³⁸ None of these resolutions were made law. The Subiaco Women's Social and Political League may have been referring to the Commonwealth *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* and Amendment 1905 when they referred to 'aliens'. The Act ensured the removal of undesirable immigrants, that is non-British subjects other than Aboriginal people, particularly if they failed a dictation test 'in an European language directed by the officer'. It also provided for the deportation of an immigrant if found guilty of 'any crime of violence against a person' and who subsequently failed the dictation test.³⁹ Anxiety and a mistrust surrounding people of non-British origins was apparent, initially related to those of Asian origin but later extended to others not born in Britain such as those from Europe.

The following month, May 1910, it was reported that the WSG would hold a reception 'in honour of Miss Jessie Ackermann, Miss Muriel Matters, and Miss [Violet] Tillard.'⁴⁰ Ackermann, a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in America, was in Australia to work 'as a political organizer [sic] in Western Australia for the Australian Women's National League'.⁴¹ She urged women to utilise their right to vote.⁴² In her presentation, Ackermann stated that women of Australia did not realise how fortunate they had been to have the right to vote, nor did they 'realise what a power they were in the political world'.⁴³ She referred to the militant tactics of the English suffragettes and her earlier disagreement with their methods. However, after living in the East End of London 'in order to

³⁸ Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia, 'Second Annual Report of the Women's Service Guild For the Year Ending 31st March 1911', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, SLWA. Other organisations to suggest resolutions included the WSG, the North Perth Branch of the Australian Labour Federation, the WCTU and the British Immigration Association. These proposed resolutions arose out of the Second Annual Conference of Women held September 1910 in Perth.

³⁹ *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* and *Immigrant Restriction Amendment 1905*; Mark Finnane, 'Controlling the 'alien' in mid-twentieth century Australia: the origins and fate of a policing role', *Policing & Society*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 445.

⁴⁰ Adrienne, 'Women's service Guild "At Home". Speeches by Miss Ackermann and Miss Matters', *Western Mail*, 28 May 1910, 38. For brief biographical details of Violet Tillard refer to Appendix 1.

⁴¹ Ian Tyrrell, 'Ackermann, Jessie A. (1857-1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ackermann-jessie-a-12764> viewed 17 February 2016. For information about the Australian Women's National League refer to 'Australian Women's National League (1904-1944?)', *The Australian Women's Register*, <https://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0269b.htm> viewed 28 January 2021.

⁴² Ian Tyrrell, 'Ackermann, Jessie A. (1857-1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ackermann-jessie-a-12764> viewed 17 February 2016.

⁴³ Adrienne, 'Women's Service Guild "At Home." Speeches by Miss Ackermann and Miss Matters', *Western Mail*, 28 May 1910, 38.

study ... the conditions of life' there, Ackermann 'saw the sweating that was carried on, and lived amidst starving children.' It was then that she decided:

if this militant movement was going to bring about better conditions for the starving children, and the sweated woman worker, let them go on, "let them go on," and don't let us, who do not know the conditions of the fight, the conditions of life that are the motive power of the struggle, stand aside and criticise and judge.⁴⁴

Adelaide-born Muriel Matters then addressed the group. Matters, a suffragette, had the distinction of having been gaoled in England at Holloway Prison for a month for 'chaining herself to an iron grille in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons'.⁴⁵ The grille, according to Matters, was a 'symbol of man's conventional attitude towards woman'.⁴⁶ Women were expected to be obedient and seated behind the grille. At the time of her court appearance, the press reported Matters had stated: 'I am an Australian lady, and have a vote in that country. I am now living in England and want to see votes for women here'.⁴⁷ Matters added she 'was sorry [Australian women] had not had more struggle' – this was in contrast to the English struggle for the right of women to vote resulting in the use of militant tactics.⁴⁸ Australian women it was believed, had gained the right to vote without a struggle and failed to understand its importance in contrast to British women who fought to achieve suffrage. Of the tactics adopted by the English suffragettes, Matters believed 'it was through apathy and injustice that [the women] had been forced to adopt them'.⁴⁹ The presentation was well received by the audience. Figure 2.2 is a photograph of Matters on tour.

⁴⁴ Adrienne, 'Women's Service Guild "At Home." Speeches by Miss Ackermann and Miss Matters', *Western Mail*, 28 May 1910, 38.

⁴⁵ Fayette Gosse, 'Matters, Muriel Lilah (1877-1969)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/matters-muriel-lilah-7522> viewed 17 February 2016. Refer also to 'Woman's Sphere. A Champion of the Suffrage. Miss Muriel Matters Interviewed', *Advertiser*, 3 August 1922, 11.

⁴⁶ Cynicus, 'The Girl of the Grille. Miss Muriel Matters. Arrives in Perth. A Bright Interview', *Daily News*, 17 May 1910, 3.

⁴⁷ 'Woman Suffrage. The Disorder at Westminster', *The Times*, 30 October 1908, 9.

⁴⁸ Adrienne, 'Women's Service Guild "At Home." Speeches by Miss Ackermann and Miss Matters', *Western Mail*, 28 May 1910, 38.

⁴⁹ Adrienne, 'Women's Service Guild "At Home." Speeches by Miss Ackermann and Miss Matters', *Western Mail*, 28 May 1910, 38. Muriel Matters also visited Adelaide in June 1910.

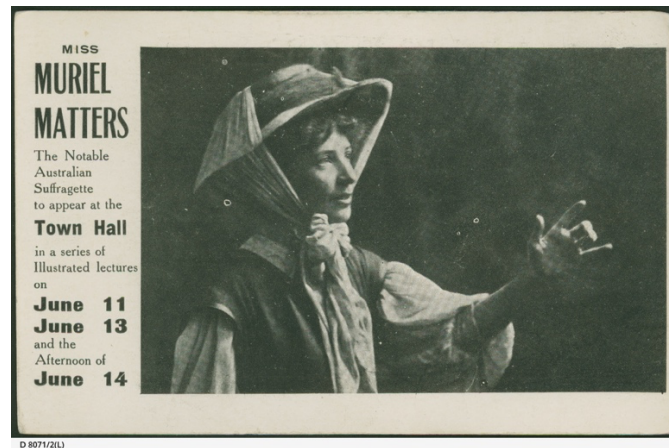


Figure 2.2: Postcard advertising Muriel Matters's tour for Adelaide in June 1910. (SLSA D8071/2 L).

Accompanying Matters was Miss Violet Tillard, a fellow British suffragette, also imprisoned in Holloway, and like Matters, a member of the Women's Freedom League in Britain.⁵⁰ Tillard's role was to sit on stage dressed in prison garb during Matters's presentation thus giving her account greater impact and an air of theatrics that could not have failed to impress the audience.

Members were kept abreast of developments overseas. At a meeting held 8 July 1910, Lady Edeline Strickland, wife of Western Australia's Governor Sir Gerard Strickland, informed those present of the International Council of Women (ICW), an umbrella organisation that included the National Council of Women.⁵¹ It was hoped a Western Australian branch of the National Council of Women could be established. Lady Strickland suggested the WSG affiliate with the National Council of Women so that they could be 'kept in touch with women's work throughout the world' via correspondence.⁵² She emphasised it was not a political association. There was also the promise of International conferences every five years where women could:

confer with one another as to how to further extend, and deepen the work which they have taken in hand, and which has proved so potent a bond of union among the millions of women who are now associated with it.⁵³

⁵⁰ 'Woman Suffrage. The Disorder at Westminster', *The Times*, 30 October 1908, 9; Adrienne, 'Social Notes', *West Australian*, 6 May 1910, 6; 'Miss Muriel Matters', *Western Mail*, 14 May 1910, 30; 'Entertainments. "Within the Walls of Holloway"', *West Australian*, 23 May 1910, 7.

⁵¹ 'International Council of Women. Address by Lady Edeline Strickland', *Western Mail*, 16 July 1910, 40; G P Walsh, 'Strickland, Sir Gerald (1861-1940)', <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/strickland-sir-gerald-8700> viewed 1 March 2016.

⁵² 'International Council of Women. Its Aims and Objects. Address by Lady Edeline Strickland', *West Australian*, 9 July 1910, 4.

⁵³ 'International Council of Women. Address by Lady Edeline Strickland', *Western Mail*, 16 July 1910, 40.

Lady Strickland concluded by informing those present that the ICW had ten million members from eight countries in the world.⁵⁴

In September 1910, fourteen months after their first conference the WSG held another. Concluding remarks supported the formation of a National Council of Women (NCW) branch in Western Australia. Four months later the Western Australian branch of the NCW was inaugurated on 5 January 1911, with the WSG an affiliated organisation. Edith Cowan gave a paper on 'the better protection of women and girls'. She referred to 'the number of offences committed against young children, and the appalling inadequacy of the sentences for this class of crime'.⁵⁵ It was decided to approach the Government to amend the laws, and to even contemplate 'surgical treatment' as a penalty.⁵⁶ A Mrs Butler, affiliation unknown, presented 'A White Australia from a Woman's Standpoint'; she believed all Asian people should be deported immediately. It was moved and resolved that the WSG would seek the Government amendment of the laws so that 'all aliens proved guilty of an offence against our laws should be deported'.⁵⁷ It was decided the 'the question involves a very difficult problem, but the matter will receive consideration' at the conference.⁵⁸ As the conference progressed, other topics discussed included the need for a 'pure milk supply', the Factories Act and sweating; the equality of divorce laws; prison reform; protection of animals (with a resolution that school children were to be educated on this matter), and issues affecting children such as 'State Endowment of Motherhood' of which some thought was 'charity'.⁵⁹ Dr Gertrude Mead who represented the Children's Protection Society, suggested the *State Children's Act* should be amended to allow children to be boarded out with their own mothers. This appears to have related to destitute children. She added: '... the child might be better off with the mother, if more generously assisted by the State, than if taken from her'.⁶⁰ Other issues included the possibility of a Contagious Diseases Act to address venereal disease, but this met with disfavour as it was believed this did not reduce its

⁵⁴ 'International Council of Women. Address by Lady Edeline Strickland', *Western Mail*, 16 July 1910, 40.

⁵⁵ 'Women's Service Guild. Conference in Perth', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 September 1910, 5. The *Register* also had a small article in reference to these comments. Refer to 'The Lash and The Knife', 7 September 1910, 7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁷ 'Women's Service Guild. Conference in Perth', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 September 1910, 5.

⁵⁸ Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia (WSG), 'Second Annual Report of the Women's Service Guild For the Year Ending 31st March 1911', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, SLWA. This question had been raised by the Subiaco Women's Social and Political League and mentioned previously.

⁵⁹ 'Women's Service Guild. Conference in Perth', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 September 1910, 5; 'Conference of Women. Questions of National Import.', *Western Mail*, 17 September 1910, 44.

⁶⁰ 'Conference of Women. Questions of National Import.', *Western Mail*, 17 September 1910, 44.

incidence in other countries. The conference demonstrated a commitment by those present, and that these women held an interest in the 'practical and political questions of the day' of which some were not limited to the local sphere.⁶¹ There was also a diversity of topics some of which are later referred to in the South Australian context. This showed that such interest was not the exclusive preserve of men, nor to the state of Western Australia. It also demonstrated that these women were well-informed about state, national and international issues. The Conference was followed by a deputation to the Premier by the WSG and others who believed that prison sentences were inadequate. The deputation requested amendments to the Criminal Code regarding assaults on children.⁶²

The WSG organised a meet-and-greet opportunity with Vida Goldstein in February 1911. Goldstein was *en route* to England. The event was held at the Karrakatta Club where Goldstein discussed the Victorian Women's Political Association.⁶³ While Goldstein was not directly involved with the establishment of the WSG, it is clear she was known, and her input was valued.

At the WSG's annual meeting held in April 1912, a Mrs Tothill presented a paper on 'the ideals of the guild'. She believed women were essentially home-makers, 'not only for herself, but for the race', and 'that feeling ... had first brought the small band of women together to inaugurate their society'.⁶⁴ This was further evidence that, as considered by men, women's primary function was to provide for future generations through motherhood, and that they were therefore limited to domestic duties and child-rearing. Had women not taken a particular attitude to their role that empowered them with a political voice, this notion would have persisted. Did the organisation persevere with their objective of equality with men, or did they pursue the familiar trajectory of what was expected of women by men and society? It is unknown if Mrs Tothill's paper was well received. According to figures given in Annual Reports, membership of the WSG and attendance at meetings was steadily increasing, clear evidence of its relevance. A short time later in South Australia, the Women's Non-Party Political Association was formed.

Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA): Genesis and Early Years

⁶¹ 'Women's Service Guild. Conference in Perth', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 September 1910, 5.

⁶² 'Women's Deputation. Offences Against Girls. More Drastic Legislation Desired.', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 2 December 1910, 5.

⁶³ WSG, 'Report of the Women's Service Guild For the Year Ending March 31st, 1910', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, SLWA.

⁶⁴ 'Women's Service Guild. Annual Meeting. The Year's Operations', *Western Mail*, 20 April 1912, 16.

It was during the years of political change that a meeting of women took place at Madame Berthe Mouchette's studio in Currie Street, Adelaide on 2 June 1909.⁶⁵ Vida Goldstein addressed a group of women regarding non-party political action and its value.⁶⁶ Goldstein was the founder and president of the Women's Political Association in Victoria. The Victorian Women's Political Association had evolved from the Melbourne Women's Progressive League which itself was founded in July 1902.⁶⁷ By February 1903, they were known as the Melbourne Women's Political Association. The press reported this name change was '[s]o as not to "involve" the other leagues' in Melbourne at the time.⁶⁸ The new Melbourne Women's Political Association's platform reflected an interest in social reforms for the benefit of women and children. Included were equal pay for equal work; equality between men and women; adult suffrage; and penal reform.⁶⁹ By June 1903, the Melbourne Women's Political Association was renamed the Women's Federal Political Association. In March 1904, Goldstein signed a letter to the Editor of the Age as President of the 'W.P.A.', indicating yet another name change.⁷⁰ The Association had dropped 'Federal' from its title. Goldstein pointed out '[t]he association has been merely altered from one of a Federal character only to a Federal and State Association'.⁷¹ The association therefore had both Federal and State agendas.

Catherine Helen Spence was a guest speaker at a meeting in Melbourne in May 1904 to celebrate the Women's Political Association in Victoria first anniversary.⁷² Four years later on 15 April 1908 Goldstein's diary noted she met Spence in Melbourne, and organised meetings with representatives from the "Age" & Herald" to see [Spence] at my office this afternoon'.⁷³ The specific purpose of that meeting is unknown, but Spence delivered presentations the following day to a public meeting organised by the Women's Political Association of Victoria, and again on the 17 June 1908.⁷⁴ It is therefore evident from both diary entries and newspaper reports that Spence and Goldstein were already well known to

⁶⁵ For brief biographical details of Madam Berthe Mouchette refer to Appendix 1. Also refer to John Drury, 'Berthe Mouchette (1846-1928) Artist and Founder of the first Alliance Francaise in Australia', in Eric Berti and Ivan Barko (eds), *French Lives in Australia*, Australian Scholarly, North Melbourne, 2015, 129-145.

⁶⁶ 'Non-Party Politics for Women', *Register*, 4 June 1909, 4.

⁶⁷ 'News of the Day', *Age*, 22 July 1902, 4. It was advertised within this column that a meeting was to be held 'with the object of forming the Melbourne Women's Progressive League in connection with the Federal franchise'.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Morris, 'Woman's Point Of View', *Tocsin*, 26 February 1903, 7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁰ Vida Goldstein, 'Women's Political Association. To The Editor Of The Age', *Age*, 9 March 1904, 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷² 'Social Circle. Society Letter', *Leader*, 28 May 1904, 37.

⁷³ *Vida Goldstein Papers*, MSM118, 1902-1919, MS7865, State Library of Victoria.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*.

each other. Jeanne Young later confirmed Goldstein was amongst the closest of Spence's friends.⁷⁵ Spence had great respect for Vida Goldstein and noted her 'public spiritedness'. Spence added that she had 'been associated with [Vida Goldstein] on many platforms and in many branches of work. Her versatility is great, but there is little doubt that her chief work lies in helping women and children'.⁷⁶ Biographer Janette Bomford described Goldstein as 'ahead of her time', a 'trailblazer', working for the 'welfare of women, children, the unemployed and poor wage-earners'.⁷⁷

Both Catherine Helen Spence and Vida Goldstein attended the Inter-State Congress of Workers Among Dependent Children held in Adelaide in May 1909. Goldstein had visited Adelaide several times earlier in the decade.⁷⁸ The meeting at Madame Mouchette's had been 'hurriedly called together by telephone and postcards' indicating it was impromptu, probably to ensure Vida Goldstein was present.⁷⁹ The process also conveyed a sense of women networking together to formalise contact with other like-minded women with whom they were socially connected. This social connectedness would ensure the efficient channelling of ideas so that the group's goals could be achieved.⁸⁰ The collective of respected and notable women was important for the establishment of an organisation such as the Women's Political Association of South Australia (later renamed the Women's Non-Party Political Association) as it increased networking opportunities and the creation of valuable links for its on-going success. These included national and transnational contacts.

⁷⁵ Jeanne F Young, *Catherine Helen Spence: A Study and An Appreciation*, The Lothian Publishing Co Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1937, 176. In 1897, Young was appointed the secretary of the Proportional Representation League, later known as the Effective Voting League. She later accompanied Spence to New South Wales, at the request of that state's government, to campaign for proportional representation. Young's friendship began with Spence in late 1896. Spence noted Young was a 'disenfranchised voter at her first election' who looked for a 'just electoral method', hence Young's involvement with the Effective Voting League. Also refer to Helen Jones, 'Young, Sarah Jane (1866-1955)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/young-sarah-jane-9216> viewed 7 March 2016; 'Women Justices. No. 13 – Mrs. Jeanne F. Young', *News*, 12 April 1928, 8. Jeanne F Young, (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence: An Autobiography*, W K Thomas & Co., Adelaide, 1910, 79.

⁷⁶ Spence, Catherine Helen, and Susan Magarey, Barbara Wall, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams (eds), *Ever Yours, C.H. Spence: Catherine Helen Spence's An Autobiography (1825-1910), Diary (1894) and Some Correspondence (1894-1910)*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2005, 207.

⁷⁷ Janette M Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman: Vida Goldstein*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993, 1.

⁷⁸ 'Saving Child Life. Inter-State Congress In Adelaide', *Advertiser*, 18 May 1909, 9.

⁷⁹ Elizabeth, 'Woman's View. A letter from Pater. A Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 19 June 1909, 14.

⁸⁰ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000, 289.

The purpose of the meeting was to form 'an association of women, irrespective of their political views, in the interests of the sex, the home, and the children'.⁸¹ Non-party political organisations were neutral forums where women could discuss matters without association with formal political parties. Members considered a woman rather than a man would best represent their political needs. Thus, it was agreed that belonging to a non-party political organisation provided women with the ability to define goals and strategise reforms in the absence of party restrictions or male influence.

Expecting just twenty-five, the unnamed convenors, generally thought to have been Catherine Helen Spence and Lucy Morice, were surprised to discover the presence of over seventy women. They 'regretted ... it had not been possible to have a large hall' so that more women could have heard Goldstein's presentation.⁸² The meeting affirmed the need for a women's political organisation in South Australia. Catherine Helen Spence was pivotal to the formation of the Women's Non-Party Political Association.⁸³

Born in Scotland in 1825, Catherine Helen Spence arrived in Adelaide with her family in 1839. She was a novelist, journalist, and public speaker. In 1891 Spence became a Vice-President of the Women's Suffrage League in South Australia.⁸⁴ Once suffrage for South Australian women had been achieved in 1894, Spence's focus turned to effective voting and proportional representation. In February 1895 she made a presentation to the Barossa Political Reform League and reminded women that they had a 'great responsibility' to ensure they regarded the right to vote 'as a privilege and ... to exercise their franchise rightly and wisely'.⁸⁵ Not only this, but proportional representation, the allocation of votes in proportion to the number of formal votes, formed part of the Effective Voting League's agenda of which Spence was a member. She was passionate about the reform of the electoral system to achieve a fairer system by not favouring one candidate or party over another. Termed the Hare-Spence system (after Thomas Hare a British lawyer and political reformer, and

⁸¹ Elizabeth, 'Woman's View. A letter from Pater. A Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 19 June 1909, 14.

⁸² Elizabeth, 'Woman's View. A letter from Pater. A Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 19 June 1909, 14.

⁸³ For further details concerning Catherine Helen Spence also refer to Jeanne F Young, *Catherine Helen Spence: An Autobiography*, W K Thomas & Co., Adelaide, 1910; Spence and Magarey *et al*, *Ever Yours, C. H. Spence*; and Susan Magarey, *Unbridling the tongues of women*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1985.

⁸⁴ Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, 32.

⁸⁵ 'The New Factor in Politics. Lectures by Miss Spence', *Evening Journal*, 10 February 1895, 3.

Catherine Helen Spence), the bill was introduced to parliament in 1902 and 1910 but was defeated both times.⁸⁶



Figure 2.3: Catherine Helen Spence ca 1901 (SLSA B9881), and her niece Lucy Spence (later Morice) 1886 (SLSA B58523).

Closely aligned to Catherine Helen Spence was her niece Lucy Spence Morice, born in Adelaide in 1859, the daughter of Spence's brother John Brodie Spence (see Figure 2.3).⁸⁷ Geoff Burgoyne, editor of the *Weekly Herald*, described Lucy Spence Morice as 'a cultured woman, an ardent socialist and feminist, and a most charming personality'.⁸⁸ She was very close to Catherine and was mentored by her. The pair formed a formidable team that was to prove important for the establishment of the Women's Political Association of South

⁸⁶ Magarey, *Unbridling the tongues of women*, 157. For additional information on the Hare-Spence system refer to David M Farrell and Ian McAllister, '1902 and the Origins of Preferential Electoral Systems in Australia', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 2005, Vol. 51, No. 2, 155-167. Thomas Hare was a British lawyer and political reformer who proposed a system of electoral reform that included proportional representation. Proponents of this system included John Stuart Mill and Catherine Helen Spence.

⁸⁷ On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html> viewed 8 February 2016. For further details on Lucy Spence Morice refer to Lynne Trethewey, 'Lucy Spence Morice: Working Toward a Just Society Via the Education of Citizens and Socialist Feminist Collective Action', *Vitae Scholasticae*, 2009, Vol. 26, No. 1, 61-79. Also refer to Appendix 1.

⁸⁸ G Elberg, 'Along The Inky Way. No. 3. The Birth of "Elizabeth"', *West Australian*, 1 August 1936, 6.

Australia. Following the presentation at Madame Mouchette's studio, a large majority of those present resolved to form a Women's Political Association on similar lines to the Victorian organisation. A provisional committee was appointed.

Of the unnamed speakers, only one person disagreed with the formation of a non-party political organisation in South Australia.⁸⁹ The provisional committee included Lucy Spence Morice and Lillian de Lissa, both of whom shared an interest in kindergartens. The press reported:

The object of the association will be to give the women's vote a chance of being a really effective force to press forward legislation which will be for the advantage and protection of women, children, and the home.⁹⁰

A word of caution was offered by journalist 'Elizabeth' (surname unknown) when she wrote:

I have no objection to it being non-party, as there are heaps of questions upon which women can unite for the common good of the sex, the home, and the children, irrespective of party politics; but I trust that the fashionable dames will not be found in large numbers on the membership roll, or on the executive. I have very little faith in these society ladies who join these organisations. They rarely are sincerely interested, but are merely seeking some means of killing their ample spare time.⁹¹

'Elizabeth' was not only referring to a class divide in Adelaide, but also suggesting these women used philanthropic activities as a means to increase their social status in their free time. This was similar to the stereotypical Lady Bountiful who is referred to in Chapter Five.

The First Meeting of the Women's Political Association of South Australia

Goldstein's influence was a major contributing factor to the formation of the Women's Political Association in Adelaide. This was confirmed in a letter by Spence to fellow associate, suffragist and friend Alice Henry, dated 24 September 1909, when she referred to 'the Adelaide branch of Vida Goldstein's Womens [sic] Non-party Political Association' thus acknowledging Goldstein's important contribution.⁹⁴ Spence also indicated she had given an address in Melbourne to Goldstein's association about Effective Voting, and the following

⁸⁹ 'Non-Party Politics For Women', *Register*, 4 June 1909, 4.

⁹⁰ Elizabeth, 'Woman's View. A letter from Pater. A Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 19 June 1909, 14. Also refer to Appendix 1 for biographical details of Lillian de Lissa.

⁹¹ Elizabeth, 'Woman's View. Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 19 June 1909, 3.

⁹⁴ Diane Kirkby, 'Henry, Alice (1857-1943)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/henry-alice-6642> viewed 29 February 2016. Alice Henry was a journalist and suffragist, born in Victoria in 1857 of Scottish descent.

evening to a 'kindergarte[n] meeting', about children's education, further confirmation of their continued contact.⁹⁵

The first meeting of the newly formed Women's Political Association took place on 19 July 1909 with Catherine Helen Spence presiding. Between fifty and sixty people were present at Bricknell's Café (see Figure 2.4) where the meeting was held.⁹⁶ Other organisations, such as the 'Grocers' Employees' [sic] Association', used this Café as a meeting venue suggesting it was a convenient and large enough place for the women of the new organisation to meet.⁹⁷

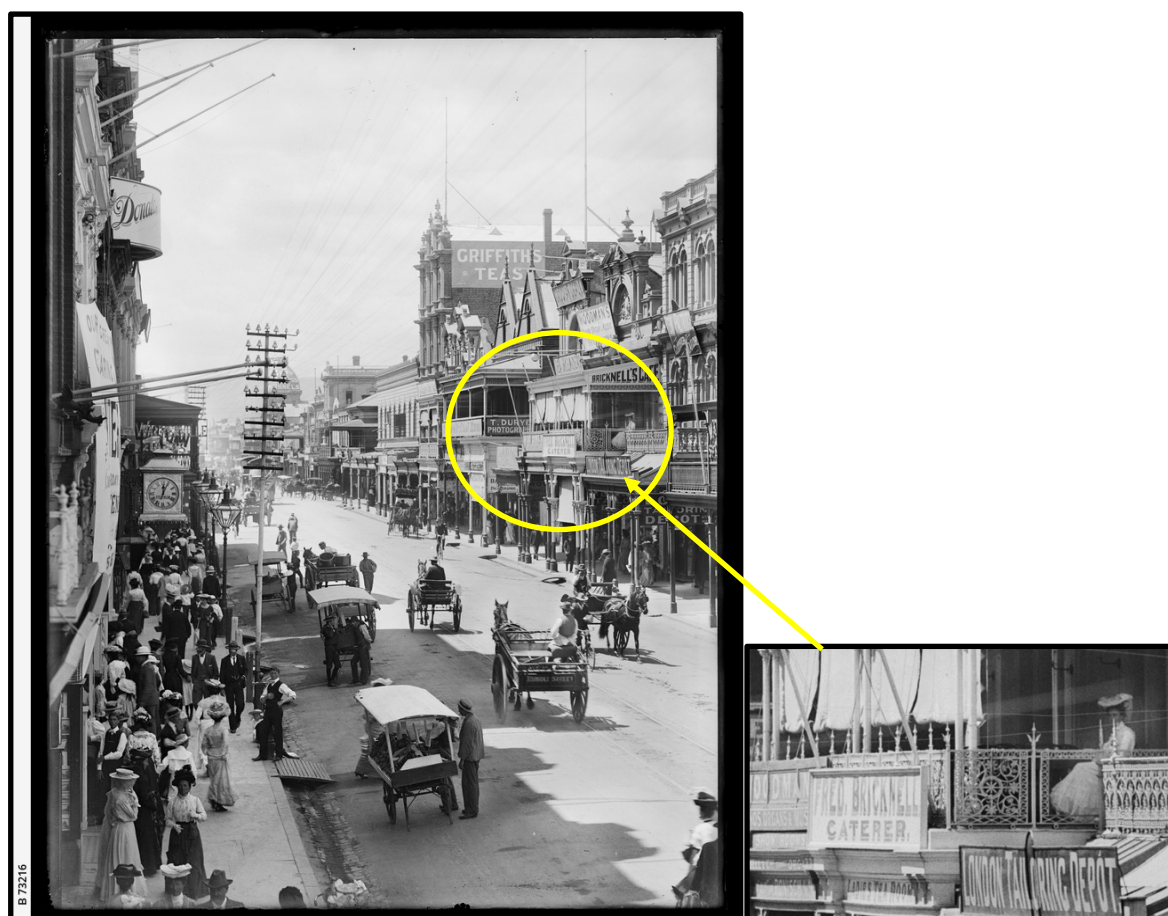


Figure 2.4: View along Rundle Street showing Bricknell's Café. Date unknown but the café opened in September 1900. Inset shows a lady sitting on the balcony. The sign underneath reads 'Ladies Tea Room', (SLSA B73216).

⁹⁵ Susan Magarey, *Papers (Copies) relating to Catherine Helen Spence*, mms, PRG 1398/4 2002, SLSA, 3.

⁹⁶ LWVSA, Minutes, 19 July 1909, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

⁹⁷ 'Grocers' Employees' [sic] Association', *Advertiser*, 14 January 1909, 6; 'New City Café', *Register*, 22 September 1900, 11. Situated in Rundle Street, the café comprised a smoking lounge for gentlemen in the basement; ground floor general tearooms; and ladies' tearooms and boudoir on the first floor complete with 'an extensive balcony'. The boudoir was described as having 'comfortable lounges, [and] writing tables'. The building had been renovated at the cost of £2000, a substantial sum, to provide 'up-to-date tea and refreshment rooms', and was opened in late September 1900.

The minutes of that first meeting recorded the enrolment of twenty-seven members, a disparity with the reported number of fifty to sixty in attendance. In the absence of membership rolls, it is difficult to ascertain who joined. It is also difficult to determine their social status. Of those whose names were known, most were not working-class women but wives of merchants, businessmen, doctors and lawyers.

The new organisation requested other women's associations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Women's Christian Association, to send a delegate to the meetings.⁹⁸ At the second meeting of the Women's Political Association of South Australia, Lucy Morice proposed 'that all delegates shall become members of the Association & accept the constitution before they will be accepted'.⁹⁹ The proposal was carried. This ensured exposure for the new organisation as well as additional members; networking between the various women's organisations; and an awareness of what other groups were doing. Most importantly, they joined with other organisations providing a stronger voice to exert pressure on authorities to effect legislative changes. Delegates included Mrs Elizabeth Nicholls from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union; Miss Esther L Anderson of the Young Women's Christian Association; Mrs Evelyn Vaughan (wife of Crawford Vaughan parliamentarian and later State Premier) of the Labor Party, and a Miss Twiss of the Governesses' Association.¹⁰⁰ Each of these women were influential in their own right, for example Esther L Anderson.

Esther L Anderson was an American who had arrived in Adelaide from New York in September 1907 to take up the position of secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).¹⁰¹ The YWCA, a global organisation, had its foundations in England in 1855. The United States of America (USA) established a branch in 1858 while Adelaide's YWCA commenced in 1884.¹⁰² This organisation evolved from a focus on Bible studies to concern for the welfare of women in the community. The Adelaide organisation aimed to educate and instruct young women to be 'a better mother, wife or sister in the home', adhering to the generally accepted roles of women as wives and mothers.¹⁰³ This, however, appears to be quite different to Esther's own role as a single working woman with an official

⁹⁸ LWVSA, 19 July 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

⁹⁹ LWVSA, 18 August 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

¹⁰⁰ 'Women's Non-Party Political Association.', *Herald*, 11 September 1909, 4. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of these women.

¹⁰¹ 'Miss Esther L. Anderson', *Observer*, 13 Jul 1907, 28. It was reported Miss Anderson was the newly-appointed Secretary of the YWCA and due to arrive per the *Schamhorst* about 18 September.

¹⁰² YWCA Adelaide, *About Us. History*, <http://ywca.com.au/about-us/history/> viewed 5 March 2016.

¹⁰³ 'Fitting Women For Life. What The Y.W.C.A. Is Doing. An Admirable Institution', *Advertiser*, 26 March 1909, 10.

position in a world-wide organisation. Esther had previously been the secretary to the YWCA's national board in New York. She had earlier been general secretary for the YWCA in Detroit, Michigan, a city of 300,000 inhabitants.¹⁰⁴ During her time the Detroit YWCA grew markedly.¹⁰⁵ Likewise in Adelaide, the YWCA membership increased 'under [her] guiding influence'.¹⁰⁶ As a delegate to the WNPPA, Esther brought a wealth of information and knowledge from her experiences in the USA and thus provided another transnational link. She remained associated with the WNPPA during her time in Adelaide – she retired from her position after seven years to return to America via India and England in early 1915. Later, in March 1917, she was recalled to Australia to become the National Secretary for Australasia, but this time was based in Sydney.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, South Australia's Governesses' Association was a locally formed organisation which had emerged in Adelaide during April 1909. Miss Twiss, (whose first name was not given but was probably Leonora rather than her sister Frances), presided over the inaugural meeting. She indicated that:

A great deal of information had come to her hands of late showing that the position between employers and governesses was far from satisfactory. She thought that governesses should have a better status, and that steps should also be taken to ensure more satisfaction to the employers by the establishment of some centre of information for both parties.¹⁰⁸

While it appears this association was short-lived, Leonora Twiss's contribution to the WNPPA continued as will be discussed later. She was a foundation member of the WNPPA.

Catherine Helen Spence became the inaugural President of the Women's Political Association of South Australia. She later remarked '... the fact that on its platform was included proportional representation was an incentive for me to work'. This underlined her willingness to participate in the new organisation, despite being almost eighty-four years old.¹⁰⁹ Vice-Presidents were Lucy Spence Morice and Dr Violet Plummer. Members of council included Mrs Crawford (Evelyn) Vaughan; Miss De Lissa; Mrs Margaret Wragge; and

¹⁰⁴ 'Young Women's Christian Association. Its Work For Australasia. A Double Interview', *Register*, 26 September 1907, 5.

¹⁰⁵ 'Detroit Young Women's Christian Association', *Detroit Free Press*, 26 October 1902, 44.

¹⁰⁶ 'Fitting Women For Life. What The Y.W.C.A. Is Doing. An Admirable Institution', *Advertiser*, 26 March 1909, 10.

¹⁰⁷ 'Concerning People', *Register*, 26 February 1915, 4; 'Personal', *West Australian*, 11 December 1916, 7.

¹⁰⁸ 'Registered Governesses' Association' *Chronicle*, 17 April 1909, 39.

¹⁰⁹ Spence and Magarey *et al*, *Ever Yours*, C.H.Spence, 207.

Miss Leonora Twiss (later Mrs Polkinghorne).¹¹⁰ Each of these women were of social standing in the community.

A special meeting of the South Australian organisation was held on the 14 September 'for the benefit of country visitors'.¹¹¹ Chairing the meeting was Violet Plummer who read an article from the *Woman Voter* to the audience.¹¹² It was decided to both subscribe to the *Woman Voter* and ask for inclusion in its pages. The reference to 'country visitors' suggests early attempts were made to include rural women, but the locations of these visitors were not stated. However, in the 1920s branches were established at Blackwood and Henley Beach, and while these will be discussed further in Chapter Six they were relatively short distances from Adelaide compared to other rural locations in the state. The group then moved to decide on a constitution.

The Constitution of the South Australian Organisation

The Victorian Association's constitution was adopted 'with a few modifications'.¹¹³

Amendments included two additional objectives, namely the Hare-Spence System of Voting or Proportional Representation, perhaps added to ensure Catherine Helen Spence's support, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The platform of the newly established group was published in the local daily press. The following shows the platform which was more detailed than that of the WSG suggesting more time and discussion had taken place to decide what to include:

1. Equal Federal marriage and divorce laws.
2. Equal parental rights over children.
3. Equal pay for equal work.
4. Pure food and pure milk supply.
5. Educational reform and the formation of a Council of Education.
6. Protection of boys and girls to the age of 21 against the vicious and depraved.
7. Appointment of a Special Children's Magistracy, to be composed of both men and women.
8. Stringent legislation to protect the child wage-earner.
9. Appointment of women –
 - (a) Police matrons
 - (b) Sanitary inspectors
 - (c) Inspectors of State schools and truant officers
 - (d) Inspectors of all State institutions where women and children are immured
 - (e) Members of municipal and shire councils.
10. Reform of the liquor traffic.
11. Cessation of borrowing except for reproductive works.
12. International woman suffrage.
13. International peace and arbitration.

¹¹⁰ 'Women's Non-Party Association', *Register*, 21 July 1909, 4. Also refer to Appendix 1.

¹¹¹ LWVSA, 14 September 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ LWVSA, 19 July 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/ 1/1, SLSA.

14. Proportional representation.
15. Prevention of cruelty to animals.¹¹⁴

This shows wide and diverse themes with most focussed on the well-being of women and children. Some were clearly political; others reflected international issues. By February 1911 the platform was reviewed and members accepted a refined Constitution, with a printed version subsequently minuted. It was clearly stated in the Constitution that the new organisation was to be known as the Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA) of South Australia. The goal of appointing women as jurors and Justices of the Peace were important additions to the 1911 edition of the platform, which differed slightly from the original 1909 draft.¹¹⁶ These two additional aims were not specifically mentioned in the 1911 Victorian organisation's platform and therefore appear to be original contributions by the South Australian women.

The expansion of the South Australian manifesto suggests an evolving appraisal of what local members thought necessary to achieve their aims and objectives. It indicates an emerging independent planning framework among the South Australian women. This thinking differentiated them from their Victorian counterparts, and clearly reflected their concerns within their state. The change represented a tacit recognition that the position of women in each state had both similarities but also differences. It is also evident some items were identical or very similar to those of various political parties including the United Labor Party of South Australia.¹¹⁷ But it also suggests an evolving process whereby women were determining what was necessary for the good of all women, children and ostensibly animals.

The Platform

The items that formed the organisation's manifesto provide a sense of contemporary social issues. The well-being of women and children was clearly a priority, but other issues were cause for concern. Also included was the prevention of cruelty to animals which at first seems odd given it received little attention in the minutes. Contemporary newspaper reports however, provide comments expressing concern at the treatment of horses pulling trams to Glenelg, a beachside suburb.¹¹⁸ The constitutional addition may have been a response to those concerns. Overcrowding on trams was not only an issue for the horses pulling such

¹¹⁴ 'Women's Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 11 September 1909, 4

¹¹⁶ LWVSA, 15 February 1911, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

¹¹⁷ 'The United Labor Party of S.A. Fighting Platform', *Herald*, 25 September 1909, 3.

¹¹⁸ 'Cruelty to Tramhorses', *Register*, 21 May 1909, 4; 'Horse Tramcars. "Evils of Overcrowding"', *Advertiser*, 21 May 1909, 10; 'Cruelty to Tramhorses', *Evening Journal*, 21 May 1909, 2.

vehicles, but also for passengers unable to travel in comfort, or unable to board trams due to a lack of room.¹¹⁹ In December 1908 the Governor of South Australia assented to *The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1908*. The Act was to bring South Australia in line with other states as '[m]any acts of cruelty were now committed which could not be prevented by the present law'.¹²⁰ In late May 1909 the annual meeting of the South Australian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals emphasised the need to educate children to love animals. It was hoped that instilling in children the need to regard animals with fondness would avoid the 'ignorance' in adulthood that was considered a prime cause of animal cruelty.¹²¹ The Act provided an opportunity for the WNPPA to include this in their objectives, as it related to the group's interest in an aspect of children's education rather than the treatment of animals *per se*.

Aside from this, another issue that required political action was that of the Federal and State marriage and divorce laws. The first minutes of 1909 show that the 'uniformity of marriage and divorce laws' was underlined in red thus highlighting its importance. This was of relevance to all states and an obvious priority.¹²² Howard Vaughan, lawyer, member of the Effective Voting League, later Attorney-General in 1915 and brother of Crawford Vaughan, gave a presentation on this topic to a meeting of the WNPPA on the 17 November 1909.¹²³ He indicated '[t]hat under the present law a wife must prove cruelty or desertion, as well as misconduct, to obtain a divorce, whereas in the case of a husband claiming he need only prove misconduct'.¹²⁴ Men were clearly advantaged in comparison to women. Vaughan was in favour of equality for women. He stated the cost of divorce at '15 or 20 guineas', an obvious deterrent for many wanting to instigate proceedings, particularly women.¹²⁵ As well there were difficulties 'as regards to domicile', that is their place of residence with many women already having left the marital home. This created problems in deciding which court had jurisdiction.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ W.D., 'The Tramways. To the Editor', *Register*, 9 March 1909, 11. WD refers to overcrowded trams and difficulties getting on. Believed this was not a problem when the trams were privatised.

¹²⁰ 'Cruelty to Animals Bill', South Australian Parliamentary Debates, 1908, 22 September 1908, 112.

¹²¹ "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Society's Annual Meeting", *Advertiser*, 21 May 1909, 9.

¹²² LWVSA, 19 July 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

¹²³ G Grainger, 'Vaughan, John Howard (1879-1955)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/vaughan-john-howard-9268> viewed 1 April 2016.

¹²⁴ 'Marriage and Divorce Laws', *Register*, 18 November 1909, 4.

¹²⁵ LWVSA, 17 November 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

On a continuing theme, Mrs Scott-Broad presented a paper in March 1913 at the WNPPA's first meeting for the year about marriage.¹²⁷ She said:

We want to arrive at the general feeling of women with regard to these new marriage laws and regulations which shall no longer leave a woman and her children chattels, drudges, footstools at the mercy of the meanness, strength, temper, or vicious contagion of men who are not fit to put a wedding ring on any woman's hand.¹²⁸

Women, according to Scott-Broad, were treated as possessions and not as partners in marriage. Likewise, children of the marriage were considered as possessions belonging to the father.

Another issue was that of 'Equal pay for equal work'. At its October 1909 meeting, papers were presented on this topic and highlighted that women who were doing the same work as men did not receive the same pay. Spence added that there was a:

vast difference between the scope of woman's work 50 or 60 years ago, & the present position & showed that very few women take up a profession or trade with the idea that it is going to be the be-all & end-all of their lives.¹²⁹

There was therefore a long-held expectation that women would marry, cease work, and be supported by their husbands. However, not all women married, moved out of the workforce or had children. An argument for women's suffrage in South Australia had been that women's chances of being given equal pay for the same work as men would be improved if they had the vote.¹³⁰ Yet, by 1909 a difference remained between women's wages and men's wages for comparable work – a situation that was not easily resolved, related to the 1907 Harvest Judgement that did irreparable damage to women's objective of equal pay for equal work.

Miss Twiss presented a paper on 'Equal Work. Equal Pay', and argued it was illogical to support a division of pay based solely on gender for the same work done. As well, she believed the 'present gross under-payment of women [was] injurious to their self-respect'.¹³¹ Twiss added that financial remuneration increased with experience for the male wage earner but not for females. Those against equal pay for equal work cited fears that women would no longer be interested in marriage; or that the role of the male as the breadwinner would be

¹²⁷ Refer to Appendix 1 for details about Mrs Scott-Broad.

¹²⁸ 'Our Adelaide Women of Interest. The Fearless Attitude Towards Reform. A Chat with Mrs. Scott-Broad', *Daily Herald*, 8 March 1913, 5.

¹²⁹ LWVSA, 15 October 1909, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

¹³⁰ Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia*, 18.

¹³¹ 'Man and Woman. Should Both Be Paid Alike?', *Register*, 30 October 1909, 9; LWVSA, 15 October 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

threatened. Of this latter objection Twiss responded that 'everyone [knew of] many instances where the contrary [was] the case'.¹³² Twiss's argument was persuasive – the minutes reported an 'animated discussion followed' with 'many points of view' brought forward although these were not specifically recorded.¹³³

Two years later the minutes of 16 November reported papers from October 1909 were re-read. This time the WNPPA resolved that it was 'unfair to the citizens of the Commonwealth to close any avenue of employment simply because they are women'.¹³⁴ Thus the group explicitly acknowledged that women were being disqualified on the basis of their gender. The meeting proposed that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Vida Goldstein, and also to all South Australian Federal Members of Parliament, the latter clear evidence of lobbying as a form political activism.¹³⁵

Later, in October 1913, Vida Goldstein returned to Adelaide and addressed the WNPPA. She cited an example of women employed by the Victorian Public Service who, as the result of legislative changes, had received equal pay for equal work, but without receiving the same advances in their salaries as men had for the same work. She also reported that some female teachers in the public system still did not receive equal pay. Goldstein urged the non-party organisations to continue in their endeavours to achieve equality with men.¹³⁶ It is evident that change was taking place, albeit very slowly in Victoria, and could be expected in due course in South Australia. Therefore, the WNPPA needed to maintain pressure on the Government to ensure this objective was met. The Harvester Judgement had ensured the disparity between men and women's wages remained.¹³⁷

The WNPPA considered the appointment of women to positions traditionally held by men, and representation on municipal and shire councils. This included women as special magistrates for the Children's Court; as women police, sanitary inspectors, inspectors of State schools, and truant officers, as well as personnel in institutions where women and children were incarcerated. These were viewed as a priority and a necessity for the well-being of these particular women and children. In April 1913 a deputation of women from the WNPPA visited the Acting Premier, Richard Butler, requesting consideration of the engagement of a special magistrate to the Children's Court; equality of pay for the same

¹³² 'Man and Woman. Should Both Be Paid Alike?', *Register*, 30 October 1909, 9.

¹³³ LWVSA, 15 October 1909, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

¹³⁴ LWVSA, 16 November 1911, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ 'For Women and Children. Non-Party Organization', *Register*, 18 October 1913, 5.

¹³⁷ The Harvester Judgement was made in 1907. Refer to Chapter One for more detail.

work; appointment of women as inspectors of State Schools; and of women as inspectors 'of institutions where women and children are immured'.¹³⁸ Additionally, both Lucy Morice and Lillian de Lissa argued it was not only necessary to have a special magistrate appointed, but also someone who should 'know something about the psychology of childhood and the rights of children'.¹³⁹ This suggests Morice and de Lissa were well informed about contemporary medical and legal knowledge. When Mr Butler queried if they 'did not want a woman chosen as a magistrate' Morice replied 'Not necessarily, at present'.¹⁴⁰ Morice was aware in 1913 that few women were educated in psychology and had sufficient legal knowledge. But it would only be a matter of time when these requirements could be fulfilled by individuals with the necessary background education and training. Of course, Mr Butler, while sympathetic, could do no more than to promise to place these issues before his parliamentary colleagues. By publishing details in the local press, the WNPPA were able to keep the public informed as well as garner support for their actions, and possibly also increase their membership.

Health and Welfare

On 14 December 1909, advertising as the Women's Non-Party Association, the organisation announced Dr Violet Plummer was giving a presentation the following day about 'Pure Food and Milk Supply' – see Figure 2.5.¹⁴¹ It is unknown why the organisation did not officially drop 'political' from its name until after June 1917 (refer to Chapter Three). Until then, apart from this advertisement, they continued to be referred to as the Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA).

¹³⁸ 'Women's Wants. Detailed by Deputation. Question of Women Inspectors. Acting-Premier Sympathetic', *Daily Herald*, 30 April 1913, 5.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5. Refer also to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Lucy Morice and Lillian de Lissa. Also see Helen Jones, 'The Acceptable Crusader: Lillian de Lissa and pre-school education in South Australia', in Brian Condon (ed.), *Selected Papers in the History of South Australian Education*, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Magill, 1977, 164-178.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁴¹ 'Public Notices', *Express and Telegraph*, 14 December 1909, 2; 'Public Notices', *Advertiser*, 14 December 1909, 2; 'Public Notices', *Evening Journal*, 14 December 1909, 3. For brief biographical information about Dr Violet Plummer, refer to Appendix 1.



Figure 2.5: Advertisement for the Women's Non-Party Association meeting 15 December 1909. (*Express and Telegraph*, 14 December 1909, 2.)

Dr Plummer, a medical practitioner, read extracts from an American paper detailing the adulteration of food in that country.¹⁴² Those who attended were 'horrified to learn how easily & frequently their food was adulterated particularly by the use of boracic acid & preservatives'.¹⁴³ In July 1909, correspondent Marion writing to journalist Elizabeth reinforced the necessity for the WNPPA health and welfare item when she stated:

If we want to preserve our baby population we must first see that they are supplied with pure milk Some of the milk vendors are not very particular as to cleanliness, and some of them will hardly take the pipe from their mouths while they serve you. Just think of the tobacco ashes getting down the throat of a delicate baby or invalid. ... Pure food and drink are the main stay of a nation, and it is essential for the Government or State to look carefully after them.¹⁴⁴

Similar concerns regarding the adulteration of food and milk had been evident in Australian newspapers for some years. In February 1903, the chairman of the Victorian Board of Public Health, Dr D Astley Gresswell, used the *Melbourne Age* to indicate that 'in the interest of the public, [he] intends to prosecute vigorously his campaign in favour of a pure food and milk supply'.¹⁴⁵ Boric or boracic acid had also been used as a preservative in milk, but Dr Gresswell cautioned about its slow elimination from the body, pointing to its major health implications. While Dr Gresswell was based in Victoria, his views had nationwide impact. Reporting on his death in December 1904, the *Sydney Morning Herald* indicated Dr Gresswell's 'name would stand as a memento of the foundation of sanitary science in Australia'.¹⁴⁶ This reflected his high standing. Janet McCalman's study of the poor in Richmond, Victoria from 1900, argued many working-class women relied on bottle feeding their babies. However, the milk needed to be fresh which was challenging as few had the

¹⁴² 'Women's Non-Party Political Association', *Register*, 20 December 1909, 5.

¹⁴³ LWVSA, 15 December 1909, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA, 10.

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth, 'Woman's View. A Letter From Marion', *Herald*, 3 July 1909, 3.

¹⁴⁵ 'Food Adulteration. Dr. Gresswell Replies To Apologist. More About The Effects Of Boric Acid.' *Age*, 25 February 1903, 6.

¹⁴⁶ 'The Late Dr. Gresswell', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 December 1904, 7.

means to keep it cool. She reported that in 1901 Richmond had 107 dairies and milk stores with Council officers waging a 'constant war against contaminated and watered-down milk'.¹⁴⁷ Few dairies provided 'safe' milk.

In South Australia, the *Food and Drugs Act 1908* commenced on 1 June 1909, the day before the inauguration of the WNPPA. The new Act clearly defined 'adulterated food' as meaning:

Any food which differs in composition, by reason either of the addition of foreign matter or of the abstraction of any matter, from food ordinarily known under the same name as that which the said food is represented to be, or which differs from the standard (if any) of such food fixed by regulation under this act.¹⁴⁸

While food was defined as:

any article used for food or drink by man, 'other than drugs or water, and any article which ordinarily enters into or is used in the composition or preparation of human food; and shall include flavouring matters, condiments, and confectionery'.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, given this Act covered the adulteration of food, why did the WNPPA include it? Was this to ensure the public complied with the Act? In May 1910, Dr Plummer's response suggested compliance was a factor. She acknowledged that with the introduction of the *Food and Drugs Act 1908*, 'South Australian laws were the best in the world, ... [and] stressed the importance of securing a pure supply of food and drugs, and the necessity for preventing adulteration'.¹⁵⁰ She highlighted the need for ongoing education and monitoring to ensure understanding, compliance, and acceptance of the Act.

However, the adulteration of food and milk formed only one part of the issue. McCalman stated pure milk was a complex issue because there were other factors.¹⁵¹ Cleanliness and hygiene were of paramount importance. Dr Gresswell had noted that borax, when added to milk, 'checks the growth of the organisms that cause sourness ... , but had little effect upon

¹⁴⁷ Janet McCalman, *Struggle town: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900-1965*, Hyland House Publishing, Melbourne, 1998, 47.

¹⁴⁸ *Food and Drugs Act 1908*, South Australia. Prior to this time, the sale of milk was regulated under the Health Act 1898. See Steve Rice, 'History of Dairy Legislation in South Australia', *A History of Agriculture in South Australia*, Primary Industry and Regions SA, http://pir.sa.gov.au/aghhistory/livestock/dairy/dairy_legislation viewed 14 January 2016.

¹⁴⁹ Acts of the Parliament of South Australia 1900-1909, 'The Food and Drugs Act 1908 No. 968 South Australia. Parliament', <http://dspace.flinders.edu.au/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2328/15422/9681908.pdf?sequence=1> viewed 13 November 2015.

¹⁵⁰ 'Pure Food and Drugs', *Register*, 11 May 1910, 5.

¹⁵¹ McCalman, *Struggle town*, 48.

certain other micro-organisms that readily grow in milk'.¹⁵² In a letter to the *Advertiser*, Arthur Spring referred to the unsanitary conditions of some dairies; one of these was also 'a piggery at which they boil down dead horses'.¹⁵³ In 1907 John Frazer McEachran, veterinary inspector of the metropolitan dairies in South Australia, reported several dairy cows had tuberculosis and actinomycosis at a Thebarton dairy.¹⁵⁴ At a St Peters dairy, a sample of milk was found to be 'adulterated with 8.3 per cent. added water' – that vendor was subsequently fined, although according to McEachran, not severely enough. Another sample was 'deficient in fat', perhaps indicative of the inadequate feeding of cattle, although this may also have been a seasonal variation.¹⁵⁵

In Adelaide, before the enactment of the *Food and Drugs Act 1908*, a County Board was created and included the Metropolitan Dairies Board. Previously, the Metropolitan Dairies Board was 'a voluntary association of corporations and district councils, which, for eight years, ... had the oversight of city and suburban milk supplies and dairy cattle'.¹⁵⁶ The County Board became responsible for the sanitary inspection of dairies. The Act aimed to ensure all 'dairies, milk stores, and milk shops' were licensed, as well as the licensing of milk vendors; and that dairy cattle were inspected to determine if they were fit and healthy.¹⁵⁷ With her medical background, Dr Plummer clearly recognised the consequences for women and children of ingesting adulterated food and milk, as well as of the dangers of unhygienic and insanitary conditions. Hence the WNPPA supported constant monitoring to ensure compliance with the Act.

The remaining objectives of the WNPPA reflected their ability to bring into public conversation issues affecting those persons who were under the age of twenty-one. The daily press frequently reported on incidents of criminal and sexual assaults on children and

¹⁵² 'Food Adulteration. Dr. Gresswell Replies To Apologist. More About The Effects Of *Boric Acid*.' *Age*, 25 February 1903, 6.

¹⁵³ 'Municipalising Milk', *Advertiser*, 14 August 1908, 10.

¹⁵⁴ 'The People's Food. "Deplorable State of Affairs"?' *Express and Telegraph*, 15 August 1907, 4. See also 'Mr. J. F. McEachran', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1932, 15 for his obituary. Tuberculosis and actinomycosis were bacterial infections with the possibility of transfer to and infection of humans.

¹⁵⁵ 'The People's Food. "Deplorable State of Affairs."?' *Express and Telegraph*, 15 August 1907, 4. Also John Crosby, General Manager, Dairy Authority of South Australia, telephone conversation 1 March 2016. Mr Crosby suggested in these early years, cattle were not as well fed as they are today with modern farming knowledge and methods. With the flush of spring, cows, particularly Friesians, produce less milk and therefore of insufficient fat quantity. Modern dairies are able to blend this milk with milk from other dairies to overcome this problem, but this knowledge was probably unknown in 1907.

¹⁵⁶ 'Pure Food And Drink. Passing of Dairies Board. Something About The New County Board', *Register*, 1 April 1909, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

young women. Perusal of the *South Australian Police Gazette* shows warrants and apprehensions for perpetrators of such crimes.¹⁵⁸ Some perpetrators were themselves children, that is younger than twenty-one years; while others who committed these crimes against women and children were older men. It did not matter if they were acquitted by the courts – the story had already made headlines and had made an impact on the public. Journalist Elizabeth reported in September 1909 that ‘unpleasant facts of life persist in obtruding themselves, and I feel that I should not ignore them, such as the cowardly part of me would like to do so’.¹⁵⁹ She continued, referring to a correspondent’s letter which included distressing facts about girls under fifteen awaiting the birth of their babies, and often the father was underage. Elizabeth added:

We must try and rouse people to realize that matters of sex are of the profoundest importance, and must no longer be left for silly and senseless and unclean jocular and innuendo. It appals one to realize that the function upon which the continuation and the elevation of the whole human race depends should be regarded as it is at present, a subject not to be spoken of by decent, clean-minded people.¹⁶⁰

This objective was a response to the whole sphere of sexual and physical abuse, an area which media reports helped elevate to one of increasing public concern. Therefore, ‘Protection of boys and girls to the age of 21 against the vicious and depraved’ meant the safeguarding of those children from persons who were considered immoral, corrupt, perverted or evil. Contemporary newspapers reported on court cases involving assaults on children, particularly girls; these were presented under various headings of ‘indecent assault’, ‘indecent exposure’, ‘criminal assault’, ‘lewdness’ and so forth.¹⁶¹ The consistency of such reports, and often their graphic details, was likely to have had a significant influence on general readers. In May 1912 the WNPPA committee reviewed their platform and expanded this to read: ‘Equality of the sexes in measures for the suppression of vice’.¹⁶² This demonstrates continued concerns by the organisation.

In addition, women and children in gaols and reform institutions were under consideration by the organisation. As early as the third WNPPA meeting held 15 October 1909, the organisation received a letter from Mrs Parson, president of the Penal Reform Association. She advised that an impending delegation to the Chief Secretary needed to urge ‘the

¹⁵⁸ South Australia Police Department, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner’s Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947.

¹⁵⁹ Elizabeth, ‘Woman’s View’, *Herald*, 11 September 1909, 3.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶¹ ‘Adelaide Criminal Sessions’, *Naracoorte Herald*, 19 February 1909, 2; ‘Law Courts. Supreme Court Criminal Sittings’, *Chronicle*, 20 February 1909, 35.

¹⁶² LWVSA, 15 May 1912, Minutes of Executive and Committee Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLISA.

necessity of appointing women at The Lock Up'.¹⁶³ This was to ensure that the care needs of women and children were met while they were incarcerated. Not only this, but alcohol was viewed as contributing to the violence towards women and children.

The WNPPA maintained a close link to the WCTU through Elizabeth Nicholls who at various times was President of both organisations. 'Reform of the liquor traffic' possibly emanated from the temperance movement and the WCTU. This movement initiated a campaign against the excess use of alcohol to curb a brand of masculinity viewed as dangerous to women and children. Later in May 1912, a committee meeting added the words 'and stringent administration of existing laws' confirming the matter was of ongoing concern. However, stringent was used in the context of another issue.

Point eight, 'Stringent legislation to protect the child wage-earner', covered children as wage-earners. This was to ensure they were not abused. But the minutes reveal little discussion about this matter. Instead, matters relating to education were more frequently discussed. The WNPPA covered 'Educational reform and the formation of a Council of Education' with contemporary newspapers reporting on aspects of this. In July 1907 Adelaide's Catholic newspaper, the *Southern Cross*, criticised the State Government arguing it was a 'significant fact that the State schools have fallen off in attendance while their cost has increased'.¹⁶⁴ Similarly in Victoria blame was attributed 'to the increased attractions of private schools'.¹⁶⁵ By March 1908 an editorial in the *Register* suggested there were issues relating to the quality of teaching in South Australia.¹⁶⁶ It was further suggested that 'Teaching [was] of indifferent quality, ... fearfully expensive', and something which the State could not afford.¹⁶⁷ An earlier report had indicated that owing to a lack of practical experience, teacher training was deficient.¹⁶⁸ While the Director of Education's Annual Report of June 1910 reported an awareness of the decline in the numbers of students attending public schools, a trend evident from 1902, it offered no reason for this.¹⁶⁹ Instead, the Director commented that:

¹⁶³ LWVSA, 15 October 1909, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA. Mrs Parson was probably Mary Elsie Parsons, wife of the Chairman of the Penal Reform Association Herbert Angus Parsons, lawyer, later Judge and knighted in 1945. For additional information see Elizabeth Kwan, 'Parsons, Sir Herbert Angus (1872-1945)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/parsons-sir-herbert-angus-8501> viewed 14 May 2019.

¹⁶⁴ 'The Failure of State Education', *Southern Cross*, 5 July 1907, 10.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁶⁶ 'Education Reform', *Register*, 2 March 1908, 4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ 'Educational Reforms', *Advertiser*, 9 January 1908, 6.

¹⁶⁹ 'Annual Report of the Director of Education', *Education Gazette*, 14 June 1910, 144.

Those interested in the development of the State will be startled to learn that during the past eighteen years we have added only 300 to the number of children taught in the public schools, and 282 to the number instructed in private institutions.¹⁷⁰

Although this statement suggested some concerns with the public education system, it does not support the claim that private schools were attracting more students.

The WNPPA's response to this small increase over eighteen years explains the inclusion of Education Reform as a policy. Yet this was not their initiative, but was 'borrowed' from others, perhaps to demonstrate support for and unity with those working in the education sector including members with an interest in early childhood education, for example Lucy Spence Morice and Lillian de Lissa. In 1910, at their fifteenth annual conference the president of the South Australian Public School Teachers' Union, William Bennett, referred to 'the proper education of our girls will depend [on] their ultimate fitness as the wives and mothers of the future' generation, confirming their expected roles in a white dominated society.¹⁷¹ Female teachers need to be 'efficient in home science' to ensure girls were well trained to fulfill those obligations.¹⁷² The idea of maternal citizenship presented an enigma – females wanting equality with males amidst the constant assumption they were future wives and mothers to ensure the survival of the white race in Australia. If they chose to marry and have children, they usually became subservient to their husbands. This was a dominant theme which would prove challenging for all women's organisations to resolve. The aims of the WNPPA were quite diverse as the following shows.

The unusually worded 'Cessation of borrowing except for reproductive works' referred to existing State and Federal Governments borrowing money for works other than those where financial benefit would enable the repayment of the loan. For example, the building of toll roads generated an income that could offset the loan required for building works. In March 1855, 'reproductive works' was defined as 'work ... only to be considered reproductive from which a money revenue can be derived'.¹⁷³ Furthermore, the amount raised should be sufficient not only 'to pay interest for the capital expended, but also to leave a balance which should constitute a sinking fund for the gradual extinction of the debt'.¹⁷⁴ Much later, in April 1909, Hugh Mahon, Australian Minister of Home Affairs stated that:

The Labour Party is not opposed to borrowing for reproductive works, provided that a sinking fund is established, so that the loan will be paid off during the life of the works. You

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁷¹ 'Education of Our Girls', *Education Gazette*, 14 July 1910, 180.

¹⁷² 'Women Teachers', *Education Gazette*, 14 July 1910, 177.

¹⁷³ 'Reproductive Works', *Argus*, 13 March 1855, 4.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

want to have something left when the work is paid for, so that you have not to be borrowing again to replace it.¹⁷⁵

Mahon's wise fiscal commentary does suggest the issue was continuing to attract public attention in the early twentieth century.

Earlier in January 1909 George Houstoun Reid, a former Prime Minister of Australia from 1904 to 1905 and a sitting member of the Federal parliament, acknowledged difficulties with the country's finances.¹⁷⁶ He added that '[t]his idea of not borrowing for necessary and reproductive works is the silliest, crudest idea of national finance that has ever come to the surface in any country in the world'.¹⁷⁷ Referring to the Post and Telegraph Department as an example, Reid described their finances as in 'disgraceful chaos'.¹⁷⁸ Cessation of such borrowing was taken from the United Labor Party platform. Such action demonstrates the breadth of these women's interests, and suggests possible links to or influence from the United Labor Party. However, in May 1912 as part of the committee's platform review, this was removed for reasons that were not given. The review though left the reference to International Peace unaltered.

During December 1907 in Adelaide, the Reverend Alfred E Gifford, minister of the North Adelaide Congregational Church, presided at a meeting held to discuss the formation of a branch of the London Peace Society.¹⁷⁹ The London Peace Society had been formed in June 1816 in Britain.¹⁸⁰ Between 1899 and 1902 Australia was involved in the South African War (also known as the Boer War), and the Boxer Rebellion in China from 1900 to 1901.¹⁸¹ Catherine Helen Spence considered the 'South African war ... was altogether unjustified', and proposed the formation of the Peace Society in Adelaide.¹⁸² The Adelaide group affiliated with the London Peace Society. In November 1909, Reverend Gifford indicated that 'settlement by arbitration of all international disputes' was an important objective of the

¹⁷⁵ 'Federal Politics. Mr. Deakins' Speech. "Not Unfriendly" To Government', *Register*, 9 April 1909, 6. See also H J Gibbney, 'Mahon, Hugh (1857-1931)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mahon-hugh-7460>, viewed 3 November 2015.

¹⁷⁶ 'George Houstoun Reid – Fact Sheet 213', National Archives of Australia, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs213.aspx> viewed 3 November 2015; W G McMinn, 'Reid, Sir George Houstoun (1845-1918)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/reid-sir-george-houstoun-8173> viewed 3 November 2015.

¹⁷⁷ 'Australian Finance. Mr. Reid Advocates Borrowing', *Advertiser*, 13 January 1909, 7.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁷⁹ 'Peace Society', *Advertiser*, 3 December 1907, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Swarthmore College Peace Collection, International Peace Society Collected Records, 1817-1948, <https://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/CDGB/intpeacesociety.htm> viewed 9 March 2016.

¹⁸¹ Australian War Memorial, Australian military history overview, <https://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/boer/> viewed 9 March 2016.

¹⁸² Young, (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence: An Autobiography*, 86; 'A Plea for Peace', *Register*, 3 December 1907, 10.

Peace Society.¹⁸³ Committee members included Miss Spence and Mrs Crawford Vaughan, both influential members of the WNPPA.¹⁸⁴ Spence added that she 'was glad to be able to express my sympathy with the movement by becoming a member' of the Peace Society.¹⁸⁵ Therefore 'International Peace and Arbitration' was borrowed by the WNPPA from the Peace Society. In June 1911, the Peace Society requested the WNPPA provide a speaker for their meeting. While the WNPPA Executive agreed, in return they asked Reverend Gifford to speak to their members.¹⁸⁶ Peace was to take on much greater significance later. The importance of the press in the dissemination of information regarding these organisations, and their goals should not be overlooked. Often newspapers were distributed interstate and overseas.

The Value of the Press

At the September 1909 meeting of the WNPPA, it was decided to 'subscribe and be represented in the organ of the Victorian Non-party Political Association "The Woman Voter"'.¹⁸⁷ This allowed the WNPPA to keep abreast of interstate issues and decisions affecting women and children. Given Vida Goldstein's position as editor, continued ties were maintained with the Victorian Women's Political Association, and the Victorian organisation remained a model for the South Australian organisation. The publication also operated as a means of advertising the WNPPA's own agenda as well as ensuring it was viewed as an organisation of importance in the realm of women's affairs and politics. This effectively engaged South Australian members with wider issues within Australia. Later this expanded to include international matters affecting women and children, thus fulfilling another objective, that of International suffrage.

Not only this but the draft of a letter to Mr Foster Fraser was read to members. A prominent British travel writer, Foster Fraser had visited Australia in 1909, and delivered a lecture in Adelaide attended by WNPPA vice-president, Dr Violet Plummer. The draft letter informed Mr Foster Fraser that women of Australia did take a 'keen and growing interest in politics' contrary to his assertions.¹⁸⁸ Local press reports of an earlier interview by Foster Fraser in Fremantle may have provoked the draft letter. He stated that:

The people of England ... are taking the greatest interest in what is being done by Australian legislators. Personally, I shall enquire into the results of the enfranchisement of

¹⁸³ 'The Peace Society', *Advertiser*, 27 November 1909, 7.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁸⁵ Young, (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence: An Autobiography*, 87.

¹⁸⁶ LWVSA, 21 June 1911, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA.

¹⁸⁷ 'Women's Political Association', *Chronicle*, 18 September 1909, 42.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

your women. I am in favour of female suffrage, and I feel sure it will come about in England one of these days. It has been said that women in Australia do not regard their prerogative with much favour, and don't exercise it as they might do. It would be different in England. I might add that half the women of Great Britain take an interest in politics, though a good proportion of them don't want votes.¹⁸⁹

Foster Fraser was generalising that Australian women were not taking an interest in politics nor using their right to vote. He was ignorant of efforts made by such prominent women as Catherine Helen Spence and Vida Goldstein.

Foster Fraser's 1910 publication *Australia: The Making of a Nation*, was based on his Australian tour. Despite his claims of supporting female suffrage, there is no commentary on South Australian women, neither their political interests nor the fact they had achieved female suffrage in 1894. Neither does he mention that by 1908 all white Australian women over twenty-one could vote in both federal and state elections. This was in contrast to Britain where female suffrage was not achieved until 1918 with conditions, and 1928 for everyone over the age of twenty-one.¹⁹⁰

Foster Fraser added that:

Leading politicians not once, but many times, told me that they would have been unable to take a certain action had they not had the support of certain newspapers; or that they were unable to follow a particular line of conduct because they had not the support of particular journals in favour of that course.¹⁹¹

Such comments from an informed observer confirm the place of the press in Australia, and its recognition as a powerful force. In September 1909, Spence in a letter to the Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, stated that 'Nothing educates people in the principles and practical working of Proportional Representation like a newspaper ballot'.¹⁹² The WNPPA used the press to publish information about its meetings and its annual reports, some letters to the editor, and other material they regarded as important to both inform their members and the general public. This they did to garner support for their objectives. In 1909 the daily press noted that the WNPPA aimed:

To educate citizens to appreciate the value of non-party political and industrial action.

¹⁸⁹ 'Mr. Foster Fraser. Interviewed at Fremantle.', *Advertiser*, 18 August 1909, 7.

¹⁹⁰ British Library, 'Women's suffrage timeline', <https://www.bl.uk/votes-for-women/articles/womens-suffrage-timeline> viewed 18 June 2019. In 1918 women had to be over the age of thirty and either on the Local Government Register (rate-payers) or married to someone who was.

¹⁹¹ John Foster Fraser, *Australia: The Making Of A Nation*, Cassell and Company Ltd., London, 1910, 42.

¹⁹² 'Letter from Catherine H Spence to Alfred Deakin, September 1909', *Papers of Alfred Deakin*, National Library of Australia (NLA), MS1540, 15/926-7.

To protect the interests of women and children and the home, under municipal, State, or national government.¹⁹³

The public were kept well informed about the progress of the WNPPA by the regularity of the publication of these reports.

It is worth noting that many contemporary journalists used pennames. Subsequent research has revealed that the previously mentioned 'Elizabeth', was not a woman, but a single young man. The Editor of the *Weekly Herald* was the author of a page for women writing from an alleged female perspective. Some years later while reflecting on the 'birth of Elizabeth', Geoff Burgoyne, writing under the assumed name of G Elberg, stated he had 'consulted Mrs. J. P. Morice' and engaged her to contribute a column to the newspaper.¹⁹⁴ He added:

When her first letter came to hand I had qualms of doubt. It was excellent stuff which would be enjoyed by the few, but would be caviar to the multitude. Mrs. Morice continued to contribute for some months; but one day she came to see me and said that she would like to be relieved of the task purely because she felt that she was making no contact with readers of the "Herald" and so her column was not pulling its weight.¹⁹⁵

Burgoyne was the son of Thomas Burgoyne, a South Australian Parliamentarian from 1884 to 1915.¹⁹⁶ Born at Port Augusta in August 1877, Burgoyne had been appointed Associate Editor of the *Herald* in 1899 – he had been editor of the *Herald's* predecessor, the *Weekly Herald*.¹⁹⁷ Following Morice's resignation, Burgoyne, unable to find a replacement writer for a woman's column, became 'Elizabeth'. He later wrote that he 'decided to comment on current affairs from a woman's point of view, or what [he] considered would be a woman's point of view' without reporting on domestic life or 'the movements and small beer, generally, of Society'.¹⁹⁸ The column proved successful, although Mary Gilmore, the Australian poet, while applauding Elizabeth did suspect it had been written by a man.¹⁹⁹ Burgoyne stated he

¹⁹³ 'Women's Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 11 September 1909, 4.

¹⁹⁴ G Elberg, 'Along The Inky Way. No. 3. The Birth of "Elizabeth"', *West Australian*, 1 August 1936, 6; G L Burgoyne, *Reminiscences of Adelaide Journalism 1906-12*, PRG 1394/7, SLSA. In a letter to Mr Frederick S Wallis dated 18 December 1936, Burgoyne confirmed his use of the pen-name G Elberg while a free-lance journalist.

¹⁹⁵ G Elberg, 'Along The Inky Way. No. 3. The Birth of "Elizabeth."', *West Australian*, 1 August 1936, 6; G L Burgoyne, *Reminiscences*, mms, D 7924(L), SLSA. In *Reminiscences* Burgoyne wrote: 'I soon recognised that her [Morice] column was over the heads of my readers. After some months, she realised this too. Reluctant to drop this feature I undertook it myself under the pen-name "Elizabeth"'.
¹⁹⁶ 'Mr Thomas Burgoyne, Former Member of Parliament, Parliament of South Australia',

<https://www2.parliament.sa.gov.au/formermembers/Print/DetailPrint.aspx?pid=3662> viewed 7 February 2016.

¹⁹⁷ State Library of South Australia, 'Daily Herald', SA Memory South Australia Past and Present, For the Future, <http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?c=2683> viewed 22 February 2016.

¹⁹⁸ G Elberg, 'Along The Inky Way. No. 3. The Birth of "Elizabeth."', *West Australian*, 1 August 1936, 6.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

was able to 'deceive male readers easily enough; but an intelligent woman was another matter'.²⁰⁰

The South Australian *Weekly Herald* newspaper (12 October 1894-31 December 1898), later the *Herald* (first issue 7 January 1899), and later still the *Daily Herald* (first issue 7 March 1910) operated as the 'official organ of the State Labour Party'.²⁰¹ Its roots were therefore working class, so it is not surprising 'Elizabeth' vented concerns in the way 'she' did. Does knowledge of the real author detract from the published statements? Or does the writing reveal some male sympathy and support for women's causes? The column continued for some years without it seems anyone else suspecting that the writer was a male. It also was apparent that Morice's writings were out of touch with the working-class given her place in a very different echelon of the Adelaide community. Burgoyne's writing skills allowed him to easily communicate with the working class and with women. However, Burgoyne, writing as Elizabeth, was not the only person with concerns about the newly formed WNPPA.

The membership of men was the focus of a meeting held on 17 August 1910 following an application by a Mr Barringer. The meeting debated whether to allow men to join. Ultimately one vote determined that while they could 'become "sympathetic" members of the Association [men] could not attend meetings'.²⁰² Whether Mr Barringer was sympathetic to the cause of women, or just wanting to observe the group's activities as a concerned male is unknown. Perhaps he felt his role as the breadwinner was under threat. A Mrs Barringer was a member - perhaps his wife or mother. The close vote suggests that some women were hesitant to embrace their lives as independent to those of their menfolk, or that some women were confident in their ability to hold their own in the presence of male members. The vote also indicated most women, albeit by one vote, appreciated the need for a closed sanctum where they could discuss political matters affecting women and children. Significantly, the examples of 'Elizabeth' and Mr Barringer highlight some awareness by men of the WNPPA. While Mr Barringer's motives for membership remain unclear, Elizabeth was able to offer what 'she' thought was important advice about the new organisation. It is probable although not recorded that other men were also taking notice.

Most organisations have a Committee, a small group of members who make planning decisions about the management of the group, offering guidance and support to their

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰¹ 'Herald', Adelaide 1899-1910, National Library of Australia, Trove, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/title/396> viewed 5 February 2016.

²⁰² LWVSA, 19 July 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

general members in the decision-making process. Like Western Australia's WSG, the WNPPA was no exception. Once the WNPPA was established, members set about electing women to an Executive Committee, but this was twelve months after their establishment. The organisation's first few months were focussed on operational matters and the constitution. At their October meeting, while the decision was made to elect an Executive committee, the action was deferred until a future meeting, possibly because only twenty-three women were present. Low attendance was blamed on the wet weather.²⁰³ An Executive Committee met for the first time on 24 August 1910 just over twelve months after the inauguration of the organisation. The process of fully establishing the WNPPA was therefore protracted, but one that was carefully evolving.

The need for a more suitable hall for holding the group's meetings took precedence, indicating a growing membership. It was also decided to hold Committee meetings monthly prior to the scheduled General Meeting. At their second meeting held in September 1910, it was resolved 'that the President ... not always [be] asked to act as Chairman but that the Chairman be elected for each meeting from the Committee'.²⁰⁴ This decision ensured all Committee members would take turns in chairing a meeting, fulfilling part of the educational process with women gaining experience in this role. Early members of the Executive Committee included Mrs Lucy Morice as President, Mrs Margaret Wragge, Misses Amy Tomkinson, Leonora Twiss, Edith Devitt, Rhea Loessel, Aitkin, Barringer and Annie Whitham.²⁰⁵ These were women of financial means and influence. Few details, however, are available to identify members Misses Aitkin and Barringer.

The Victorian Women's Political Association in May 1911 urged the WNPPA to support their Irish counterparts. The committee agreed stating:

Having now been enfranchised for years, we workers in the Women's Cause in the State of South Australia urge the Irish Delegates to use their influence on members of their party to secure the passing of the Conciliation Bill for Women's Suffrage during this present Session.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ LWVSA, 15 October 1909, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

²⁰⁴ LWVSA, 21 September 1910, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA.

²⁰⁵ Refer to Kay Whitehead and Lynne Trethewey, 'Edith Devitt, Domestic Science and Feminist Ideas in State Schools, 1910-1925', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, Vol. 29, 2001, 85-94. Also refer to Appendix 1 for short biographical details for some of these women including Rhea Loessel. Her will details have also been checked to provide information for her biography.

²⁰⁶ LWVSA, 10 May 1911, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA.

The Irish Delegates were 'from the Home Rule Party in the House of Commons' (Britain), namely Messrs W A Redmond, Mr R Hazleton, and Mr J T Donovan.²⁰⁷ They visited Australia, including South Australia and towns such as Kapunda, and later New Zealand to bolster support and funds for their Home Rule movement.²⁰⁸ It was later reported they raised £30,000 from their 1911 Australian tour.²⁰⁹

Measures to increase membership numbers were discussed at an Executive meeting of the WNPPA held on 14 July 1911. It was suggested current members be encouraged to 'bring a certain number of new members during the ensuing year of work or in default thereof pay a sum equal to the subscriptions'.²¹⁰ While this was rejected, it does show the committee was exploring ways to encourage new members and contemplating some radical ideas.

Later, on 16 August 1911, the Executive decided a Social was to be held the following month. Admission was sixpence, with the Executive providing 'refreshments'.²¹¹ Social occasions encouraged members to socialise and develop a broader interest in their organisation, and was a measure to maintain their membership. This may have been a response to attempts to increase membership, a focus of their previous meeting.

The organisation's aims and objectives were reviewed in May 1912. Lucy Morice's proposal that the 'prevention of cruelty to children' be added was carried.²¹² At a later meeting it was decided to print and display their objectives in their club rooms so all members were aware of the organisation's aims. However, there were disagreements when meetings deviated from the defined policies as the following reveals.

Seeds of Internal Disharmony

Earlier, at their April 1912 meeting, a Mr Barry spoke against the 'compulsory clauses of the Australian Defence Act' adding he was 'opposed to all military training on ethical, economic, and religious grounds'. Instead, he advocated 'open-air training in systematic physical culture camps and bush life' as a method of discipline, and the development of manliness, qualities he believed that contributed to a healthy and strong nation.²¹⁶

²⁰⁷ 'The Irish Delegation to Australia', *Advocate*, 11 March 1911, 29.

²⁰⁸ For information about the Irish envoys visit to Kapunda refer to Bronte Gould, 'Kapunda's Irish Medical Men, 1848-1914', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 47, 2019, 21.

²⁰⁹ 'Envoys in the Past from Ireland to Australia. An Interesting Letter', *Advocate*, 16 June 1917, 20.

²¹⁰ LWVSA, 14 July 1911, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/ 2/1, SLSA.

²¹¹ LWVSA, 16 August 1911, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA.

²¹² LWVSA, 15 May 1912, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA.

²¹⁶ "'The Curse of Militarism'", *Advertiser*, 19 April 1912, 8.

In October 1912 the committee met at Dr Plummer's North Terrace residence. They considered a decision that had been moved at a general meeting held the previous month. This involved the:

passing [of] a motion of protest against the compulsory clauses of the Defence Act, as this subject is not a part of our platform, & is one on which members differ very strongly. It was decided to hold the meeting after the usual monthly meeting on Oct. 16th.²¹⁷

Minutes of the September general meeting indicated twenty-five women were present. Two representatives from the Women's Auxiliary of the Freedom League gave a presentation on compulsory military training and explained the main reasons for their opposition. Their objection was based on a belief that compulsory training:

interfered with the civil rights & religious freedom of the people & tended to create & foster a military spirit which was not the truest & highest force of patriotism & was in opposition to the world wide movement for international peace.²¹⁸

It was agreed a letter of protest be sent to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Minister of Defence. It was this resolution that upset Violet Plummer who reminded members that the subject was not part of the WNPPA's platform and therefore should not have been considered for action.

To understand the issue, it is necessary to look back in history. In 1870, the last of the British garrisons left the Australian colonies, and subsequently cadet corps for military preparedness and education commenced. Western Australia formed a cadet corps in 1895 and South Australia in 1899. Following Federation, the state cadet corps were incorporated into a national cadet scheme, and this received overwhelming public support with little 'organised resistance'.²¹⁹ The Commonwealth *Defence Act 1903* encouraged males aged twelve to nineteen to join. However, the amended Commonwealth *Defence Act 1911* introduced compulsory cadet training. Craig Stockings noted Australia became 'the first modern English-speaking country to demand universal and mandatory military training in times of peace'.²²⁰ Someone in Adelaide stated: 'it had never been known in the history of the world where the father had to put his son to the front in his place'.²²¹ The compulsory scheme was under the authoritarian rule of the military and concentrated on drill work which

²¹⁷ LWVSA, 7 October 1912, Minutes of Committee and Executive Meetings, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA. Early Committee meetings were often but not exclusively held at Dr Plummer's residence. This was also her place of work.

²¹⁸ LWVSA, 18 September 1912, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1.

²¹⁹ Craig Stockings, 'Australia's boy soldiers: The army cadet movement', in Craig Stockings and John Connor (eds), *Before the Anzac Dawn*, NewSouth, Sydney, 2013, 191.

²²⁰ Stockings, 'Australia's boy soldiers: The army cadet movement', 191.

²²¹ 'Compulsory Training. Australian Freedom League', *Daily Herald*, 1 May 1912, 3.

became boring and led to absenteeism. The Australian Freedom League, an organisation established in Adelaide in April 1912, opposed compulsory training. The two representatives who stated their case at the September WNPPA meeting were from this organisation.

On 16 October the WNPPA held a special meeting on this matter but failed to reach agreement. The matter was postponed to 20 November 1912 when it attracted fifty women. In Dr Plummer's absence Morice acted on her behalf. It was proposed and accepted that the resolution be rescinded on the grounds it was not part of the WNPPA's platform.²²² However, this was to take on greater significance during World War One and the issue of conscription, discussed in Chapter Three. It does question why the WNPPA refused to deal with the issue of compulsory cadets given they were boys aged under twenty-one, and this could be categorised as a form of education, both of which the WNPPA had an interest, in particular refer to points five and six of their platform. If they had been girls, would there have been a different outcome?

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the WSG and the WNPPA appear to be very similar organisations, they had very different beginnings. Owing to the geographical isolation of Western Australia from the eastern states including South Australia, the WSG evolved from the Karrakatta Club which had been influenced by visiting American Emily Brainerd Ryder. American influence has also been noted with other organisations, such as the WCTU in both states and the YWCA in South Australia. South Australia's WNPPA on the other hand, took inspiration from Victoria's Women's Political Association and Vida Goldstein. However, these organisations were similar in their aims and objectives suggesting communication between the two states did occur albeit slowly. In the beginning the WSG's platform was broad, general, and less refined than the South Australian organisation perhaps reflecting the haste at which the organisation was inaugurated.

The inclusion of delegates from other groups gave them an awareness of what other organisations were doing; added to their own membership base and afforded them links and contacts with others. This broadened their sphere. There were many women who were important to these organisations, some more so than others. The role Catherine Helen Spence played in the establishment of the South Australian organisation was pivotal. Spence was a member of many organisations some of which she encouraged to form, was an adherent of proportional representation and a believer in the education of women to use

²²² LWVSA, 16 October and 20 November 1912, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1.

their vote and wisely. Education, she believed, was critical to the success of the woman's vote. The WNPPA had a variety of diverse objectives which reflected contemporary society that was not endemic to South Australia alone. The examination and analysis of these objectives has provided greater understanding of contemporary Australia including Western Australia.

The following chapter examines South Australia and Western Australia and the effect of World War One on the WSG and the WNPPA. The war brought changes that necessitated adaptation by both the WSG and the WNPPA to survive. During the war years the development of additional organisations to contribute towards the war effort resulted in competition for their membership therefore threatening their survival.

CHAPTER THREE: WORLD WAR ONE: THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

As a constituent part of the British Empire, the Commonwealth is also at war against that Power [Germany]. If England is going to Armageddon, Australia will accompany her! She will stand or fall with the dear old Motherland.¹

Editorial, *Register*, 6 August 1914

On 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany. Australia gave its bipartisan support to the British Prime Minister H H Asquith, thus confirming it was also at war.² This was not unexpected as Australia was 'constitutionally bound' to Britain.³ Britain also controlled the foreign policy affairs of countries within the British Empire. The editorial of Adelaide's local press reflected the inevitability that Australia would follow Britain, referred to above as 'the dear old Motherland'. The conflict was the catalyst for change as it had a major disruptive effect and incurred huge financial and economic costs which impacted not only Australians nationwide but the world.

The engagement of men and some women, such as nurses, who enlisted to participate directly in the war created a large void in the Australian workforce. Later, the demands and costs of rehabilitating the physically damaged and psychologically impaired returned servicemen and women had a further major impact on society and the economy. The Women's Service Guild in Western Australia (WSG) and the Women's Non-Party Political Association in South Australia (WNPPA) needed to remain relevant and focussed for several reasons. Firstly, to maintain their organisation's existence. Secondly, to be able to continue their work during the war, and lastly to support Australia's war effort during the crisis. The war, which was not as so often forecast, over by Christmas 1914, provided unique challenges and obstacles for these organisations. They needed to accommodate and adapt to survive when their members joined and engaged in work for patriotic war organisations that flourished during this period.

This chapter focuses on the war years from 1914 when the bloodshed commenced to November 1918 and the signing of the Armistice which signalled the end of war, although it is acknowledged that hostilities continued in some areas after this date. Much has already been written and published about the World War, its impact, and effects in Australia. The

¹ 'God Defend the Right!', *Register*, 6 August 1914, 6.

² Commonly referred to as HH, he was Herbert Henry Asquith. Germany was located thousands of miles from Australia.

³ Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2013, 12; Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2009, 157.

following draws on some of that scholarship to provide background to the WSG and the WNPPA during this period.⁴ The establishment of patriotic war organisations was an important and integral part of the war years as they utilised the services of many women. This chapter discusses these patriotic organisations. As well, Burra in South Australia, similar to many country towns, is presented as a case study of the ways in which its women were involved in the war effort during this period. The impact of both the war and of the establishment of patriotic organisations and their effects on the WSG and the WNPPA are examined in the latter part of the chapter.

As a point of clarification, it was during this period that the WNPPA decided on a slight name change by removing Political from its title because they stated it was 'confusing to most people, and we were so frequently referred to as the Non-Political Society'.⁵ At a committee meeting held 11 June 1917, it was decided to raise the subject of the minor name change at their next annual meeting of members. At that meeting held in July 1917, it was reported the motion for the change of name was carried 'after careful discussion'.⁶ From then the organisation became known as the Women's Non-Party Association. While remaining a political organisation for women, run by women, it is probable 'political' in the title was cumbersome as well as confusing. But most importantly, the group remained without affiliation to any political party, hence retaining its 'non-party' status. To avoid confusion in this chapter, they will continue to be referred to as the WNPPA.

The declaration of war was met with varying reactions and emotions in each state, with historians having differing views on the strength of that public reaction. Neville Meaney indicated the public in Perth greeted the war with enthusiasm, whereas Bobbie Oliver suggested it was in fact met 'quietly'.⁷ In Adelaide, according to Meaney, the news was met

⁴ Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18: Volume XI, Australia During the War*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1939; Bobbie Oliver, *War and Peace in Western Australia: The Social and Political Impact of the Great War 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995; Neville Meaney, *Australia and World Crisis 1914-1923, Volume 2, A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1901-1923*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2009; Melanie Oppenheimer, Margaret Anderson and Mandy Paul, *South Australia on the Eve of War*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2017. Also refer to Frank Bongiorno, 'Labour and the Home Front: Changing Perspectives on the First World War in Australian Historiography', in Kate Ariotti and James E Bennett (eds), *Australians and the First World War: Local-Global Connections and Contexts*, Palgrave Macmillan, Sydney, 2017, 105-122. Bongiorno provides a summary of the various historians and histories published that dealt with the home front in Australia.

⁵ Women's Non-Party Association of South Australia, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, SLSA, 1918; LWVSA, 18 July 1917, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

⁶ LWVSA, 11 June 1917, Committee Minutes, SRG 116/2/1, SLSA; LWVSA, 18 July 1917, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

⁷ Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1980; Neville Meaney, *Australia and World Crisis 1914-1923, Volume 2, A History of*

with less enthusiasm, but Melanie Oppenheimer and Margrette Kleinig suggested otherwise stating up to '20,000 people crammed into Elder Park' to greet the news with cheers.⁸ The public differed in their responses – some greeted the news with jubilation and others, perhaps more concerned and worried, were hesitant about doing so. There were always going to be those individuals who welcomed the declaration of war, and others who did not. In June 1916 Ellie Le Souef, secretary of the WSG, expressed in her personal diary that she 'Felt very savage after church that there was a war at all – It seems to me to be a hideous crime that lives should be so ruthlessly destroyed & homes & lives wrecked'.⁹

The Australian Imperial Force (AIF), by voluntary enlistment, was raised in response to the declaration of war.¹⁰ This led to a growing manpower shortage as young men enlisted. Michael McKernan argued that Australia's lack of experience of war led young men to consider it as a kind of sport at which the Empire would excel.¹¹ Paradoxically, McKernan also believed the Christian doctrine allowed the public to accept the sacrifices made by the men who went to the front. The public gained some solace believing that it was God's will.¹² Australians and others had unrealistic expectations that the war would be won, and it would be of short duration. Little did they consider the overall monetary costs of the conflict. Not only did the actual war cost enormous sums of money, but also in terms of the manpower drain, as well as the medical and psychological impact on those who served – including women as nurses – these were extraordinarily damaging factors. The subsequent loss of men killed in battle, those who later died of injuries or of disease, and others maimed physically or mentally, and requiring rehabilitation when they returned home (plus support for their dependents), all required funds that were in short supply. The states were clearly unprepared for the enormous burden of those who were repatriated.

Some of their injuries were utterly devastating and life-changing, such as blindness and the loss of limbs. This was in addition to mental health issues that followed the witnessing of the devastating carnage which initially was considered as shellshock or war neuroses, but is

Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1901-1923, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2009, 22; Bobbie Oliver, *War and Peace in Western Australia: The Social and Political Impact of the Great War 1914-1926*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995, 27.

⁸ Meaney, *Australia and World Crisis 1914-1923, Volume 2*, 22; Melanie Oppenheimer and Margrette Kleinig, 'Progressive conservatism and boundless optimism' in Melanie Oppenheimer, Margaret Anderson and Mandy Paul, *South Australia on the Eve of War*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2017, 1.

⁹ Le Souef Family Papers, Ellie Le Souef Diaries, 1914-1918, 4370A 637-643, SLWA.

¹⁰ Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2009, 158.

¹¹ Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1980, 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, 18.

now recognised as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Psychiatrists Marc-Antoine Crocq and Louis Crocq stated that 'World War I ... was the first modern war fought with massive industrial means', that is, with advances in weaponry and mechanisation such as the use of gas, aerial bombardment and of military tanks.¹³ In their study, the Crocqs noted that increasing cases of shell-shock led to military medical authorities limiting the 'number of cases' diagnosed as a means of allegedly containing the problem, as well as preserving their military personnel numbers.¹⁴ In her examination of the war and returned Australian servicemen, Marina Larsson stated shell-shock was a 'unifying term that indicated the sufferer was a soldier not a civilian'. She added it was a term used to 'describe almost every mental disturbance experienced by returned men'.¹⁵ Some families were unable to cope with the care of the psychologically or physically damaged returned servicemen therefore necessitating their institutionalisation. Joy Damousi described the disabled soldier as a 'haunting spectacle' that had ramifications for Australia. Their care further impinged on Government finances.¹⁶

Economically, the war was acutely felt with expenditure far exceeding projected costs.¹⁷ Ernest Scott noted the majority of the Australian states were in a budget deficit for the six years from 1914 to 1920.¹⁸ Combined with an Australia-wide drought in 1914-15, and growing unemployment as markets in Europe dried up, the economy was in for a tumultuous time.¹⁹ In late August 1914 'E.H.H.' lamented in South Australia's local press:

I see the awful condition Australia is in, brought about by the war and drought, more especially the war – mines closed, smelters closed, and thousands of men out of work and many women and children on the verge of starvation. And yet with all this state of misery

¹³ Marc-Antoine Crocq and Louis Crocq, 'From shell shock and war neurosis to posttraumatic stress disorder: a history of psychotraumatology', *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2000, 49.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

¹⁵ Marina Larsson, 'Families and Institutions for Shell-Shocked Soldiers in Australia after the First World War', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 101-102. It was unknown how many soldiers were affected by shell-shock, but Larsson cites the official medical historian A G Butler as giving a figure of around eighty per cent.

¹⁶ Refer also to Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999; Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: Living with the Scars of War*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2009; Larsson, "'The Part We Do Not See' Disabled Australian Soldiers and Family Caregiving after World War I", in Martin Crotty and Marina Larsson (eds), *Anzac Legacies: Australians and the Aftermath of War*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2010, Chapter 2, 39-60.

¹⁷ Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18: Volume XI, Australia During the War*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1939, 488.

¹⁸ Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18: Volume XI, Australia During the War*, 483; John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule, *The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War: Volume 4: The War at Home*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2015, 57.

Connor, Stanley and Yule, *The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War*, 16-17. Connor, Stanley and Yule suggested that by 1934 the total expenditure exceeded £830 million.

¹⁹ Connor, Stanley and Yule, *The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War*, 16-17.

there are demonstrations being held practically in every town in South Australia, not for distress purposes, but for the war funds. ... Why not think of some of the distress funds as well!²⁰

The reduction in or loss of European markets because of hostilities led to a decline in employment opportunities for those working in Australian mining or agriculture. Rising unemployment coupled with the drought led to the distress to which EHH alluded, as well as the need for fundraising for the war effort.

Significantly, the declaration of war was accompanied by an impressive proliferation of voluntary patriotic organisations throughout Australia. These groups supported the war effort by their use of philanthropy and mutual aid. Scott emphasised that the 'amount of work done by women [had been] a remarkable feature of the Great War, distinguishing it from every other war'.²¹ Oppenheimer referred to the public response as 'striking' with hundreds of patriotic groups formed.²² While women featured prominently in the voluntary patriotic war organisations, men were not excluded. These war-related organisations provided further opportunities for men who were unable to enlist, as well as women who were never considered for military service, a means by which they could contribute towards the support of Australian soldiers fighting in Europe. Unlike Britain, women in Australia neither took the vacated civilian jobs of serving men, although there were exceptions, nor performed paid work in armament factories during this period.²³

By 1916 the first conscription plebiscite took place and was rejected. This was followed in 1917 by another which also failed. The Government had hoped to bolster the AIF by conscription rather than a reliance on volunteers. The conscription debates have been examined in detail by many historians including P M Gibson in 1963-64 whose article focussed on South Australia; Jenny Stock's 1978 doctoral dissertation also examined the 1916 referendum. More recently, Joan Beaumont's book, and the joint publication by John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule have all included chapters on the conscription

²⁰ 'War and Human Blood', *Daily Herald*, 25 August 1914, 6.

²¹ Scott, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume XI, Australia During the War*, 700.

²² Melanie Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity: 100 Years of Australian Red Cross 1914-1918*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, 2014, 19. Refer also to Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Civilian Volunteers in War*, Ohio Publications, Riverwood, New South Wales, 2002 and in particular 'Giving 'til it Hurts'. Volunteering, 1914-18', Chapter 3, 26-58.

²³ Commonwealth Bank of Australia, 'CBA: Filling Wartime Funding Gaps, 6 November 2018', <https://www.commbank.com.au/guidance/newsroom/cba-wwone-funding-the-war-201811.html%20viewed%2016%20August%202020> viewed 16 August 2020.

The Commonwealth Bank noted that a Bernice Pitcher had joined the bank in 1916 'to cover for the male clerks who had gone off to fight'. This provides one example of a woman in Australia taking the paid position of a man during the war.

question in Australia. Prevailing political attitudes have been examined by Nathan Church's research paper revealing a complex changing situation with Billy Hughes determined to introduce conscription that ultimately met with failure.²⁴ These publications provide an overview of the period, and its complexities. While the first plebiscite was not held until October 1916 the question of the necessity for compulsory military service was raised several months before the first referendum. Evidence from both the WSG and the WNPPA demonstrates their clear focus on the conscription issue.

In April 1916 the WNPPA's meeting included a debate titled 'Is Conscription a suitable measure at the present time?'.²⁵ The minutes record the affirmative speakers noting 'the apparent failure of the voluntary system to secure the necessary numbers of men' as the reason for the implementation of conscription. On the other hand, the negative speakers 'pointed out the immense difficulties which would confront any attempt at conscription and the moral hypocrisy of introducing compulsion into an army which is fighting for the sake of liberty'.²⁶ After a vote, it was declared the negative speakers had won.

Similarly, in June 1916 in Western Australia Ellie Le Souef stated in her diary that the WSG held a meeting about Conscription. She commented that 'I would not like to be President of the guild – worries are too numerous'.²⁷ The fact that both organisations were examining the conscription issue shows they remained in touch with current events that would have effects on not only those who may have been conscripted and their families, but also the whole of Australia.

As hostilities escalated the financial deficit and totally inadequate support services worsened, both of which needed to be resolved. Britain was no longer able to provide financial assistance to Australia, therefore it became necessary to use other means to raise funds.²⁸ Voluntary patriotic organisations and donations had only partially filled the gap for both the support of the war effort as well as helping to manage the return of servicemen.

²⁴ P M Gibson, 'The conscription issue in South Australia, 1916-1917', *University Studies in History*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 47-80; Jenis Marie Stock, *The 1916 Conscription Referendum: An Analysis of Voting Patterns in the Rural Areas of South Australia*, PhD thesis, School of Social Sciences, Flinders University, 1978; Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 238-239, 258-261; Connor, Stanley and Yule, *The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War*, 128-129; Nathan Church, 'Political attitudes to conscription: 1914-1918', Parliament Library Research Paper Series, 2016-17, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/4899280/upload_binary/4899280.pdf viewed 6 August 2020.

²⁵ LWVSA, 15 March 1916, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Le Souef Family Papers, Ellie Le Souef Diaries, 9 June 1916, MN 1391, 4370A/637-642, SLWA.

²⁸ McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 18.

More financial support was necessary. Therefore, the Government's fiscal response to the demands of war involved establishing war loans or bonds by public subscription. Clarence Faulkner examined the Australian Government's fundraising process of floating war bonds or loans to ameliorate the financial deficit. For example, in August 1918 the Seventh War Loan was launched to raise £40,000,000.²⁹ A Central War Loan Committee was appointed in each state, and these were all given a specific quota which they subsequently exceeded. By November 1918, South Australia (with a quota of £3,500,000) had raised, not only a greater amount per capita compared to Western Australia (their quota was £1,000,000), but also in relation to the rest of Australia.³⁰

In August 1918, the *Observer* commented that 'prominent men and women all over the state are asked to hold themselves in readiness' for the seventh war loan, adding it was to be the 'biggest money-raising campaign ever attempted here'.³¹ Faulkner commented that one in seven adult males had contributed to this particular loan.³² However, while most subscribers were believed to be men, it is probable that some women contributed as the League of Loyal Women in South Australia (more of which shortly) encouraged women to invest in war bonds.³³ Mr W A Robyns, publicity officer of the war loans said:

There are thousands who would go to the front if they could, and to them therefore comes the supreme opportunity of registering their influence and weight for victory, and the financial credit of their country.³⁴

In other words, war loans were also a means for those left at home to contribute to the war effort. There were in total 'ten public loans – seven War Loans and three Peace Loans' from 1915 to 1921.³⁵ On the other hand, patriotic war organisations were many and varied, and reflected the extraordinary non-Government means by which the public rallied to aid the war effort.

²⁹ Clarence C Faulkner, *The Commonwealth Bank of Australia: A Brief History of its Establishment, Development and Service to the People of Australia and the British Empire under Sir Denison Miller, K.C.M.G. June 1st, 1912- June 6th, 1923*, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Sydney, 1923, 145.

³⁰ 'Seventh War Loan. South Australia Leads', *Chronicle*, 23 Nov 1918, 12.

³¹ 'The War Loan', *Observer*, 3 August 1918, 27.

³² Faulkner, *The Commonwealth Bank of Australia*, 146.

³³ 'League of Loyal Women', *Red Cross Record*, September 1916, 9.

³⁴ 'Seventh War Loan. Port Pirie Activity. Meeting of Citizens', *Port Pirie Recorder*, 2 August 1918, 3. See also poster: *Women – Help Australia's Sons Win the War*. 1918, available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough, The First World War, Imperial War Museum, http://www.firstworldwar.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/Documents/Details/IWM_PST_01062 viewed 30 November 2017.

³⁵ David S Waller, 'War Loan Bonds in Australia 1915-1921: Patriotism or Propaganda?', *Journal of Non-Profit & Public Sector Marketing*, 1915, Vol. 3, No. 1, 81-96.

Patriotic War Funds and Organisations

Records from the State War Council indicate the extent of patriotic war funds in South Australia, not only the type of organisations established but also their distribution. The State War Council was formed in September 1915 to deal with 'matters concerning the welfare of returned soldiers and other questions arising out of the war'.³⁶ It worked with the Federal Parliamentary War Committee. All patriotic funds were subsequently under the authority and regulation of the State War Council.³⁷ In September 1918 J E Barrett, Deputy Comptroller of the Department of Repatriation, wrote: '... the Parent Societies, Red Cross, Trench Comforts, and Cheer-Up Society have established Circles and Branches throughout the Suburbs, and Country Districts ...' thus indicating a wide distribution of these funds.³⁸ In South Australia the location of some towns participating in patriotic fundraising ranged from Streaky Bay on the far West Coast and the much larger Mount Gambier south-east of Adelaide; Murray Bridge on the River Murray; and Burra in the mid-north. The names of the various patriotic organisations and funds in South Australia and Western Australia can be found in Appendix 2. However, as the South Australian information has been gleaned from one document, it is possible some towns and organisations have been inadvertently omitted.

There were also specific Regimental Funds that existed as extensions of the Trench Comforts Fund such as the 43rd Battalion Trench Comforts Fund and the 3rd Light Horse Comforts Fund. Women, some single, took positions as secretaries or organisers of the various patriotic war fund organisations. For example, Mrs Alexandrine Seager of the Cheer-Up Society; Miss Adelaide L Miethke for the Children's Patriotic Fund (State School Children); and Mrs Rhoda Preedy, the Navy League which provided comforts and aid to returned naval personnel, widows, and their dependents.³⁹ The Navy League had formed in Adelaide in August 1914, initially to support Britain, and assist with the training of sailors.⁴⁰ Of the thirty-six South Australian patriotic organisations documented in the State War Council records of September 1918, twenty-four women were listed as secretary or organiser. These are shown in Figure 3.1. Of the remaining twelve, eight were men, while gender was not indicated in four cases.

³⁶ 'State War Council', *Advertiser*, 17 Sep 1915, 6. Members included the Premier, Crawford Vaughan, Patrick McMahon Glynn and Archibald H Peake.

³⁷ 'Patriotic or War Funds', *Bunyip*, 12 October 1917, 2.

³⁸ NAA: A2488/1 21/19359, 18 September 1918, 'Patriotic Funds', Western Australia, in possession of Melanie Oppenheimer.

³⁹ NAA: A2487/1 21/19359, 24 September 1918, 'Schedule of Patriotic Funds in South Australia', in possession of Melanie Oppenheimer. For brief biographical details of Alexandrine Seager and Rhoda Preedy refer to Appendix 1.

⁴⁰ 'The Week. The Navy League', *Observer*, 29 August 1914, 6.

In contrast in Western Australia, as shown in Figure 3.2, more men held positions as secretaries or organisers of various patriotic fund-raising organisations. Of the forty-five organisations submitted to the Comptroller of the Department of Repatriation in September 1918, thirty secretaries or organisers were men, nine were women and six could not be ascertained or were not stated.⁴¹ When examining the organisations of both Western Australia and South Australia (listed in Appendix 2), it becomes clear that in most organisations dealing with enlisted or formerly enlisted men, males held the positions of secretary or contact persons.

However, battalion funds in South Australia were part of the Trench Comforts Fund organised by the League of Loyal Women. Thus, women provided the contact point in the majority of these South Australian cases. It appears therefore that while women were expanding roles in public life during the war years, this did not include those organisations that were solely for the benefit of returned servicemen. The gender divide in their roles remained in both states. This suggests that the provision of 'comforts' was viewed as an extension of the familiar caring and nurturing roles ascribed to women.

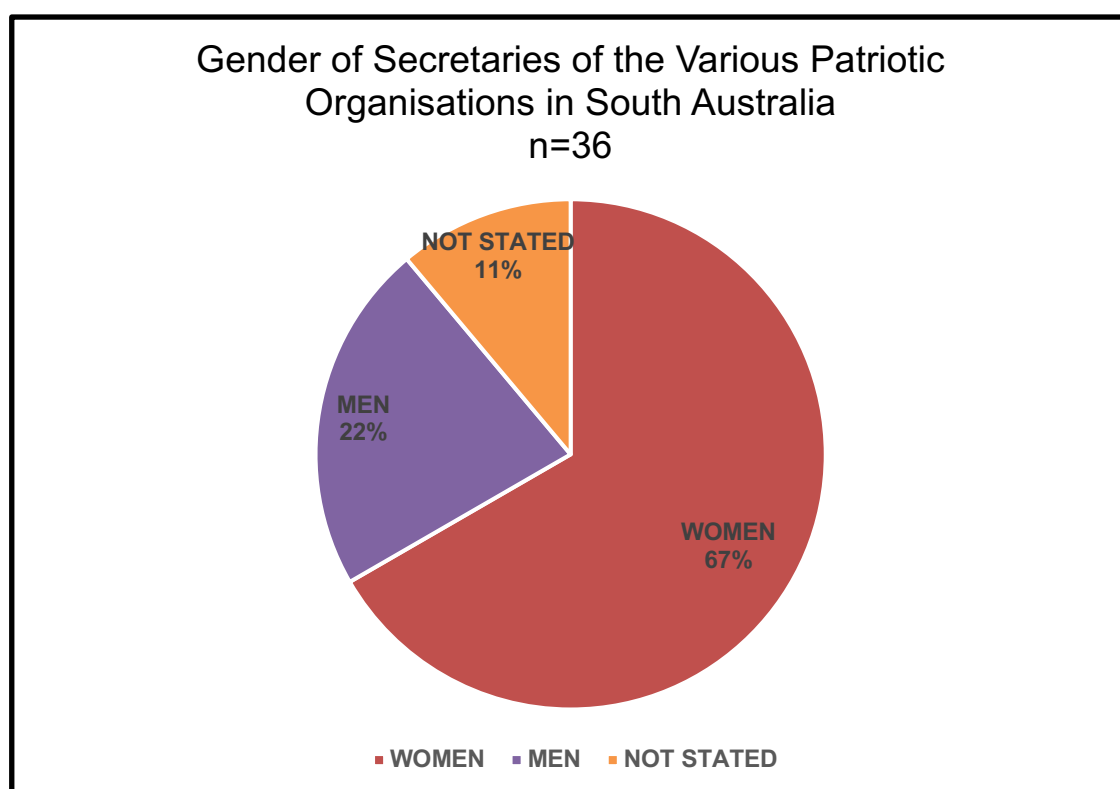


Figure 3.1: The gender of secretaries of the various patriotic organisations in South Australia. (State War Council, GRG 32/20 SRSA).

⁴¹ NAA: A2488/1 21/19359, 18 September 1918, 'Patriotic Funds', Western Australia, in possession of Melanie Oppenheimer.

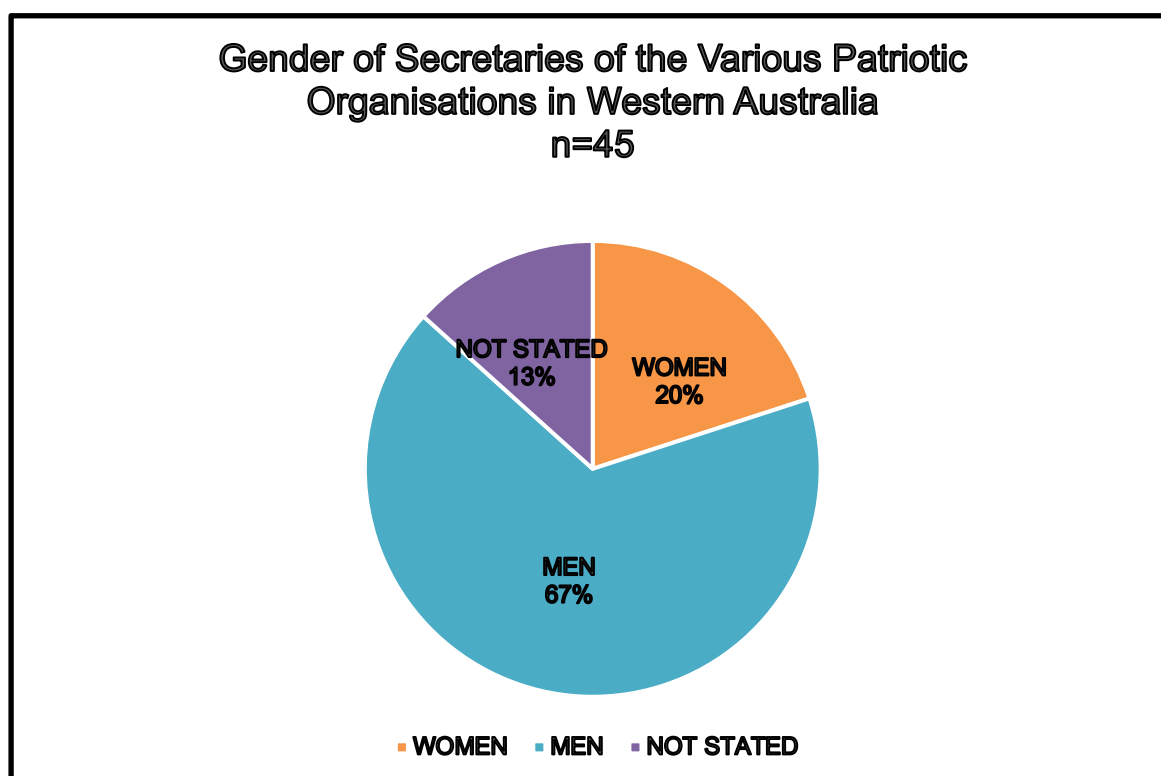


Figure 3.2: The gender of the secretaries of the various patriotic organisations in Western Australia. (NAA: A2487/1 21/19359)

The inaugural meeting of the League of Loyal Women was held at the Adelaide Town Hall on 20 July 1915 with a large number in attendance.⁴² Their motto was 'For God and Empire'. The President, the Governor's wife Lady Marie Galway, stated the League was formed to 'promote a strong sense of fellowship and Imperial duty among women'.⁴³ Mrs J P Morice otherwise Lucy Spence Morice, Dr Helen Mayo and Miss Miethke were vice-presidents. Both Morice and Mayo were members of the WNPPA.⁴⁴ The group assisted various organisations such as the Red Cross, the Wounded Soldiers' Funds and Rifle Funds. It also supported Compulsory Military Training, provided backing to the Navy League, and encouraged women to buy goods and produce from Australia or from Allied countries. Women were also encouraged to minimise waste, especially of food, and as previously indicated, to invest in War Loans. Efficiency and thrift were the main objectives of the League.⁴⁵ But it did not go unnoticed by authorities that patriotic organisations throughout Australia were replicating efforts and resources. For this reason, the League of Loyal Women in Adelaide came under

⁴² 'League of Loyal Women', GRG 31/1, File 244/1915, SRSA.

⁴³ 'The War. The Loyalty of Woman. Patriotic League Formed', *Advertiser*, 27 July 1915, 9. For brief biographical details of Lady Galway refer to Appendix 1.

⁴⁴ 'The League of Loyal Women', *Mail*, 24 July 1915, 13. For brief biographical details of Adelaide Miethke and Dr Helen Mayo refer to Appendix 1.

⁴⁵ 'League of Loyal Women', *Red Cross Record*, September 1916, 9.

the umbrella of the Australian Comforts Fund, a Federal body instituted in August 1916 to monitor and ensure patriotic organisations did not duplicate and overlap in their work.⁴⁶

Contributions to patriotic funds may have been viewed as mandatory rather than voluntary as the following from police records shows. On 10 February 1915 Inspector Burchell of the South Australian police listed eleven foot constables who had failed to make a contribution for either one or two months. He believed that the number of police who did not contribute was increasing which seems surprising given the war had not long commenced.⁴⁷ Perhaps financially they too were struggling. An examination of Burra as a case study of a country town and its patriotic activities during the war can provide important insights about the ways patriotic funds were generated and developed.

Burra and Their Patriotic Organisations

Burra's individual importance becomes clearer in later chapters of this thesis in relation to the Country Women's Association of South Australia. Here it is presented as a case study of a South Australian rural town in which several patriotic war funds were established, including the League of Loyal Women. Burra, located 160 kilometres north of Adelaide, and originally a mining town with a thriving business centre, was later the hub of pastoral and agricultural interests.

It was by no means the only country town to establish patriotic organisations in South Australia or Western Australia. However, difficulties arise in any attempt to compare funds raised during this period because few records have survived. In some towns the local press published the amounts raised, and these have been used together with other records including those from the State War Council. But not all dates coincided. These factors limit the possibility of providing an accurate statistical analysis. For example, Gawler had raised just over £5483 by November 1915, but four years later, in October 1919 it was reported that Clare had raised £15,284.⁴⁸ However, while it appears Clare's contribution was extraordinary, overall figures for the war period in Gawler have not been located.

⁴⁶ 'Australian Comforts Fund', *Register*, 5 August 1916, 10; 'Australian Comforts Fund Formed', *Mail*, 5 August 1916, 7. Other funds included the Citizens' War Chest Fund and the Lady Mayoress's Patriotic League both in Sydney, the Melbourne and Queensland Patriotic Funds, the Victoria League in Western Australia and the Tasmanian On Active Service Fund.

⁴⁷ Correspondence Files – Police Commissioner's Office, 10 February 1915, Inspector Burchell, 'Non contributors to The Patriotic Fund in the Police Force', GRG 5/2 108, File 136/1915, SRSA.

⁴⁸ 'Patriotic War Funds. Splendid Effort in Gawler District', *Bunyip*, 12 November 1915, 3; 'Clare's Contributions to Patriotic Funds', *Northern Argus*, 10 October 1919, 1.

Just twenty days after war was declared, Burra's local press reported a 'Fine Patriotic Meeting' had been held to form the Burra Town and District Patriotic Fund. The speed with which the meeting was called demonstrates a sense of urgency. The meeting was at the behest of its Mayor, Ernest W Crewes, but this was not unique to Burra. Many towns and cities formed such organisations to raise funds for the relief of both the distress caused by the war, and the severe drought.⁴⁹ The Burra meeting was to give residents 'an opportunity of expressing their loyalty to the King and Empire ...'. The Mayor's wife, Eliza Crewes, was assigned to establish a branch of the British Red Cross Society.⁵⁰ Mayor Crewes also sent a telegram to South Australia's Governor, Sir Henry Galway, affirming Burra's '... loyalty to the King and Empire in the great European crisis, and pledged ... to do all in its power to assist in every possible way'.⁵¹ At the close of the meeting a band played the Song of Australia and Rule Britannia, demonstrating allegiance to both Australia and Britain. Thus, Burra's patriotic war effort was launched. In the following weeks and months, branches of other patriotic organisations were established in Burra.

Apart from the Mayor's Patriotic Fund the British Red Cross Society branch was the first of the patriotic organisations to be established. The branch commenced on 25 August 1914 with up to fifty ladies as members. Mrs Crewes was elected President.⁵² This had followed the establishment of the British Red Cross Society in Melbourne several days after the declaration of war.⁵³ Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, wife of Australia's Governor-General and the first Red Cross President, requested the wives of state governors including Lady Galway in South Australia, and Lady Clara Barron in Western Australia, to inaugurate and preside over their state branches.⁵⁴ Reflecting on the past, Lady Galway later noted:

Except for Lady Helen herself, there was, as far as I know, not a living soul in the country who knew anything about the Red Cross. Certainly I was ignorant to the degree of incompetence. I called a meeting of prominent citizens, male and female.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ NAA: A2487/1 21/19359. Memorandum dated 24 Sep 1918 re Patriotic Funds for the Comptroller, Department of Repatriation, Melbourne.

⁵⁰ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details about Eliza Crewes.

⁵¹ 'Great Patriotic Meeting', *Kapunda Herald*, 4 September 1914, 3.

⁵² 'British Red Cross Society. Burra Branch Formed', *Burra Record*, 26 August 1914, 5.

⁵³ Marie Carola Galway, *The Past Revisited: People and Happenings Recalled*, The Harvill Press, London, 1953, 213.

⁵⁴ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographies of Lady Barron and Lady Galway. For information on Lady Helen Munro Ferguson refer to Melanie Oppenheimer, "'The best P.M. for the empire in war?': Lady Helen Munro Ferguson and the Australian Red Cross Society, 1914-1920", *Australian Historical Studies*, 2002, Vol. 33, No. 119, 108-134; Melanie Oppenheimer, 'The 'imperial' girl: Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, the imperial woman and her imperial childhood', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 2010, Vol. 34, No. 4, 513-525.

⁵⁵ Galway, *The Past Revisited: People and Happenings Recalled*, 213.

Lady Helen Munro Ferguson was an adept organiser and manager, and an important role model.

The Mayor of Adelaide, Alfred Allen Simpson, forwarded patterns to the Burra branch, most probably for pyjamas and knitted items such as socks, scarves, and gloves, plus instructions of what was required to enable work to begin immediately. Branches of the Red Cross were also established across South Australia including country areas such as Smoky Bay on Eyre Peninsula, and Kingscote on Kangaroo Island. This also occurred in Western Australia.

In November 1914, a Cheer-Up Our Boys Society was formed in Adelaide. A short time later it became known as the Cheer-Up Society under the leadership of Mrs Alexandrine Seager. William Sowden, the editor of the *Register*, one of Adelaide's daily papers, became its President. His influence was significant – he published various letters and reports encouraging public support.⁵⁶ In May 1915, a branch of the Cheer-Up Society was formed in Burra to counter an emerging lack of 'public recognition' for local boys departing for the war front in comparison to the 'rousing and enthusiastic send-off' for the first troops the previous year.⁵⁷ It was therefore proposed that those girls without brothers at the front should organise both the send-offs and returning-home welcomes rather than leaving this to the soldiers' relatives.⁵⁸ However, while it was suggested that the ladies form a working committee with power to add to their number and able to elect their own officers, women present at the inaugural meeting asked Mayor Crewes and several men to become Treasurer, Vice-Presidents, and President respectively. This suggests that these women were hesitant to take on these positions, possibly due to inexperience and a lack of confidence. Despite the fact that women were granted the right to vote in South Australia in 1894 and Federally in 1902, the Burra committee procedure shows that some women were still dependent on men to make decisions on their behalf.

Concerns were expressed about the duplication of various comfort items, but it was decided any 'surplus articles' were to go to the Red Cross Society. Significantly, at their July 1915 meeting, Mayor Crewes announced the order of proceedings would change for that evening, the ladies were to speak allowing the gentlemen to rest. He added that in the future, 'we cannot allow the gentlemen to have all the say'.⁵⁹ However, records do not reveal whether women were given equal speaking rights from that point onwards.

⁵⁶ 'Burra Cheer-Up Society', *Burra Record*, 28 July 1915, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

As an indicator of the success of Burra's patriotic efforts, the new Cheer-Up Society Hall in Adelaide was named the Burra Hall with Mayor Crewes unveiling a plaque in February 1916.⁶⁰ This was a tribute to the contribution from the Burra district reaching more than £15,000 which totally paid for the hall. The local press reported it 'was without a parallel in proportion to the population'.⁶¹ Previously, in June 1915 Mayor Crewes had announced that Burra had raised over £3000 in cash, clothing, blankets and sheets for the war effort so the larger sum in 1916 was exceptional.⁶² Burra and district's population was 2171 in 1911.⁶³ In comparison, by July 1915 the Corporation of Gawler, with a population of 3450 in 1911, had raised £5000 in cash and goods, somewhat more than Burra at that time.⁶⁴ Figures for Gawler in 1916 are unknown. McKernan questioned whether patriotic fundraising activities were more an 'excuse for socialising', but the extent of Burra's total would appear to contradict or at least challenge this notion.⁶⁵

In April 1915 a committee for the Belgian Relief Fund was established in Burra. It aimed to provide funds for the seven million Belgians affected following Germany's invasion of Belgium. In September, Mayor Crewes praised the generosity of Burra's residents in supporting these organisations with time, money and materials voluntarily given, making particular note of the fact that nearly all of Burra's women were involved in some way.⁶⁶ In addition, various Australia Days, then held in July, raised funds for wounded soldiers.

On 31 May 1915, a Soldier's Aid Society was formed at Burra in response to Lady Galway's appeal for assistance for wounded returned servicemen. Government failure to provide for these soldiers was the catalyst for its establishment.⁶⁷ The meeting was convened by the Reverend J C Jennison and Mr C Bartholomaeus, both of Burra. Abberton Park, a local residence was even offered for use as a hospital for up to twenty-five wounded regional soldiers. However, the authorities declined this offer because of the distance from Adelaide, and the logistics of transporting injured soldiers.

⁶⁰ 'The "Burra Hall" of the Cheer-up Hut', *Burra Record*, 23 February 1916, 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶² 'Original Correspondence. The European War. What Burra Had Done and Is Doing!', *Burra Record*, 2 June 1915, 5.

⁶³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, Taken for the night between the 2nd and 3rd April 1911*, Part XIV - Summary, Local Government Area, 2246, 2247.

⁶⁴ 'War Funds', *Chronicle*, 24 July 1915, 12.

⁶⁵ Michael McKernan, *Australians at Home World War I*, The Five Mile Press, Scoresby, 2014, 192.

⁶⁶ 'French Flag Day at Burra', *Burra Record*, 22 Sep 1915, 5.

⁶⁷ 'To Assist Our Wounded. Enthusiastic Meeting at Aberdeen', *Burra Record*, 9 June 1915, 1; 'Soldiers Aid Society, Burra', *Burra Record*, 9 June 1915, 5.

None of these organisations worked in isolation from each other. In September 1915, the *Burra Record* reported on a successful French Flag Day where £300 was raised to aid the French Red Cross. Burra's Red Cross, the Cheer-Up Society and the Soldiers' Aid Society worked together to provide lunches and afternoon teas, sales of buttons and ribbons, as well as decorating the Rotunda for the occasion.⁶⁸ In 1917, the annual reports of these three societies were jointly published, indicating their continued links. These organisations effectively formed a collective utilising voluntary action to achieve their aims. Table 3.1 summarises the various patriotic organisations that were formed in Burra, and their dates of inauguration.

Table 3.1: Burra's Patriotic Organisations during World War One showing dates of establishment.

ORGANISATION	PARENT GROUP	DATE IN BURRA	INSTIGATOR
Burra Town and District Patriotic Fund		24 Aug 1914	Mayor Ernest Crewes
Red Cross Society	Melbourne August 1914	25 Aug 1914	Lady Helen Munro Ferguson to Lady Galway
Belgian Relief Fund		November 1914	Lady Galway to Mayor Crewes
Cheer-Up Society	Adelaide, November 1914	Burra May 1915	Alexandra Seager, William Sowden and others
Soldiers' Aid Society		31 May 1915	Lady Galway
League of Loyal Women	Adelaide, June 1915	29 Jan 1918	Lady Galway
Leighton Ladies Guild		Leighton hall opened 1909	
Australia Day		July 1915	Premier to Mayor Crewes

Not all Burra organisations performing patriotic war work were newly formed. The Leighton Ladies Guild was one such example. Situated thirteen kilometres from Burra, Leighton was more a locality than a town although its post office was opened in 1877, and a school in 1880. Both appear to have remained in existence into the early twentieth century.⁶⁹ The Leighton Ladies Guild, together with women from nearby Mount Bryan and Booborowie, contributed to the patriotic funds by working in collaboration with the Burra Red Cross

⁶⁸ 'French Flag Day at Burra', *Burra Record*, 22 September 1915, 5.

⁶⁹ Geoffrey H Manning, *Manning's Place Names of South Australia*, Adelaide, 1990, 178.

Society and the Cheer-Up Society.⁷⁰ The Guild appears to have been established a short time after the Leighton Hall was opened in 1909. Mary Warnes (see Figure 3.3) became its president.

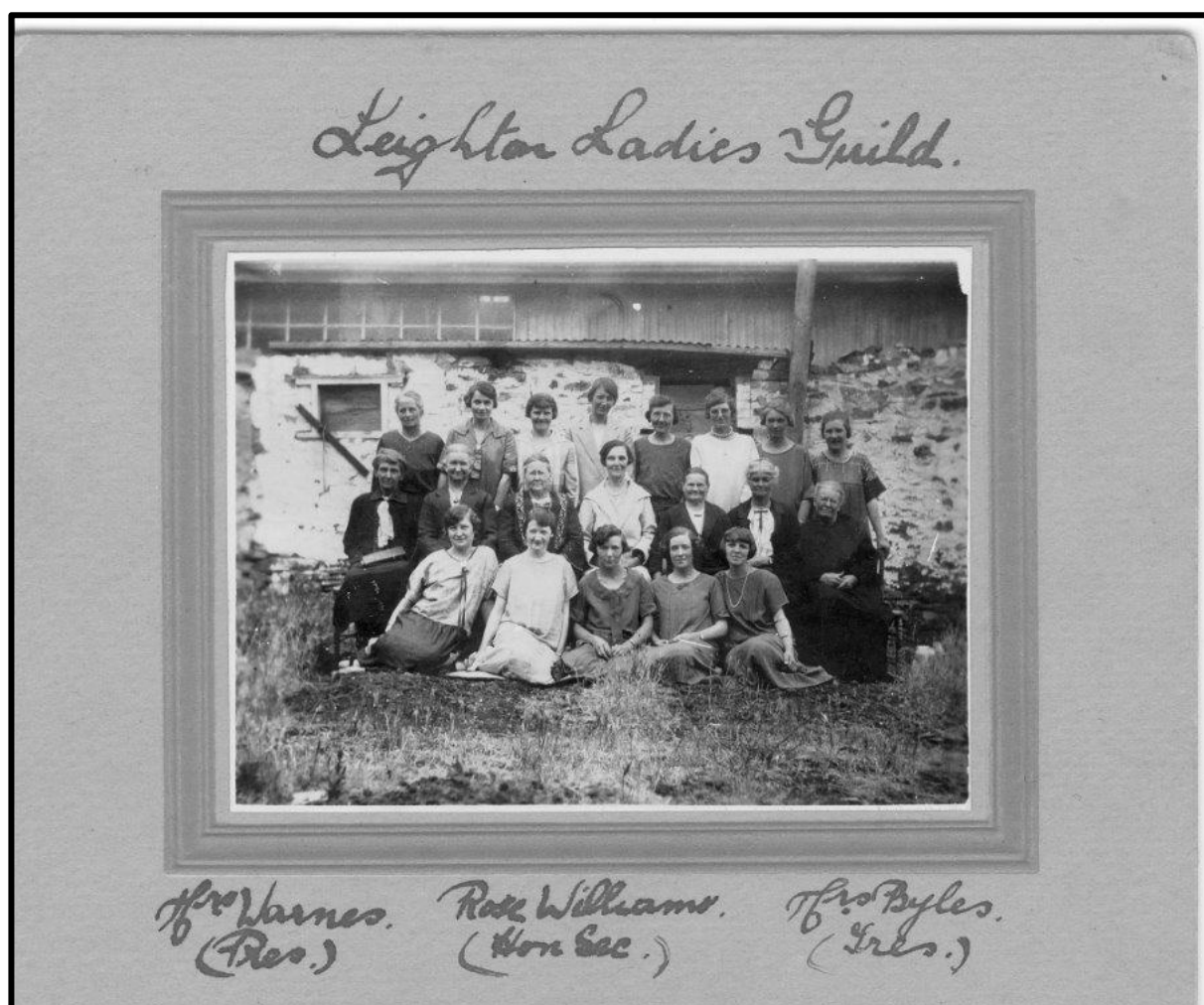


Figure 3.3: Leighton Ladies Guild, date unknown. Mary Warnes, President seated in the middle row fourth from right. (Courtesy of Meredith Satchell, Burra).

While Burra has been the focus, there were other country towns in both Western Australia and South Australia that formed patriotic funds. For example, Clare in South Australia's mid-north with a population slightly larger than Burra, advertised the various funds in the area raising money. As a comparison, the following Table 3.2 provides population figures for Burra and some other country towns in South Australia. Branches of organisations formed included the Red Cross Society, Belgian Relief Fund, Cheer-Up Society and the Trench Comforts Fund, as well as the Young Men's Christian Association. Some lesser-known

⁷⁰ 'Burra Cheer-Up Society', *Burra Record*, 28 July 1915, 3.

funds included the Billy Can Fund, the Lady Galway Club, and various Australia Day funds, as well as money raised for a Second Drum for Troops to name just a few.⁷¹ This shows the depth, breadth and diversity of patriotic funds. Oppenheimer added that ‘almost anyone could find a fund to suit their political and social beliefs and their pocket’.⁷² However, the effects of the war on the home front extended beyond the establishment of patriotic organisations.

Table 3.2: South Australia: Population of select Country Centres in 1911. (1911 Australian Census data). Note: Petersburg name was later changed to Peterborough.

PLACE	CORPORATION	DISTRICT COUNCIL	TOTAL
Burra	1751	420	2171
Clare	882	1541	2423
Gawler & Gawler Sth	1814	1636	3450
Petersburg	-	-	2320

The Impact of the War on the Women’s Organisations

Existing women’s groups examined by this thesis, including Western Australia’s WSG and South Australia’s WNPPA, were also affected in various ways. The war had brought about an irrational and misplaced fear of those persons in Australia who were of German or Austro-Hungarian descent or their spouses, and others considered as enemy aliens.⁷³ Because of their non-English surnames some members came under close scrutiny following the declaration of war and were viewed as a possible threat to Australia. World War One brought about an acute awareness that Australia’s loyalties were with the British, and this created a distrust of those persons of non-British descent. Bill Gammage noted that ‘[b]y October 1914 most German nationals in Australia were interned, and most citizens of German origin or extraction were subject to social, economic and legal bars’.⁷⁴ Beaumont

⁷¹ “Clare’s Contributions to Patriotic Funds’, *Northern Argus*, 29 September 1916, 1.

⁷² Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay*, 29.

⁷³ The *War Precautions Act 1914* ensured ‘enemy aliens’, those people who were from countries at war with Australia, or were their descendants, were registered and monitored, or even interred. This included people from countries other than Germany. According to the *Advertiser*, 29 July 1914, 10, “All aliens in Australia must register after October 31, in accordance with regulations under the War Precautions Act issued today. The regulations apply to aliens over the age of 15 and include aliens’ wives”. For example, Olaf Magnus, born in Estonia, Russia in 1895, arrived in South Australia in 1914, applied for Naturalisation in late November 1917, and it was discovered he had failed to register as an alien therefore he was given four months in gaol. He married in mid 1918 to a South Australian born woman and had several children by her, but deserted the family in 1923 as was still unable to obtain his Naturalisation. See his file, Olaf MAGNUS naturalisation, 1923/3054, National Archives of Australia.

⁷⁴ Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1975, 5.

added that these people or their descendants were the first to be placed under surveillance by the authorities citing 'conflicting loyalties' as a contentious issue. The public soon began to suspect any person of German descent, or with a Germanic name, or others with foreign surnames irrespective of whether they were Australian born.⁷⁵ For example, in Western Australia a gossip report in the *Sunday Times* of April 1916 pertaining to the WSG and referring to the 'German element' in that organisation stated:

Members of a certain women's organisation are working hard to have the German element removed from the list of office-bearers at a forthcoming election. One prominent lady has a German name, her husband being of German extraction. Another is the descendant of Germans, as her maiden name indicates, but her hubbie is doing his "bit" for King George.⁷⁶

The WSG were definitely not working to remove its alleged German element – such false claims were an irrational reaction to the war, one fanning the flames of fear about people from non-British backgrounds. Bessie Rischbieth was the 'prominent lady' with a German surname – her husband was Henry Wills Rischbieth, they had married at Kent Town near Adelaide in 1898. He was born in 1866 at Mount Gambier, South Australia.⁷⁷ The WSG Secretary, Ellie Le Souef was the other. Le Souef recorded the press report in her personal diary noting she had 'Bought a S. [Sunday] Times & see that some members are working to get rid of Mrs R. & me from the officebearers [sic] in G. [Guild] call us the "German element"'.⁷⁸ Ellie Le Souef was the wife of the Perth Zoo Director, Ernest Le Souef, and the daughter of Reverend Frederick and Louise Hagenauer, long-time missionaries at an Aboriginal mission in Victoria.⁷⁹ Reverend Hagenauer was German born, and became a naturalised Australian in 1863.⁸⁰ Le Souef's husband had enlisted in the Australian Army Veterinary Corps in June 1916.⁸¹ Beaumont refers to this reaction as 'hysteria ... fuelled by hyperactive imagination[s]', or perhaps by 'personal malice'.⁸² Not only this but German sounding place names were changed because of the anti-German feeling. South Australia was the 'most German of the Australian states' with various towns settled by German

⁷⁵ Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 46

⁷⁶ 'Perth Prattle', *Sunday Times*, 23 April 1916, 62.

⁷⁷ On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, SAGHS, <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>.

⁷⁸ Le Souef Family Papers, Ellie Le Souef Diaries, 23 April 1916, MN 1391, 4370A/637-642, SLWA.

⁷⁹ 'Le Souef Family Summary', SLWA, 2011; 'Death Notice – Ellie Le Souef', *Argus*, 7 August 1947, 9. Notice inserted by Ellie's brothers notes the parents were formerly of Ramahyuck Mission Station, Gippsland, Victoria.

⁸⁰ Friedrich August Hagenauer, 'Index to Naturalisation Certificates, 1851-1900', VPRS 4396, Public Record Office of Victoria, Australia. Friedrich August Hagenauer naturalised on 9 September 1863, Occupation "Missionary to the Aborigine[sic] Aboriginal Mission Station, near Lake Wellington, Gippsland". Born in 'Hohenlentzen, Reuss, Germany'.

⁸¹ NAA: B2455, Ernest Albert Le Souef, 1914-1920.

⁸² Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 48.

immigrants in the nineteenth century, such as Hahndorf and Lobethal both near Adelaide. Petersburg in the mid-north became Peterborough.⁸³ An Act of Parliament was subsequently passed in that state to ensure these names were changed.⁸⁴ However, there were other ways by which war affected these organisations.

The WNPPA's Annual Report of 1915 attested that attendances at meetings decreased as members became 'engrossed with Red Cross and other work that they found little time to attend meetings'.⁸⁵ By 1918 the WNPPA had decided to 'discontinue afternoon meetings for the present, as members are so much occupied in different kinds of patriotic work'.⁸⁶ That same year it was noted that 369 Red Cross branches had been established in South Australia, proof of the demands of war.⁸⁷ Therefore, a decline in membership could have been expected as women became increasingly involved with patriotic war organisations.

Fewer members meant smaller subscriptions for the organisations, and consequently some difficulty in remaining financially viable. Furthermore, in November 1914 the WNPPA saw the departure of two members for the front, Nurses Heritage and Chapman. Nurse Norma Heritage had completed her training at the Adelaide Hospital in 1906, passing with honours and was awarded a gold medal for her outstanding results; she enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service and served at Mena near Cairo and later in France. Heritage was demobilized in July 1917 owing to illness, yet she remained in the reserves.⁸⁸ She also worked at the Keswick Military Hospital near Adelaide (refer to Figure 3.4 which shows Nurse Heritage with some of her patients).⁸⁹ At the time of the declaration of war, Norma Heritage was employed with the Education Department as a 'school nurse and health inspector'.⁹⁰ It was through this role that she came into contact with some of the WNPPA hierarchy such as Dr Gertrude Halley chief medical officer of the Education Department. However, identifying the second farewelled nurse, Nurse Chapman, has been difficult

⁸³ Peter Monteath, 'German South Australia on the eve of war', in Melanie Oppenheimer, Margaret Anderson and Mandy Paul, *South Australia on the Eve of War*, Wakefield Press, Mile End, 2017, Chapter 9, 153-175.

⁸⁴ South Australia, *Nomenclature Act 1917*. Names such as Hahndorf and Lobethal were changed to Ambleside and Tweedvale respectively.

⁸⁵ WNPPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1915.

⁸⁶ WNPPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1918.

⁸⁷ Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity*, 26.

⁸⁸ 'War Sister to Marry. Matron Heritage's Long Record', *News*, 9 January 1925, 5; Joan Durdin, *Eleven Thousand Nurses: A History of Nursing Education at the Royal Adelaide Hospital*, Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide, 1999, 229; 'Nurses For The Front. South Australia's Contribution', *Advertiser*, 27 November 1914, 8; NAA: B2455, Norma Eleanor Sarah Heritage, 1914-1920.

⁸⁹ Photograph, 'Diggers Ward', No. 15 Ward, Sister Heritage and patients, Keswick Hospital, Circa 1916, B26285/108, SLSA.

⁹⁰ 'War Sister to Marry. Matron Heritage's Long Record', *News*, 9 January 1925, 5. Also refer to Appendix 1.

because there were two nurses with the surname of Chapman, both from South Australia.⁹¹ It is unknown whether any WSG members went to the war front.



Figure 3.4: 'Diggers War', No. 15 Ward, Keswick Hospital showing Sister Heritage and her patients. (SLSA 26285/108).

Despite this, membership subscriptions, converted from pounds and shillings and expressed in pence for the WNPPA in the absence of actual membership numbers, suggests a different story. After an initial slight decrease, there was a small steady increase to 1918, then a very slight decrease in 1919 (refer to Figure 3.5). This suggests the organisation was able to maintain its membership base, albeit with a modest increase during the war. In contrast, the WSG chart (Figure 3.6), shows a steady rise in the number of members. However, figures for 1918 were missing. The major difficulty for analysing membership in both organisations was the lack of membership rolls. These charts therefore are a guide only.

⁹¹ Identifying Nurse Chapman has been difficult as she could be one of two people, both born in Adelaide and both of whom enlisted in November 1914. Refer to NAA: B2455, Agnes Craig Chapman, 1914-1920; NAA: B2455, Eva Helen Chapman, 1914-1920. See also Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Gertrude Halley.

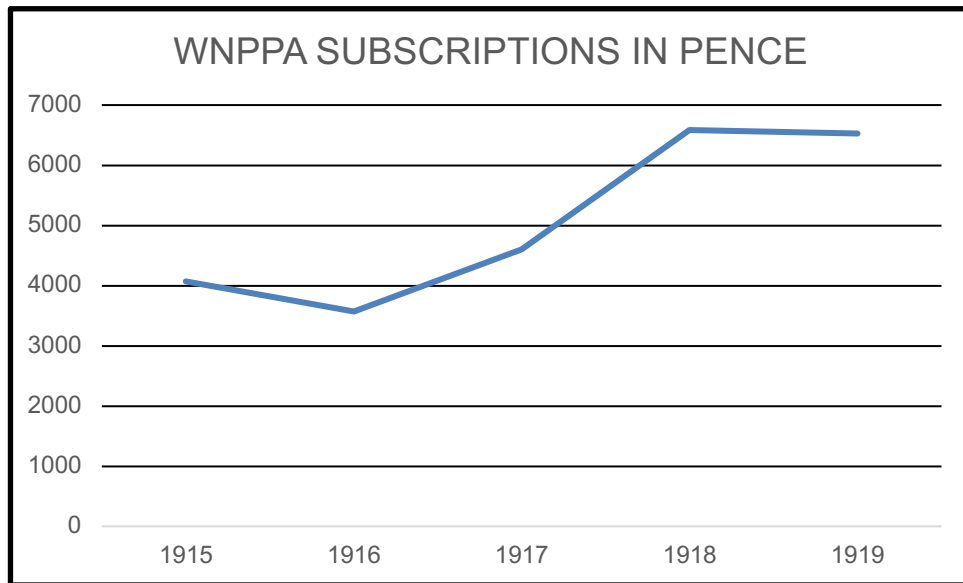


Figure 3.5: WNPPA Subscriptions in pence.

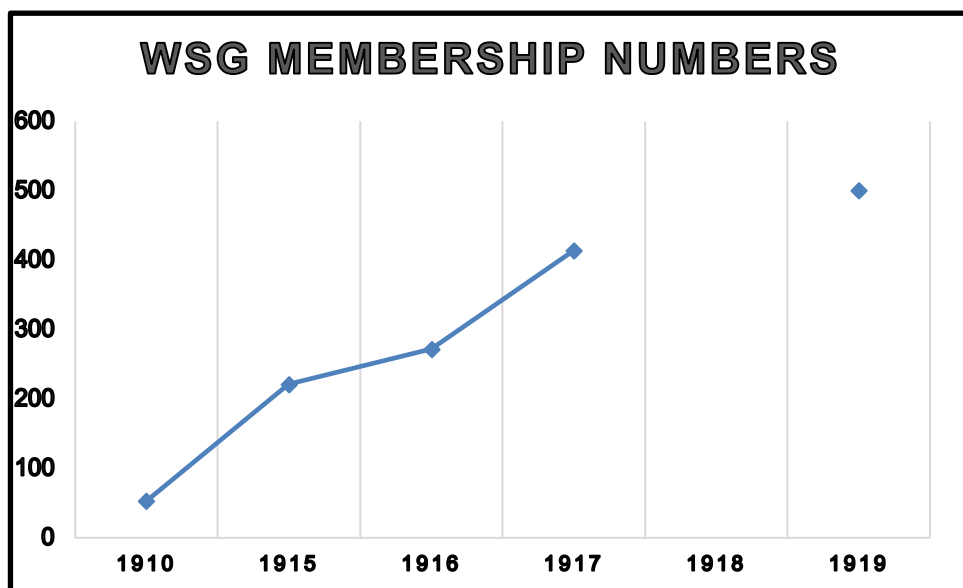


Figure 3.6: WSG Membership Numbers. Figures for 1918 were missing.

If the WSG chart is correct, why was there a steep and continual increase in members compared to the WNPPA's membership? Several factors could explain this. Firstly, the WNPPA chart is expressed in pence, having converted the amount the organisation received from pounds and shillings. In comparison the WSG membership was expressed in the numbers of members that were cited in annual reports. In some years Life membership of the WNPPA was mentioned, but not in others. This could have been because there were none offered in that particular year, or the report failed to separate the life member figures

from the total of subscriptions received. Secondly, there were difficulties in ascertaining the cost of a single membership in each organisation for every year. What can be deduced is that both organisations managed to maintain their membership base during the First World War. The number of members involved in various patriotic organisations, such as the Red Cross, is unknown.

Reflecting some years later on the WSG, Bessie Rischbieth indicated members 'joined Red Cross Circles and Camp Comforts Committees' at the outbreak of the First World War. The Red Cross was established in Western Australia by Lady Barron following a public meeting held at Government House on 31 August 1914 for interested people, irrespective of class. Lady Barron became patroness of the new organisation which was headed by Mr Prowse, the Mayor of Perth, as President. Vice-presidents included some familiar names, such as Lady James, and Mrs Edith Cowan who became a committee member.⁹² Sir Edward Stone, a former Chief Justice of Western Australia, when reading out the names of the executive, claimed that:

while the war which had brought out the best manhood for the British colours and the best womanhood to work as hard as they had ever done in the past in such times of trial, it had drawn the people closer together in bonds of love and interest in the common welfare.⁹³

His statement once again affirmed that Australia's imperial links with Britain led to a sense of duty to the motherland. Patriotism, however, was a two-edged sword – on the one hand duty and allegiance to Australia, and on the other hand to Britain. Bobbie Oliver agreed that in Australia, as a country of majority British descent, it was understandable Australians supported Britain in the war. She added that Western Australia was 'economically, militarily and emotionally dependent on Britain', therefore suggesting the necessity to support Imperialism for the state's survival.⁹⁴ This was probably true for the other states including South Australia.

On 15 September 1914, the WSG received a letter outlining the aims of the newly formed Western Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society. Words and phrases such as

⁹² 'The Red Cross Society. Formation of Western Australian Branch', *West Australian*, 1 September 1914, 8.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁴ Oliver, *War and Peace in Western Australia*, 32. Oliver also refers to enlistment numbers for the preceding South African War, often also known as the Boer War. Over 2000 men from Western Australia enlisted compared to 1200 from South Australia, resulting in Western Australia being credited with the reputation as the most loyal of the Australian colonies. However, in terms of population figures, South Australia was double that of Western Australia. But Western Australia's male population was greater and this accounted for the higher enlistment numbers and therefore the assumption they were the most patriotic state.

finding 'articles for the RELIEF of the SICK AND WOUNDED by TENS OF THOUSANDS'; and the Red Cross Society's work was of 'VITAL MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE' [original emphasis], could not have failed to attract volunteers and impress upon women the urgency and seriousness of the war situation.⁹⁵ In Western Australia there was a total of 148 branches with membership 'overwhelmingly female'.⁹⁶ Surprisingly, the Red Cross appears to have supported the enlistment of men for the war. Even in 1918, the *Red Cross Record* stated '... the finer type of Australian girl brings out the nobler qualities in a man, and encourages him to go to fight for the Empire, while the poorer type keeps him at home'.⁹⁷ This suggests a class divide between those who supported the enlistment of their husbands, sons or brothers, and those who wanted them to remain at home. It also highlights dilemmas faced by mothers such as Britomarte James from Victoria, mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, whose personal reminiscences reveal her emotions varied from not wanting her sons to enlist for fear of losing them, to wanting them to join out of a sense of duty to their country and Empire.⁹⁸

During this period, both organisations continued their work. For example, the WNPPA in 1915 lobbied for the inclusion of a female representative as Protector of the Aborigines, and as a member of the Destitute Board. Not since the death of Catherine Helen Spence in 1910 had a woman been appointed to the Destitute Board. The WNPPA continued to work for Equal Pay for Equal Work; attended the Children's Court to monitor cases; and lobbied municipal bodies for public toilets. In 1916 a deputation to the Chief Secretary lobbied for a female representative to be appointed to the Board of Management of the Wounded Soldiers' Fund, and for changes to inheritance laws. They also recognised the need for the appointment of women to municipal councils so their voices could be heard; and they lobbied for the inclusion of women as Justices of the Peace.

Similarly, the WSG lobbied for better toilets in the city. They also supported the appointment of women to councils, and as official visitors to the Hospital for the Insane. As well, they sent deputations to the Prime Minister regarding the Naturalisation Act and marriage, and the Divorce Act. The WSG also supported Equal Pay for Equal Work, as well as continued their

⁹⁵ 'West Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society', letter dated 15 September 1914, WSG, 7750A/30.

⁹⁶ Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity*, 26, 27.

⁹⁷ 'Australian Girl in Wartime', *Red Cross Record*, February 1918, 21.

⁹⁸ Mrs Britomarte James, 'My personal reminiscences of the war, August 1914 – August 1918', ML MSS 2871, Mitchell Library, New South Wales. Britomarte James visited Adelaide in 1922 in her capacity as President of the Metropolitan Branch of the Women's section of Victorian Farmers' Union.

support for child welfare issues. One of their major achievements was the establishment of a maternity hospital, an important early objective.

Achievements of the Women's Organisations To 1919 in Western Australia

In November 1909, just a few weeks after their inauguration, the WSG organised a public meeting attended by around 400 persons, held at Government House, to discuss the establishment of a maternity hospital. Lady Edeline Strickland, the Governor's wife, presided.⁹⁹ Those present included several members of parliament, medical practitioners, and religious representatives such as the influential Anglican Bishop Charles Riley.¹⁰⁰ In a ground-breaking decision that went against accepted norms, Mrs Frances Ruffy-Hill, a foundation WSG member, proposed that a planned hospital for women not only admit married women but also those who were single and pregnant. Not everyone was in agreeance. An unnamed medical practitioner suggested married women were 'highly sensitive' and would refuse to use the new maternity hospital if single pregnant women were admitted.¹⁰¹ Mrs Edith Cowan asserted that the hospital was for all women whether married or not. Medical practitioners were divided, while Bishop Riley preferred to delay the decision until the formation of a committee which could then decide who was to be admitted to the hospital. William Dartnell Johnson MLA agreed with the bishop, while Timothy Quinlan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, tried to dismiss the motion when he stated the 'amendment was not in order'. However, Madge Cort, secretary of the Women's Workers' Union, urged a resolution be decided there and then, otherwise her association 'would not lift a finger to help the project'.¹⁰² Cort probably had her own personal experiences for supporting this amendment.¹⁰³ Despite the mounting pressure on Mrs Ruffy-Hill, she refused to withdraw her amendment, asking that it to be put to the meeting. It was carried by an 'overwhelming majority'.¹⁰⁴ This episode provides a compelling example of the power of women's voluntary action arising from the unification of various voluntary organisations – the WSG in combination with others was able to achieve a momentous gain for the benefit of all women. Had they not insisted on the inclusion of single women, it is possible these women would have been excluded as had been the case at South Australia's maternity hospital. The

⁹⁹ Refer to Appendix 1 for details about Lady Edeline Strickland.

¹⁰⁰ Refer to a brief biography of Bishop Riley by Peter Boyce, 'Riley, Charles Owen Leaver, (1854-1929)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/riley-charles-owen-leaver-8213> viewed 16 October 2020.

¹⁰¹ 'Proposed Maternity Hospital', *Western Mail*, 13 November 1909, 57. Some of the people present at the meeting were the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Edward Stone, Bishop Charles Riley, Sir Edward Wittenoom, and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Mr T F Quinlan.

¹⁰² 'Proposed Maternity Hospital', *Western Mail*, 13 November 1909, 57.

¹⁰³ For more details about Madge Cort refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁰⁴ 'Proposed Maternity Hospital', *Western Mail*, 13 November 1909, 57.

Queen's Home in Adelaide, established in 1901 as a maternity and training hospital, admitted married women only, a situation that continued until 1917.¹⁰⁵

In June 1910 it had been resolved the hospital for women was to be named the King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) to commemorate the late King who had died the previous month.¹⁰⁶ The WSG's Annual Report of 1910 recorded that its members 'must urge all women to bear this important matter [of the Maternity Hospital] constantly in mind, so that by continued effort we shall some day have this much needed Maternity Home an accomplished fact'.¹⁰⁷ Although it was a long process before the hospital became a reality, this also demonstrates the necessity for these organisations to engage in continual lobbying to achieve their goals. Bessie Rischbieth described the establishment of a maternity hospital as an 'epic struggle'.¹⁰⁸

After sustained pressure on the Government by the WSG, the hospital came to fruition following 'six years of broken promises'.¹⁰⁹ Both married and single pregnant women were admitted, as well as women needing treatment for gynaecological problems. It was also a training hospital for midwives.¹¹⁰ Credit was given to the WSG for their perseverance and continued pressure that led to the success of the hospital's establishment.¹¹¹ When it first opened in July 1916 the KEMH had twenty beds; although this was a small number it was better than nothing.¹¹² A new purpose-built building was not constructed. Instead, part of the Industrial Boys' School building at Subiaco was converted for this purpose. Rischbieth reported that one hundred babies were born in the first six months of the hospital, thus reinforcing its necessity.¹¹³ Importantly, the Government appointed an Advisory Committee of three, including two WSG members – Jean Beadle and Edith Cowan.¹¹⁴ While the WSG was the principal lobbying group for the hospital, organisations such as the Children's Protection Society were also involved. This was not the WSG's only success during the war.

¹⁰⁵ Briony McKenzie, *Place and Power: A History of Maternity Service Provision in Western Australia, 1829-1950*, PhD thesis, Murdoch University, 2015, 160.

¹⁰⁶ 'The Proposed Maternity Hospital', *West Australian*, 2 June 1910, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Women's Service Guild – 'Report of the Women's Service Guild For the Year Ending March 31st, 1910', ACC No. 7750A, MN 826, Box 30, 1927-1990, SLWA.

¹⁰⁸ Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, 14.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁰ 'The Proposed Maternity Hospital. Meeting at the Town Hall', *West Australian*, 2 June 1910, 4.

¹¹¹ B C Cohen and R L Hutchinson, *The King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women: The First Fifty Years 1916 to 1966*, King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, Subiaco, 1966, 3.

¹¹² Bobbie Oliver, *Jean Beadle: A Life of Labor Activism*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2007, 78-79.

¹¹³ Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, 16.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15. For brief biographical details of Jean Beadle and Edith Cowan, refer to Appendix 1.

Credit has also been given to the WSG for establishing the Girl Guide Movement in June 1915. Indeed their 1916 Annual Report reinforces this when they reported: 'The work during the past twelve months included the inauguration of the Girl Guide movement'.¹¹⁵ Based on the Boy Scout Movement formed in England in 1908 by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, Dianne Davidson believed the Girl Guides Association was a vehicle for the theosophist members of the WSG as a means of spreading their message and promoting theosophy.¹¹⁶ It is however, unclear whether the 1915 group was actually the first Western Australian Girl Guides' organisation. In July 1911, the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* reported that a 'branch of Miss Baden Powell's Girl Guides was started' in late 1910. This was independent of the WSG and much earlier than they were given credit. The press added: 'The girls are taught flag signalling, first aid, home nursing, and how to cook a dinner for an invalid'. Furthermore, perhaps prophetically, they stated: 'It may not be in our time that these girl guides ... will be called upon for active service, but should their country need them they will be ready, well trained, and reliable'.¹¹⁷ Likewise, in March 1910 the Fremantle Troop of Girl Scouts changed their name to Girl Guides, 'this being the name adopted by the girls in England'.¹¹⁸ It is unknown if these groups were still in existence at the time of the WSG's formation of the Girl Guides in Perth. According to Davidson the Guides and the WSG remained associated for many years.¹¹⁹ Perhaps the earlier Girl Guide groups failed, and the WSG, realising their value as a movement to educate and supervise young girls, recommenced the organisation during the war years. The WSG also recognised there was a need for policewomen.

As early as October 1915, the Colonial Secretary was approached by the Maylands Australian Labor Federation to appoint women police, but they were informed it was unlikely owing to the expense.¹²⁰ In May 1917, the WSG together with other organisations such as the Anglican Church Social Questions Committee, the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, the Women's National Movement and the National Council of Women sent a deputation to the Colonial Secretary, again urging the appointment of women as police

¹¹⁵ 'Women's Service Guild. Annual Meeting. Work During the Past Year', *West Australian*, 2 May 1916, 8.

¹¹⁶ Dianne Davidson, *Women on the Warpath: Feminists of the First Wave*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1997, 77. Theosophy, according to Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley (eds), *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, Harper Collins, London, 1999, was 'a religious movement founded ... in India towards the end of the 19th century ...'. Adherents followed a system of beliefs founded by the Theosophical Society, dealing with religious philosophy.

¹¹⁷ 'A Lady's Letter', *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 4 July 1911, 11.

¹¹⁸ 'Girl Guides', *West Australian*, 12 March 1910, 14.

¹¹⁹ Davidson, *Women on the Warpath*, 80.

¹²⁰ 'Women Police', *Westralian Worker*, 1 October 1915, 2.

ostensibly to protect young girls and women.¹²¹ Inevitably, with protection came a degree of control which impacted girls and women from diverse social strata in various ways.

Consideration to the establishment of a women's police presence was given. By July 1917 the WSG sent a letter of thanks to the Colonial Secretary regarding the decision to appoint two women thus indicating their success in the matter. In August 1917 the press reported that two women had been appointed as women police – Mrs Helen Dugdale, a trained nurse and an inspector with the State Children's Department, and Miss Laura Chipper who had been matron of the Perth Rescue Home (see Figure 3.7).¹²² Dugdale was the wife of prospector, George Rupert Dugdale – they were listed together in the 1925 Perth Electoral Roll.¹²³ Their roles as police women were broad, their main focus being the protection of girls and young women rather than working as equals with male police officers. These duties included ensuring girls and young women were not on the streets at night; to assist the Education Department in cases of truancy, and to monitor railway stations and theatre precincts 'in order to guard and advise women, girls, and children, who are strangers and have no friends waiting for them'.¹²⁴

¹²¹ 'Women Police. Wanted for Perth', *Daily News*, 15 May 1917, 6.

¹²² Western Australia Police Force, 'Timeline of the History of Women in the WA Police Force', <https://www.police.wa.gov.au/About-Us/100-Years-of-Women-in-Policing/Timeline-of-the-history-of-women-in-WA-Police> viewed 21 October 2020; 'Dugdale, Helen Blanche (1876-1952)', *The Australian Women's Register*, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE4822b.htm> viewed 21 October 2020. 'Women Police. Two Officers Appointed', *West Australian*, 29 August 1917, 5. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details of Helen Dugdale and Laura Chipper.

¹²³ 1925 Electoral Roll, Perth, Western Australia per Ancestry.com.au.

¹²⁴ John McArthur, 'The Early Origins of Women Police in Western Australia', cited in Mel Ainsworth, Duane Bell and Irene Froyland, *Into The Blue: A Celebration of 80 years for Women Policing in Western Australia*, Joondalup, The Centre for Police Research, 1998, 3-5.



Figure 3.7: Mrs Helen Dugdale and Miss Laura E Chipper.
(*Sun*, 16 September 1917, 8).

The *Truth* newspaper ridiculed the appointments when it stated:

The two petticoat pleece [sic] are now a reality in Perth. One is a Mrs. and the other a Miss – but there is no knowing what they will miss later on. Their names are Mrs. Dugdale and Miss L. E. Chipper. The madame has been in the State Charities for some time, and the mademoiselle in the Salvarmy [sic] Rescue Department.¹²⁵

However, this was part of the stereotype women had to deal with. By contrast, another press report noted their appointment had met with ‘emphatic approval’.¹²⁶ In addition they stated:

we all know of cases with which a woman is far better fitted to cope with than a man, particularly those in which a little practical advice and a few tactful sympathetic words may arrest thoughtless and silly girls on their downward path.¹²⁷

Therefore, they were appointed to monitor women and girls, and their social conditions by patrolling streets, racecourses, and picture theatres, or wherever else they gathered to prevent their participation in crime. Leonie Stella has argued the appointment of women police was probably more about the control of the sexuality of young girls and women; the

¹²⁵ ‘Oh Yes! Certainly’, *Truth*, 1 September 1917, 4.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3

protection of men from 'wayward girls' amid a rise in venereal disease, and a rise in the rate of pregnancies to single mothers than concerns about their protection.¹²⁸

Achievements of the Women's Organisations To 1919 in South Australia

The WNPPA strived for the establishment of women police to deal with matters relating to women and children much earlier than the WSG. This too was a protracted process but one that met with eventual success and attracted national interest including from Western Australia. As early as October 1911 the WNPPA advocated for the appointment of Police Matrons to protect women and children. The matter was again discussed in June 1913. Mrs Belinda Christophers reported on parliamentary reforms at the meeting of 1 July 1914, noting that 'little satisfaction had been gained especially with regard to the police matron'.¹²⁹ The following year Mrs Lucy Morice, as WNPPA delegate, joined a deputation to the Chief Secretary regarding the appointment of women as police. This shows the tenacity of the organisation in continuing to pursue this matter despite setbacks. By uniting and lobbying with other organisations they were finally successful. On 1 December 1915 Kate Cocks and Annie Ross (see Figure 3.8), both State Children's Department, were officially appointed as policewomen.¹³⁰



¹²⁸ Leonie Stella, "'Wayward Girls': The Policing of Women in Western Australia Between the Wars", *Papers in Labour History*, Number 11, June 1993, 43, 60. Refer also to Leonie Stella, 'Women's Police in Western Australia 1917-1943', *Papers in Labour History*, Number 7, May 1991, 1-22.

¹²⁹ LWVSA, 1 July 1914, General Minutes, SRG 116/1/1, SLSA.

¹³⁰ Robert Clyne, *Colonial Blue: A History of the South Australian Police Force 1836-1916*, Wakefield Press, Netley, 1987, 263. For brief biographical details of Annie Ross, refer to Appendix 1.

Figure 3.8: Kate Cocks, on the left, in 1936, appointed first police woman in South Australia in 1915, (B10886 SLSA). Annie Ross, on the right, (4177, South Australian Police Historical Society).

In July 1916, a third policewoman, Mrs Maud Mary Wilcher, was appointed. Wilcher, also from the State Children's Department, was a certificated nurse and 'inspectress of licensed foster mothers'.¹³¹ Robert Clyne stated that while positions for police women were advertised in the press, the Chief Secretary had already decided who would be selected effectively making the process of applications a formality.¹³² Clyne further believed it was a 'political decision made by a Labor government, influenced by advanced social welfare policies, an international women's suffrage movement, and a shortage of manpower because of the war' that led to the creation of these positions.¹³³ However, the State Children's Council and 'concerned citizens' are believed to have agitated for the appointments as a matter of urgency.¹³⁴ Kate Cocks was not an applicant preferring instead to accept the position if offered.¹³⁵ These appointments created interest interstate, but in replying to Mrs Lillias M Skene, secretary of the National Council of Women in Victoria, the South Australian Police Commissioner was cautious when he described the engagement of women police as 'experimental'.¹³⁶ In a brief history of the women's police in South Australia prepared for the WSG, Kate Cocks stated that 'they had the same powers, pay, hours of work, and the same privileges for leave and pensions as the men'.¹³⁷ Only in South Australia and California were women police given equal status to men but not necessarily equal pay.¹³⁸ However, not everyone was convinced about the role of women as police. Concerns were expressed by an unnamed reporter in the daily press at their appointment when they wrote:

... what we want to know is, while the policewomen are protecting the public, who is going to protect the policewomen? Will they each be paired off with a male copper? And if so, will it be a single or a married male? If a married man is selected, what will his wife have to say about it?¹³⁹

¹³¹ 'Another Woman Constable', *Register*, 30 June 1916, 4. For brief biographical details of Maud Mary Wilcher, refer to Appendix 1.

¹³² State Records of South Australia (SRSA), GRG 5/2/1916/179 – SA Police Correspondence Files, cited in Clyne, *Colonial Blue*, 261.

¹³³ Clyne, *Colonial Blue*, 263.

¹³⁴ Patricia Higgs and Christine Bettess, *To Walk a Fair Beat: A History of the South Australian Women Police 1915-1987*, Past and Present Women Police Association, Adelaide, 1987, 19.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹³⁶ 'Report re Usefulness etc of Women Police', Correspondence Files – Police Commissioner's Office, GRG 5/2 462/1916, SRSA. For additional information about Lillias Margaret Skene refer to Judith Smart, 'Skene, Lillias Margaret (1867-1957)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/skene-lillias-margaret-11706> viewed 26 May 2021.

¹³⁷ 'Information from F.K.B.Cocks, Principal of Women Police, Sth Australia, 1933. South Australian Women Police', Women's Service Guild, Acc. 7750A Box 14, SLWA. Kate Cocks was born Fanny Kate Boadicea Cocks but went by the Christian name of Kate.

¹³⁸ Clyne, *Colonial Blue*, 263; Higgs and Bettess, *To Walk a Fair Beat*, 19.

¹³⁹ 'Police!', *Sport*, 1 October 1915, 6.

These concerns, although reflective of gendered norms at the time, later proved to be unfounded.

Some of the women who responded to the newspaper advertisements and applied (see Figure 3.9) needed to augment their dire financial situation by working. Women such as Mary A O'Neill who wrote she had 'suffered loss by the death of my father and am obliged to provide for myself' which indicated her reliance on her father for support. Mabel Annie Tier pleaded for consideration adding 'that in affording me my desire you are not only supplying me with an improved position but a means of sustenance (anxiously endeavoured for many months) for my little girl'.¹⁴⁰ Tier had been widowed in 1910 less than four years after marriage, and her daughter was born in 1908.¹⁴¹ Miss A W Finch twenty-one years old, applied in September 1915 stating she had 'only done domestic duties' and lived all of her life in Gawler. Miss Jessie Smith's application noted she could endure 'hardships and fatigue in the execution' of her duty and was a 'typist and shorthand writer' which she thought would be useful if appointed. Not all women were single or widowed. Twenty-eight-year-old Elsie Olivia Clark, who was married, Irish and a recent arrival in South Australia, applied in October 1915 stating she could 'ride a Motor Cycle, Bicycle & am a fair rifle shot', attributes she thought necessary if selected for the position. 200 applications were received.¹⁴²

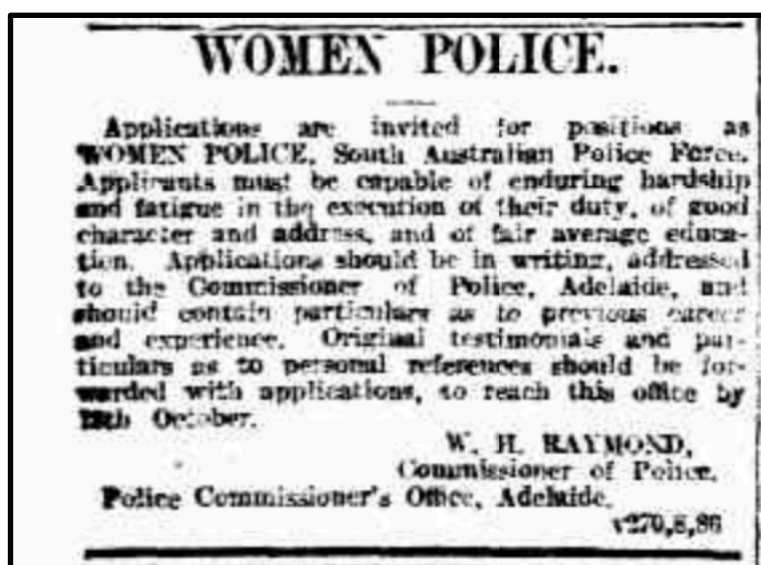


Figure 3.9: Advertisement for the position as women police.

¹⁴⁰ 'Applications for Appointment as Women Police', Correspondence Files – Police Commissioner's Office, GRG5/2 788/1915, SRSA.

¹⁴¹ On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>.

¹⁴² 'Applications for Appointment as Women Police', Correspondence Files – Police Commissioner's Office, GRG5/2 788/1915, SRSA.

(*Express and Telegraph*, 27 September 1915, 3).

The WNPPA advocated to assist women and children in other ways as well. Its Annual Report for 1915 detailed the focus of several sub-committees. The Municipal Committee, for example, examined the availability of safe and clean public toilets for women. More importantly, they recognised the need to have women representatives on councils not only to advocate for more and accessible toilet facilities, particularly in the city, but also to represent other issues that affected their sex. From this a plan was developed whereby WNPPA members would stand for election to municipal councils as a means of better representing women's interests. Members of the WNPPA's Court Committee also attended cases involving children facing the Children's Court and Police Court. This sub-committee recognised that a special magistrate with knowledge of children's psychology would be beneficial to these children. In another instance, a Soldiers' Wives sub-committee was formed, comprising a group of women assigned to visit the wives of soldiers whose husbands were at the front. This was organised by Lucy Morice with female volunteers allocated to districts where soldiers' wives lived so that visitations offering encouragement and support for these women could be made.

In addition, the Women's Work and Wages Committee examined the conditions of 'industrial, commercial, educational and domestic workers', and those working in restaurants. They supported equal pay for equal work and advocated the establishment of a Woman's Labour Bureau. The Minister for Industry responded confirming a Bureau would be established.¹⁴³ Indeed, the 1916 Annual Report shows the Bureau was established in 1915 as a direct consequence of the war.¹⁴⁴ Mrs Belinda Christophers mentioned recruiting campaigns were one cause of the 'depletion of employes [sic] in many firms, and employers generally are being faced with this serious aspect' – she supported the Woman's Labour Bureau.¹⁴⁵ However, women did not take over all the paid positions of enlisted men as had taken place in Britain where many were employed in transport and other industries. Instead, newspaper advertisements for "Person's Wanted" were perused in Adelaide, and 'many letters ... written with the hope of bringing together employers and employed. We [the Bureau] advance money to get people away to where work may be found'.¹⁴⁶ The case of a woman who had moved to the city for work but remained unemployed was cited. She was

¹⁴³ Women's Non-Party Political Association of South Australia (WNPPA), *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1915.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1916.

¹⁴⁵ 'The Recruiting Movement', *Advertiser*, 7 August 1915, 18. For brief biographical details of Belinda Christophers refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁴⁶ 'A Superfluous Woman', *Australian Christian Commonwealth*, 28 January 1916, 6.

noted as “‘The superfluous woman’”, that is one among many women in the city looking for work. In this instance, the Bureau was able to provide her with one pound to move ‘down south’ and obtain employment; reportedly her employer was grateful.¹⁴⁷ It is unclear how long this Bureau existed in South Australia. Victoria had a similarly named organisation commenced by Vida Goldstein of the Women’s Political Association. The Victorian Bureau was instituted to both address concerns with women’s unemployment during the war, and as a means of reducing their reliance on charity.¹⁴⁸ Clearly South Australia’s Bureau operated similarly.

Conclusion

During World War One Australia became embroiled in the war by virtue of its membership of the British Empire which required it to follow the lead set by Britain. The conflict had a major disruptive effect and incurred huge financial and economic costs which both impacted on Australians nationwide and the world. The engagement of men and some women, for example nurses, who enlisted in the defence services to participate directly in the war created a large void in the workforce, a huge burden for society. Later the demands and costs of rehabilitating the physically damaged and psychologically impaired returned servicemen and women had a major impact on society and the economy.

This chapter has provided an overview of that period and of the challenges Australians faced. It has shown how those at home were able to contribute to the war either by their involvement with patriotic war organisations, or subscription to war loans and bonds. Women became intensely involved with organising send-offs for troops heading to the war, or welcome homes for those returning, as well as fundraising efforts of the patriotic war organisations. It was during this time it could have been expected that the WSG and the WNPPA had a fall in membership with members involved elsewhere.

Instead, membership generally remained steady or slightly increased during this period even though some members took part in the work of the patriotic war organisations. The WSG and the WNPPA adjusted their agendas and meetings to remain relevant during a period of great stress, and to accommodate those who were unable to attend because of other commitments. Neither did the establishment of a plethora of patriotic organisations, an extraordinary and unparalleled phenomenon, see the WSG and WNPPA collapse. Instead,

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴⁸ Janette M Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman: Vida Goldstein*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993, 150-2, 226.

these organisations continued their work to improve social conditions for women and children. Evidence of some of their achievements has been referred to in this chapter.

The First World War was a catalyst for change. The establishment of patriotic organisations also provided women a means by which they were able to learn managerial and organisational skills that proved useful in the future. In Part Two of this thesis, I show that some of these women who were active in the patriotic organisations were also important for the newly established organisations such as the Country Women's Association (CWA) that was formed during the interwar period.

As well, Part Two follows the trajectory of the existing WSG and the WNPPA (later the WNPA) organisations to 1939 and the start of World War Two. The next chapter, and the first of Part Two, further examines the WSG and the WNPA.

PART B: 1919 – 1939

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EARLY INTERWAR YEARS: 1919-1929

This is “the day” that we have fought for, and the day that we have longed for; and our hearts are full of rejoicing. Now we are looking for happiness and peace in the future history of the world. ... let us rejoice together¹

Archibald Peake, Premier of South Australia, November 1918

Archibald Peake’s jubilation at the signing of the Armistice in November 1918 was palpable. However, the immediate post-war years were ones that would prove complex and fraught with enormous economic costs and social changes. The world Australians had known before the war had irretrievably changed. Indeed, the war had not actually ended as there were still areas of conflict in Europe that continued beyond 1918. The signing of the Armistice did bring relief to most if not all Australians as witnessed by Ellie Le Souef, Women’s Service Guild secretary. On 11 November 1918 she recorded in her private diary:

End of War!!!

... At 9.15 pm the gun went 3 times and we knew Germans had surrendered. Dad [husband] rang Zoo bell and Mil our Bell. Nance woke up. Sat on Balcony.²

The following day she added there was ‘Terrific joy everywhere’.³

Earlier, the Annual Report of the Women’s Service Guild referred to having ‘lived through stirring and heart-searching times, and [they] had seen the great glass house of civilisation fall shattered in a thousand pieces at their feet’.⁴ Civilisation as a glass house hinted at its fragility. War wrecked the illusion of civilisation, rendering the previous life in ruins. The world was changed by the war, but it was time to pick up the pieces and move forward. However, there were many difficulties and challenges that lay ahead.

The discussion in the previous chapter centred on the First World War as the catalyst of change for society and the world, the establishment of the patriotic war organisations, and

¹ ‘The World at Peace’, *Advertiser*, 13 November 1918, 5

² Le Souef Family Papers, Ellie Le Souef Diaries, 11 November 1918, MN 1391, 4370A/637-642, State Library of Western Australia (SLWA).

³ *Ibid.*, November 1918.

⁴ ‘Women’s Service Guild. Annual Meeting’, *Western Mail*, 10 May 1918, 28.

the effects of the war on the Women's Service Guild and the Women's Non-Party Association. In Australia, many women volunteered their services to various patriotic organisations working for the war effort to support soldiers abroad, and later to assist those who had returned home. Some men, unable to enlist owing to ill-health, age, or other factors, had also joined these organisations as a means of contributing to the war effort. However once war ended, these organisations generally became redundant, disbanded, and ceased thereby leaving a void in voluntary work opportunities, particularly for women. When the war ended, so too did women's emergency service roles.⁵

This chapter argues the cessation of war brought about a subtle but important shift in focus from the political to the non-political. The new post-war women's organisations examined by this thesis were non-political in contrast to the Women's Service Guild (WSG) and the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA), which were political and remnants of the struggle to achieve suffrage. The WSG and the WNPA identified with mainstream politics but were without party affiliation. They sought women's political and local government representation in parliament and to achieve policy reforms in favour of women and children. The 1920s was also a time of resurgence for these earlier women's organisations, which increased their membership during this period. The WSG and the WNPA had attracted a small cohort of mostly white middle-class women. Their membership base during the interwar period is examined later in this chapter. However, the new women's organisations ultimately eclipsed the earlier groups in membership numbers and their modality of operation.

These new women's organisations, for example the Country Women's Association (CWA) in both Western Australia and South Australia, unwaveringly rejected mainstream politics by stating they were non-political. CWA members could be likened to a marginalised group that had a shared identity as rural-based women – not only did their organisation reject mainstream politics but appeared to reject feminism as well. Yet as lobby groups who influenced local, state, and federal governments, they *were* in fact political despite their assertions they were non-political. Their membership eventually numbered in the thousands. Rural women living in isolated areas lacked medical facilities and educational opportunities as well as access to social occasions such as those enjoyed by many of their city counterparts. The CWA was not only a rural movement for the benefit of women and children, but also a service organisation. They took on a service role – that is provided services governments were unable or unwilling to perform particularly during periods of great distress such as the Depression and the drought, assisting those in need in regional areas

⁵ Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, 282.

by distributing goods. CWA membership also inspired rural women to take action to improve living and working conditions in rural areas. In addition, they used the power of the women's vote through the ballot box to strive for legislative changes and to lobby for reforms.

The first section in this chapter examines the early interwar period from 1919 to 1929 in Western Australia and South Australia to contextualise the women's organisations. Some of the challenges faced by Australia during the post-war period included the repatriation of servicemen and the influenza pandemic. The chapter also examines membership figures of both the WSG and the WNPA, and the reconstitution of the National Council of Women (NCW) in South Australia in 1920. The NCW was important for the establishment of both the Housewives' Association and the Country Women's Association (CWA), the latter discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. This is followed by an examination of some important issues which these women's organisations focussed, including the establishment of rest rooms, and their involvement in Aboriginal affairs. In addition, they expanded through the formation of branches, and the initiation of a magazine to disseminate knowledge and organisational news to their growing number of members. This chapter does not examine the Australian Federation of Women Voters, established in 1921 by Bessie Rischbieth, to which the WSG and the WNPA were affiliated. Briefly, the Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV) was described as the 'vanguard of the progressive women's movement in Australia', and had been established as a national body to represent various women and their organisations at a Federal level as well as at the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and other conferences.⁶ The AFWV arose following efforts by Bessie Rischbieth in 1915 to affiliate the WSG with the British Dominions' Woman Suffrage Union, an international group for women's organisations. However, because the WSG was not a national representative body, the request was refused. Rischbieth rejected the suggestion that the WSG join with the WNPPA and Vida Goldstein's Women's Political Association in Victoria to set up a national organisation. Instead, Rischbieth established the AFWV.⁷ In February 1919, the League of Nations was established in Geneva, Switzerland after the Paris Peace Conference. Its aim was to prevent another war by 'resolving international disputes'.⁸ This allowed Australia, newly designated as a Dominion, to join as a member. Rischbieth seized

⁶ Sheila Byard, 'Australian Federation of Women Voters', *The Encyclopedie of Women & Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0639b.htm> viewed 26 May 2021.

⁷ Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999, 154-155. The British Dominions' Woman Suffrage Union later became the British Dominions' Woman Citizenship Union, and was eventually absorbed by the International Alliance of Women. Refer also to Zora Simic, *Hall of Selective Mirrors: Feminism, History and Identity 1919-1969*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2003, 41-42.

⁸ League of Nations, <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/history/league-of-nations> viewed 24 June 2021.

upon the opportunity of establishing the AFWV to represent Australian women's interests and concerns on the international stage.⁹

The WSG and the WNPA had survived the war but were faced with new challenges during the interwar period.

Post-War Australia: Repatriation and Reconstruction

The initial joy of war's end soon abated with the realisation of the enormity of reconstruction, together with the consequences of the repatriation of service personnel back to Australia. Planning for repatriation had commenced as early as December 1916. The journey home for many took much longer because of the large numbers who had to 'wait months before being allocated a ship'.¹⁰ By 1919 Australia's population was estimated at just over five million. A total of 416,809 mostly young men had enlisted.¹¹ By the end of 1916 just over a year after the war had commenced, 23,000 mostly wounded servicemen had already returned to Australia.¹² At war's end an estimated 60,000 had been killed, and 150,000 had been wounded. Over the following years at least 22,000 remained in hospital in 1926; 49,000 in 1939 suggesting the effects of their war related injuries and mental health had deteriorated, and by 1940 more than 70,000 were on pensions.¹³ Women and those men who did not enlist shouldered the on-going burden of the war effort at home after the return of the service personnel. Stuart Macintyre referred to war as often having been a 'regenerative force' but added that was not the case this time. Instead, the Great War had 'left an incubus of debt that continued to mount as payments to veteran and war widows continued'.¹⁴ Such was the magnitude of the situation but there were other issues associated with the aftermath of the war.

Bill Gammage's seminal work, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, claimed that at the end of the war many Australians considered returned servicemen had

⁹ Bessie Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964, 59.

¹⁰ Philip Payton, 'Repat' A Concise History of Repatriation in Australia, Department of Veteran Affairs, Canberra, 2018, 21, 26.

¹¹ 'First World War 1914-18', <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war>, viewed 5 October 2018; 'Australia's Population', *Argus*, 18 June 1919, 8.

¹² Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2013, 237, 524.

¹³ Bill Gammage, 'Was the Great War Australia's war?', in Craig Wilcox, (ed.), *The Great War: Gains and Losses – ANZAC and Empire*, Australian War Memorial and Australian National University, Canberra, 1995, 6. See also Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1996, 74-117.

¹⁴ Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2013, 168.

already been sufficiently rewarded for their service. However, the promised rewards fell short of their expectations:

They came home to the cheers and thanks of a grateful nation, and to better payments and benefits than fell to the lot of returned men in other lands. They had given their country a tradition, and for that, for the rest of their lives, they would be especially honoured. Yet before the last veterans reached home the cheers were already dying away, and it soon became clear that the soldiers' rewards would be less than had been promised during the war.¹⁵

Most returned servicemen wanted to forget the war and its horrors, but they returned to a world that had changed. Lieutenant Garnet Adcock lamented:

Old values had been lost and new standards were changing overnight. The world was going through the upheaval from war to peace ... a greater upheaval than from peace to war ... The Peace following a War is worse than the War.¹⁶

Economically, the burden of the financial costs of war lasted until the commencement of World War Two in 1939. The WNPA's 1920 Annual Report stated: 'As the war itself recedes into the past, the great and varied problems of reconstruction that arise from it make increasing claims upon our thought and energy'.¹⁷ This group of women recognised the huge task that post-war reconstruction presented for the government and the people of Australia. Ernest Scott's history noted an estimated 167,000 service personnel remained overseas and needed to be returned to Australia and integrated back into civilian life after the war ended. It was a daunting logistical task to bring them home. At least 176 ships were required to transport them.¹⁸ In addition, some men had married and fathered children while abroad, and transporting their families to Australia also needed to be included. Not only this, but these men also required employment if able to work, or alternatively hospitalisation and rehabilitation once they returned. Additional domestic issues such as an influenza outbreak and transport problems had implications for all Australians and organisations in the immediate aftermath of war and demonstrated how complex the situation had become.

In 1920, reflecting on the previous year, the WNPA discussed 'tram restrictions and influenza'.¹⁹ The restrictions on trams had an impact on the attendance of members at their meetings. The *Register's* editorial had warned in April 1919 of the serious consequences of a coal shortage owing to wage demands by New South Wales coal miners who threatened

¹⁵ Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria, 1974, 270.

¹⁶ Garnet Adcock cited in Gammage, *The Broken Years*, 272-273.

¹⁷ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1920.

¹⁸ Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1939, 825, 827.

¹⁹ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1920.

strike action.²⁰ The editorial foreshadowed the cessation of tram and train services in South Australia because of insufficient coal to operate beyond a month resulting in the shut down of industry.²¹ Owing to its reliance on coal, the ramifications of a strike and coal shortage to the state were enormous. As well, the WNPA referred to the influenza outbreak in 1919 brought from overseas, mostly by returned servicemen, which infected many Australians.

Returning soldiers were often carriers of the pneumonic influenza, also known as the 'Spanish 'flu'. The outbreak was so severe that it was declared a pandemic. Up to thirty per cent of the world's population is believed to have been affected with at least forty million dying.²² In Australia, approximately 12,000 succumbed to influenza, often almost entire families were wiped out.²³ In Western Australia, the local press regularly published circulars that detailed ways in which authorities proposed to deal with an outbreak of influenza. The Commissioner of Public Health, Dr Everitt Atkinson, outlined how they would manage an outbreak. In the first instance, the victim and their family were quarantined, and the Public Health department immediately notified.²⁴ The quarantine station at Woodman's Point fourteen miles from Perth was utilised for some influenza cases. Not all the cases of influenza were returning soldiers. For example, infected Asian crew members of the SS *Charon* sailed from Singapore to Broome were transferred on arrival to Woodman's Point where they were nursed in isolation.²⁵ Nurses were not immune to contracting influenza. Hilda Williams, a 'conscientious and clever nurse' from Claremont, succumbed to the infection after nursing at Woodman's Point. She had 'offered her services for the soldiers at the quarantine station' who were routinely held in isolation at Woodman's Point before proceeding to Fremantle for disembarkation.²⁶

In Adelaide, South Australia in January 1919, it was reported that six returning soldiers were seriously ill with influenza, another six were categorised as ill, and another five were

²⁰ 'Big Strike Possible', *Chronicle*, 19 April 1919, 15.

²¹ 'The Coal Crisis. Position of South Australia', *Register*, 17 April 1919, 7.

²² Jeffery K Taubenberger, 'The Origin and Virulence of the 1918 "Spanish" Influenza Virus', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 2006, Vol. 150, No. 1, 86.

²³ John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule, *The War At Home*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2015, 215.

²⁴ 'Pneumonic Influenza. Preparing for an Outbreak', *Daily News*, 5 April 1919, 9.

²⁵ "'Spanish" Influenza. Strict Precautions', *Daily News*, 25 October 1918, 8; 'Influenza. The Charon Arrives', *Daily News*, 26 October 1918, 9.

²⁶ Rubina, 'A W.A. Heroine', *Daily News*, 11 January 1919, 3; 'Coming Home. Our Returning Heroes', *Daily News*, 12 November 1918, 2. See also 'Heroic Nurses. Pneumonic Influenza Victims', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 22 May 1933, 3, which contains a letter dated 1919 from Lieutenant-Colonel P M McFarlane detailing the nurses who died at the quarantine station.

convalescing – all were in quarantine at Torrens Island.²⁷ In Naracoorte, a rural town in the state's south-east, members of the Hastings family contracted influenza. The local press reported:

A sad death occurred on Tuesday evening, when Mr. Alexander William Hastings, a well-known resident of the district and a young married man, succumbed to an attack of pneumonic influenza after an illness extending over about a week. Mrs. Hastings, wife of the deceased, and the three children were attacked with the disease at the same time, and the whole household were laid up, including the deceased's mother, who while attending them, also became ill.²⁸

Hastings's wife and young children recovered, but his mother died a short time later.²⁹ His death and that of his mother highlighted the easy spread of the disease within the general community once those infected overseas with the influenza virus were repatriated home. Apart from quarantining returning service personnel because of the influenza outbreak, there was a need to address problems they had with integrating back into civilian life.

The government provided new opportunities for returning servicemen which often created tensions between them and those who had not served. According to Joan Beaumont, the Public Service Act was amended to allow servicemen to be offered employment over others who may have been more suitable.³⁰ This seemed unjust for those who were more suitably qualified and in need of employment. However, this was not the only government measure to support the veterans.

The Australian Government offered war loans as part of soldier settlement schemes to settle returned service personnel on land thus providing them with employment. This gave returned servicemen the opportunity to take up farming and make a productive living. Much of the land offered though was marginal or of insufficient acreage to provide a productive living and located in isolated areas. In Western Australia, it was proposed to settle 9000 ex-soldiers on land. Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees suggested the allocated land was within an area of good rainfall. However, historian Murray Johnson disagreed suggesting it was marginal land necessitating soldier settlers to undertake mixed farming, an approach more likely to be successful in those conditions.³¹ In South Australia, early soldier settlements

²⁷ 'Influenza. No Fresh Cases. Patients' Conditions Improving. Full List of Cases', *Daily Herald*, 1 January 1919, 3; 'Influenza. Boonah's Patients Improving', *Advertiser*, 1 January 1919, 5.

²⁸ 'Deaths from Influenza', *Naracoorte Herald*, 19 September 1919, 2.

²⁹ 'Influenza', *Border Watch*, 23 September 1919, 4. Report of Mrs Hastings death, the mother of Alexander Hastings.

³⁰ Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 529.

³¹ Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1994, 45; Murray Johnson, "'Feathered foes': Soldier settlers and

were located on reclaimed swamp land at Pompoota, Swanport and Jervois on the River Murray.³² Many who accepted these offers did not have farming backgrounds and therefore lacked the necessary skills to carry out the work despite some training provided. Lloyd and Rees's publication, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia*, noted South Australia's soldier settlement scheme commenced in early 1916. There were '22,000 acres of reclaimed land' subdivided into thirty-acre blocks, and a further 70,000 acres 'of non-irrigable land were acquired for subdivisions up to 300 acres' as part of this scheme.³³ 150 veterans were given six months of training in 'irrigated farming, land reclamation and general farm work'.³⁴

By January 1919 the press reported that 329 soldiers had been allocated blocks, and of these 100 were settled on farms. A further 129 were in training on farms, and another 260 had been approved for blocks. In total 179,212 acres had been allocated for soldier settlements with an additional 248,871 acres set aside for later use if necessary.³⁵ More than 40,000 Australian returned servicemen had taken up land offered under the soldier settlement schemes Australia wide, but 'fifteen years later' less than half remained on their holdings.³⁶ Aside from Lloyd and Rees's broad and detailed account of the system of repatriation in all states, Philip Payton's recent publication *'Repat' A Concise History of Repatriation in Australia* provides an overview of the First World War veterans and the government's response at that time.³⁷

Not everyone supported soldier settlement schemes. Farmers and others wanting to buy land became disgruntled because they believed they had been 'discriminated' against in favour of returned service personnel.³⁸ The repatriation of servicemen caused these unforeseen circumstances and created a divided society – men who had been to war, and those who remained at home. Peter Stanley also stated that an increase in violence, particularly against women and mostly perpetuated by returned servicemen ensued, highlighting tensions during the 1920s.³⁹ However, Elizabeth Nelson's study of Victoria revealed war affected the whole community, not just returned soldiers. She cited insanity

Western Australia's 'Emu War' of 1932", *Journal of Australian Studies*, 2006, Vol. 30, No. 88, 147-148.

³² 'The Man on the Land', *Daily Herald*, 22 September 1916, 6.

³³ Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling*, 45.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁵ 'Soldier Settlement in This State', *Observer*, 25 January 1919, 29.

³⁶ Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer, *The Last Battle: Soldier Settlement in Australia 1916-1939*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2016, 16.

³⁷ Payton, *'Repat' A Concise History of Repatriation in Australia*, 2018.

³⁸ Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling*, 45-46.

³⁹ Connor, Stanley and Yule, *The War At Home*, 218.

and alcohol abuse as pre-war causative factors for domestic abuse, but violence increased during the war years suggesting other issues. She attributed some of the issues to public acceptance of the brutality of war in which these men were a part, and their 'fighting ability' equated with their manliness', as well as their hero status on return.⁴⁰ Returning home to women who had grown more independent during their absence, as well as anxieties about the wives' possible new friendships and relationships, led to a sense of disempowerment among some ex-soldiers, causing them to react violently.⁴¹

Both the WSG and the WNPA acknowledged in their Annual Reports the need to grapple with these challenges. For example, the WSG's 1921 Annual Report illustrated the way in which the organisation had worked towards effective liquor reforms, including lobbying for necessary legislation.⁴² This may have been a response to issues of violence towards women by men who abused alcohol. The following year in Western Australia, the women's organisations lobbied for a reduction in hours when alcohol was served, and for closing at six o'clock in the evening.⁴³ In South Australia, the WNPA suggested liquor reforms including the limitation of serving alcohol to between nine and eleven in the morning on Christmas Day.⁴⁴ Lobbying for liquor reform continued well into the 1930s for both organisations – it was a long and difficult struggle.

Towards the end of the 1920s, the Great Depression caused major economic and social distress. While 1929 is widely accepted as the year of its commencement, in South Australia the Great Depression began two years earlier in 1927.⁴⁵ This had been triggered by a culmination of factors such as drought, rising unemployment, and the looming world economic crisis. The Depression added an additional layer of hardship for Australian states struggling to recover during the immediate post-war period and generated another challenge for the women's organisations. In the following section, the membership trajectories of the WSG and the WNPA are discussed with this post-war context in mind.

Membership of the WSG and the WNPA

In the absence of subscription rates and totals, incomplete membership numbers have been used to examine the course of the Western Australian WSG. As can be noted in Table 4.1

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Nelson, *Homefront Hostilities: The First World War and Domestic Violence*, Australian Scholarly, Melbourne, 2014, 176.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁴² 'Women's Service Guilds. Annual State Congress', *Daily News*, 26 May 1921, 1.

⁴³ 'Women's Service Guilds. State Congress and Annual Report', *Daily News*, 26 May 1922, 4.

⁴⁴ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1921.

⁴⁵ Ray Broomhill, *Unemployed Workers: A Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide*, University of Queensland, St Lucia, 1978.

there were gaps for some years. Numbers for 1911, 1912, 1913 and 1918 are unknown, while membership in 1919 was estimated at over 500 members. These figures have been included in this chapter to give a sense of the changes in membership for the post-war period which clearly had risen from 1910 as shown in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.1: WSG Membership Numbers (incomplete numbers from the Annual Reports).

YEAR	MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS
1910	53
1911	Unknown
1912	Unknown
1913	Unknown
1914/15	221
1916	272
1917	414
1918	Unknown
1919	>500

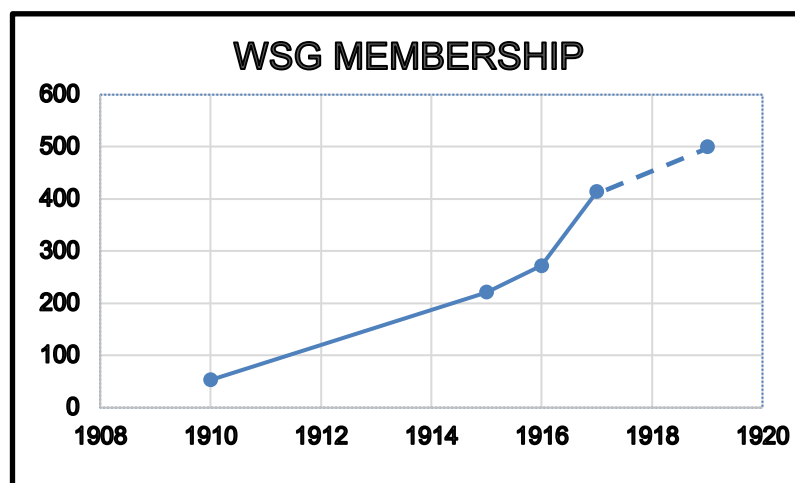


Figure 4.1: WSG Membership Numbers as a Graph 1909-1919 (from WSG Annual Reports). The broken line indicates a suggested trajectory given the lack of numbers for 1918.

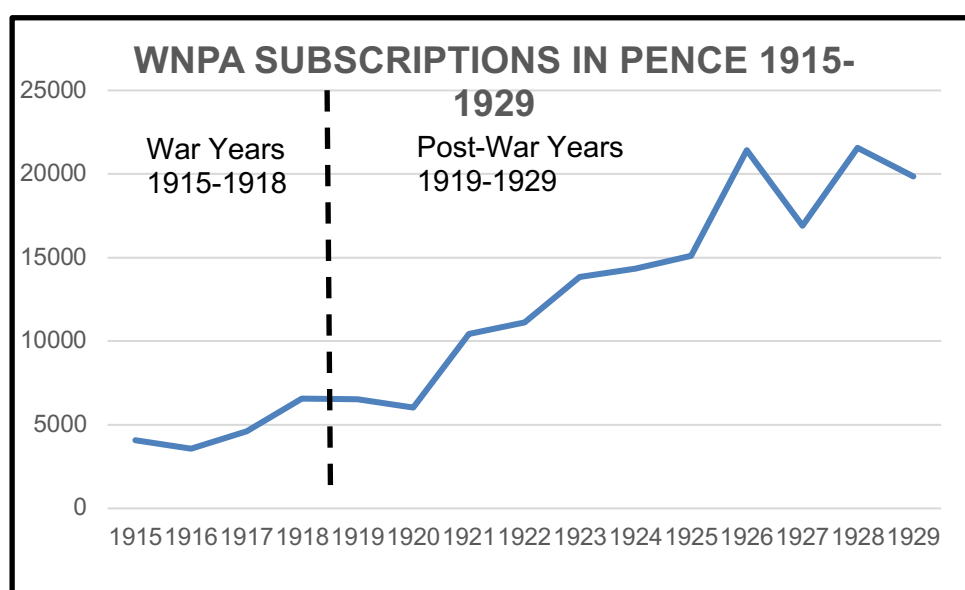


Figure 4.2: WNPA Subscriptions in Pence 1915-1929. War Years 1915-1918 and Post-War Years 1919-1929 (Figures derived from WNPA Annual Reports).

While both Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 show a steady rise in membership to 1915, there was a sharp increase in the WSG membership after 1916 peaking in 1919 in contrast to the WNPA. It is unclear why the difference other than there was encouragement for WSG women to assist the Red Cross in Western Australia. Bessie Rischbieth suggested that women should retain their membership of the WSG while joining the 'Red Cross Circles and Camp Comforts Committees'.⁴⁶ Membership figures for the WSG after 1919 have not been found, so a complete comparison with the WNPA is not possible.

Exact annual membership numbers for the WNPA are unavailable. Instead, the value of subscriptions in pence has been used to determine an estimated membership, and these are shown in Figure 4.2. In 1909 it cost two shillings (twenty-four pence) to become a member of the organisation. By March 1914 membership fees had risen to two shillings and six pence (that is thirty pence), and by July 1920 to five shillings (that is sixty pence).⁴⁷ The fee during the war years is unknown but is presumed to be less than the 1920 rate. On this basis, an estimated membership has been determined, but the figures for Life members paying a higher fee is unknown. The June 1926 Annual Report shows that subscription figures included five pounds five shillings for life membership. The figures shown here are thus only a guide to membership numbers. Ellinor Walker, former Secretary of the WNPA,

⁴⁶ Bessie Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964, 23.

⁴⁷ 'Women's Non-Party Political Association', *Herald*, 11 September 1909, 4; 'The Women's Non-Party Political Association', *Mail*, 28 March 1914, 2; 'Women's Non-Party Association', *Daily Herald*, 24 July 1920, 3; League of Women Voters of South Australia (LWVSA), 21 July 1920, General Minutes, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

indicated the organisation had up to 400 members, but she did not give the year of their peak membership.⁴⁸ She added that when she joined in 1914 there were seventy members, and membership increased each year thereafter. The problem with Ellinor Walker's account is that it was based on her memories of the organisation from many years previous and documents to support her statement have not yet been located.

From Figure 4.2 it can be seen that during the war years and until 1920 inclusive, the WNPA's membership was relatively steady. Then, as also shown in Figure 4.2, in contrast with the war years, there was a rise between 1921 (actually the period up to 30 June 1921) and 1927. This rise may reflect the numbers of women who were free of their membership of patriotic war organisations and were able to return to the WNPA. The immediate post-war years were demanding for all Australians. Perhaps the membership increases also reflected greater confidence during this period, and a renewal in women's interests.

As mentioned previously, in 1927 the effects of the Great Depression were felt in Adelaide earlier than elsewhere in Australia. Figure 4.2 indicates a slight decrease in WNPA subscriptions at that time. Ray Broomhill suggested a loss of subscriptions may have been due to rising unemployment. This rendered people either unable to afford the fees, or unable to sustain an 'acceptable standard of dress' for attendance at meetings and therefore opted out of membership of these organisations.⁴⁹ However, it is unknown whether the WNPA lowered their subscription rates during this period in an attempt to alleviate the loss of their members. Because subscription rates for the WNPA are difficult to ascertain for all years, the figures given in Figure 4.2 suggest their membership trajectory.

These charts do provide a suggested brief overview of the membership base of both the WNPA and the WSG. While the figures provided are limited as explained previously, particularly for the WSG, they do give a sense of what was happening during the war years and thereafter. The WSG appears to have fared better during the war years than the WNPA, but post-war both organisations were able to attract more members, something reflected in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. This may in part have been because women who had been involved in the patriotic organisations were now willing to join the pre-existing groups. However, membership of these pre-existing organisations would have been challenged by the emergence of new voluntary women's groups in the 1920s such as the Housewives'

⁴⁸ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1926; Jenny Barber, *Women's Movement South Australia*, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, 1980, 11. A transcript of Ellinor Walker's interview appears on pages 10-13.

⁴⁹ Broomhill, *Unemployed Workers*, 56-57.

Association, and the reconstitution in South Australia of the National Council of Women (NCW).

National Council of Women

The NCW was an important organisation for the establishment of both Country Women's Associations in Western Australia and South Australia. The NCW was a non-party, non-political and non-sectarian voluntary women's organisation. The WSG in Western Australia was involved in the formation of the NCW in 1911 in that state, which was much earlier than South Australia.⁵⁰ The WSG became affiliated with the NCW, but this affiliation was terminated in 1916 following an acrimonious division between the two groups. Marian Quartly and Judith Smart argue that this was due in part to regulations regarding the mandatory notification and treatment of venereal disease, and 'questions of autonomy and presidential authority' such as was evidenced by a special meeting held in October 1916.⁵¹ Compulsory notification of venereal disease and testing reminded some women of the detested contagious diseases legislation in Britain which had been used as a model for Australia's proposed laws. In late 1915, Western Australia brought in compulsory notification and mandatory treatment for people with venereal disease. Feminists were opposed to compulsory notification because of its implication that all women, especially those who were single, were potential prostitutes.⁵² Cowan and the NCW supported the legislation while Rischbieth and the WSG did not.

On the occasion of the split, the WSG requested a special meeting of the NCW to discuss the policy of their Council.⁵³ Edith Cowan, a WSG member, was also President of the Western Australian NCW. Bessie Rischbieth President of the WSG, believed her organisation came into conflict with the NCW more often than other affiliated groups because the WSG had 'been a more active worker than other Societies'.⁵⁴ She questioned whether affiliation with the NCW excluded the WSG 'from working on its own initiative'. Both Cowan and Rischbieth were very strong and determined women, and the meeting appears to have been lively and divisive. For example, Miss Harriet Hooton, a foundation member of both the WSG and the NCW, accused Cowan of informing the WSG representatives at the

⁵⁰ Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women of Australia 1896-2006*, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, 2015, 16.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵² Judith Smart, 'Sex, the State and the 'Scarlet Scourge': gender, citizenship and venereal diseases regulation in Australia during the Great War', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1998, 19.

⁵³ National Council of Women, 'Minutes Special Meeting Called by Desire W.S.G. Oct. 1916 & Executive Minutes, Oct. 1916-1917-18-part 1919 – (June)', 1389A/4, Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*.

meeting that if they did not agree with the NCW to 'get out'. However, Roberta Jull denied this had been said, instead stating Cowan had used the word "withdraw".⁵⁵ Either way, what happened between the WSG and the NCW became irreparable.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 PM and closed three hours later at 10.40 PM indicating a long-protracted discussion had taken place. From that point the WSG withdrew its affiliation. In a letter to the press published in January 1924, Rischbieth, by then President of the Australian Federation of Women Societies for Equal Citizenship (later the Australian Federation of Women Voters), again took aim at the NCW. She accused Cowan of turning the NCW into a 'political propaganda organisation' which ignored the needs of those organisations which were 'charitable, social, or educational, certainly not political'.⁵⁶ Charitable organisations needed to remain non-political. They risked losing their donors if they supported NCW political measures that were not in line with their donors own political persuasions. The main objection was the perceived interference by the NCW in the work of the WSG, rather than providing support to its affiliate associations to achieve their objectives. The NCW Executive was singled out for blame. Rischbieth added that when the NCW was formed, it was to perform a 'mothering, co-ordinating, and encouraging' role rather than an active 'doing role' independent of these organisations.⁵⁷ This disagreement was most likely a legacy of the aforementioned 1916 venereal disease issue.

After this meeting, Rischbieth and Cowan remained bitterly opposed to one another as demonstrated by the following instance. Cowan did not support the Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV) established by Rischbieth, instead preferring a federal National Council of Women as the co-ordinating body.⁵⁸ Rischbieth, through the AFWV, challenged Jessie Street's United Associations in New South Wales as they competed for organisations to affiliate, and to represent Australian women on the international stage. According to Zora Simic this competitiveness reached a pinnacle during World War Two that saw the decline in interwar feminism in Australia, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*. For brief biographical details of Harriet Hooton and Roberta Jull refer to Appendix 1.

⁵⁶ 'The N.C.W. and Political Controversy', *West Australian*, 5 January 1924, 9.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁸ Simic, *A Hall of Selective Mirrors*, 40.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 35-38. Simic refers to a growing antagonism between Rischbieth and Street that culminated during World War Two that resulted in the decline of the interwar Australian feminism. In part, Rischbieth rejected communism, but the United Associations accepted this ideology. The AFWV was originally known as the Australian Federation of Women's Societies for Equal Citizenship, but after 1924 became the AFWV. Their records can be found at the National Library of Australia – refer to Australian Federation of Women Voters, *Records of the Australian Federation of Women Voters 1920-1983*, MS 2818, NLA.

The South Australian NCW does not appear to have had such issues. In March 1920 the South Australian NCW was reconstituted after having initially been formed in 1902 and failed by 1909 – this has been discussed in Chapter One. The NCW was never a leader but acted on the initiatives of others to achieve reforms, none-the-less it played an important role.⁶⁰ In the following chapter, the role of the NCW in the formation of the CWA state organisations is examined. The focus here is to provide a brief overview of the Housewives' Association.

Judith Smart noted that in post-war New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, the Housewives' Associations 'were the first organizations [sic] in the nation to successfully mobilize large numbers of ordinary women in a society for non-party political ends'.⁶¹ Smart referred to these as 'mass organisations' given their ability to attract a very large membership base.⁶² The Housewives' Association was one such mass organisation, and the CWA's another. In contrast with the earlier women's organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA, both had members numbering in the thousands rather than a few hundred. Smart makes clear that the Housewives' Association filled a need to focus on the domestic sphere leaving other organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA to 'direct their energies to more explicitly party-political, feminist, and internationalist arenas'.⁶³ Certainly as political groups, the WSG and WNPA continued to lobby politicians and take part in international discussions.

A detailed examination of the Housewives' Association falls beyond the scope of this thesis – here it is intended to provide a brief overview demonstrating its existence in South Australia and Western Australia during the interwar period, and as an example of a 'mass organisation'. It also provides information about other issues that were faced by the women's groups during the interwar period and that affected the general population. In Western Australia, the Housewives' Association was formed in 1920, the CWA in 1924; and in South Australia both the Housewives' Association and the CWA formed in 1926.⁶⁴ The existence of both organisations competed with existing groups for members. They heralded a new era of

⁶⁰ Judith Smart and Marian Quartly, 'The National Council of Women of Victoria Suffrage and Political Citizenship 1904-14', *Victorian Historical Journal*, 2008, Vol. 79, No. 2, 226.

⁶¹ Smart, 'The Politics of Consumption', 13.

⁶² Judith Smart, 'A Mission to the Home: the Housewives Association, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and Protestant Christianity, 1920-1940', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 1998, Vol. 13, No. 28, 215.

⁶³ Smart, 'The Politics of Consumption', 16.

⁶⁴ State Library of Western Australia, 'West Australian Housewives' Association (Inc)', http://slwa.wa.gov.au/pdf/mn/mn1001_1500/mn1019.pdf viewed 5 September 2018.

women's organisations which, although they vowed they were non-political, functioned as lobby groups using political activism.

It was in 1915 in Melbourne that the Housewives' Association was first formed. The Western Australian branch was established on 10 March 1920 in response to increasing prices for household food, as well as shortages of, for example, sugar.⁶⁵ It was not until June 1926 that the South Australian division was inaugurated.⁶⁶ South Australian housewives were encouraged to lobby for the reduction in 'the cost of living' and to control "profiteering".⁶⁷ Ruth Donovan stated that while the 'Association was influenced by Christian values', it was non-sectarian, and aimed to reduce the high cost of living. For example, in January 1926, Mrs Eva d'Arenberg, part-owner of the Piccadilly Tea Rooms on North Terrace, Adelaide, was critical of the increase in the price of butter which affected the cost of living. She vented her fury in the press when she stated that 'I do not see why we should be taxed to make food cheaper for people in England. There seems no reason why we should not be able to buy things cheaply here. It is too harsh'.⁶⁸ The cost of butter in London was three pence a pound cheaper than in Australia.⁶⁹ Mrs d'Arenberg was not a stranger to the press, having written social news under the *nom de plume* of Ariel during the early part of the twentieth century.⁷⁰ Her business partner, widow Violet Twiss, was the sister-in-law of Leonora Polkinghorne, a WNPA member and later a President of the Housewives' Association, thus showing Mrs d'Arenberg's interconnectedness with Adelaide's society.⁷¹ Mrs d'Arenberg's friendship ties provide another example of networking that occurred between these women and the organisations they formed or were members of.

In April 1926, Mrs d'Arenberg wrote of her continuing despair at the rising cost of living which she believed made '... it absolutely impossible to amass any money when dealing with food.' For her, the formation of a Housewives' Association offered the promise of relief to these high prices. She added:

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Ruth Donovan, 'The Housewives' Association – a typical voluntary organisation: 1926-1976', Honours thesis, Department of History, Flinders University, 1999, vii.

⁶⁷ Smart, 'The Politics of Consumption', 16.

⁶⁸ 'Housewives Angry. Rise in Price of Butter. Stabilisation Levy', *News*, 14 January 1926, 1. For brief biographical details about Eva D'Arenberg refer to Appendix 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Anthony Laube, *SA Newspapers: Pen names of South Australian journalists or cartoonists*, SA Memory South Australia: past and present, for the future, SLISA, <https://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1477> viewed 8 August 2019.

⁷¹ Donovan, 'The Housewives' Association – a typical voluntary organisation: 1926-1976', 3. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biography of Violet Twiss.

We know that union is strength, and where a woman could not hope to effect any reduction in prices singly by combining forces with others and setting about things in a methodical, commonsense way, much good might accrue.⁷²

Mrs d'Arenberg was clearly aware of the importance of women uniting in a cause in order to achieve their goals and, thus, of the importance of the new association.

A short time later, the press announced the formation of a Housewives' Association by Mr J A Wright (see Figure 4.3). This action caused some alarm amongst women, and raised the ire of Mrs Eleanor Glencross, Federal President of the Housewives' Association.⁷³ This early attempt at forming an Association was dismissed. Wright had proposed the new organisation's membership was for both men and women. That he was a male, and an organising secretary did not sit well with many women, and in particular Mrs Glencross. She added:

it was pleasing to note the desire for such an organisation, but peculiar to learn that the mover is a man. There already exists an Australian Housewives' Association, founded and maintained by women with a special purpose – to give attention to those problems particularly affecting the home, as they deal with the cost of living and the political and social welfare of women and children. ... The formation of a Housewives' Association is essentially women's work, and it should be originated and organised by women.⁷⁴

Glencross implored South Australian housewives to wait until a meeting of the NCW which would determine whether an Association could be formed. Mrs Elizabeth Bowman, President of the South Australian NCW, chaired the meeting at which it was decided to form a Housewives' Association. Mrs Glencross gave a presentation noting the NCW, although having organised the meeting, was in no way connected to the Housewives' Association.⁷⁵ This was an example of the NCW's involvement in the establishment of an organisation which was not unlike their later involvement with the formation of the CWA in Western Australia and South Australia.

⁷² 'Union of Housewives. High Cost of Living', *News*, 3 April 1926, 1.

⁷³ 'High Cost of Living. Housewives Form Association', *News*, 12 April 1926, 5.

⁷⁴ 'A Housewives' Association. To the Editor', *Advertiser*, 29 April 1926, 15.

⁷⁵ 'Housewives' Association', *Register*, 18 June 1926, 14.

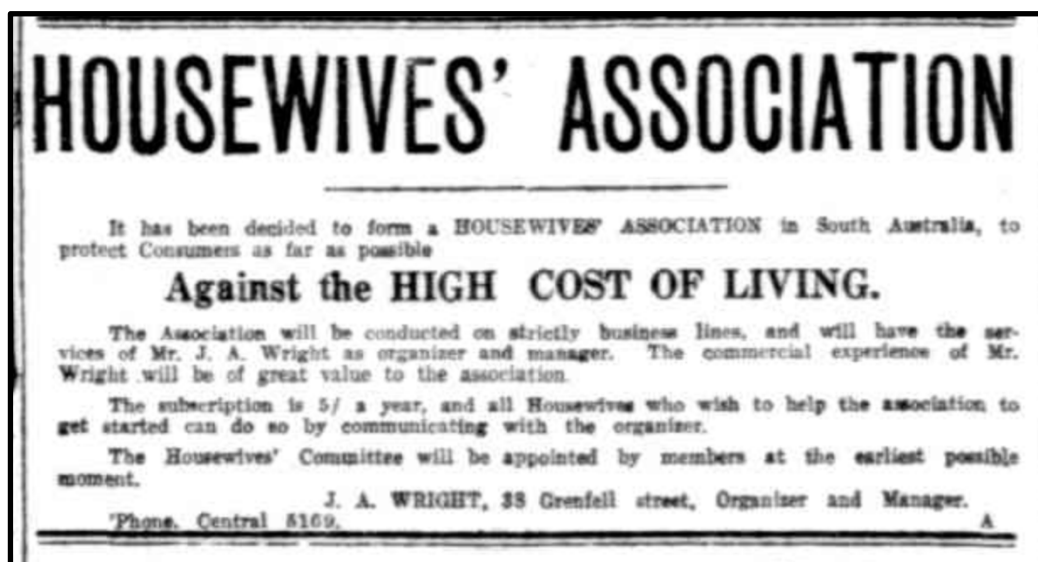


Figure 4.3: Advertisement, Housewives' Association with the services of J A Wright. (*Register*, 13 April 1926, 2).

On 18 June 1926 with Agnes Knight Goode as inaugural president, the new organisation was established in South Australia.⁷⁶ Mrs Belinda Christophers, a WNPA member, and a member of the Sailors, Soldiers and Nurses Relatives Association during World War One, became a vice-president of the Housewives' Association, again reflecting the range of organisations to which some of these women belonged. The Housewives' Association's aims and objectives were:

- To support, protect and raise the status and interests of the home, women and children.
- To promote and establish co-operation among housewives.
- To oppose profiteering in every practical manner.
- To encourage the greater use of Australian goods.⁷⁷

Within three months of its inauguration, the Association had a membership of 2,000.⁷⁸ In April 1926, Mrs Glencross had boasted that the Victorian Housewives' Association of which she was also President, had more than 30,000 financial members. These membership figures were significantly higher than those of the WSG and the WNPA that are shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.⁷⁹ This suggests the Housewives' Association membership may have impacted pre-existing organisations' membership base. Therefore, why were the non-party non-political organisations more successful in terms of membership than those that

⁷⁶ Donovan, 'The Housewives' Association – a typical voluntary organisation: 1926-1976', 1. For brief biographical details of Agnes Goode refer to Appendix 1.

⁷⁷ *The Housewife*, 15 April 1929, Vol. 1, No. 1, cited in Donovan, 'The Housewives' Association – a typical voluntary organisation: 1926-1976', 4.

⁷⁸ Donovan, 'The Housewives' Association – a typical voluntary organisation: 1926-1976', 5.

⁷⁹ Smart, 'A Mission to the Home', 217.

specifically aligned themselves with politics? Adelaide journalist Irven suggested the size of the organisation was a key factor in its success.

Earlier, in September 1915 Irven, which was a pseudonym for Jean Irven MacKenzie (nee Everall), had referred to the strength of unity to 'raise the status and conditions of women'.⁸⁰ She added that small organisations were unable to achieve what larger ones could, and referred to the example of men and the achievement of improved working conditions once they were members of unions. It is perhaps not surprising that Irven referred to unions and working conditions given the *Daily Herald* was a Labor Party newspaper.⁸¹ Irven's article was also a response to a letter from Bessie Rischbieth, WSG President, which included part of the WSG's annual report. Significantly Irven named the Red Cross, and its war work, as a large organisation that was a 'splendid example' of what could be achieved with the unity of substantial numbers of women, but which also included some men amongst their membership who assisted. Irven added:

It was impossible to gather individual helpers together, and it was unnecessary. But the result of all their individual and sectional efforts with every little stream of it eventually directed into the one channel, has formed a current of irresistible force for service.⁸²

Irven therefore noted a single large organisation could achieve more than a small group. One large organisation was more effective than several small groups because of their sheer membership numbers. She added: 'How much longer are women going on defeating their own ends by working in small bodies entirely separate from each other, and apparently quite out of sympathy with each other?'.⁸³ While most small groups did work independently of other organisations, and maintained their own agendas separate to the others, they often did unite over issues because of their recognition of the value of a stronger collective voice. Irven's assumption therefore seems rather tenuous. Other factors must also have been at play to explain the post-war surge in membership of the newly formed organisations which overshadowed those of the older groups.

Donovan stated the Housewives' Association attracted a range of women with various attributes such as those who were educated or had 'prior experience among voluntary

⁸⁰ Irven, 'For the Women. Our Good-Morning Corner. The Linking-Up of Women's Efforts', *Daily Herald*, 7 September 1915, 8. Personal email, 2 October 2018 from Anthony Laube, State Library of South Australia confirming Irven's full name and gender. Also refer to Appendix 1.

⁸¹ Refer to 'The Daily "Herald"', *Herald*, 12 February 1910, 8. Mr G L Burgoyne, editor of the *Herald*, became associate editor of the *Daily Herald*. Burgoyne has been mentioned in Chapter Two, writing as Elizabeth.

⁸² Irven, 'For the Women. Our Good-Morning Corner. The Linking-Up of Women's Efforts', *Daily Herald*, 7 September 1915, 8.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 8.

organisations'.⁸⁴ Some may have been members of patriotic war organisations but this has not been investigated. A subscription of one shilling per annum and product discounts attracted many members.⁸⁵ In contrast, the WSG and the WNPA subscriptions in 1920 were approximately five shillings and without product discounts. Therefore, this no doubt would have influenced higher numbers of women to join the Housewives' Association.

Kerreen Reiger offers an insight into a possible shift in ideology that had taken place during this period. By the 1930s she noted the emergence of a 'conservative reaction' towards feminism. Around the turn of the twentieth century magazines for women such as *New Idea*, carried articles promoting women's work outside the home, but by the 1930s its focus was again on the domestic sphere. 'Housewifery' was viewed as the most appropriate occupation for women. In effect, this shift promoted the return of women to their traditional roles as housewife and mother, rather than seeking paid jobs outside the home. This was contrary to the WSG and the WNPA principles – while some members were engaged in paid employment, the organisations' focus was on political activism to achieve women's rights.⁸⁶ It is unclear if members of the Housewives' Association were also in paid employment. Following the Great War it appears women were taking a more conservative approach to politics that may have accounted for the rise of the non-party non-political organisations. Both the CWA and the Housewives' Association denied being political despite being lobby groups. The lobbying of politicians was a form of political activism which these women's groups also undertook although often through the guise of supporting other organisations. For example, in 1934 at the CWA Conference the Kimba branch complained of the high freight charges citing 'the freight on a baby's chair was more than the cost'. It was decided to support the Stockowners' Association in their action for reduced freight charges to country regions.⁸⁷ In this case, pressure from the CWA was a form of lobbying by proxy.

Both the WSG and the WNPA formed branches, some extending into rural areas, and established a magazine or newsletter as a form of communication to its geographically widening membership base. This signalled that they were growing, albeit slowly in contrast to the 'mass organisations'. As well, they established Rest Rooms where women could relax and meet.

⁸⁴ Donovan, 'The Housewives' Association – a typical voluntary organisation: 1926-1976', x.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁸⁶ Kerreen Reiger, *The disenchantment of the home: Modernizing the Australian family 1880-1940*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985, 40.

⁸⁷ 'Country Women Want Cheaper Freights', *News*, 14 September 1931, 8.

New Branches, Rest Rooms and a Magazine

In Western Australia, the WSG had formed additional branches much earlier than the WNPA. Both states were large with small populations that were mostly city based, but the WSG branches extended into large rural towns. However, this was not the extensive branch distribution developed later by the CWA, but it was more extensive than South Australia's WNPA. It was also a measure of the WSG's success that it was able to establish these branches and circles. Women unable to attend meetings in Perth were now able to join local groups or circles. Branches were established at Albany in 1915, followed by Fremantle, Claremont, and Cottesloe in 1918. Country circles commenced in Kalgoorlie, Kellerberrin, Doodlakine, and Donnybrook.⁸⁸ Rischbieth stated the circles commenced as early as 1912, maintaining contact with country women via letters and the sending of 'sixty-odd parcels of literature, containing information about women's ideas and activities, as well as parcels of toys collected for the children'.⁸⁹ She added that some of the women joined the organisation as associate members. This suggests the circles were informal groups located in isolated areas rather than official branches. The locations of the WSG branches and circles are shown in Figure 4.4.

⁸⁸ Dianne Davidson, *Women on the Warpath. Feminists of the First Wave*, University of Western Australia Press, 1997, 87.

⁸⁹ Bessie Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, Paterson, Brokensha Pty Ltd., Perth, 1964, 31.

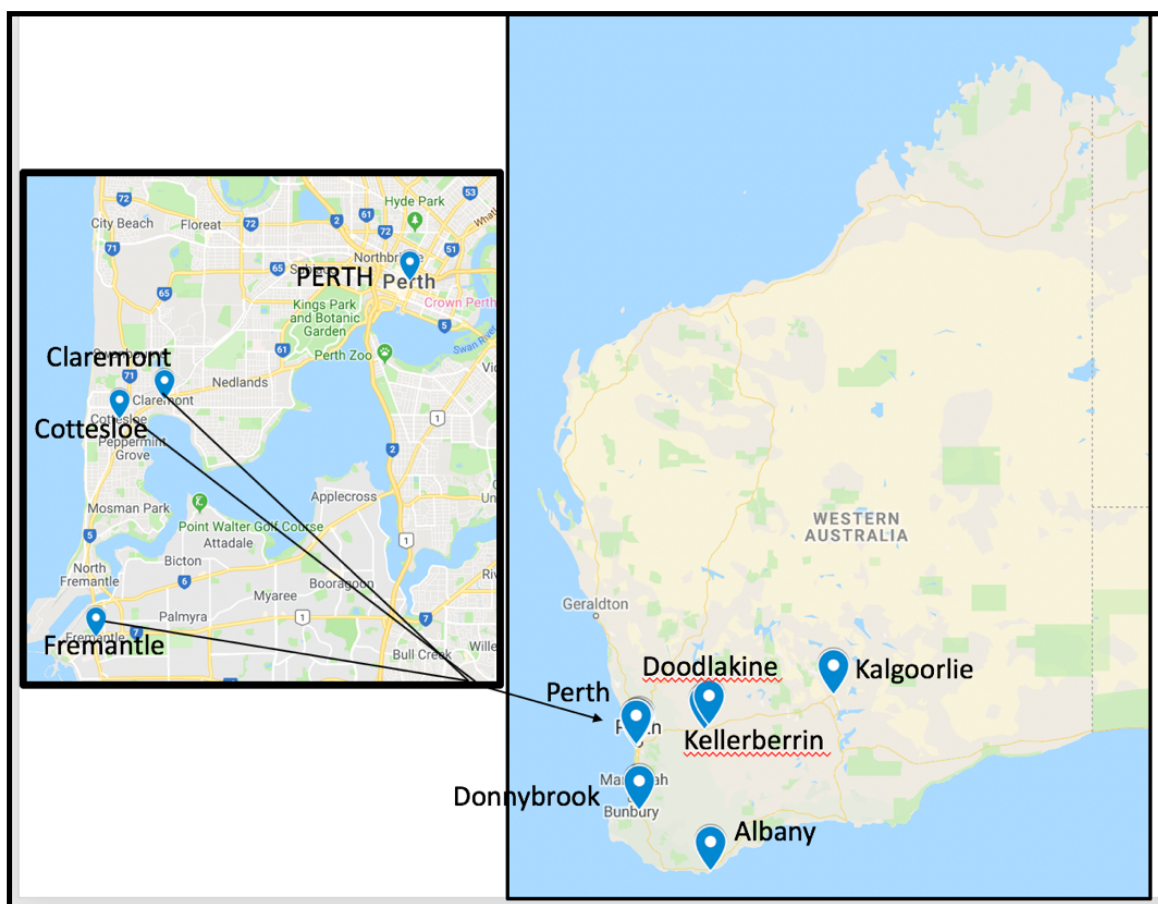


Figure 4.4: Map of Western Australia's WSG branches and circles. Maylands and Carlisle are not shown but are in close proximity to Perth.

However, the expansion of new branches required '[a]n overhaul of the organization [sic] structure ... to clarify areas of authority and responsibility'.⁹⁰ At a special meeting of the WSG held in February 1920, it was decided to create a State Executive to manage the whole organisation. This also required the appointment of a State General Secretary, a paid position.⁹¹

By late 1924 the WSG had become incorporated and known as the Women's Service Guilds to reflect several branches that now formed the organisation rather than the initial one. These were Perth (the founding group), Claremont, Fremantle, Cottesloe, Maylands, and Carlisle, the latter two close suburbs of Perth. This is what Rischbieth meant when she referred to 'the guilds' in 1925.⁹² As well, the WSG utilised the *Dawn*, established by the Fremantle branch in 1920, as their monthly newspaper to keep their widely scattered

⁹⁰ Davidson, *Women on the Warpath*, 87.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁹² 'Incorporation of the Guilds', *Dawn*, 15 October 1924, 1; 'Guilds', *Dawn*, 15 May 1929, 10.

members informed.⁹³ It was also the official newspaper of the Australian Federation of Women Voters.

In South Australia the WNPA established a monthly paper known as *Non-Party News* informing its members it was 'without expense to the Association'.⁹⁴ The *Non-Party News* circulated information about the organisation, as well as news from related societies in other states, and internationally. Editors also planned to include one or two other articles of interest. Their first edition was published in July 1923.⁹⁵ Its survival depended on subscriptions from WNPA members and others. Later, the WNPA's Annual Report of 1925 announced two new branches had been inaugurated. One was located at Blackwood, thirteen kilometres from the city, and the other at Henley Beach eleven and a half kilometres west of Adelaide. The WNPA, unlike the WSG, did not extend into the rural areas beyond Blackwood or Henley Beach, or create country circles.

As early as 28 February 1917, the WNPA formally opened their 'rest room, tea room, and meeting place'.⁹⁶ They made their quarters comfortable places where women could relax. The rooms provided a library from which books and magazines could be borrowed, set up from donations of suitable reading matter. Women were also able to make themselves refreshments, attend meetings and become involved in discussions on current topics within the comfort of its walls.

Rest Rooms became an important feature of women's organisations and often included toilet facilities. These rooms allowed women to create their own space, something separate to the home. Social scientist Doreen Massey likened the domestic sphere as a zone of 'spatial control' for women, their own private space.⁹⁷ Some rest rooms may have had commercial roots, an idea that originated from overseas. In December 1910, a Mr Blackwell, part-owner of an emporium in Naracoorte reported that the idea of the rest room was a 'feature of all the large trading firms' in Canada and America. Blackwell ensured his Naracoorte emporium had a rest room. He added:

⁹³ Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia & Australian Federation of Women Voters & League of Women Voters, *Dawn: monthly organ of the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia*, The Guilds, Perth, 1920-1967, State Library of Western Australia.

⁹⁴ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1925.

⁹⁵ Women's Non-Party Association, *Non-Party News*, Women's Non-Party Association of South Australia, Adelaide, July 1923, Vol. 1, No. 1.

⁹⁶ Women's Non-Party Political Association (WNPPA), *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1917.

⁹⁷ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, University of Minnesota Press, 1994, 179.

When [customers] have completed their purchases, or have any spare time on hand, may go in and rest. This is called a rest-room, and will be supplied with magazines, where the time may be spent pleasantly in reading, and ink, pens, paper, and envelopes will always be at hand.⁹⁸

This was very similar to the early Ladies Tea Room at Bricknell's Café that also supplied stationery for use by women, and where the WNPA first met in July 1909. However, early in 1911 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union opened their new headquarters in Adelaide. This had a rest room where members could 'have a rest and a cup of tea and tidy themselves up before taking the suburban train' home. The WCTU added the rest room was a 'blessing ... to tired women!' and appears to have been instigated without any commercial considerations, unlike the Naracoorte emporium.⁹⁹

In Burra in 1926 when the first branch of the South Australian CWA was established, Adelaide Wilkinson the wife of Koorunga's chemist Charles Drew Wilkinson, allowed the organisation the use of a room at their shop in Commercial Street, Koorunga as a Rest Room. Members were encouraged to donate items to set up the room; these included toilet paper, a sofa and chairs, drinking glasses, a flower bowl and a jug.¹⁰⁰ These CWA women made it their own space, filled with material culture to give it their identity. It was here too that CWA members met in February 1927, but it is more than likely the limited seating required them to move their meetings, first to the Burra Show Office, and later to the Liberal Union rooms. The Rest Room however, remained for the use of women at the chemist's shop until such time that the Wilkinson's required the room.

CWA historian Heather Parker stated the establishment of the Rest Room for women was occasioned by their waiting outside in the street, or in their vehicles, while their husbands completed business in the town.¹⁰¹ Rest Rooms became an important feature of all CWA branches and were not confined to toilet facilities alone. As discussed above, these were not an entirely new feature, but the CWA Rest Rooms did differ to the earlier ones.

⁹⁸ 'Business Enterprise in Narracoorte [sic]. Fullarton and Blackwell's Big Store', *Narracoorte Herald*, 9 December 1910, 3.

⁹⁹ 'W.C.T.U. The New Headquarters. A Busy Scene', *Advertiser*, 22 April 1911, 22.

¹⁰⁰ 'List of Donations for the Rest Room', Burra Country Women's Association Minutes, December 1926.

¹⁰¹ Heather Parker, *The First Fifty Years: Golden Jubilee History of the South Australian Country Womens's Association*, South Australian Country Women's Association, 1979, 6. 'The setting in Burra of a room where country wives could rest and relax, tend the baby, make a cup of tea, meet and chat with others on that infrequent trip to town. What a contrast it would be to the common experience of wives and children waiting hour after hour in a trap, of buggy, or even the spring cart, whilst the husband completed his business'.

Firstly, the Emporium rest room in Naracoorte was established at the instigation of the male owners of the business who had a commercial interest in ensuring their customers were well served. Secondly the Woman's Christian Temperance Union's new headquarters were in Adelaide, the capital of the state. However, the CWA's Rest Rooms were provided in country areas not serviced by large department-like stores, and many women utilised these on their visits to town from outlying properties. This afforded them their own temporary space where they could rest after shopping, and while waiting in comfort for their husbands before the return trip home. It was a benefit of their membership of these organisations. Rest Rooms did provide early meeting venues for these organisations before they outgrew them and needed larger premises to conduct their business.

Some meetings and discussions of the WSG and the WNPA focussed on Aboriginal women and children and were included in their agendas.

Aboriginal Women and Children

Australia had been settled as a British penal colony in 1788 at Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, New South Wales. It was described as *terra nullius*, that is land that belonged to no-one thus negating Aboriginal ownership and occupation.¹⁰² Aboriginal people in the Australian colonies were dominated and oppressed by the non-Indigenous people or whites and a legal system that overlooked their own culture and law, including systems of punishment. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Aboriginal people remained marginalised and were subjected to derogatory treatment and violence. Children of mixed descent were removed from their families. Despite being considered as British subjects in the South Australian Constitution, this was never honoured.

By the late nineteenth century, the children of mixed descent were increasing in numbers causing alarm amongst the authorities.¹⁰³ In the 1930s the focus shifted from a biological model of absorption of mixed descent Aboriginal people to a policy of assimilation, a 'socio-cultural model' in which they were expected to live as white people, abandoning their Aboriginal culture.¹⁰⁴ However, the expectation that they would forget or reject their

¹⁰² Alan Atkinson, 'Conquest', in Deryck M Schreuder and Stuart Ward (eds), *Australia's Empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, 33, 40.

¹⁰³ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them home: report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Children from their Families*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sydney, 1997, Chapter Two.

¹⁰⁴ Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain*, Viking, Ringwood, 2001, 152; Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2009, 227.

Aboriginal culture because of their whiteness did not happen. Aboriginal culture was likewise regarded as valueless by non-indigenous people.¹⁰⁵

The White Australia Policy ensured their marginalisation. Part-Aboriginal children were removed from their families and raised in a white person's setting, often in homes run by missionaries. Aboriginal men who enlisted in the Australian Army during World War One were forgotten once war had ended. But it was about the women and children that the WSG and the WNPA expressed concerns that were included in their agendas, although as will be shown those concerns betrayed an investment in the preservation of the white race that outweighed any altruism towards Aboriginal people.¹⁰⁶

As early as June 1912, the WSG together with other organisations such as the National Council of Women, the Karrakatta Club and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Western Australia, approached the Colonial Secretary to lobby for the appointment of women protectors for Aboriginal people. None of the organisations 'had ... fault to find with the administration of the Chief Protector of Aborigines', but added that 'it was absolutely essential from a moral standpoint that a woman protector should be appointed'.¹⁰⁷ However, the Colonial Secretary did not believe the proposal was either workable or practicable. Nor did he believe any 'female [A]borigines' had complained about the system as it was. In February 1914 Edith Cowan, visiting Sydney, stated that eight women had been 'appointed as honorary protectors of the [A]borigines in the north-west' of Western Australia although this has not been substantiated.¹⁰⁸ The WSG considered this to be a major success brought about by their lobbying for reforms. It is not until the 1920s that further concerns about Aboriginal women and children were expressed by the WSG suggesting the emergence of a more genuine interest in their well-being. Their annual report of 1925 mentioned dissatisfaction at the reduction of government allowances to Indigenous mothers. Rischbieth added: 'The situation was very grave, and it should not be thought for a moment that the guilds were satisfied with it'.¹⁰⁹ It is unknown what the organisation did to address this problem.

In a 1981 interview, Ellinor Walker, an early WNPA secretary, recounted that the organisation sought to ensure 'the right treatment of the [A]boriginal race', adding it had

¹⁰⁵ *Bringing them home*, Chapter Two.

¹⁰⁶ Atkinson, 'Conquest', 2008; Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 2009; Paul Sendziuk and Robert Foster, *A History of South Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018.

¹⁰⁷ 'The Care of Aborigines. Proposed Women Protectors. Deputation to the Colonial Secretary', *West Australian*, 21 June 1912, 4.

¹⁰⁸ 'Women's Service Guild. "Non-Party and Non-Social" Club', *Sun*, 1 February 1914, 20.

¹⁰⁹ 'Women's Service Guilds. Annual Conference', *West Australian*, 20 May 1926, 11.

been on the 'original platform'.¹¹⁰ A member of the WNPA from 1914, Walker's father had objected to his daughter joining the organisation until she turned twenty-one despite the fact that she had attended some earlier meetings.¹¹¹ However, the original platform of the organisation contains no reference to Aboriginal persons or their plight. WNPA interest in the 'Aboriginal race' is not mentioned until four years later in 1913 when advocating the appointment of women to the Aborigines' Board. Anne (or Annie) Whitham, as Honorary Secretary and writing on behalf of the WNPA, reinforced that the organisation 'feels strongly that, whenever women and children are dealt with, there should be women on the boards of control'.¹¹² Whitham was responding to a letter published the previous day by Annie Hornabrook in her capacity as the Honorary Secretary of the School for Mothers. She too was a member of the WNPA. The School for Mothers also supported the appointment of women to the Board of Control 'in the interests of the women and children with whom the Aborigines Department has to deal'.¹¹³

On 5 August 1914, Mrs Daisy Bates gave a presentation to WNPA members regarding the Indigenous population.¹¹⁴ In 1919, she presented "Work Among the Aborigines". The WNPA, together with other organisations made another attempt to 'obtain a protectorship' for Bates.¹¹⁵ Bates expressed concerns about the 'starving' Aboriginal people and the welfare of Aboriginal women and girls who she believed were prostituting themselves at Tarcoola, a railway town in the far north of South Australia.¹¹⁶ Irish born Bates has been described as a 'welfare worker among Aborigines and [an] anthropologist'.¹¹⁷ She lived amongst the Aboriginal people in both Western Australia and South Australia and kept various records and made notes on their lifestyle. Some, including Bates herself, believed she would have been an ideal choice as a Protector of the Aborigines. However, she was subject to derogatory comments by those who sought to discredit her to protect their own

¹¹⁰ Ellinor G Walker, Interview with Mary Hutchinson, for the Who Was Edith Hubbe? Project, 1981, OH3/4, State Library of South Australia (SLSA). For brief biographical details of Ellinor Walker refer to Appendix 1. Also refer to Jones, Helen, 'Walker, Ellinor Gertrude (1883-1990)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/walker-ellinor-gertrude-15882> viewed on 1 January 2015.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² 'Notes and Queries. The Aborigines', *Register*, 17 October 1913, 3. For brief biographical details of Annie Whitham refer to Appendix 1.

¹¹³ 'Aborigines', *Register*, 16 October 1913, 9. For brief biographical details of Annie Hornabrook refer to Appendix 1.

¹¹⁴ 'Women's Non-Party Political Association', *Daily Herald*, 8 August 1914, 1.

¹¹⁵ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1920.

¹¹⁶ Eleanor Hogan, *Into the Loneliness: The unholy alliance of Ernestine Hill and Daisy Bates*, NewSouth, Sydney, 2021, 39.

¹¹⁷ Richard V S Wright, 'Bates, Daisy May (1863-1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, viewed at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bates-daisy-may-83> 10 September 2018.

positions. For example, South Australia's Chief Protector of Aborigines, William South, questioned Bates's motives, believing she had misled the WNPA about the 'rationing system' at Ooldea, a South Australian railway settlement on the Nullarbor Plain, to enhance her campaign to become the Protector. He further stated she was an 'hysterical woman' who was determined to seek revenge on South and the Ooldea constable.¹¹⁸ Constance Cook, though, agreed with Bates about the living conditions of the Aboriginal people when she travelled to Oodnadatta, another remote railway settlement in South Australia's Outback in 1926.¹¹⁹ Because of her lack of formal qualifications, Bates's anthropological research evoked criticism.¹²⁰ Forensic archaeologist Professor Richard Wright wrote of Bates that '[h]er achievements remain the subject of sustained controversy'.¹²¹ Bob Reece, in his biography *Daisy Bates: Grand dame of the desert* added while there were critics, and in particular those who believed she exploited the Aboriginal people, Bates left her estate to the Aboriginal people who lived at Ooldea as though somehow exonerating any imperfections she may have had in her dealings with Aboriginal people.¹²² This bequest was despite having a son and grandchildren (from whom she was estranged).¹²³ It suggests Bates was generous towards the Aboriginal people even in death. Reece added that there was no confirmation of Bates's acceptance into the Aboriginal communities. However, she was accepted at the time by the general white population, and importantly the women's organisations as having some practical expertise and experience that they could benefit from when considering Aboriginal issues.

Historian Victoria Haskins highlighted the role played by the WNPA in the 1920s. The organisation was involved in the monitoring of Aboriginal girls and women of mixed descent who were brought to Adelaide to work as domestic servants, and the conditions of their service.¹²⁴ According to the *Bringing them home* report of 1997, young girls were not only placed into domestic service to provide cheap labour, but also forced to work long and

¹¹⁸ Hogan, *Into the Loneliness*, 39.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹²⁰ Richard V S Wright, 'Bates, Daisy May (1863-1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, viewed at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bates-daisy-may-83> 10 September 2018. Ken Edwards, (compiler and transcriber), and Daisy Bates, *Games and Amusements of Australian Aboriginal peoples outlined in the 'Papers of Daisy Bates': principally dealing with the south west region of Western Australia*, CISER, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, 2017, 2.

¹²¹ Richard V S Wright, 'Bates, Daisy May (1863-1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, viewed at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bates-daisy-may-83> 10 September 2018.

¹²² Bob Reece, *Daisy Bates: Grand dame of the desert*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2007, 155.

¹²³ 'Aborigines' Friend Daisy Bates Seeks Her Son', *Daily News*, 4 July 1949, 7.

¹²⁴ Victoria Haskins, 'Domestic Service and Frontier Feminism: The Call for a Woman Visitor to "Half-Caste" Girls and Women in Domestic Service, Adelaide, 1925-1928', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, 2007, Vol. 28, Nos. 1&2, 124.

exhausting hours as a means of controlling their perceived promiscuity.¹²⁵ In 1925, the WNPA launched a programme for a white Woman Visitor to visit these homes to check on the Indigenous girls' well-being. According to Victoria Haskins, the drive to appoint a Woman Visitor was 'quickly forgotten' by those who were involved in this campaign.¹²⁶ However, as shown by the 1925 Annual Report, the WNPA made further attempts to address this situation.¹²⁷

In the Annual Report of 1925, the WNPA stated the organisation's interests were not limited to the welfare of the white population, but also included Aboriginal women and children.¹²⁸ The WNPA reported on the appalling conditions of the 'Government Bungalow at Alice Springs' located next door to an hotel, an intolerable situation considering children as young as three years were housed there.¹²⁹ Letters of protest were sent by the WNPA to various State MPs and Federal Senators. The South Australian Government responded by denying a request to relocate Indigenous girls aged between three and fourteen. Instead they allocated 'a grant of £5,000 to enable a new Home to be built in a better situation'.¹³⁰ In addition, the WNPA requested the appointment of a Woman Protector of Aborigines 'to work in conjunction with, the male Protector'.¹³¹ Recognising that 'united action' was 'stronger than individual effort' the WNPA contacted the Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA) to discuss the matter.¹³² The AFA had been formed in 1858 in Adelaide out of concern for Aboriginal people living in the Northern Territory and South Australia.¹³³ As a result of the approach, Constance Ternent Cooke was appointed to the AFA Committee in February 1925. With the aid of the AFA and with Cooke on their Committee, another attempt was made to persuade the Government to provide a hostel to accommodate Aboriginal girls and women in Adelaide. This attempt also failed because of a 'lack of money ... holding up this scheme'.¹³⁴

It was decided to appoint a woman as Honorary Official Visitor to visit 'half-caste girls from the Northern Territory who are at present in employment in this State, and who hitherto have

¹²⁵ *Bringing them home*, Chapter Two.

¹²⁶ Haskins, 'Domestic Service and Frontier Feminism: 124.

¹²⁷ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1925.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*.

¹³² *Ibid.*.

¹³³ South Australian Museum, 'Aborigines' Friends' Association (AA 1)', <https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collection/archives/provenances/aa1> viewed 28 September 2018.

Refer also to 'Aborigines' Friends' Association (1858-2000), <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/sa/biogs/SE00149b.htm> viewed 24 February 2021.

¹³⁴ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1925.

not come under the care of State authorities'.¹³⁵ The WNPA together with the AFA approached the Federal Government and informed them that they wanted their nominee, Mrs Agnes Knight Goode, to be appointed as the first Woman Visitor. She was a member of the WNPA, and later the inaugural President of the South Australian Housewives' Association. The Federal Government responded, stating they had 'no power to make appointments outside the Territory, nor any jurisdiction over the natives [sic] employed beyond its borders'.¹³⁶ Owing to the WNPA failure to achieve any support from the Federal Government, South Australia's State Minister was once again approached. This time he was requested to ask the Chief Protector to take responsibility for 'the care of the girls and also that a woman be appointed to visit them'.¹³⁷

When Constance Mary Ternent Cooke, (sometimes Ternent-Cooke), visited Alice Springs in 1926 the old bungalow was still there, although authorities were waiting for a new building.¹³⁸ Cooke was a member of both the NCW and the WNPA. In July 1926 she was elected President of the WNPA. She had also been appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1927.¹³⁹ Cooke travelled to Alice Springs and reported to the WNPA that fifty children were housed in the sheds known as the Bungalow (see Figure 4.5).¹⁴⁰ She observed:

The Federal Government bungalow for half-castes left much to be desired.

It adjoined the hotel, and the quarters for the girls consisted of an iron shed with an earthen floor, and have little furniture other than a rough table and a few wooden bunks, with old rugs for coverings. The interior was, however, clean and orderly.¹⁴¹

In May 1928, John Bleakley, Queensland's Chief Protector of Aborigines, was commissioned by the Commonwealth Government to investigate the 'status and conditions of Aborigines' who lived in Central and North Australia. His findings, *The Aborigines and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia Report*, were published in early 1929. Bleakley had inspected the Bungalow in July 1928 and agreed that both the building and the

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*.

¹³⁸ See Margaret Macilwain, 'Cooke, Constance Mary Ternent (1882-1967)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cooke-constance-mary-terment-12855> viewed 28 September 2018; 'Women Justices. No. 17 – Mrs. Constance M. Cooke', *News*, 17 May 1928, 10. Refer to Appendix 1.

¹³⁹ 'Association's Annual Meeting', *Register*, 22 July 1926, 13; 'New Justices. 113 Additions to Roll. Eight Women', *News*, 16 March 1927, 4; 'Women Justices. No. 17 – Mrs. Constance M. Cooke', *News*, 17 May 1928, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Fiona Paisley, "'For a brighter day', Constance Ternent Cooke", in Anna Cole, Victoria Haskins and Fiona Paisley (eds), *Uncommon Ground: White Women in Aboriginal History*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2005, 172.

¹⁴¹ 'Impressions of Central Australia. Address by Mrs. W. Ternent Cooke', *Observer*, 31 July 1926, 53.

site were unsuitable and recommended its 'immediate removal'.¹⁴² His visit came two years after Cooke made her comments, but little had been done during that time. This vindicates Cooke and the WNPA's actions. It also reflects the tardiness and, perhaps unwillingness, of the government to provide funds for an upgrade of facilities to house mixed descent Aboriginal children and their mothers. By then the situation was becoming urgent. Following on from this the WNPA directed its attention to those Aboriginal girls and women in Adelaide who were from the Northern Territory.

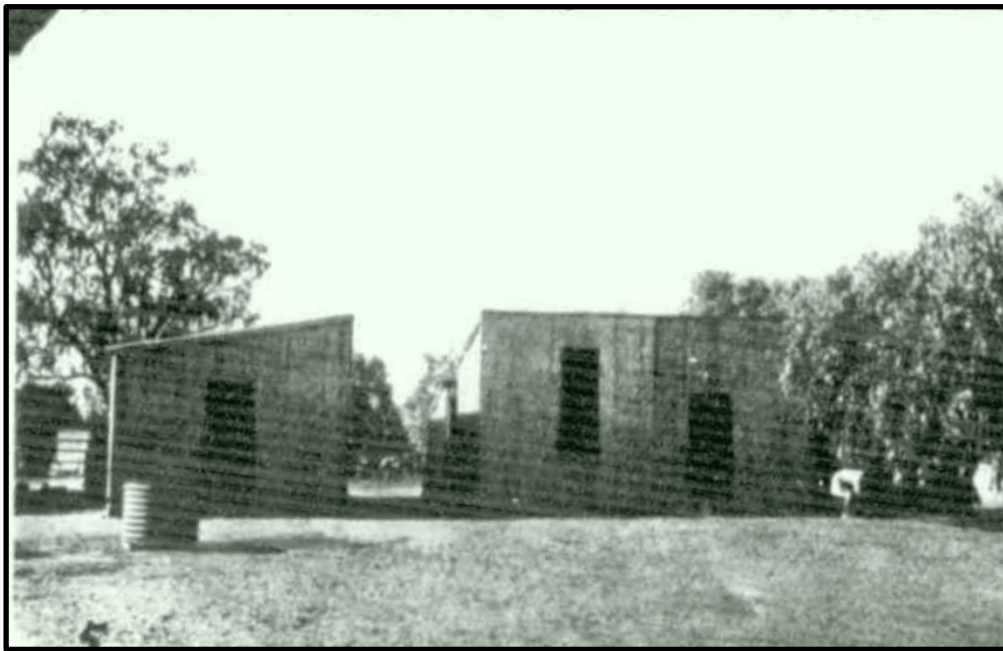


Figure 4.5: The Bungalow, Alice Springs.
(*Observer*, 4 August 1926, 36).

Historian Alison Holland examined the campaign for women protectors during the interwar years. She concluded, owing to the 'sexual exploitation' of Aboriginal girls, and an increase in venereal disease, concerns had increased amongst women's organisations about the well-being of these girls during this period.¹⁴³ The campaign has been variously described by Holland as one of 'maternal citizenship'; a campaign for the 'self-actualisation' of the white women involved; and borne out of a concern about miscegenation and the purity of the white

¹⁴² J W Bleakley, *The Aborigines and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia Report*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1929, 17.

¹⁴³ Alison Holland, 'The Campaign for Women Protectors: Gender, Race and Frontier Between the Wars', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 2001, Vol. 16, No. 34, 30.

race rather than for the preservation of the Aboriginal race.¹⁴⁴ She also noted there was a 'gradual shift from protection to assimilation' during the interwar years regarding Aboriginal policy.¹⁴⁵ Holland based some of her conclusions on the Bleakley Report of 1929.

Bleakley's report also recommended the removal of children. His proposal involved the forced removal of young Aboriginal children under twelve years of age from their mothers if the children were classed as 'Quadroons and Octoroons', that is one quarter and one eighth Aboriginal by descent. His claim was that:

where such can be done without inflicting cruelty on the half-caste mother, [and] be placed in an European institution, where they can be given a reasonable chance of absorption into the white community to which they rightly belong.¹⁴⁶

Children who were of part-Aboriginal descent were sent to Hermannsburg Mission, located approximately 135 kilometres west of Alice Springs.¹⁴⁷ Hermannsburg had been established in 1877 by Lutheran missionaries.¹⁴⁸

The WNPA's 1925 Annual Report noted the organisation supported the removal of Aboriginal children as they believed 'quadroon and octaroon children, being more European than native, would probably fare better if brought up as Europeans'.¹⁴⁹ The WNPA firmly believed the future of these children lay in European hands rather than remaining with their own mothers and within their Aboriginal culture. Cooke referred to half-caste children as having 'white blood in their veins' as though to support their removal.¹⁵⁰ The *Non-Party News* stated it was the WNPA's '... contention that it would be better for the whitest of the children to be separated from the others and placed in entirely new surroundings'.¹⁵¹ Quite clearly the WNPA supported the removal of Aboriginal children on the basis of their whiteness and therefore assimilation into the European community rather than staying with their Aboriginal family. A whiter child would have been easier to integrate within a white society than a child with brown skin; the eventual hope was that their Aboriginality would disappear. However, these women's organisations and white women were completely ignorant of cultural factors other than skin colour, thus unable to appreciate the cultural ties and close family

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 34, 28, 31, 39.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁴⁶ Bleakley, *The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia Report*, 17.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴⁸ Department of Environment and Energy, 'National Heritage Places – Hermannsburg Historical Precinct', <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/hermannsburg> viewed 14 September 2018.

¹⁴⁹ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1925.

¹⁵⁰ 'Impressions of Central Australia. Address by Mrs. W. Ternent Cooke', *Observer*, 31 July 1926, 53.

¹⁵¹ Women's Non-Party Association, *Non-Party News*, January 1925, Vol. 1, No. 4, [page number not given].

attachments from which these children were being removed and denied access. But this was the accepted practice at that time. The appointment of an Honorary Official Visitor was to monitor the welfare of Aboriginal women and children employed within South Australia, and over whom State authorities would have had no control.

Cooke reported in 1926 that Aboriginal women were 'taught to knit and embroider', both obviously white women's pursuits, and dismissive of Aboriginal women's own skills and cultural heritage.¹⁵² This demonstrated the failure and inability by Cooke and others to understand Aboriginal culture. This continued into the following decades. For example, Jennifer Jones's examination of a 1950s Aboriginal CWA branch in New South Wales demonstrates white women's lack of awareness and knowledge about Aboriginal culture and crafts pertaining to that particular area.¹⁵³

The CWA hierarchy attempted to impose their own culture's handicrafts and standards, such as knitting, on these Aboriginal women.¹⁵⁴ In this situation, Jones added that these were 'white middle-class' pursuits that entailed 'leisure time and discretionary spending money' to carry out.¹⁵⁵ This may have been equally true for Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory. While they may have had the time because of their incarceration, they would have lacked money although it is probable craft requisites were supplied.

In contrast, the CWA does not appear to have addressed the Aboriginal question during their early years. The CWA had not long been established when the WSG and WNPA became increasingly involved with issues surrounding the welfare of Aboriginal women and children in the 1920s. The Bleakley report coincided with the commencement of their South Australian State branch, which came three years after the establishment of the Burra CWA branch. The CWA did not have any clear policies regarding Aboriginal women and children during the early years of their organisation. Their constitution did not consider Aboriginal issues. Its focus was on white country women and children and improving their lives due to the isolation of rural life far from amenities and resources. The CWA's exposure and awareness of the plight of Aboriginal women and children may have been much less than that of the city organisations; this could have accounted for the seemingly apparent lack of

¹⁵² 'Impressions of Central Australia. Address by Mrs. W. Ternent Cooke', *Observer*, 31 July 1926, 53.

¹⁵³ Jennifer Jones, *Country women and the colour bar: Grassroots activism and the Country Women's Association*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2015.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 113-116.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

understanding and interest. The following example suggests the South Australian CWA's lack of knowledge about Aboriginal people and their culture.

In February 1936, the Burra CWA Branch hosted an exhibition of wool and handicrafts, mainly to encourage women to participate and make home improvements during times of economic stress. One exhibit for a "Wear more Wool" campaign involved the use of wool from Koomooloo Station, owned by the Warnes family. An exhibit included a 'perfect copy of [a] full sized lamb' made of wool.¹⁵⁶ A re-creation of the display showed 'the famous Mary in charge'. The exhibitor also added 'a miniature lamb alongside [and] to make the picture complete an [A]boriginal (doll) dressed as a jockey is astride the big lamb'.¹⁵⁷ There seems to be a confusion of images and themes, so it is not clear what the exhibit conveyed apart from promoting the use of wool to support Australian graziers. Was Mary a religious figure? Or was the image referring to Mary Warnes, President of Burra's CWA, also long-time president of the Burra women's branch of the Liberal Union, later known as the Liberal and Country League.¹⁵⁸ The Aboriginal doll dressed as a jockey on the back of a sheep may have been a reference to Aboriginal stockmen who were commonly employed on sheep and cattle stations. However, it is unknown whether Koomooloo Station used Aboriginal stockmen. Sheep were not ridden, and the use of an Aboriginal doll as a jockey could now be considered unnecessary, if not derogatory, but presumably at this time was unquestioned.¹⁵⁹ Any specific relevance to sheep and wool, though, remains unknown.

Aboriginal issues allowed the WSG and WNPA to formulate policies for their improved care according to white man's directives. These organisations approached State and Federal Governments exerting pressure that allowed changes to be made. What Aboriginal women thought of these policies is unknown. The changes were attempts to assimilate mixed descent children into white society that ignored (at best) or tried to eradicate their Aboriginal cultural heritage. This was consistent with government policy at that time.

Returning to 1926, there were further challenges for Aboriginal welfare. The construction of the North-South railway from Adelaide to Alice Springs, completed in June 1929, was considered as a threat to Aboriginal welfare. The WNPA recommended that steps be taken

¹⁵⁶ 'Country Women's Association', *Burra Record*, 25 February 1936, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵⁸ 'Liberal Federation. (Burra Women's Branch)', *Burra Record*, 11 June 1930, 1; 'Liberal & Country League. Burra Women's Branch', *Burra Record*, 5 May 1936, 2.

¹⁵⁹ A practise did occur during the late twentieth century of 'mutton busting' where children rode on the backs of sheep at rodeos. It is possible 'mutton busting' may have taken place earlier at Koomooloo Station but this has not been confirmed. Refer to 'Program set for big weekend', *Victor Harbor Times*, 19 August 1981, 9.

to ensure the protection of Aboriginal women and children. This included: unless employed on construction work Aboriginal people were to be 'prohibited from coming within a radius of 10 miles' of 'railway construction camps'; 'no native or half-caste women to be employed in any capacity whatever in the camps'; and the appointment of at least two women police officers to 'ensure the carrying out of these regulations'.¹⁶⁰ It is unknown if these measures were carried out.

Haskins was scathing about the WNPA motivations. She challenged the notion that the segregation of these women was because of concerns for their protection as Indigenous persons, and for their health and welfare. Haskins showed that WNPA concerns for the health and welfare of Aboriginal women and children were more about the preservation of the purity of the white race and the upholding of the White Australia policy, than Aboriginal welfare.¹⁶¹

Likewise, Fiona Paisley doubted that Cooke's interest in the welfare of Aboriginal women and children was borne out of altruistic concern. As Cooke did not leave any diaries to give clues to her motives, Paisley suggested the real reason for Cooke's involvement will never be known.¹⁶² She added that Cooke was one of several women who campaigned for Aboriginal policy reforms during the interwar years.¹⁶³ In a diary kept by a New Zealand activist Elsie Andrews, Cooke's interest in 'all matters concerning native races' was confirmed.¹⁶⁴ For example, Andrews noted that in September 1923 Cooke had given an 'impromptu' speech "'Is the White Australia policy justifiable?'".¹⁶⁵ But it is unknown whether she spoke in support of the policy, or for the people it affected.

Segregation, surveillance of the Aboriginal people, and the removal of mixed descent children met with little public resistance at the time. Both Haskins and Anna Haebich referred to earlier press reports in 1923 of short-lived public outrage at the removal of Aboriginal infants from their mothers. Public awareness though, failed to change government policy.¹⁶⁶ Haebich's publication, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*, offers a

¹⁶⁰ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1926.

¹⁶¹ Haskins, 'Domestic service and frontier feminism', 131.

¹⁶² Paisley, "'For a brighter day', Constance Ternent Cooke'", 173

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁶⁴ Elsie Andrews, 'Diaries, Elsie Andrews Papers, Taranaki Museum, New Zealand, 1930, 5, cited in Fiona Paisley, 'Performing 'New Zealand': Maori and Pakeha Delegates at the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference, Hawai'i, 1934', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 2004, 38, No. 1, 26. Refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁵ 'W.N.P.A.', *News*, 6 September 1923, 8.

¹⁶⁶ Haskins, 'Domestic service and frontier feminism', 131; Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2000, 200.

detailed examination of Aboriginal issues in all Australian states, and the treatment they received at the hands of government authorities. As well, Haebich outlined the efforts of misguided, if well-meaning, white persons such as Cooke and Bates.¹⁶⁷ Similar patterns of concern about Indigenous issues were also evident in Western Australia. Aboriginal issues, particularly relating to health and histories of dispossession and abuse, continued, and proved challenging for these women's organisations.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the complexities of the post-war period. Together with the reintegration back into society of servicemen and women, or their hospitalisation and medical treatment, society faced many issues. In addition, there were service personnel overseas who needed to be returned to Australia, which was an enormous logistical task. The end of war also saw the disbanding of most of the patriotic organisations that had worked for the war effort. Their cessation provided a condition of possibility for the new women's voluntary organisations to be established in a period of relative peace. For many of those women who had joined the patriotic war organisations, the establishment of the new groups provided an alternative and new site of voluntary work. From their experiences with the patriotic war organisations, women had gained a sense of empowerment and were able to perform tasks that had previously been carried out by men, such as managing groups beyond the family. The focus of these new organisations was the improvement in conditions of women and children whether in the rural sphere or in the city. One activity across all groups was the creation of rest rooms. These facilities allowed members their own space which was quite separate to men. There they were able to participate in educational or organisational meetings, or simply relax after shopping and before their journey home.

The post-war period was marked by the eclipse of the older organisations in terms of membership – the Housewives' Association and the CWA emerged as dominant. There may have been a sense of disillusion with the non-party political organisations because of the long and protracted attempts to lobby for reforms needed for the well-being of women and children.

In addition, this was a period when issues faced by Aboriginal people came to public notice. The WSG and the WNPA attempted to lobby for reforms yet were complicit in the removal of Aboriginal children determined as mostly white. This was in line with government policy at

¹⁶⁷ Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*, 141-142, 337-338.

the time. The following chapter examines the establishment of the CWA in Australia, with a particular focus on Western Australia and South Australia.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA

[M]y work was hard – dreadfully hard – holding three offices [as] organiser, secretary and treasurer. Many a time I almost wept in despair. Night after night my work went on to the early hours of the morning. Organising the country by pen from the city is indeed a difficult task.¹

Mrs H A Griffiths,
Secretary, CWA of Western Australia

Reflecting on the establishment of the Western Australian Country Women's Association (CWA), Mabel Craven-Griffiths, often referred to as Mrs H A Griffiths, recounted the struggle to form the organisation in that state. It was alleged that a 'thousand letters in six months were written to town and country papers' outlining the aims and objectives of the CWA.² Much hard work and persistence therefore was required by Mrs Griffiths and the National Council of Women (NCW) in Western Australia to ensure the success of their campaign to commence a CWA branch. Earlier in September 1923 the NCW had hosted a meeting with Lady Rachel Forster during her visit to Perth.³ Lady Forster referred to the benefits of the CWA in New South Wales and Queensland suggesting such an organisation would assist rural women living in isolated areas in Western Australia. She encouraged the Western Australian NCW to consider establishing a CWA organisation in that state, which was non-political, non-sectarian, and managed by the country women. Edith Cowan reported the university already offered an annual course of lectures to rural women and this was assisted by the Women's Service Guilds.⁴ Nevertheless, on 9 October 1923 the NCW decided to hold an informal meeting, chaired by Edith Cowan, to discuss the formation of a CWA branch in Western Australia which would assist in improving conditions for rural women and children, as well as encourage an 'active interest in municipal affairs'.⁵ Some letters of support were

¹ Mrs H A Craven-Griffiths, 'Early History of the CWA of Western Australia', ca 1932, mms, Country Women's Association of Western Australia. Mrs H A Craven-Griffiths was Mabel Craven-Griffiths. Refer also to Appendix 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ 'Governor-General's Visit. Public Reception at Prince of Wales Theatre', *Sunday Times*, 2 September 1923, 1; 'Governor-General. Welcomed in Adelaide. Returning Next Month', *News*, 4 September 1923, 10. Lord and Lady Forster left Melbourne on the train via Adelaide for Perth arriving in Perth 7 September 1923. After their visit, they travelled to Adelaide where they stayed with the Governor Sir Tom Bridges.

⁴ 'National Council of Women. At Home. At the Karrakatta Club', *Western Mail*, 4 October 1923, 37. The Women's Service Guild did not become the Women's Service Guilds until late 1924.

⁵ 'News and Notes. To Help Country Women', *West Australian*, 10 October 1923, 10; Country Women's Association of Western Australia, *Provisional Committee Minutes*, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, Perth. The Provisional Minutes book has a note by M C Griffiths indicating the 'informal

read as well as mention of other women's organisations already in existence in country areas, at Moora, Wyalcatchem, Kellerberrin and Denmark. Although details of these groups were not given, it is probable they were 'country circles' established by the Women's Service Guilds and mentioned in Chapter Four.⁶ Furthermore, only four women attended this meeting, and there was the possibility the attempt to establish a CWA was going to be abandoned.⁷ Perhaps this indicated some resistance to the formation of a new organisation. A Provisional Committee of women from the NCW was appointed, with an official meeting held 12 November, chaired by Mrs Ada Manning, President of the NCW.⁸ A plan was formulated to use a 'travelling railway car' to tour rural areas to speak with country women.⁹ Members were encouraged to submit names of country areas they thought would be receptive to forming a new women's organisation.¹⁰

During the war there had been a rise in patriotic funds and organisations to support the war effort and this has been discussed in Chapter Three. The cessation of hostilities saw the disbanding of many of these war-time organisations. These organisations had given Australian women a means of directly supporting not only the war effort but also providing for those in need during the war's immediate aftermath when soldiers, many of whom were physically and mentally damaged, began to return home. Organisations that disbanded included the Cheer-Up Society and the League of Loyal Women. War's end provided a condition of possibility for the foundation of new organisations such as the CWA that were distinctly separate to associations in existence before world hostilities began. The cessation of the wartime patriotic funds and groups left a void for women that these new post-war organisations filled. They provided women, who had been involved in volunteer war-time organisations that had disbanded, an outlet for voluntary work where they were able to continue to practise their leadership skills as well as gain a sense of independence and community. While some of the earlier associations such as the Women's Service Guild (WSG) in Western Australia and the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA) in South

meeting' minutes were on a sheet of paper but had not been given to her. The Minute Book notes minutes from the First Official Minutes 12 November 1923. Newspapers have filled the void created by the missing informal meeting minutes.

⁶ Refer also to Chapters Four and Six for additional details on 'country circles'.

⁷ Craven-Griffiths, 'Early History of the CWA of Western Australia'; Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, The Country Women's Association of Western Australia, Perth, 1974, 2.

⁸ *Country Women's Association of Western Australia Early History 1924-1934*, PUB21, Country Women's Association of Western Australia, Perth, ca 1934. Refer also to Appendix 1. Ada Manning was a niece of Edith Cowan.

⁹ 'News and Notes. To Help Country Women', *West Australian*, 10 October 1923, 10.

¹⁰ Country Women's Association of Western Australia, *Provisional Committee Minutes*, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, Perth.

Australia, persisted through the war years, these groups needed once again to adapt, this time during the interwar period to ensure their relevance and survival.¹¹

The preceding chapter focussed on post-war repatriation and reconstruction and the challenges this created particularly for the earlier organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA. As their organisations expanded, they added new branches, rest rooms, and utilised a magazine or newspaper to disseminate information to their members. The topic of Aboriginal women and children was briefly addressed in Chapter Four. However, it appears that the West Australian and South Australian CWA's had little involvement in their welfare during the 1920s and 1930s. Although the WSG had requested the Western Australian CWA to 'affirm the right of the [A]boriginal woman to the sanctity of her person, and ask for definite reforms for her protection' – the outcome of this request is unknown but is indicative that the CWA had some knowledge of the plight of the Aboriginal people in that state.¹² The CWA focussed on rural white women, while the WSG and WNPA concerns included Aboriginal women and children, albeit from a White Australia policy perspective. Additionally, the influenza pandemic following the return of servicemen from overseas impacted on everyone including these organisations.

This chapter focuses on the foundation of the CWA in both Western Australia and South Australia. A short history of the organisation's beginnings in New South Wales provides context. Ostensibly non-political, the CWA was a women's lobby group to effect social and political changes to benefit white women and children. Despite their non-political position, Joanne Scott stated the CWA in Queensland was indeed a lobbying organisation.¹³ In fact, in 2019, an aim of the South Australian CWA was to encourage 'the study of community issues' and take 'results from these studies to the appropriate authorities and press for changes to be implemented' which suggests a political aspect of the organisation.¹⁴ All organisations examined by this thesis were voluntary women's groups that comprised women who freely gave their time to assist women and children. Tensions remained, however, about whether the CWA's organisations were truly political rather than non-political, especially among its members. Even though the suffrage movement in Australia had long passed, its effects were still remembered as the press in Australia had published

¹¹ Before 1924 the WSG was known as the Women's Service Guild. After this date, it became the Women's Service Guilds.

¹² Cited in Kay Daniels and Mary Murnane, *Uphill All the Way: A Documentary History of Women in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1980, 292.

¹³ Joanne Scott, 'Generic Resemblances'? *Women and Work in Queensland, 1919-1939*, PhD thesis, Department of History, University of Queensland, 1995, 109.

¹⁴ South Australian Country Women's Association Incorporated, *Handbook for Members*, SACWA, Kent Town, ca 2019, 3.

much about militant feminism in Britain during their struggle for the vote for women. Historian Helen McCarthy claimed women's suffrage was the reason for the establishment of non-party non-political women's organisations in post-war Britain. However, in Australia women had already gained the vote well before Britain, therefore suffrage was unlikely to be a factor.¹⁵

The new organisations broadened the scope of their work in contrast to the WSG and the WNPA and recognised the need for services that the State had not provided. In particular, the CWA offered members mutual help and assistance; friendship; educational opportunities to white women and children living in country areas, many isolated from amenities; encouraged the establishment of rural health services and provided other resources. Membership of the association also enabled women to meet and socialise; to increase their knowledge not only of local, but state, national and transnational issues; and to lobby for reforms that benefitted women and children, particularly those living in rural areas.

Not only this, but membership of these voluntary organisations also afforded women a means of actively participating in voluntary work towards the organisations' objectives. Scott acknowledged many women worked full-time within the voluntary sector thus making voluntary work their career. Voluntary work was more likely to be pursued as a full-time occupation by those who came from a more privileged background or at least enjoyed financial stability.¹⁶ Often, they were members of several organisations at the same time. The more prominent amongst them had links to family members who acted as role models that imbued them with the ability and willingness to accept executive positions within these organisations. For example, Ada Manning, President of the Western Australian NCW, was the niece of Edith Cowan.¹⁷ Scott also suggested women derived benefits from volunteering such as increased status and 'public recognition'.¹⁸

Some of the women featured in the following discussion were wives of politicians, pastoralists, and businessmen. Scott however noted from her own research it was much easier to find information about the dominant women in the CWA than it was about the general members.¹⁹ The absence of formal membership records during the early years of the CWA branches, as well as other groups examined in this thesis, contributed to the

¹⁵ Helen McCarthy, 'Parties, Voluntary Associations, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 2007, 891-912.

¹⁶ Scott, 'Generic Resemblances'? *Women and Work in Queensland, 1919-1939*, 96.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

difficulties in identification. Often only a surname was given making identification an arduous task or even impossible. It is therefore difficult to determine if membership of CWA organisations included women other than those from the middle class. It is possible working-class women were busy with daytime chores on farms, and domestic duties in the evenings that prevented them from having free time to become members of these organisations, or perhaps they were unable to afford the cost of membership fees or to travel to meetings. However, without evidence of their membership owing to the lack of record keeping this is difficult to prove with certainty.

The CWA was first established during the immediate post-war years in New South Wales in 1922 with Queensland following shortly thereafter. Within a few years branches were commenced in other states of Australia. The following is a narrative of the early years until 1928 inclusive, followed by an account of the impact the organisation had from its beginnings in New South Wales, its influence and spread into Western Australia and South Australia. Furthermore, it is argued the influence of Lady Rachel Forster and the NCW were critical to the formation of the CWA in both Western Australia and South Australia. Lady Forster, wife of Australia's Governor-General, encouraged the establishment of CWA branches in both Western Australia and South Australia through her links with the NCW.

In the Beginning: New South Wales

In April 1922 Mrs Grace Munro (see Figure 5.1), also referred to as Mrs Hugh Munro, presided over a Bushwomen's Conference in Sydney that culminated in the formation of the New South Wales CWA organisation which eventually was to generate branches Australia wide. Queensland followed that same year. Grace Munro was part of the 'rural elite' – the wife of a wealthy grazier with her own financial means – and became the new organisation's foundation president.²⁰ The death of one of her young children owing to a lack of medical help steeled her resolve to do something for country women so that they could avoid suffering a similar tragedy.²¹

²⁰ Elizabeth Teather, 'Mandate of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1996, 78.

²¹ Jillian Oppenheimer, 'Munro, Grace Emily (1879-1964)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/munro-grace-emily-7686> viewed 1 June 2015. Also refer to Appendix 1.



Figure 5.1: Mrs Grace Munro. ('The Countrywoman', *Land*, 20 December 1929, 17).

This was not unlike the story in Canada which is often cited as a possible reason for the eventual formation of the CWA in Australia. In 1889 in Canada, Adelaide Hoodless's toddler son died of illness allegedly from 'drinking impure milk'.²² From her efforts to increase awareness amongst others, the Women's Institutes in Canada were established at Stoney Creek, Ontario in 1897. During a visit to England in World War One, Mrs Alfred Watt from British Columbia, Canada suggested rural women there would benefit from a similar organisation.²³ It is possible however, that the CWA arose coincidentally and independently of the Women's Institutes in Canada and Britain.

In New South Wales, Dr Richard Arthur (see Figure 5.2) suggested holding a Bushwomen's Conference. He realised that Bush Week in Sydney scheduled for late September 1919, did not directly address women's concerns.²⁴ An aim of Bush Week was to promote primary and secondary industry goods in the city to benefit country farmers and businesses. A long-

²² Erickson, Gibbings and Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, 1. For information about Adelaide Hoodless refer to 'Hunter, Adelaide Sophia (Hoodless)', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hunter_adelaide_sophia_13E.html viewed 1 March 2019.

²³ 'Country Woman's Club', *Register*, 27 December 1919, 11. For additional information also refer to 'National Federation of Women's Institutes', Peter Gordon and David Doughan, *Dictionary of British Women's Organisations 1825-1960*, Woburn Press, London, 2001, 103-104. Mrs Alfred Watt was nee Madge Robertson.

²⁴ Richard Arthur, 'Making Bush Life Attractive. Conference of Bush Women', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 17 January 1919, 7. Refer also to "Bush Week" Exhibition & Carnival, 'Official Catalogue. "Bush Week" First Annual Exhibition & Carnival Feb. 9 to Feb. 17, 1920', Austral Press & Advertising, Sydney, 1920. The original date proposed for Bush Week in September 1919 was postponed until February 1920 because of the influenza epidemic.

standing Member of Parliament, Arthur was viewed as 'always ... a champion of country interests' despite having been elected to a metropolitan constituency.²⁵ As early as September 1905, recognising the need for an increase in Australia's primary production, Arthur supported state-aided immigration and land settlement.²⁶ In January 1906 he noted country areas attracted few young men either to remain on the family holding, or to move from the city to the country. This, he believed, was because these men equated country life as a kind of 'penal servitude with hard labour' where the 'delights of [participation in] sailing, cricket matches, bicycle sports, and music halls [were] unknown'.²⁷

In January 1919 Arthur penned 'Making Bush Life Attractive' which was published in the *Stock and Station Journal*, inviting comments from the public, particularly country women.²⁸ Support was found in the *Journal's* part-owner and editor Robert McMillan (see Figure 5.2) who also wrote under the *nom de plume* 'Gossip'.²⁹ The media was important for the dissemination of information and ideas by providing a forum for the discussion of conditions in the country that women had to endure and tolerate. Arthur highlighted the difficulties faced by country people in comparison to city folk who had reliable electricity and water directly supplied to their houses. Their daily hardships were emphasised when he stated:

In the bush, people have to manage with kerosene or candles, and the water is to many a source of endless trouble. ... country people have to cart water for a mile or two in old kerosene-tins or tubs – water with a green hue and a distinctive odor [sic] ...³⁰

Journalist Florence Gordon (see Figure 5.2), writing under the pen-name of 'Urbania', supported Arthur and encouraged her readership to 'join together and form A Countrywomen's Union of Help', importantly recognising that 'a body of several thousand women, speaking with one voice, could not be ignored politically'.³¹ Arthur's suggestion of a 'Conference of Countrywomen' was taken up, the date dependent on the number of replies

²⁵ 'City and Country. Dr. Richard Arthur. A Friend of the Primary Producer', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 24 February 1922, 4.

²⁶ Richard Arthur, 'Australia's Destiny. The Solution. State-Aided Immigration and Land Settlement', *Daily News*, 23 September 1905, 4.

²⁷ Richard Arthur, 'The Difficulty of Getting a Living', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1906, 7.

²⁸ Richard Arthur, 'Making Bush Life Attractive. Conference of Bush Women', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 17 January 1919, 7; 'The Country Women's Union of Help. A Bushwomen's Conference', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 30 August 1921, 3; 'City and Country. Dr. Richard Arthur. A Friend of the Primary Producer', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 24 February 1922, 4.

²⁹ 'Gossip', 'Bush Week. Dr. Arthur's Views', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 31 January 1919, 3.

³⁰ 'Comfort and Happiness in the Country. Dr. Richard Arthur advocates a Campaign to Bring the Amenities of Civilisation from the City to the Bush. And Educational Conference and Exhibition. How to Make Bush Life Attractive.', *Farmer and Settler*, 21 January 1919, 8.

³¹ Urbania, 'Our Home Page', *The Outlook. The Moral of the Dog*, *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 12 July 1921, 3. Refer also to Appendix 1 for a brief biography of Florence Gordon.

to the column and their suggestions as to the most suitable time for it to be held.³² It was under the auspices of the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal* that the conference eventuated. Florence Gordon later became Secretary of the newly formed New South Wales CWA.

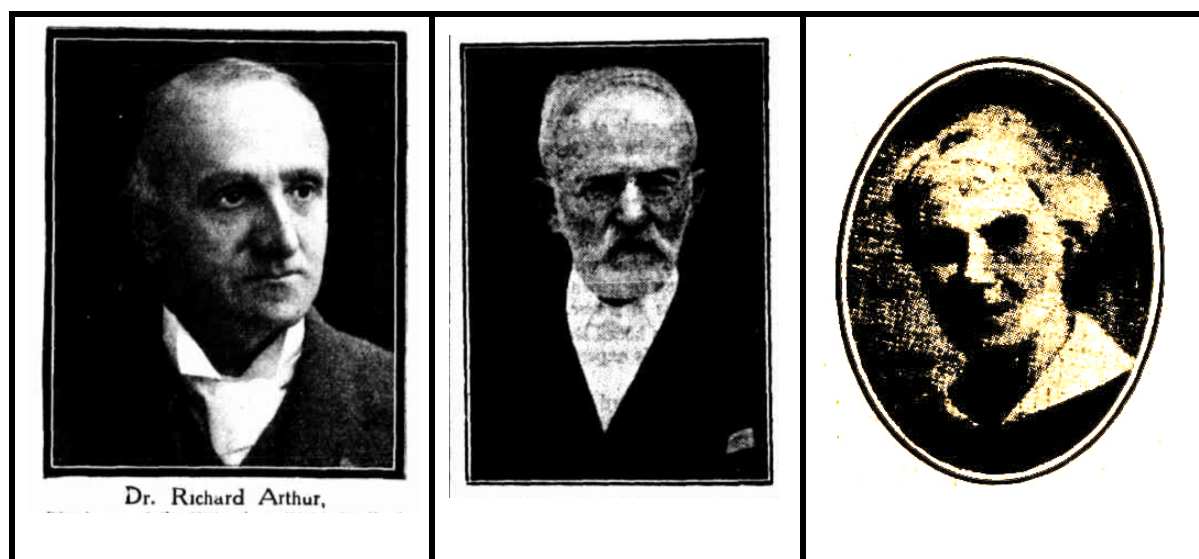


Figure 5.2: (Left to right) Dr Richard Arthur, Robert McMillan and Florence Gordon. (*Sydney Mail*, 3 March 1920, 6; 'Veteran Journalist', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1929, 12 and 'A Southern Worker', *Queenslander*, 2 February 1928, 50).

Initially advertised as an 'Open Conference of Country Women' (see Figure 5.3), the Bushwomen's Conference was convened to discuss a range of concerns including the population drift to Sydney from the country; oppressive conditions for women and children on the land in comparison to their city counterparts; and a lack of medical facilities and birthing centres for women. Sydney's *Catholic Press* acknowledged:

The story of the country woman is usually a story of silence in the face of hardships and suffering born of droughts, floods, bad seasons, insect pests, and countless household difficulties ...³³

³² 'The Country Women's Union of Help. A Bushwomen's Conference', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 30 August 1921, 3.

³³ 'The Bushwomen. In Conference in Sydney.', *Catholic Press*, 27 April 1922, 25.

Grace Munro wisely added 'If you want women to go out to live on the land you must do something for them'.³⁴ She recognised from her own personal experience the need to improve facilities in the country that included offering women social supports.³⁵

UNDER THE DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE OF DAME MARGARET DAVIDSON, D.B.E.

— AN —

OPEN CONFERENCE OF COUNTRY WOMEN

Will Be Held At

THE COUNTRY CLUB

17 Castlereagh Street, SYDNEY,

To be opened by DAME MARGARET DAVIDSON, D.B.E. on
April 18th, 1922.

Object : Improving the Conditions of the Woman on the Land.

Committee:

Mrs. Hugh Munro, President.
Mrs. Richard Arthur, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. Harding, Mrs. Herbert, Mrs. W. W. Killen,
Dr Morris, Mrs. Masey, Mrs. Sturt, Miss H. Souter, Dr. Arthur, Mrs. Kenneth Street,
Miss F. Fourdrinier, Miss F. Gordon, Hon. Organiser.

ADDRESSES WILL INCLUDE:—

<p>"INFANT MANAGEMENT": Dr. Margaret Harper.</p> <p>"COMFORT IN THE COUNTRY HOME": Mrs. Florence Taylor, M.L.A.</p> <p>"PRACTICAL HOUSE BUILDING": Miss Moss.</p> <p>"CITIZENSHIP": Miss Preston-Stanley.</p> <p>"THE CASE FOR THE WOMAN ON THE LAND": Mr. J. K. Powell.</p>	<p>"MAN'S PART TO THE WOMAN ON THE LAND": Mr. A. B. Piddington.</p> <p>"THE INSECT MENACE TO RURAL LIFE": Professor Lancelot Harrison.</p> <p>"SCIENTIFIC DIET IN RELATION TO THE HIGH COST OF LIVING": Mr. R. McMillan.</p>
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Hospitality for a limited number can be afforded from April 18th to 21st.

Please cut out and post to the Hon. Organiser:—
17 Castlereagh St., Sydney.

I propose to attend the Conference of Country women, opening April 18th.

Signed

Address

Please state if hospitality is required.

Figure 5.3: Open Conference of Country Women.
(‘Advertisement’, *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 28 February 1922, 3).

The *Sydney Stock and Station Journal* highlighted the importance of the woman’s vote as equal to men, and suggested Governments were accordingly ‘sensitive to the voice of numbers’.³⁶ The Journal was publicly acknowledging the value of the woman’s vote, and that women could make a difference politically if they united as one providing strength in unity to

³⁴ ‘Speak Up, Country Women!’, *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 25 April 1922, 4.

³⁵ Melanie Oppenheimer, *Volunteering, Why Can’t We Survive Without It*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008, 3.

³⁶ ‘Speak Up, Country Women!’, *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 25 April 1922, 4.

achieve their aims, a recurring theme in this thesis. It was therefore essential that women met to discuss their ideas.

In May 1924 the Annual Conference for the New South Wales CWA was held at Moree and opened by Mr Wearne, Minister for Lands, with the President of the CWA, Mrs Grace Munro presiding.³⁷ Grace Munro, in her address, emphasised the non-political nature of the Association; and outlined what she believed was necessary for the CWA to successfully continue into the future. She suggested:

to organise the State properly, we must divide it into various districts, each with their own governing Committee, under the jurisdiction of the Head Executive of the Association, thus relieving the latter body of a great deal of organising.³⁸

Continuing, Munro reported on the activities of the CWA since its inauguration in 1922. These included the provision of 'special counters for women and children at Railway Refreshment Rooms'; the establishment of Seaside Homes where women and children could gain respite from oppressive country conditions; and assistance to the Bush Nursing Association to improve medical and nursing facilities for women and children that would 'help to bring safety and comfort to a lot of women whose lives are at present fraught with danger and anxiety'.³⁹

Mrs Earle Page, president of the newly formed Women's Country Party of New South Wales, commented that despite Munro's exhortations the CWA was non-political, this was a 'misnomer, seeing that the aims and objects of the Country Women's Association simply bristled with political activity'.⁴⁰ Page added:

several women prominent in the organisation of the Women's Country Party were also members of the Country Women's Association ... [and] had deliberately joined the Women's Country Party subsequent to their enrolment in the ranks of the Country Women's Association.⁴¹

³⁷ 'Country Women's Association. The Annual Conference. Political Parties Repudiated', *Land*, 30 May 1924, 15. According to the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Walter Ernest Wearne was a grazier and politician who became a Nationalist. Also see John Atchison, 'Wearne, Walter Ernest (1867-1931)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wearne-walter-ernest-9017> viewed 21 January 2015.

³⁸ 'Country Women's Association. The Annual Conference. Political Parties Repudiated', *Land*, 30 May 1924, 15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁰ 'Country Women's Association. Statement By Mrs Earle Page. "Bristling With Political Activity"', *Land*, 6 June 1924, 15. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biography of Ethel Page (nee Blunt).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

Ethel, the wife of Earle Page, a Federal politician, who assisted her husband to form the Country Party, may well also have been referring to herself.⁴² Author Paul Davey stated the Women's Country Party was formed in 1923 in Sydney and confirmed Ethel Page was appointed President the following year. He described the Women's Country Party as:

a support and advisory group, which also provided important contact to non-political organisations such as the Red Cross, Country Women's Association and National Council of Women.⁴³

The date of Ethel Page's membership with the New South Wales CWA has not been checked and is therefore unknown.⁴⁴ Non-political was a common belief shared by several organisations particularly post-World War One, but in fact this may not have accurately reflected their true position. As previously discussed in the Introduction to this thesis the term 'political' was often subjective.

However, historian Hilary Carey argued organisations affiliated with the New South Wales NCW, including the CWA, despite proclaiming they were non-political and non-sectarian, were invariably non-Labor and non-Catholic. She added that these terms were code for conservative politics and Protestantism.⁴⁵ Historian Martin Woods also stated the CWA was typical of those organisations established during the 1920s that had the 'familiar non-political, non-sectarian tags' suggesting their conservative politics.⁴⁶ Page's words were a salutary reminder that the CWA was indeed politically active. Ascertaining the religious affiliation of various members though, is difficult and has not been pursued. Woods also believed many South Australian CWA members were Protestant adding '[a]s far as it is possible to tell, Catholic women were not involved on the executive', but his statement does not preclude their inclusion as ordinary members.⁴⁷ Although, in New South Wales, Mrs Toby Browne was the wife of a pastoralist, mother of a large number of children, a prominent member of the CWA, an inaugural vice-president of the Binalong branch, and a Catholic.

⁴² Carl Bridge, 'Page, Sir Earle Christmas, (1880-1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/page-sir-earle-christmas-7941> viewed 13 January 2015; 'Ethel Page. Australia's Prime Ministers', *Your Story, Our History*, National Archives of Australia, <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/page/spouse.aspx> viewed 13 January 2015.

⁴³ Paul Davey, *The Nationals: The Progressive, Country and National Party in New South Wales 1919 to 2006*, The Federation Press, Annandale, 2006, 362.

⁴⁴ Hilary M Carey, "'Doing Their Bit': Female Collectivism and Traditional Women in Post-Suffrage New South Wales", *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies*, 1996, Vol. 1, No. 2, 101-116.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-116.

⁴⁶ Martin Woods, *Towards a civil society: voluntary community service and womanhood in South Australia, 1836-1936*, PhD Thesis, Flinders University, 2000, 264.

⁴⁷ Woods, *Towards a civil society*, 264-265.

Her Catholicism did not preclude her membership of the organisation or the holding of an official position.⁴⁸

The formation in New South Wales of the CWA ensured its role as a principal advocate for country women and children, and for these reasons the organisation's future success was assured. Robert Putnam indicated the formation of 'local chapters' or branches was a 'distinctive feature of a social-capital-creating formal organization [sic]'.⁴⁹ It was a necessary part of a growing organisation. However, it required strong women to become its leaders to steer the organisation in a direction to achieve its goal of social reforms. These influential women were not only Australian residents, but visitors to Australia who were able to bring new ideas to the discussion table to infuse into the new organisations. Lady Rachel Forster, the wife of Australia's Governor-General Lord Forster, was one of these women, and she encouraged the formation of CWA branches in Western Australia and South Australia.

Lady Rachel Forster

The Honourable Rachel Cecily Montagu, only daughter of Henry John Douglas-Scott-Montagu the first Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, was born in 1868.⁵⁰ Her early life was one of privilege. She was raised in a household that comprised twelve servants including a nurserymaid.⁵¹ It is likely her early education was undertaken at her family's estate, Beaulieu in New Forest, Hampshire, as the 1881 Census entry indicates they had a private governess and a 'school room maid'.⁵² In June 1890 she married at Westminster to Henry William Forster, Esquire, a childhood friend. There followed four children – two sons and two daughters – all born in the 1890s in London.⁵³

⁴⁸ 'Mrs. Toby Browne to Resign', *Sun*, 20 July 1937, 16; 'New South Wales Legion of Catholic Women', *Catholic Freeman's Journal*, 27 February 1941, 11. For additional information about Mrs Toby Browne, refer to Catherine Kevin, *Dispossession and the Making of Jedda: Hollywood in Ngannawal Country*, Anthem Press, London, 2020. Mrs Toby Browne was formerly Winifred Lander and married in New South Wales in 1917.

⁴⁹ Robert D Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000, 51.

⁵⁰ 'Death of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu', *Driffield Times*, 11 November 1905, 4; 'Lady Forster', *The Times*, 13 April 1962, 15; Chris Cunneen, 'Forster, Sir Henry William (1866-1936)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/forster-sir-henry-william-6213> viewed 8 May 2015. Also refer to 'Rachel Cecily (nee Douglas-Scott-Montagu), Lady Forster', *National Portrait Gallery*, <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp132565/rachel-cecily-nee-douglas-scott-montagu-lady-forster> viewed 13 June 2016. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu was a member of a long-established noble family, his father the fifth Duke of Buccleuch.

⁵¹ 1871 Census, Hampshire/Bonchurch/District 1, England, RG10/1169 per Ancestry.com.au.

⁵² 1881 Census, Hampshire/Beaulieu/District 6, England, RG11/1203 per Ancestry.com.au.

⁵³ 'Forster Marriage', *The Times*, 4 June 1890, 9; Christopher Cunneen, *Kings' Men: Australia's Governors-General from Hopetoun to Isaacs*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, 154; Marriage certificate of Henry William Forster and Rachel Cecily Douglas-Scott-Montagu, Westminster Marriages, City of Westminster Archives Centre, per Findmypast.com.au viewed 17 June 2016.

Unlike the stereotypical dame portrayed by many as idle, or the Lady Bountiful, the rich woman using philanthropy to utilise her spare time to help the poor and less fortunate, Lady Forster was politically informed, and actively engaged in various voluntary organisations in England.⁵⁴ While important social occasions befitting her class demanded attendance such as at the State Ball by 'command' of Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace in June 1898 where, as Mrs H W Forster, Lady Forster mingled with other aristocratic women, these did not detract from her political and social interests.⁵⁵ Her father had been a Member of Parliament (as Lord Henry Scott) for Selkirkshire in Scotland between 1861 and 1868, and Southern Hampshire between 1868 and 1884. Likewise, her paternal grandfather the Duke of Buccleuch had also been a Member of Parliament, as was her maternal grandfather.⁵⁶ Not only this but her mother, Lady Cecily Susan Montagu-Stuart was involved with the Primrose League and gave an address at their Annual Meeting in 1888 on 'Why should women care for politics'. She argued that politics played a part in women's everyday lives irrespective of whether they were prepared to become involved, that 'women's lives must be affected, directly or indirectly, by political events'.⁵⁷

Lady Montagu-Stuart also addressed the Mother's Union in London in 1891 supporting women's equality and recognising many women were confined to the domestic sphere. Acknowledging a world-wide women's movement, she stated 'we are women first and mothers afterwards', and added that:

in spite of many brilliant illustrations of what women could do for their country and generation ... [men] seemed content to write and speak of her capacities as bounded by the limits of the nursery and the kitchen.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Carla Wilson, Anne Kerslake Hendricks and Rachel Smithies, "Lady Bountiful" and the "Virtual Volunteers": The Changing Face of Social Service Volunteering', *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, Issue 17, December 2001, 128.

⁵⁵ 'Court Circular', *The Times*, 8 June 1898, 10.

⁵⁶ 'Mr Walter Scott', *Hansard 1803-2005*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-walter-scott/> viewed 18 June 2016 (he later the Duke of Buccleuch); 'Lord Henry Scott', *Hansard 1803-2005*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/lord-henry-scott/> viewed 16 June 2016. 'John Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie', *Hansard 1803-2005* <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/people/mr-john-stuart-wortley-mackenzie> viewed 22 January 2020. He was the second Lord Wharnccliffe, was Lady Cecily Susan Montagu-Stuart's father.

⁵⁷ Lady Cecily Susan Montagu-Stuart, 'Why Should Women Care for Politics. An Address by the Lady Montagu. At the Annual Meeting of The Ladies' Grand Council of the Primrose League. Held at Westminster Town Hall on May 1st 1888', Forster Family Papers, Lepe House, manuscript copy in possession of the Hon Dr Emma Page.

⁵⁸ Lady Cecily Susan Montagu-Stuart, 'An Address to the Mother's Union given by Lady Montagu of Beaulieu on 'The Worth of Womanhood' 1891', Forster Family Papers, Lepe House, manuscript copy in possession of the Hon Dr Emma Page.

Later, Lady Forster's husband was a Member of Parliament representing 'as a Unionist continuously' the Kent constituencies of Sevenoaks and Bromley.⁵⁹ These instances would have given Lady Forster ample insight into the world of both politics and social order.⁶⁰ It was this knowledge, wealth of experience and advice that allowed her to participate in discussions and impart new ideas to groups of women.



Figure 5.4: Lady Rachel Forster. (Courtesy of Hon Dr Emma Page).

It is also clear Lady Forster (Figure 5.4) supported her husband in the exercise of his political duties and his career, which was viewed as unusual at that time. In June 1913 she accompanied him to a Garden Party organised by both the Sevenoaks Constitutional

⁵⁹ 'New Governor of Australia. Lord Forster Appointed', *The Times*, 15 June 1920, 16.

⁶⁰ 'Lord Henry Scott', *Hansard 1803-2005*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/lord-henry-scott/> viewed 16 June 2016. Lord Henry Scott was first Baron Montagu of Beaulieu from 1885 to November 4, 1905.

Association and the Sevenoaks Women's Unionist Association, at which her husband gave an address.⁶¹ Later, in January 1914, she presided over a meeting of the Sevenoaks Women's Unionist Association where she reminded those in attendance that while the occasion presented as 'an opportunity of meeting together in a very friendly manner, ... they must not lose sight of the really important reason of their meeting', that was to discuss politics.⁶² Introduced by Lady Forster, Mr Seymour Lloyd, Unionist candidate for Dundee, Scotland against Liberal Winston Churchill, also spoke.⁶³ In July 1914 Lady Forster addressed the Seal branch of the Primrose League in July 1914 in place of her husband, who had been delayed at the House of Commons, demonstrating her talent and confidence in doing so.⁶⁴

Lady Forster, as the Honourable Mrs H W Forster, earlier in March 1914 had also spoken at the Kent County Nursing Association's Annual Public Meeting.⁶⁵ The annual meeting was held at her London residence, during which she was appointed a member of the Committee.⁶⁶ Lady Forster referred to ways in which 'public authorities' could utilise to their advantage the services of voluntary organisations that would improve 'efficiency and economy' in those provided by the State.⁶⁷ This also depended on the organisation's willingness to participate, but it was an acknowledgement by Lady Forster of her awareness of the importance of voluntary organisations and their role in society. Author Ann Bourdillon had recognised voluntary organisations performed functions that the State was either unable to perform or 'should ... never do alone' in assisting the poor and unfortunate members of the public.⁶⁸ One decided advantage of voluntary organisations was the services they offered were given without bureaucratic restraint.⁶⁹ The Annual meeting of the Kent County Nursing Association was again held at Lady Forster's residence in April 1917 indicating her continued association with this organisation.

⁶¹ 'Sevenoaks Constitutional Association and Sevenoaks Women's Unionist Association', *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, 20 June 1913, 5.

⁶² 'Sevenoaks Women's Unionist Association. Speech by Hon. Mrs. H. W. Forster. Enthusiastic Proceedings', *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, 30 January 1914, 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁴ 'Seal Primrose League. Address by the Hon. Mrs. Forster', *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, 10 July 1914, 5.

⁶⁵ 'Forthcoming Events', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 27 February 1914, 6.

⁶⁶ 'Kent County Nursing Association. Legislation and Charitable Organisations', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 6 March 1914, 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁸ A F C Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services Their Place in the Modern State*, Methuen & Co Ltd, London, 1945, 7.

⁶⁹ James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War: Continuities of Class*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, 200.

Of her activities during the war years, Lady Forster's husband reported she worked:

at a canteen at one of the busy London railway stations, and she used to turn out at 4 o'clock in the morning to do her shift there. We had no chauffeur – he had gone to the war. Right through the winter – that bitter one of 1916 particularly – she used to tramp down to the station, frequently ankle deep in snow, and she spent many hours serving out food at the canteen⁷⁰

Lady Forster also referred to having set up and worked at a 'home for mothers and infants at Sydenham' in London.⁷¹ British newspapers reported in June 1919 that the Lodge at Sydenham was to be converted into the home.⁷² Known as the Lady Forster Guest House for Mothers and Babies, it was opened in early July 1921.⁷³ Lady Forster indicated 'a number of very poor mothers and their children [were] able to go there in order to regain their full health after the birth of the children'.⁷⁴ It would appear however, admission was limited to the wives of ex-servicemen who were unemployed or disabled, and these women could stay for a maximum of four weeks without charge, as long as they were breastfeeding their infants.⁷⁵ Later, Lady Forster said 'infant welfare was her keenest hobby' and the Sydenham home confirmed this.⁷⁶ She had also been an active member of the NCW in England including a period as President of the Bromley, Kent branch.⁷⁷ All of these experiences were to stand her in good stead when she resided in Australia from 1920-1925 as the wife of the Governor-General.

Many women in voluntary organisations were touched by personal tragedy during the war years, and Lady Forster was no exception. Her eldest son Second-Lieutenant John Forster of the King's Royal Rifle Corps was killed in action in France in September 1914 aged twenty-one years.⁷⁸ As a result of the fighting it was reported the battalion had 'lost fifteen officers out of twenty-four and 283 men' – a high toll.⁷⁹ Another report described John Forster as a 'gallant English gentleman ... leading his men at a critical time when men

⁷⁰ 'Lady Forster', *Mercury*, 14 August 1920, 10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10; Falaise, 'Lady Forster', *Australasian*, 26 June 1920, 36 reports the home was given by Lord Forster for its establishment.

⁷² 'Peak Hill Lodge', *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 11 June 1919, 4.

⁷³ 'Baby's Guest House', *Dundee Courier*, 14 July 1921, 8.

⁷⁴ 'Lady Forster', *Mercury*, 14 August 1920, 10.

⁷⁵ 'The Lady Forster Guest House for Mothers and Babies', *British Journal of Nursing Supplement*, 23 July 1921, 62.

⁷⁶ 'New Governor-General. Leaving in August. Wife's Infant Welfare Hobby', *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 25 June 1920, 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2; 'National Council of Women', *West Australian*, 30 Sep 1921, 10.

⁷⁸ 'John Forster', Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/878634/FORSTER,%20JOHN> viewed 23 June 2016.

⁷⁹ 'Enemy's Treachery. Heavy Losses in Officers and Men', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 10 October 1914, 8.

wanted leading'.⁸⁰ In August 1916 the press announced a site at Lewisham had been given by the Forsters for the establishment of the Southend Hall Chapel in memory of their son.⁸¹ But the family was to suffer a further loss with the death of their remaining son Lieutenant Alfred Henry Forster of the Royal Scots Greys in March 1919 as a result of wounds received in October 1918.⁸² He was also twenty-one years old at his death. This time twenty-four acres of land was gifted by the Forsters to the Borough of Lewisham as a memorial to both of their sons for use as a 'public promenade and recreation ground'.⁸³ According to later press reports the deaths of Lady Forster's sons 'impaired her health'.⁸⁴ Their sons' deaths probably also caused her husband's subsequent reported 'ill-health' and his early resignation from Parliament.⁸⁵

In December 1919, Forster was gazetted as 'Baron Forster of Lepe, in the county of Southampton'.⁸⁶ Six months later, Lord Forster was named as Australia's Governor-General to succeed Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson.⁸⁷ Historian Christopher Cunneen noted Lord Forster was one of three names submitted to the Australian Prime Minister William Hughes for consideration as Governor-General.⁸⁸ Cunneen believed Lord Forster's appointment was because he had not only been a parliamentarian but also a cricketer, a decided advantage when going to Australia.⁸⁹ His other sporting interests included golf and yachting.⁹⁰ Reportedly 'not wealthy' Lord Forster accepted the position 'for two years only [with] ... a special allowance ... provided by the British government'.⁹¹ The tenure lasted five years. Lord Forster believed the position would provide 'a distraction for Lady Forster' after the death of their sons.⁹²

The appointment, however, did not meet everyone's approval. One newspaper correspondent lamented the loss of vice-regal Lady Helen Munro Ferguson exclaiming 'Lady

⁸⁰ 'How Lieut. Forster Died. Son of the Member for Sevenoaks Killed in Action. "A Galant English Gentleman"', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 16 October 1914, 3.

⁸¹ 'Church Appointments', *The Times*, 1 August 1916, 5.

⁸² 'Death', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 14 March 1919, 5; 'Alfred Henry Forster', Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/362675/FORSTER,%20ALFRED%20HENRY> viewed 23 June 2016.

⁸³ 'Memorial to Sons', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 18 July 1919, 7.

⁸⁴ Falaise, 'Lady Forster', *Australasian*, 26 June 1920, 36.

⁸⁵ 'Financial Secretary to the War Office. Barony for Mr. H. W. Forster on his Retirement', *Scotsman*, 2 December 1919, 7.

⁸⁶ 'Lord Forster of Lepe', *The Times*, 17 December 1919, 1.

⁸⁷ 'New Governor of Australia. Lord Forster Appointed', *The Times*, 15 June 1920, 16.

⁸⁸ Cunneen, *Kings' Men: Australia's Governors-General from Hopetoun to Isaacs*, 152.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁹⁰ 'Character Sketch. Man of Many Interests', *Cairns Post*, 16 June 1920, 5.

⁹¹ Cunneen, *Kings' Men: Australia's Governors-General from Hopetoun to Isaacs*, 154.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 154.

Forster will have her work cut out to reach the high standard set by her Excellency Lady Helen Munro Ferguson'.⁹³ The Labor press, *Worker*, complained that Lord and Lady Forster were to be accompanied to Australia by their two daughters, son-in-law and two grandchildren with the warning that 'Australia will doubtless be expected to keep the lot' (see Figure 5.5 which shows the Forsters leaving for Australia).⁹⁴ They also inferred Lady Forster 'is what is known as a slummer, and she intends to do the Lady Bountiful act ...',⁹⁵ yet this could not have been further from the truth.

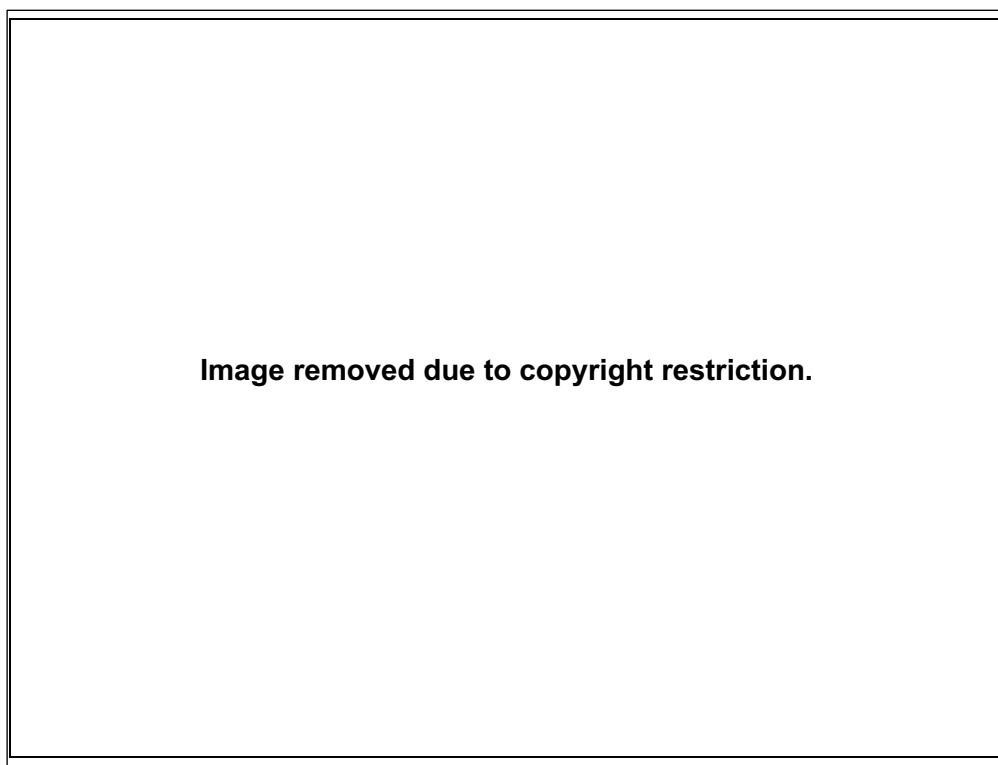


Figure 5.5: Lord and Lady Forster (far right) at St Pancras Station on their departure for Australia (*Illustrated London News*, 28 August 1920, 320).

Once in Australia, Lady Forster received numerous invitations to become patroness of various organisations including the Royal British Nurses' Association in Adelaide; the Tasmanian Bush Nursing Association; and the National Council of Women in Victoria and New South Wales.⁹⁶ She also succeeded Lady Helen Munro Ferguson as President of the

⁹³ 'A Woman's Melbourne Letter', *Western Mail*, 8 July 1920, 28-29.

⁹⁴ 'Home for Rejects', *Worker*, 1 July 1920, 13.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁶ 'Royal British Nurses [sic] Association. Annual Meeting', *Register*, 23 April 1921, 10; 'Lady Forster and the National Council of Women', *Chronicle*, 9 July 1921, 40; 'Bush Nursing. Annual Conference of the Association', *Mercury*, 5 October 1921, 4.

British Red Cross in Australia.⁹⁷ As well, in November 1920 she attended the opening of the Victoria League Conference in Melbourne where she gave a well-received speech.⁹⁸

It is unknown if Lady Forster was a member of the Victoria League prior to her arrival in Australia, but before leaving London the organisation's Executive gave the Vice-Regal couple a reception.⁹⁹ In 1901, the Victoria League, a patriotic organisation, was formed in response to the death of Queen Victoria and the South African (Boer) War. One of its objectives was to unite women 'of the British Isles who are in sympathy with Imperial objects and desire a closer union between the different parts of the Empire'.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, it was a means of maintaining contact with British women throughout the Empire, sharing ideas and upholding Imperialist ideas and traditions. It was non-party. After her return to Britain, in 1927 Lady Forster became President of this organisation. Historian Matthew Hendley however noted that Lady Forster was unable to 'match the imposing presence of her predecessor', and did not make any 'notable interventions at executive meetings'.¹⁰¹ This was not dissimilar to the Red Cross in Australia where Lady Forster followed Lady Helen Munro Ferguson with many believing she could not achieve the commanding presence of her predecessor. However, Lady Forster had already stated infant welfare was her main 'hobby' so these organisations probably did not imbue her with the same sense of enthusiasm.

Lady Forster, patron of the National Council of Women (NCW) in Victoria soon after her arrival in Australia, urged the NCW to develop 'closer relations between the different national councils' within the country.¹⁰² It was important that delegates from each state met at conferences to discuss the legal peculiarities in the laws across the country, particularly pertaining to women and children, and the need for the uniformity of those laws within Australia. Additionally, this would allow branches of the NCW to become aware of what each branch was doing, thus more able to unite as one voice. However, this was an on-going issue as in April 1924 the *Argus* reported Lady Forster continued to encourage the various

⁹⁷ Melanie Oppenheimer, *The Power of Humanity: 100 Years of Australian Red Cross 1915-2014*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, 2014, 71.

⁹⁸ 'Victoria League. Lady Forster Opens Conference', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1920, 5; 'A Woman's Melbourne Letter', *Western Mail*, 25 November 1920, 28.

⁹⁹ 'Lord and Lady Forster Entertained', *Brisbane Courier*, 17 July 1920, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth L Riedi, *Imperialist Women in Edwardian Britain: The Victoria League 1899-1914*, PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 1998, 33.

¹⁰¹ Matthew Hendley, 'The Triumph of Domesticated Imperialism?: The Victoria League and the League of the Empire in the 1920s', in *Organized Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Quebec, 2012, 175-176.

¹⁰² 'National Council of Women. Lady Forster's Interest', *Argus*, 30 September 1921, 7.

NCW branches to attain 'closer co-operation' with each other.¹⁰³ But it was not until 1931 that the federating body, the National Council of Women of Australia, was inaugurated.¹⁰⁴

In March 1923, Lady Forster consented to become patron of the New South Wales CWA.¹⁰⁵ She had already encouraged the NCW and the new CWA to form a 'cordial bond', or even to affiliate and take advantage of the NCW's international links and its influence to improve life for country women.¹⁰⁶ It was the NCW that undertook at the behest of Lady Forster, the drive to form CWA branches in Western Australia and South Australia.

A member of the British aristocracy, Lady Forster's story has parallels with other vice-regal women who were prominent in the various organisations this thesis examines. Lady Forster's own work with women's organisations to improve the lives of women and children in Britain, and an interest in infant welfare, brought a wealth of valuable international experience to Australian organisations. This confirms Melanie Oppenheimer's assertion that vice-regal women were conveyors of ideas and information within the Empire that spread between the organisations.¹⁰⁷ It also dismisses the notion of vice-regal women as idle and inconsequential adornments to their husbands.

Country Women's Association of Western Australia: The Beginning

In December 1923, the platform of the proposed CWA of Western Australia was based on the New South Wales CWA as follows:

- To improve the welfare and conditions of women and children in the country.
- To draw together all women, girls and children in the country districts.
- To bring opportunities for recreation and enjoyment within reach of all members.
- To assist charities in cash and kind.
- To assist the active study of local municipal and road board affairs and to promote a wise and kindly spirit.
- To support bush nursing and any health reforms.
- That the work of the association be carried on by means of country branches.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ 'Women's Activities. Women's National Council', *Argus*, 1 April 1924, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women of Australia 1896-2006*, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, 2015, 50-51.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Country Woman. Her Interests and Association', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 6 March 1923, 2.

¹⁰⁶ 'National Council of Women. Lady Forster Entertained', *Sunday Times*, 23 April 1922, 11; 'A Close Friendship', *Evening News*, 22 April 1922, 7.

¹⁰⁷ Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Lady Helen Munro Ferguson and the Australian Red Cross: Vice-regal Leader and Internationalist in the early Twentieth Century', in Fiona Davis, Nell Musgrove and Judith Smart (eds), *Founders, Firsts and Feminists: Women Leaders in Twentieth-century Australia*, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 2011, 274.

¹⁰⁸ 'The Country Women's Association. Practical Aid to Bush Nursing', *Daily News*, 13 December 1923, 9.

On 15 December 1923 a meeting was convened at Geraldton, located 424 kilometres north of Perth. Edith Cowan, with other ladies from Perth, addressed interested women about the establishment of a CWA branch. The formation of a CWA branch in Geraldton had the support of the local Mayor.¹⁰⁹ A few days later the *Geraldton Guardian* announced a branch of the CWA had been formed after the reportedly well-attended meeting. However, this should have read 'intended' to be formed.¹¹⁰ Early in January 1924, a letter was received by the Provisional Committee from a Mrs C Brown wanting to enrol '45 Members in Geraldton, the foundation of a strong Mother Branch'.¹¹¹ In February 1924 the local press again advertised a meeting to form both a committee and objectives of the new organisation. But some days later, it was advertised another meeting was to be held regarding the formation of a CWA branch at Geraldton. Several days later, the *Geraldton Guardian* again urged women to form a branch, acknowledging there were some initial expenses such as renting a room for meetings and for use as a Rest Room, plus associated costs in decorating and furnishing same.¹¹² The frequency of the newspaper reports suggest a sense of urgency and problems attracting interested women to respond but it was to no avail as Geraldton did not form a CWA branch until early 1929.¹¹³ The forty-five women referred to as potential members did not make a firm commitment to form an association. It became obvious that if they did indeed exist, they were no longer interested. It is unclear why the branch did not commence in 1923 given such initial enthusiasm. The minutes of the Provisional Committee mentioned fees were never received, therefore was it a problem with the cost of the fees, or general costs overall that stopped these women from joining? The attempt to open a branch in Geraldton highlighted not only the problems the NCW women faced, but also the difficulties of starting a new organisation that these early leaders had to deal with, and which Mabel Craven-Griffiths alluded to in her recollections of the early history of the organisation.

However, correspondence in January 1924 from Mrs Burns of Nungarin, located 271 kilometres east north east of Perth in the wheat belt country, gave the Provisional Committee reason for hope when she indicated her keenness to join the CWA.¹¹⁴ Nungarin owed its existence to the 1909 Civil Service Land Settlement Scheme. Due to a declining

¹⁰⁹ 'For Country, Faith and Justice', *Geraldton Guardian*, 13 December 1923, 2. Edith Cowan declined a civic reception preferring instead the visit be kept private.

¹¹⁰ 'Country Women's Association. Geraldton Branch Formed. Address by Mrs. Cowan, M.L.A.', *Geraldton Guardian*, 18 December 1923, 1.

¹¹¹ Country Women's Association of Western Australia, *Provisional Committee Minutes*, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, Country Women's Association of Western Australia (CWA of WA), Perth.

¹¹² 'Some Reflections', *Geraldton Guardian*, 26 February 1924, 4.

¹¹³ Erickson, Gibbings and Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, 110.

¹¹⁴ Country Women's Association of Western Australia, *Provisional Committee Minutes*, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, Perth.

gold industry in the early 1900s, an increasing state population and a concomitant need to improve primary production, as well as an 'over-staffed' civil service, from 1910 land near Nungarin was offered to civil servants for farming under this scheme.¹¹⁵ Already this suggests land was offered to people who had little knowledge of farming practices, and in an area with farming challenges. This was not dissimilar to the Soldier Settlement Schemes in South Australia briefly discussed in Chapter Four. The township of Nungarin was gazetted in March 1912.¹¹⁶

Mrs Burns forwarded the four shillings subscription fee for her membership of the Association.¹¹⁷ The committee decided to withhold two shillings until such time as a branch at Nungarin or nearby was opened, but accepted two shillings as a 'central fee'.¹¹⁸ By 7 July, Nungarin formed a CWA branch with Mrs R Francis, known as Ri or Annie Maria, as the inaugural president; Mrs Henrietta Burns as a vice-president and Mrs Rose Johnson the inaugural secretary.¹¹⁹ Henrietta Burns had also been a member of the WSG's country circles mentioned in Chapter Four.¹²⁰

Because Nungarin members paid their subscriptions just before Bolgart, they were given the honour of being the first Western Australian CWA branch.¹²¹ Ten days later a meeting was held to discuss the appointment of a district nurse, as well as assistance to furnish the new Kununoppin hospital, situated 247 kilometres north east of Perth and opened *circa* 1924. This indicated the immediate willingness of the new branch to work for the benefit of the community by tackling the key issue of women's and children's health as well as the provision of medical facilities for all.¹²² Additionally, the organisation 'decided to pay for

¹¹⁵ Government of Western Australia, Heritage Council State Heritage Office, 'Danberrin Area. Shire of Nungarin', <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/f7a50ee6-a351-4ec8-a13e-44ecd33225f9> viewed 8 July 2016.

¹¹⁶ Government of Western Australia, Heritage Council State Heritage Office, 'Nungarin Townsite. Shire of Nungarin', <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/016b077d-17b5-4f6d-961c-f55390c6f014> viewed 8 July 2016.

¹¹⁷ 'W.A. Country Women's Association', *Primary Producer*, 17 October 1924, 13. This later article confirms the membership fee was four shillings of which two shillings was sent to the Central Office and two shillings retained by the local branch.

¹¹⁸ Country Women's Association of Western Australia, *Provisional Committee Minutes*, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, Perth. Mrs Burns was probably Henrietta Burns.

¹¹⁹ Maxine Cornish, *A Piece of String: Stories of the Nungarin District*, Shire of Nungarin, Nungarin, 2010, 404. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details of these women.

¹²⁰ Bessie Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964, 31.

¹²¹ Erickson, Gibbings, Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, 2-3. Bolgart is approximately 170 kms west of Nungarin, and approximately 116 kms north-east of Perth.

¹²² 'Country Women's Association. Nungarin Branch', *West Australian*, 18 July 1924, 6; Patricia J Howe, *Henrietta*, P J Howe, Mundaring, WA, 2009, 96; Government of Western Australia, 'Town Names', *Landgate*, <http://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/maps-and-imagery/wa-geographic-names/name-history/historical-town-names#K>, viewed 7 July 2016.

medical attention where this was necessary and several members volunteered to provide home comforts' for the 'needy people in the area' fulfilling the CWA's goal of improving the conditions some people experienced.¹²³

The constitution of the CWA was published by the local press and is shown in Table 5.1. This was not unlike the proposed platform as mentioned above but with the following additional items: 'To establish club rooms in country townships, social meeting places, and for the comfort of members', and the name of the organisation.¹²⁴ It was also affirmed the CWA was non-political and non-sectarian. Their motto was:

Loyalty to the Throne.
Service to the Country through Country Women, for Country Women, by Country Women
Non-sectarian [sic], and non-political.¹²⁵

Table 5.1: Constitution and Rules of the CWA of Western Australia.
(*Primary Producer*, 17 October 1924, 13).

Aims of the Association

1. The name shall be "The Country Women's Association of Western Australia."
2. To improve the welfare and conditions of women and children in the country
3. To draw together all women, girls, and children in the country districts.
4. To bring opportunities for recreation and enjoyment within reach of all members.
5. To establish club rooms in country townships, social meeting places, and for the comfort of members.
6. To assist charities in cash and kind.
7. To encourage the active study of local municipal and road board affairs, and to promote a wise and kindly spirit.
8. To support bush nursing and any health reforms.
9. That the work of the Association be carried on by means of country branches.
10. That this Association shall be non-political and non-sectarian

It is uncertain if 'all women, girls, and children in the country districts' included those of Aboriginal descent.

It is also unknown if Mrs R Francis was a member of any voluntary war-time organisations, but she was a Committee member of the Primary Producers' Association prior to her involvement with the CWA.¹²⁶ She inherited her property from Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas

¹²³ *Nungarin Branch 1924-1971*, mms, Nungarin, 1971, 2.

¹²⁴ 'W.A. Country Women's Association', *Primary Producer*, 17 October 1924, 13.

¹²⁵ 'Constitution and Rules of the C.W.A.', *Primary Producer*, 17 October 1924, 13.

¹²⁶ 'Nungarin News. By our Correspondent. Primary Producers' Association', *Nungarin Trayning Mail and Kununoppin, Advertiser*, 30 April 1921, 3. For further details of the history of the Primary Producers' Association formed in 1920 and formerly known as the Farmer and Settlers Association formed in 1912, see The WA Farmers, *Western Australian Farmers Federation: Representing WA*

John Todd, an Australian Army officer who died in Egypt in January 1919.¹²⁷ Todd had been the licensee of the Bellevue Hotel at Midland, nineteen kilometres north east of Perth, until late 1911 or early 1912 so it is likely they both moved to Nungarin around the same time.¹²⁸ For Mrs Francis, life had been tough but she managed to become a prominent member of Nungarin, taking her place amongst the farming community. While few would have known the details of her early life, it is likely these events shaped her into the person she became. Local historian Maxine Cornish refers to a 1928 newspaper article mentioning Mrs Francis as 'the most up to date farmer in the North East district', a testament to her capabilities.¹²⁹

Similarly, Henrietta Burns became a prominent member of the local community. She had worked as a district nurse at Narrogin, setting up a private hospital at Wickepin where she remained until late December 1920.¹³⁰ Later as Mrs Thomas Burns, she left Wickepin, situated approximately thirty-nine kilometres from Narrogin, to join her husband on their new farm at Nungarin almost 250 kilometres north.¹³¹ Reflecting on her life, Burns stated she had also been involved with the suffrage movement in England prior to emigrating to Australia.¹³²

Henrietta Burns's nursing career, and as the wife of a man on the land, gave her first-hand experience of the hardships women in the country faced. However, while a foundation member of the CWA of Western Australia, she appears to have lost interest in the association quite early perhaps due to frustration. By 29 October 1925 it was announced the Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association (WSPPA) had been formed with

farmers for 100 years, http://www.wafarmers.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/WAFarmer-centenary-booklet-2012_LR.pdf viewed 7 July 2016.

¹²⁷ B2455, Thomas John Todd, National Archives of Australia.

¹²⁸ 'Advertising. Application for a Publican's General License', *Swan Express*, 17 August 1907, 2. Application by Thomas John Todd, accountant for a License for Bellevue House known as Bellevue Hotel. See also 'Advertising', *West Australian*, 10 October 1911, 11. Todd sought to transfer the licence. According to Olga Joukovsky-Vaisvila, *Around the Rock: A History of the Shire of Nungarin Western Australia*, Nungarin Shire Council, Nungarin, 1978, 82, he also took out a lease in 1911 Location 13073, Nungarin Shire.

¹²⁹ Cornish, *A Piece of String: Stories of the Nungarin District*, 404.

¹³⁰ 'Wickipen [sic] Branch', *Primary Producer*, 3 September 1920, 2. This article also states that both Mr and Mrs Burns built and equipped the local hospital 'at their own expense', hence they were generous benefactors. The 1920 Government Gazette records she was an uncertificated midwife first registered in March 1913 but in practice since June 1909. Government of Western Australia, *Government Gazette of Western Australia*, 1920/70, 2260, <https://www.slp.wa.gov.au/gazette/gazette.nsf/newsearch> viewed 7 July 2016. Of her grandmother, Patricia Howe wrote that she had been involved with 'the Bush Nursing Scheme, the Country Women's Association, the Farmers and Settlers, the Primary Producers' Association and various other organisations associated with the improvement of women's lifestyles in country areas'. Patricia J Howes, *Henrietta*, P J Howes, Mundaring, WA, 2009, 27.

¹³¹ 'Wickepin Notes', *Great Southern Leader*, 7 January 1921, 5.

¹³² 'Interest to Women. Pioneering Worker's Public Career. Candidate for P.P.A. Presidency', *Daily News*, 12 August 1935, 6.

Burns as the inaugural president. The WSPPA's stated aim was to 'arouse the interest of country women in political subjects by such means, in order that they may use the vote intelligently'.¹³³ In correspondence to the *Primary Producer*, December 1925, 'Country Cousin' referred to the CWA's lack of political agenda when they wrote:

When a Country Woman's [sic] Association was first mooted, most land women sat up and took notice; but when it was advertised as non-political some of us wondered for how long? Land women especially are enveloped in politics. Railway freights, water supplies, education, land tenure, markets, our existence on the land is subservient to the political situation, and in order to live under reasonable conditions we must have a place on the political map. I don't know why any association should advertise that it is non-political. To my mind it is an acknowledgement of ignorance.¹³⁴

The CWA's non-political stance was an issue for some country women, and this may have influenced Henrietta Burns's decision to also join the WSPPA.

Finally, Scottish-born Rose Matilda Johnson, the inaugural secretary of the Nungarin CWA, was a member of other unnamed organisations and was described as an 'ardent worker'.¹³⁵ She had obtained a degree from St Andrew's University in Scotland; became headmistress of a girls' school in England before her marriage and emigrated to South Africa. The family later arrived in Western Australia *circa* 1913, settling at Nungarin. Like Henrietta Burns and Mrs R Francis, she too was a member of the Primary Producers' Association.¹³⁶

These three country women were representative of the type who were leaders in the early years of the CWA in Western Australia and have been included in Appendix 1. Everyone had previously been associated with and acquired leadership skills in organisations that provided them with valuable experience for potential future groups. Their voluntary work contributed to the success of these organisations.

First CWA of Western Australia Conference

The Provisional Committee retired after sixteen months of work, having achieved the establishment of four CWA branches in that time – Nungarin, Bolgart, Benjaberring and the Metropolitan branch – as well as convening the first Conference held in March 1925.¹³⁷ The Metropolitan branch comprised many of the women from the Provisional Committee

¹³³ 'Bravo, Nungarin Women. Form First Branch, P.P.A.', *Primary Producer*, 6 November 1925, 1; Cornish, *A Piece of String: Stories of the Nungarin District*, 393.

¹³⁴ Country Cousin, 'A Country Woman Hits Out', *Primary Producer*, 4 December 1925, 5.

¹³⁵ 'Funeral. The Late Mrs. Rose Matilda Johnson', *West Australian*, 12 March 1940, 4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4; Country Women's Association, *Nungarin Branch 1924-1971*, Nungarin mms, Box HB9, CWA of WA, Perth.

¹³⁷ *Country Women's Association of Western Australia Early History 1924-1934*, PUB21, CWA of WA, Perth; 'Country Women's Association. First Annual Conference', *West Australian*, 12 March 1925, 15.

including Edith Cowan.¹³⁸ An Executive Committee was elected with Mrs Mabel Craven-Griffiths as President, Henrietta Burns of Nungarin as a vice-president, and Mrs Francis as a committee member.¹³⁹

Previously, in November 1924 Mrs Griffiths had written to the *Primary Producer* giving them an update on the 'new movement to Western Australia', adding the women were 'enthusiastic' about the CWA. She stated:

Last week we formed a Metropolitan Branch. The first aim of this branch is to establish a rest-room in the city for our country members. This alone (apart from many other suggestions), should be one of the finest moves the Metropolitan Branch can make. Many a country mother and child will be thankful for this.¹⁴⁰

Consistent with other CWA branches in Australia, Rest Rooms where women could rest, meet with others, and hold meetings, were a vital point of discussion at the Conference. Rest rooms have been discussed in Chapter Four including a brief account relating to the CWA.

Mabel Craven-Griffiths had been the secretary of the Provisional Committee and knew well the difficulties in establishing the CWA in Western Australia. She was also the wife of a state member of Parliament, Harry A C Griffiths which may have given her greater influence.¹⁴¹ In her first report given at the Annual Conference, Mrs Griffiths highlighted distance as a difficulty the Provisional Committee had faced in contrast to New South Wales:

Our progress has not been so rapid as in N.S.W., but we must take into consideration their greater population & closer settlement, as against our greater distances and sparse population, which means much slower advancement.¹⁴²

The Provisional Committee's attempts to form a branch incurred large postage costs. When the NCW was made aware of this, they did contribute towards postage thus allowing the Provisional Committee to continue its work.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Provisional Committee, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, CWA of WA, Perth; *Country Women's Association of Western Australia Early History 1924-1934*, PUB21, CWA of WA, Perth.

¹³⁹ Provisional Committee, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, CWA of WA, Perth; *Country Women's Association of Western Australia Early History 1924-1934*, PUB21, CWA of WA, Perth.

¹⁴⁰ 'A Letter from the Hon. Secretary', *Primary Producer*, 7 November 1924, 13.

¹⁴¹ Parliament.wa.gov.au, *Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia*, [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/\(Lookup\)/63D4013B49C33CD7482577E50028A619?OpenDocument](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/(Lookup)/63D4013B49C33CD7482577E50028A619?OpenDocument) viewed 1 June 2016. Mabel Craven-Griffiths had previously been married to William Edward White, a grocer who died in tragic circumstances. Refer to 'Found in The River. Middle-Aged Man's End. A Tragic Farewell Message', *West Australian*, 6 October 1914, 8. She was also referred to as Mrs H A C Griffiths or Mrs M C Griffiths.

¹⁴² Country Women's Association of Western Australia, *Provisional Committee Minutes*, 5028 Box HA2 1923-1925, CWA of WA, Perth.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*.

The Agenda for the Conference was wide and varied. Each of the four branches submitted items for discussion. Some were not carried. Others were clearly political in nature. Examples included approaching the Government to allow 'Girl Immigrants' to 'be placed in the rural districts'; 'the Government [to] be asked to support the C.W.A.'s building of Rest Rooms in country areas' and 'That the members of the C.W.A. urge the Government to introduce a measure similar to the Queensland Marketing Organization [sic] Act 1925 as soon as possible'; illegitimate children to be given the surname of their father and that married mothers be 'made equal legal guardians of their children'.¹⁴⁴ The latter was also an objective of the WSG and the WNPA. But there was one motion to which Lady Forster responded by offering a word of caution.

Nungarin suggested the CWA join with the 'newly formed Tariff organization [sic] of W.A. to fight for reduction of high tariff on all goods affecting the primary producer'.¹⁴⁵ Increased tariff protection by the federal government benefitted the eastern state manufacturers rather than those states principally reliant on agriculture for their economy such as Western Australia and South Australia.¹⁴⁶ The conference was held 10 March 1925, and Lady Forster's letter, dated 24 March 1925, offered her congratulations on the inauguration of the CWA in Western Australia. However, she added that 'Motion No. 22' was 'risky' stating:

I know in Queensland and New South Wales it has been found very difficult to keep the Association clear of politics, which is essential to its real success, and you will forgive my suggesting that every care should be taken to avoid any possible misconstruction on that point.¹⁴⁷

Yet, despite the CWA's insistence the organisation was non-political, politics was unavoidable. The CWA's conference agenda attests to their political activity. James McKay believed voluntary non-political organisations incorporated a 'political role' that allowed them to develop 'social capital and direct political intervention'.¹⁴⁸ Lobbying the Government, usually via parliamentarians, was a means to achieve social reforms.

South Australian Country Women's Association: The Beginning

Like their Western Australian counterpart, at the insistence of Lady Forster, South Australia's NCW was pivotal in ensuring a CWA branch was established in that state. The path to the

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; 'Country Women's Association. First Annual Conference', *West Australian*, 12 March 1925.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Notices of Motion for the Annual Conference.

¹⁴⁶ Geoffrey Bolton,

¹⁴⁷ Country Women's Association of Western Australia, Raigh Roe Early Files, 4633, CWA of WA, Perth.

¹⁴⁸ James McKay, 'Voluntary politics: the sector's political function from Beveridge to Deakin', in Melanie Oppenheimer and Nicholas Deakin, (Eds), *Beveridge and voluntary action in Britain and the wider British world*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2011, 89.

inauguration of the CWA branch at Burra in South Australia's mid-north was more protracted, and required the tenacity and persistence of Mrs Elizabeth Bowman, President of the NCW in South Australia, and Burra identity, Mrs Mary Warnes (see Figure 5.6).¹⁴⁹



Figure 5.6: Elizabeth Bowman (Courtesy of Margaret Flint, President of the NCW in South Australia) to the left, and Mary Warnes to the right (Courtesy of Meredith Satchell, Burra History Group).

Elizabeth Bowman was the widow of Thomas Richard Bowman who had been a well-known pastoralist at Crystal Brook and Lake Albert in South Australia. In Adelaide they lived on South Terrace. When her husband died, he left a substantial estate from which his wife was entitled to a five-hundred-pound annuity.¹⁵⁰ She was described as a 'genteel and conservative lady', and a 'prominent philanthropic worker'.¹⁵¹

Mary Warnes on the other hand, had moved from Adelaide to Burra following her marriage at Unley in 1900 to Isaac Warnes, a sheep farmer near Burra.¹⁵² As with Elizabeth Bowman, Mary Warnes was part of the 'rural elite', which was not unlike Grace Munro of the New

¹⁴⁹ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details of these women.

¹⁵⁰ 'Mr. T. R. Bowman's Will. Estate, £153,100', *Evening Journal*, 10 Jul 1911, 1; Thomas Richard Bowman 54823, died 17 February 1911, *New South Wales Will Books 1800-1952*, State Records Authority of New South Wales, <http://search.findmypast.com.au/record?id=anz%2fbmd%2fnswills%2f4148%2f00258&parentid=anz%2fnswills%2f568794&highlights=%22%22> viewed 1 December 2015.

¹⁵¹ Barbara J Pitt, *The History of the National Council of Women in South Australia 1902-1920*, National Council of Women of SA, Adelaide, 1986, 15; 'Personal Items', *News*, 13 November 1939, 5.

¹⁵² On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>; Sands & McDougall South Australian Directory, 1930, Almanacs and Directories: Search directories online 1900-1973, SLISA, <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/c.php?g=410329&p=2794474> viewed 1 January 2018.

South Wales CWA. During the war, Mary Warnes had been a vice-president of the Burra Women's Liberal Union branch.¹⁵³ By April 1917 she was President of the Leighton Ladies' Guild, a position she seems to have held well into the 1930s.¹⁵⁴ Both Elizabeth Bowman and Mary Warnes believed such an organisation as the CWA was necessary to assist country women to reduce their isolation, provide a support network, and to act as an advocate for social reforms.

Earlier, Lady Forster had forwarded a report from the New South Wales CWA to the NCW in Adelaide. She later met with the Adelaide branch of the NCW in October 1923 *en route* to Melbourne following her visit to Western Australia. The South Australian NCW minutes, however, do not record this beyond a brief report by the President indicating 'a successful and pleasant meeting with Lady Forster' had taken place.¹⁵⁵ During her address, Lady Forster suggested a CWA branch would provide the base upon which country women would make social connections with each other and thereby 'dispel that sense of lon[e]liness which so often depressed country women'.¹⁵⁶ Distance was often a major isolating factor for women. To have a place to meet as well as being able to discuss matters relating to living in the country would have benefits for all country women.

In February 1924, a meeting was held at the Women's Non-Party Club in Adelaide, presided over by Mrs Darnley Naylor, President of the League of Nations standing committee and a member of the League of Nations Union Executive.¹⁵⁷ Naylor was also a member of the WNPA. This meeting was for 'interested women' to meet Mrs Helen King, a member of the State executive of the Women's Service Guilds (WSG) of Western Australia, and her daughter Miss Marjorie King, secretary of the WSG, together with Mrs Ada M Street, President of the Broken Hill CWA which was affiliated with Sydney.¹⁵⁸ The Broken Hill CWA's aims were cited as extending:

bush nursing facilities, establishing maternity wards in all district hospitals, making telephones available to small holders, improving railway communication, keeping an ambulance ready for instant service in bringing patients from the country, and providing an aerial medical service on

¹⁵³ 'Liberal Union. Burra Women's Branch', *Burra Record*, 7 July 1915, 5.

¹⁵⁴ 'Leighton Ladies' Guild', *Burra Record*, 11 April 1917, 2; 'Leighton', *Burra Record*, 26 August 1925, 3; 'Leighton', *Burra Record*, 14 March 1928, 4; 'Leighton Hall Fete', *Burra Record*, 28 November 1939, 3.

¹⁵⁵ Minutes, Council Meeting 11 October 1923, Volume I – Executive and Council Minutes 1922-1926, National Council of Women, SRG297/1 Box 3, SLSA.

¹⁵⁶ 'Inspire the Men. Women's Influence. Address By Lady Forster', *Daily Herald*, 6 October 1923, 5.

¹⁵⁷ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Ethel Naylor.

¹⁵⁸ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Helen King and Ada Street.

the lines of the Inland Mission scheme. Also the committee hopes to make a seaside holiday camp, so as to give a holiday to bush women and children who could not otherwise afford it.¹⁵⁹

Given Broken Hill's distance from Sydney, Adelaide was considered much closer and therefore the most likely place for seaside holidays.¹⁶⁰ Thus the Broken Hill CWA was keen for the establishment of a branch in South Australia.

Elizabeth Bowman contacted Mary Warnes and suggested they meet in Adelaide during show week to 'discuss the possibility of starting some organisation on the lines of a Country Womens [sic] Service Association ...'.¹⁶¹ In March 1924, the press reported the NCW was 'deeply interested in the problems of the country section'. Bowman stated that 'These women, we feel, are the best women of the country'. She indicated the Council was 'anxious to offer them every opportunity of sharing in its deliberations; but it is for the country women themselves to say what they wish done'.¹⁶² Reporting on Lady Forster's visit and her desire for the establishment of a CWA, the NCW said it was ready to 'godmother' the new organisation, thus offering guidance and support but making it clear they would not take any responsibility for its management.¹⁶³ By September 1924 a meeting with interested country women was held to discuss the formation of a CWA branch but the idea was rejected.¹⁶⁴ One reason given was confusion about the proposed name with the Women's Country Party, the latter a political group and previously mentioned in relation to Mrs Earle Page in New South Wales.¹⁶⁵

In the meantime, in July 1924 correspondence between Bowman and E Marie Irvine the New South Wales CWA's organising secretary, reinforced Lady Forster's enthusiasm about the of a South Australian branch of the CWA.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the President and the secretary of the Broken Hill CWA branch were keen for 'geographical reasons to work in with South Australia', and added: 'We already work over the border with Queensland and therefore it would be quite simple to do so with you'.¹⁶⁷ Irvine enclosed her 'Annual Report and also our

¹⁵⁹ 'To Help Country Women. Workers from Other States', *Register*, 22 January 1924, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Broken Hill is approximately 1143 kilometres from Sydney and 517 kms from Adelaide.

¹⁶¹ Letter from Mrs Elizabeth Bowman to Mrs Warnes, ca. 1924, Historical Documents, South Australian Country Women's Association (SACWA).

¹⁶² 'Association News. National Council of Women and Country Members', *Register*, 18 March 1924, 4.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶⁴ 'National Council of Women', *News*, 9 September 1924, 4.

¹⁶⁵ 'Women From Country. National Council Entertains. Unity of Aim Sought', *News*, 10 September 1924, 7. See also: 'National Council of Women', *Mail*, 13 September 1924, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details about E Marie Irvine.

¹⁶⁷ Letter from E M Irvine, NSW CWA organising secretary to Mrs Bowman, President, NCW Adelaide, 3 Jul 1924, Historical Documents, SACWA.

President's Annual address ... so that you may have some idea of our work'.¹⁶⁸ These reports, while unavailable at the South Australian CWA's archives, were published in the press and give a good indication of CWA activities in those states, and which were later an integral part of the organisation in South Australia. Irvine's report in 1924 showed there were approximately 3000 members of the New South Wales CWA with sixty-five branches. In conclusion Irvine stated:

We are very young yet, but already our presence is being recognized [sic], and with the still existing need of obtaining better maternity and nursing care, reduced tickets for women and children and the supervision of laws relating to women and children, and other matters for the making of more comfortable country life, there is need of every woman's active help if our ideals set out in the list of our aims are to be obtained and maintained.¹⁶⁹

However, following a meeting in Adelaide the press reported that 'after much discussion it was found that the idea of a country women's association did not meet with approval'.¹⁷⁰ Instead it was proposed to form a Rural Women's District Service Association.¹⁷¹ While Mrs Belinda Christophers, whose name was well-known amongst the WNPA and other city-based organisations and has been mentioned previously, supported this proposal, it too did not meet with general approval.

It is not clear why the formation of a new group along the lines of the CWA was rejected, especially since the New South Wales reports indicated the benefits of such an organisation to women and children. Earlier in 1919, Miss Elizabeth Jackson reported a Women's Branch of the Agricultural Bureau that was run 'on [the] lines of the Canadian Women's Institutes' had been formed at Riverton.¹⁷² As more men had enlisted for the war, those women who were already sharing the load of farm work took on greater roles during that time. Jackson added that while men had received lectures and instructions on caring for 'poultry, gardening and dairying' through the Agricultural Bureau, this had not been extended to women who quite often performed this work. University educated Jackson encouraged the formation of women's institutes, citing the example of Canada whose branches had expanded throughout England and Wales by late 1919, numbering almost 1300 organisations. Jackson suggested the establishment of additional institutes to provide education to women on the land, as well

¹⁶⁸ Letter from E M Irvine, NSW CWA organising secretary to Mrs Bowman, President, NCW Adelaide, 3 Jul 1924, Historical Documents, SACWA.

¹⁶⁹ 'Country Women's Association. Secretary's Report. Covering Two Years from April 30, 1922, to April 30, 1924', *Wellington Times*, 5 June 1924, 8.

¹⁷⁰ 'Women From Country. National Council Entertains. Unity of Aim Sought', *News*, 10 September 1924, 7.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁷² Untitled, *Red Cross Record*, February 1919, 12; 'Editorial. Women and the Land', *Red Cross Record*, 9; 'Women's Institutes', *Red Cross Record*, November 1919, 15. Also refer to Appendix 1 for brief details about Elizabeth Jackson.

as a sense of congeniality with their farming colleagues. Possibly these Institutes were viewed as being like the proposed CWA.¹⁷³ In 1923, Jackson died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-two. She had also been a member of the WNPA, although her institute activities were independent of that organisation. Bowman noted most of the women who attended the proposed CWA meeting had links with the women's section of the Agricultural Bureaus. These women 'felt there was room for something more to be done as they only embraced certain sections of country interests'.¹⁷⁴

Holding the meeting during the Adelaide Show Week (9-13 September) was likely to attract many country women although the exact numbers of attendees are not known.¹⁷⁵ Perhaps the later correspondence between Kathleen Shannon of Bagot's Well near Kapunda and Bowman provides a clue about reasons for the rejection. Writing to Bowman some time later she said:

Personally speaking I am not living in a district where my experience would be of much use to you – I mean in our own district there does not seem the immediate need of such an association – I do not mean to say we would not be interested in formation of them, or that we would not derive benefits from a club when established – but the establishment of it would be a very slow process – mainly from the fact that this is such an old established district & the people almost without exception are well rooted and comfortably prosperous – New settlers here are very rare - most of the country people live in farms whose father & often grandfathers have held before them – they have their old established circle of friends & appear to enjoy this exceedingly well.¹⁷⁶

When Shannon's father-in-law, William Moore Shannon, died in 1940, his obituary indicated he had lived in the district of Kapunda for nearly eighty years.¹⁷⁷ Joseph Melville Shannon, his late son, deceased in 1938 and husband of Kathleen, had farmed with his father.¹⁷⁸ This indicates a long-established land tenure, as Shannon had described, and one that spanned successive generations. Shannon's emphasis on 'very rare' regarding new settlers is a key to indicate she believed areas containing new settlers were more likely to require the

¹⁷³ It appears Victoria was the only state in which Women's Institutes were established, sponsored by the Victoria League, in the mid-1920s. They were similar to those in England, and established for country women to meet monthly for 'social and educational purposes' which included handicrafts. In 1921 the WNPA in Adelaide referred to the women's institutes and the women's agricultural bureau as 'most valuable to the country woman' although there was no mention of their having been formed in South Australia. Refer to 'The Victoria League', *Advertiser*, 9 September 1927, 16; 'Women's Non-Party Association', *Daily Herald*, 2 April 1921, 3.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from Mrs Elizabeth Bowman to Mrs Warnes, ca. 1924, Historical Documents, SACWA.

¹⁷⁵ 'Adelaide Show Date Fixed. Cups Donated', *News*, 30 April 1924, 4.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Mrs Kathleen Shannon to Mrs Bowman 10 September 1926, Historical Documents, SACWA. Emphasis as in original. Shannon, 30 years old in 1926, had married Joseph Melville Shannon of Illawara, Bagot's Well, an older well-established farmer, in 1920. (On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>).

¹⁷⁷ 'Mr W. M. Shannon', *Chronicle*, 2 May 1940, 24.

¹⁷⁸ 'Joseph Melville Shannon', *Kapunda Herald*, 18 March 1938. 2.

services and congeniality of a CWA organisation than those areas where older established families lived and had their own support systems in times of need.

But who were these new settlers? Heather Parker, author of the South Australian CWA history, suggested the opening of land for settlement and farming post-World War I on Eyre Peninsula, and the Murray Mallee as well as other places attracted new settlers.¹⁷⁹ These included soldier settlements where veterans from the First World War were granted loans to obtain land to farm thus providing them with work and an income. Soldier settlement schemes have been briefly discussed in Chapter Four. However, many of these returned soldiers were suffering from 'physical injury and psychological trauma'. While these war wounds improved their chances of being granted land, they also increased their risks of farming failure.¹⁸⁰ Historians Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer believe the settlement of returned soldiers on land fulfilled a 'recurrent dream in Australian history' of owning land while ensuring these men returned to 'civilian life through land ownership and cultivation' but often they encountered failure.¹⁸¹ Economic and environmental conditions were not factored into the granting of land. David Potts indicated the results of Justice Pike's inquiry, published in 1929, found many of the assisted settlers, including soldier settlers, were unsuited to farming; had little capital to begin with; and some allotments were either too small or on marginal land.¹⁸² In South Australia, some areas which were not a part of the early Soldier Settlement schemes, such as the West Coast, suffered a lack of rainfall that caused crop failure; farmers subsequently requested assistance under the various Drought Relief Acts so that they could prepare for next year's crop.¹⁸³ These farmers were lurching from one disastrous year to another.

On 16 April 1925, Bowman reported to the South Australian NCW meeting that she had been invited to the New South Wales CWA's Third Annual Conference to be held in Sydney from 14 April to 17 April 1925.¹⁸⁴ Secretary Irvine, later writing to Bowman on 29 April 1925 enclosed 'papers of the conference and reports which I think may interest you'.¹⁸⁵ While the

¹⁷⁹ Heather Parker, *The First Fifty Years*, South Australian Country's Women's Association, Adelaide, 1979, 1.

¹⁸⁰ J M Powell, 'Australia's 'Failed' Soldier Settlers, 1914-23: Towards a Demographic Profile', *Australian Geographer*, 1977, Vol. 16, No. 3, 225.

¹⁸¹ Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer, "'I Intend to Get Justice": The Moral Economy of Soldier Settlement', *Labour History*, 2014, Vol. 106, 233.

¹⁸² David Potts, *The Myth of the Great Depression*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2006, 110.

¹⁸³ 'Drought Relief Wanted', *West Coast Sentinel*, 30 January 1926, 4.

¹⁸⁴ 16 April 1925, Volume I – Executive and Council Minutes 1922-1926, 4 Oct 1922 – 6 May 1926 inclusive, *National Council of Women*, SRG297/1 Box 3, SLSA.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from E Marie Irvine to E Bowman, 29 April 1925, *Historical Documents*, SACWA.

original papers sent to Bowman are unavailable, the press published Irvine's report.¹⁸⁶ Irvine indicated the CWA continued to grow in New South Wales with its membership at 4500 and 98 branches. There were three hospitals providing maternity care facilities with wards to be built in other areas; education regarding the dangers of mosquitoes, rats, and flies; campaigns for cheaper rail fares for women 'living more than 100 miles from the coast' so they could make use of the seaside homes for holidays; as well as reference to other social and educational activities.¹⁸⁷

Finally in October 1926, at Burra in South Australia's mid-north, at another meeting arranged by the NCW, the formation of a CWA branch gained support.¹⁸⁸ Mrs Bowman later travelled to Koorunga (also known as Burra) from Adelaide to speak at a public meeting held 5 November. A report of this appeared in Adelaide's daily press, reinforcing national links when it stated 'it was desired to organise a Country Women's Association on the lines of Queensland and New South Wales'.¹⁸⁹ Brief mention was made in the South Australian NCW minutes with a commendation from the Council to Mrs Bowman for her efforts.¹⁹⁰ However, further details revealed Bowman:

at the request of country women ... had paid a visit to Burra and spoken at a meeting of the proposed formation of women's social service centres, which would be of value to outback women. It was pointed out that the council existed not to do other people's work, but to consolidate action, advice, and co-operate with all societies which sought strength of union. It was desired to organise a Country Women's Association on the lines of Queensland and New South Wales.¹⁹¹

Initially calling themselves 'The Country Women's Service Association for the Burra District', the body aimed to assist women 'living under pioneering conditions'.¹⁹² Mary Warnes became the inaugural President. While the press reported that Burra was selected because 'during the war [it] had won a reputation for its patriotic works', for example, raising almost £400 by auction for a bunch of violets on Violet Day in 1915; and over £52,000 for various charities during the war in 1918, this was unlikely to be the only reason.¹⁹³ Bowman had

¹⁸⁶ E M Irvine, 'Women in Town and Country. Loyalty to the Throne – Service to the Country through Country Women – For Country Women by Country Women. Amazing Progress. Country Women's Association Annual Reports', *Country Life and Station Journal*, 21 April 1925, 5.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸⁸ Advertisement, 'Country Women's Association', *Burra Record*, 27 October 1926, 2.

¹⁸⁹ 'National Council of Women', *The Advertiser*, 13 November 1926, 19.

¹⁹⁰ 11 November 1926, Minutes of Council Meeting, SRG297/1 Box 3, National Council of Women, SLSA.

¹⁹¹ 'National Council of Women', *Advertiser*, 13 November 1926, 19.

¹⁹² 'Country Women's Association. Burra Women's Lead.', *Register*, 9 November 1926, 4.

¹⁹³ 'Country Women's Association. Most Successful Meeting at Burra', *Burra Record*, 17 November 1926, 6; 'Violet Day in Burra. Magnificent Patriotism. Over £400 for the Home for Wounded Soldiers', *Burra Record*, 7 July 1915, 2; 'Corporation of Burra. Mayor's Report, 1918', *Burra Record*, 4 December 1918, 4.

links at Burra so it was probably no coincidence that she chose that town for a CWA branch. Her sister, Margaret Barr Tennant, married to a local pastoralist, became a foundation member of the Burra Red Cross Society, and later the Burra CWA.¹⁹⁴ It is also possible that Bowman and Warnes knew each other through their pastoral interests, suggesting a 'social connectedness' already existed.¹⁹⁵ Other relatives of the Bowman family lived in the area.¹⁹⁶

On the 10 December 1926 Mrs Warnes, the President, 'read and placed the Constitution and Rules before the members' which were then accepted, and thus the Burra branch of the CWA was officially established. The regularity of meetings was agreed as two meetings yearly in April and October, 'and one meeting during the year, to each of the Country districts'.¹⁹⁷ These country districts included nearby Leighton, Aberdeen, Booborowie and Farrell's Flat. Mrs Bowman was initially honoured as Patron of the Association. Membership was limited to women aged over eighteen and resident in the district.¹⁹⁸ This automatically excluded males from membership. Young women under the age of eighteen could become Associate Members but without voting rights.

Further branches in South Australia closely followed with Spalding established 29 May 1928. The Adelaide branch, known as Metropolitan, commenced in October 1928, but a State branch, although mooted in late 1929, did not begin until February 1930 with Mary Warnes as State President. The formation of the Metropolitan and State (Executive) branches effectively transferred the CWA's administrative centre, where policies and decisions were created, from rural to urban locations, allowing for easier administration of the organisation as it grew larger. In May 1929 Mary Warnes represented the South Australian CWA at a Rural Conference of the International Council of Women (ICW) held in London, an organisation established in Washington in 1888 to commemorate forty years since the conference at Seneca Falls (discussed in Chapter One). The ICW was also established in Britain in the 1890s with Lady Ishbel Aberdeen serving terms as President from 1893.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ 'Death of Mrs. M. Tennant', *Advertiser*, 21 May 1954, 5. She had also been a foundation member of the Red Cross Society and the CWA at Burra. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details of Margaret Tennant.

¹⁹⁵ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, Sydney, 2000, 52.

¹⁹⁶ Elizabeth Warburton, *The Bowmans of Martindale Hall*, Department of Continuing Education, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1979.

¹⁹⁷ 10 December 1926, Burra Minutes, SACWA.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ 'International Council of Women', *Lend a Hand*, 1 March 1888, Vol. 3, No. 3, 179; Veronica Strong-Boag, *Liberal Hearts and Coronets*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2015, 140-144. Lady Aberdeen became President of the ICW 1893-1899, 1904-1920 and 1922-1936.

Mary Warnes visited Lady Forster who by that time had returned to England.²⁰⁰ Thus Mary Warnes maintained transnational links.

The printed Constitution and Rules of the Country Women's Service Association, Burra and District, South Australia included the Objects of the Association and was similar to that of New South Wales and Western Australia CWA organisations. It was as follows:

1. The Association is established for the following objects and purposes: –
 1. To improve the welfare and conditions of life of women and children in the country.
 2. To draw together all women, girls and children in the country districts.
 3. To assist in bringing opportunities for recreation and enjoyment within the reach of all members.
 4. To encourage the study of local affairs and to promote a wise and kindly spirit.
 5. To further the interests of health and education facilities in the country districts.²⁰¹

Their motto was 'Service for Country Women, through Country Women'.²⁰² The Constitution and Objects of the Association were also published in the local *Burra Record* newspaper.²⁰³

Through the generosity of local storekeepers Mr and Mrs Wilkinson of Commercial Road, Kooringa, the new group was granted the use of a room, initially rent free, as a 'Rest Room' for members. This was formally opened on 17 December 1926.²⁰⁴ At their next meeting, held 25 February 1927 at the Rest Room, it was agreed to affiliate with the South Australian NCW. In addition, in line with aspirations of holding educational meetings, the President to arrange for a nurse to 'address the meeting' thereby educating women on the role of community nurses.²⁰⁵

Early meetings of the Burra CWA have been well documented in the local press and augment the minutes that are sometimes sparse on detail. The first Annual Meeting of the newly formed Burra Country Women's Service Association was held 8 April 1927, taking place less than six months after its commencement in accordance with its rules regarding the regularity and timing of the meetings. An earlier recommendation that the CWA affiliate with the South Australian NCW was confirmed at that meeting. Provision for two delegates to attend the South Australian NCW meetings was also agreed. Mrs Tennant, Elizabeth

²⁰⁰ 'Mrs. I. J. Warnes Abroad. Interesting Conference, Splendid Hospitality', *Observer*, 22 June 1929, 53.

²⁰¹ 'Constitution and Rules. Objects of the Association', Country Women's Service Association, Burra & District, SACWA Archives, Kent Town.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ 'Country Women's Service Association. Burra and District', *Burra Record*, 12 January 1927, 4.

²⁰⁴ 10 December 1926, Burra Minutes, SACWA. Also reported in 'Elizabeth Leigh's Page (Continued). Country Women's Association. Burra Women's Lead', *Observer*, 20 November 1926, 54.

²⁰⁵ 25 February 1926, Burra Minutes, SACWA Archives, Kent Town.

Bowman's sister, was appointed a delegate.²⁰⁶ The South Australian NCW also extended an invitation to any country woman to apply for tickets to a reception on 2 May 1927 in honour of the Duchess of York. It was also reported, that 'to maintain interest in the Association it is intended to have little lectures of interest and benefit to women and girls ...'.²⁰⁷ Sister Edith Bottrill of the District Trained Nursing Society (DTNS) was the first to give a presentation. Proceedings ended with 'afternoon tea ... served by the ladies and a social chat'.²⁰⁸ Thanks were given for the Rest Room 'situated in the main street, Koorunga' which had been 'comfortably furnished with all necessities' that were donated by members.²⁰⁹ The election of officers followed.

The next meeting held 10 August 1927 took place at the Booborowie Hall, in accordance with their planned schedule of not holding every meeting at their Burra base, which allowed women in the district a chance to attend. However, a presentation did not take place at that time. Instead, these presentations were reserved for annual or half-yearly meetings held at Burra, perhaps because of the likelihood of increased numbers of members present, and the work involved in arranging guest speakers. Miss Cecelia Dixon of the Traveller's Aid Society gave a presentation on 28 October 1927 at their half-yearly meeting, which was attended by many women.²¹⁰

Meanwhile on 5 October 1927, at Queensland's CWA State Conference, it was reported they had unanimously decided to send:

a friendly letter ... to the Country Women's Service Association at The Burra, South Australia congratulating them on the formation of their association, and suggesting that they drop the word service, and thus pave the way to federation, which must finally eventuate.²¹¹

This related to an earlier discussion and debate at the Queensland conference regarding the eventual federation of CWA organisations throughout Australia. However, further discussion on this matter was held over for another twelve months, but highlights recognition of the importance of eventually placing all CWA organisations in Australia under the umbrella of

²⁰⁶ 14 December 1928, Burra Minutes, SACWA Archives, Kent Town.

²⁰⁷ 8 April 1927, Burra Minutes, SACWA Archives, Kent Town; also reported in the 'Country Women's Service Association', *Burra Record*, 13 April 1927, 3.

²⁰⁸ 8 April 1927, Burra Minutes, SACWA Archives, Kent Town. Refer to Appendix 1.

²⁰⁹ 'Burra', *Chronicle*, 26 May 1928, 15.

²¹⁰ Refer to Appendix 1 for brief details about Cecelia Dixon.

²¹¹ 'The C.W.A. Doings of the Queensland Organisation. The Conference', *Queenslander*, 13 October 1927, 50.

one Federal body.²¹² This was a far-sighted objective by some members of the CWA at that time, albeit initiated by the Queensland branch.

The Annual Meeting of the Country Women's Service Association was held on 11 May 1928, and the matter of the name of the organisation was discussed in response to the letter received from the Queensland CWA. The Queensland CWA asked:

to have the word "service" deleted from the local name, as the Burra Association was the only one working under that name. The President placed the matter before the meeting, which was thoroughly discussed.²¹³

Consequently, the organisation agreed to comply and dropped 'service' from its title thus becoming 'known as the Burra Country Women's Association', leaving the way for the future federation of the CWA branches.²¹⁴

Conclusion

During the immediate post-war period to 1928, with the cessation of voluntary patriotic organisations that worked for the war effort, there was an opportunity for the establishment of non-party non-political women's groups such as the Country Women's Association. Many women who were involved in the patriotic war organisations were amenable to joining these new groups which allowed them to use their leadership and the managerial skills they had acquired during that period. Their war time activities had given these women a sense of independence, and recognition of their capabilities that had not previously had the opportunity to flourish. Some substituted voluntary work for full-time paid work. Some women had their own financial means that allowed them the freedom to participate in these organisations without resorting to paid employment.

When comparing the the two CWA organisations, it is notable that each had their separate challenges in establishing branches in their states. New South Wales also differed with a population drift from the country to the city cited as the main reason for the movement of people from the country. Land settlement schemes in both Western Australia and South Australia created a need for CWA branches as these areas were newly settled, often by men who brought wives and children with them and whose inexperience impacted negatively on their families.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 50.

²¹³ 11 May 1928, Burra Minutes, SACWA Archives, Kent Town.

²¹⁴ 5 October 1927, Burra Minutes, SACWA Archives, Kent Town.

The NCW in Western Australia formed a Provisional Committee for the foundation of the CWA in that state and was much more proactive in establishing the CWA than it was in South Australia. Instead, the South Australians tasked their President, Mrs Elizabeth Bowman, with contacting interested country women and establishing the branch. Burra was more than likely selected because of Mrs Bowman's links to the area through her late husband, her sister, and a probable friendship with Mary Warnes rather than solely for its patriotic efforts during the war as the press had suggested.

Western Australian country women grasped the concept of the CWA quite early which led to its earlier establishment. However, there were setbacks as the promised Geraldton branch dubbed the 'Mother Branch' never materialised. The Nungarin CWA branch instead became the first branch in Western Australia, just ahead of Bolgart since they were first to pay their subscriptions to the main branch in Perth.

There were always going to be challenges and tensions surrounding the term non-political. Some Nungarin members, for example, became disillusioned with the CWA when they declared themselves non-political, believing it should have been a political body representing rural women's needs. The organisation's non-political status was always going to be put to the test, particularly because they operated as a lobbying group involved in political activism.

Both the Western Australian and South Australian CWA's aims, and objectives can be summarised as improving the welfare and conditions of white women and children who lived in the country by providing them with social occasions and educational activities. This included the participation in and the study of local, state, national and international affairs. Additionally, they planned to improve health care in country sectors, particularly medical and hospital facilities in areas in which these women and children lived. It is also clear that transnational and national links were in play, features that remained throughout both CWA organisations' long history.

CHAPTER SIX: THE EXPANSION AND DECLINE OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN THE 1930s

Though our branches are widely scattered, we are not a haphazard collection of women, each doing the best for herself. Ours is a great sisterhood of rural women throughout the world. We have come together because of the urgent need for better conditions for country women everywhere.¹

Minnie Hearman,
President, Donnybrook Country
Women's Association.

Minnie Hearman's description of the distribution of the Country Women's Association branches in Western Australia affirms the organisation's broad appeal during the 1930s. By then Country Women's Association (CWA) branches were established in all Australian states including South Australia. With scattered branches allowing greater coverage of the vast areas in each state, and the union of women as a sisterhood to improve conditions and relieve isolation for white women and children in rural areas, the organisation reached many who would have otherwise struggled with the remoteness and loneliness of where they lived. Earlier organisations such as the Women's Service Guilds and the Women's Non-Party Association were largely confined to urban locations, although they did not discount some country women as members, and Western Australia had branch circles in rural locations. Even though Minnie Hearman's reference to a sisterhood of women was directed at rural women, it extended to all white women regardless of where they lived, and the various volunteer organisations they joined that benefitted women and children. Earlier in London in 1911, Vida Goldstein had also referred to the 'sisterhood of women' adding it was a 'conception [sic] of liberty & justice that the world does not yet understand'.² The CWA clearly accepted this concept of a union of women working together to achieve their goals.

The decade of the 1930s in Australia was marked by the Great Depression, triggered by the 1929 Wall Street crash of American stock markets. Combined with drought in both Western Australia and South Australia, the Depression impacted on rural and urban communities alike. South Australia was affected earlier than the other states.³ Unemployment rates rose

¹ Country Women's Association of Western Australia (CWA of WA), Mrs Minnie Hearman, 6th Annual Report, July 1930, 9.

² Vida Goldstein Papers, MSM118 1902-1919 MS7865, State Library of Victoria. Vida Goldstein writing about her final Albert Hall meeting, London in 1911.

³ Geoffrey Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia Since 1826*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, Western Australia, 2008, 124, Bolton suggested the signs of an impending depression were present as early as 1927 but were ignored. Ray Broomhill, *Unemployed Workers: A Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide*, University of Queensland, St Lucia, 1978. Broomhill claimed the Depression in South Australia commenced in 1927.

markedly. Politically, Australia and the rest of the world were in turmoil. Furthermore, at the end of the 1930s increasing tensions in Europe affected Britain, the United States of America and Australia, and resulted in another World War late in 1939. These factors presented a challenge to the women's organisations, both old and new, as they worked to better the lives of women and children. It was in this decade that the CWA in Western Australia and South Australia rose to prominence. The unification or sisterhood of rural women gave them a stronger voice as they worked to achieve their objectives.

The previous chapter addressed the founding of the CWA in New South Wales in 1922, as well as reasons for its establishment. The New South Wales CWA was the model for the CWA in the other Australian states. In 1924 and 1926, the Western Australian and South Australian CWAs were established. The cessation of the patriotic war groups after 1918, which had provided many women a means of contributing to the war effort during World War One, afforded a condition of possibility for the founding of this organisation and its branches. This chapter highlights the direction followed by the organisations that have been the focus of this thesis: that is the Women's Service Guilds (WSG) and the CWA in Western Australia, and the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA) and the CWA in South Australia.⁴ The chapter argues that the Great Depression and its aftermath reshaped women's organisations in Australia allowing them a practical and outcome driven agenda in contrast to the pathway established by the WSG and the WNPA. The CWA became increasingly popular because of the material assistance it provided rural people during the 1930s. Often during this period, it was immediate interventions and material aid that were required to alleviate the distress people experienced rather than legislative changes which took much longer to achieve. The WSG and the WNPA however, continued to work for legislative reforms.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief description of the Great Depression and the political scene in Australia in the 1930s. This gives context for the era in which these organisations operated. The CWA's rise to prominence in both Western Australia and South Australia during the 1930s is covered in the second section. This includes a discussion of membership numbers as well as branch establishment. The third section addresses the WSG and WNPA's membership numbers, their continued work for legislative changes, and their relevance during this time. Given the parameters of the thesis, the period of

⁴ By 1924 the Women's Service Guild became known as the Women's Service Guilds. Several branches were united under this title.

examination of this chapter is limited to the end of 1939 and the start of the Second World War.

Melanie Oppenheimer observed that the interwar period was a period when 'a number of diverse voluntary organisations was established or consolidated in response to the needs of specific groups in the community'.⁵ As a voluntary service organisation, the CWA responded to rural communities impacted by the drought, the Depression, and the accompanying rise in unemployment. They provided services for the care of those living beyond the reach of government aid, particularly through their Outback Relief programme in the early 1930s, this is discussed in Chapter Seven.

The roles of the WSG and the WNPA as politically activist organisations in seeking legislative reform were evident and contrasted with the CWA organisations as principally service providers. However, these roles did not preclude some forms of activism by the CWA, or service provision by the WSG and WNPA. Joanne Scott stated voluntary organisations often performed activist roles, or roles that provided certain services, but sometimes the lines between the two functions were difficult to distinguish.⁶ For example, the Queensland CWA actively lobbied for the reduction in the price of railway tickets and freight charges to country regions.⁷ Similar action was also instigated by the South Australian CWA in 1931.⁸ Lobbying was a form of political activism and in this case by a service organisation. The period of the Great Depression was a turning point for the success of the CWA, and witness to the impending decline of the WSG and the WNPA.

The Great Depression in Australia

Several historians have examined in detail the Great Depression and its effects in Australia. Some also drew on oral history accounts from those who had experienced the Depression firsthand to provide an insight into their personal experiences and coping strategies. Geoffrey Bolton highlighted the effects of the Depression in Western Australia. He argued that the experience of hard times connected to the Depression shaped the state. Bolton added that as early as 1927 signs of an impending depression were either ignored by authorities or went unnoticed. The Depression also brought with it a growing unemployment

⁵ Melanie Oppenheimer, 'A Short History of Volunteering in Australia', in Melanie Oppenheimer and Jeni Warburton, (eds), *Volunteering in Australia*, The Federation Press, Annandale, 2014, 19.

⁶ Joanne Scott, 'Voluntary Work as Work?: Some Implications for Labour History', *Labour History*, 14 May 1998, No. 74, 15.

⁷ Scott, 'Voluntary Work as Work?: Some Implications for Labour History', 15.

⁸ 'Country Women Want Cheaper Freights', *News*, 14 September 1931, 8; 'Country Women Talk it Over', *Advertiser and Register*, 16 September 1931, 9.

rate.⁹ Without work it was difficult to buy food to feed families. In South Australia, the story of the Depression was not dissimilar.

Ray Broomhill argued persuasively that the Depression commenced much earlier in South Australia – in 1927 rather than 1929 as is generally accepted for the rest of Australia. Broomhill observed the period in South Australia was on the continuum of the depression of the early 1890s rather than triggered by a ‘sudden economic crash following the boom of the previous decade’.¹⁰ Following World War One, unemployment rates increased.¹¹ In part, a reliance upon the agricultural sector for income and tax revenue rather than manufacturing industries increased South Australia’s vulnerability during the post-war period. Paul Sendziuk and Robert Foster noted South Australia’s expenditure and borrowing per capita of population was higher than elsewhere in Australia.¹² As a result, during the 1920s manufacturing industries grew, a deviation from the state’s traditional agricultural and pastoral production, that resulted in a concurrent movement of people from the country to the city in search of work.¹³

Additionally, Wendy Lowenstein provided oral history accounts of the Depression in Australia in her publication and included interviewees from Western Australia and South Australia, some of whom are referred to later in the chapter. As well, Judy Mackinolty’s edited book also contained references to both Western Australia and South Australia.¹⁴ In addition, Geoffrey Spenceley examined the causes and consequences of the Great Depression.¹⁵

However, David Potts’s 1990 publication was based on 1200 interviews conducted by ‘third-year history students’ and examined the positive experiences of the Depression.¹⁶ Firstly, Potts acknowledged that Australia was ‘one of the countries worst hit by the great depression’.¹⁷ Secondly, and perhaps controversially, he concluded many interviewees

⁹ Bolton, *A Fine Country to Starve In*, 196.

¹⁰ Broomhill, *Unemployed Workers*, 1-4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹² Paul Sendziuk and Robert Foster, *A History of South Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018, 117.

¹³ Broomhill, *Unemployed Workers*, 5.

¹⁴ Broomhill, *Unemployed Workers*; Geoffrey Bolton, *A Fine Country to Starve In*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 1972; Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1978; Judy Mackinolty (ed.), *The Wasted Years?: Australia’s Great Depression*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Spenceley, *A Bad Smash: Australia in the Depression of the 1930s*, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1990.

¹⁶ David Potts, ‘A Positive Culture of Poverty Represented in Memories of the 1930s Depression’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1990, Vol. 26, 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

found the Depression years to be happy ones, particularly if they managed to maintain their material needs, physical abilities and close relationships.¹⁸

However, Scott and Kay Saunders were critical of Potts's suggestion the Depression period for some Australians was a happy one. Interviews conducted between 1965 and 1975 by undergraduate students was a source of concern, with allegations they were of poor quality and too few. A further criticism was that Potts ignored the oral history of Queenslanders, instead providing a very narrow focus on Victoria, in particular Melbourne.¹⁹ More recently Potts's publication, *The Myth of the Great Depression* challenged the earlier findings by Broomhill and Bolton that the Depression brought only hardship. Instead, Potts focussed on the camaraderie and happiness this period engendered. A thought-provoking publication, it provides a different perspective on the Depression in Australia and the ways it affected some Australians.²⁰

Scott's research also examined the plight of working women in Queensland during the interwar years. They later became unemployed and unable 'to secure or retain paid employment' in the 1930s.²¹ While this thesis has not examined women's unemployment in Western Australia or South Australia, Scott's statement that women also 'encountered [the Depression's] effects through their financial dependence on unemployed men' is relevant to women's experiences, and is not limited to Queensland.²² Despite the efforts of numerous women's organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA, which promoted women's political participation outside the domestic sphere, husbands as breadwinners while their wives stayed at home caring for children and performing domestic duties remained a profoundly entrenched feature of society. Reliance on their husbands' wages left many women struggling to cope during the Depression years when incoming finances were so limited. Pride often prevented women from seeking help. For example, in 1931 a woman living on the West Coast of South Australia expressed her desolation and humiliation by saying: 'I have to tie my shoes with wire to keep them on, and I have no underclothing. I do not like to tell strangers how we live'.²³ It was for people like this woman that the South Australian CWA embarked on a relief programme for those living in rural areas affected by drought, the

¹⁸ Potts, 'A Positive Culture of Poverty Represented in Memories of the 1930s Depression', 13.

¹⁹ David Potts, *The Myth of the Great Depression*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2006. See also Joanne Scott and Kay Saunders, 'Happy days are here again? A reply to David Potts', *Journal of Australian Studies*, March 1993, Vol. 17, No. 36, 10-22.

²⁰ Potts, *The Myth of the Great Depression*.

²¹ Joanne Scott, "'Generic Resemblances'? Women and Work in Queensland, 1919-1939", PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 1995, 223.

²² *Ibid.*, 223.

²³ 'Outback Relief', *Advertiser*, 5 May 1931, 7.

Depression and unemployment. However, social consequences were not the only effects of the Depression. Politically it also had ramifications for State and Federal governments.

Political analysts Bill Brugger and Dean Jaensch suggested there was a growing 'disillusionment with politics' during this period due to the socialism of the 1920s and the 'left-wing populism' of the 1930s.²⁴ Following Parliament's general disagreement about how to best handle the economic crisis, criticism was levelled at the Australian government for its alleged weakness in management. Just two days after the swearing in of James Scullin's new Labor government on 22 October 1929, the United States of America's stock markets crashed. This triggered the world-wide economic crisis. Sir Otto Niemeyer, a Bank of England adviser and financier, proposed the reduction of Australia's expenditure and wages to 're-stimulate the economy', and this met with Opposition favour.²⁵ Aged and invalid pensions, as well as child endowment were also earmarked for reduction. Mothers and Child Endowment are further discussed in Chapter Seven. In New South Wales Premier Jack Lang noted each state was instructed to 'review their budgets to see whether they were spending too much on education and charitable relief'.²⁶ Lang did not support these measures. Instead, he suggested his own plan, later known as the Lang Plan.²⁷ In Lang's scheme, interest payments on British loans were to be withheld, interest on 'government borrowings' would be reduced to three per cent; and the country would 'abandon the gold standard of currency' in favour of 'a currency based on the wealth of the country and to be termed the Goods Standard'.²⁸

Lang had a long reputation 'as a 'dodgy character' in Australian history', and has been described as increasingly abrasive and pugnacious.²⁹ Frank Cain provides a revised critique of Jack Lang, Premier of New South Wales until his dismissal by Governor Sir Philip Game

²⁴ Bill Brugger and Dean Jaensch, *Australian Politics: Theory and Practice*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985, 28-29.

²⁵ Potts, *The Myth of the Great Depression*, 13-14.

²⁶ John T Lang, *The Great Bust: The Depression of the Thirties*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1962, 75-76. For additional reading see John T Lang, *The Great Bust: The Depression of the Thirties*; J T Lang, *The Turbulent Years*, Alpha Books, Sydney, 1970. These provide Lang's personal perspectives of the Great Depression and his role during that time.

²⁷ Lang, *The Great Bust: The Depression of the Thirties*, 76.

²⁸ Lang, *The Turbulent Years*, 100-101. Lang details this Lang Plan in Chapter Ten, 99-115 of this autobiography. Also refer to Alex J Millmow, *The Power of Economic Ideas: The Origins of Keynesian Macroeconomic Management in Interwar Australia 1929-39*, Canberra, 2010. The Lang Plan is discussed on pages 86-87, and the Premiers' Plan 87-94. As well, Douglas Copland, 'The Premiers' Plan in Australia: An Experiment in Economic Adjustment', *International Affairs*, January-February 1934, 79-92, this was a paper he presented in December 1933 at Chatham House.

²⁹ Frank Cain, *Jack Lang and the Great Depression*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2005; Bede Nairn, 'Lang, John Thomas (Jack) (1876-1975)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lang-john-thomas-jack-7027> viewed 19 February 2019.

in May 1932. Cain's research however suggested Lang was unfairly dismissed, and that some of his proposed fiscal measures in the Lang Plan may have worked had they been introduced. He also suggested the economic crisis faced by all the states was in part due to their loss of 'financial independence' at the time of Federation in 1901.³⁰ The role of James Scullin was also examined by economist John Hawkins who stated that with little ministerial experience Scullin raised tariffs on imported goods and proposed an increase in manufacturing. Plans to reduce wages and child endowment though, met with outcry from politicians and the public alike.³¹ Despite this, the Premiers' Plan was adopted, which included a twenty per cent decrease in government spending, wage and pension cuts, and increased taxation.³²

As a sign of the continuing political turmoil, the acting Federal Treasurer Joseph Lyons left the Labor party to join the Conservative opposition which then became the United Australia Party.³³ Like Lang and Scullin, Lyons too faced major political struggles.³⁴ In December 1931 Lyons was elected Prime Minister, remaining in office until his untimely death in April 1939. Viewed as popular by the public, he provided both a stable government and economic improvement during his prime ministerial term which benefitted all Australians.³⁵ Historian Erik Eklund referred to the Great Depression as a 'tumultuous and complex' period in Australian history.³⁶

The political landscape in Western Australia was similarly complex and turbulent. In 1930 the government in Western Australia changed from Labor premier Philip Collier to that of James Mitchell of the Nationalist party. Mitchell ran a campaign promising 'Work for All', as well as instituting the Group Settlement Scheme. This scheme had the approval of the British Government to settle 15,000 migrants from Britain as farmers and labourers on land requiring clearance for farming purposes.³⁷ But Mitchell was unable to fulfill his election

³⁰ Cain, *Jack Lang and the Great Depression*, 9.

³¹ John Hawkins, 'James Scullin: depression treasurer', *Economic Round-Up*, 2010, Vol. 2, 190-116.

³² Alex J Millmow, *The Power of Economic Ideas: The Origins of Keynesian Macroeconomic Management in Interwar Australia 1929-39*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2010. The Premiers' Plan is discussed in more detail on pages 87-94.

³³ Anne Henderson, *Joseph Lyons: The People's Prime Minister*, NewSouth, Sydney 2011, 315.

³⁴ P R Hart and C J Lloyd, 'Lyons, Joseph Aloysius (Joe) (1879-1939)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lyons-joseph-alloysius-joe-7278> viewed 12 March 2019; J R Robinson, 'Scullin, James Henry (1876-1953)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/scullin-james-henry-8375> viewed 12 March 2019.

³⁵ Henderson, *Joseph Lyons: The People's Prime Minister*, 316-317.

³⁶ Erik Eklund, '10 June 1931 The Premiers' Plan and the Great Depression: High Politics and Everyday Life in an Economic Crisis', in Martin Crotty and David Roberts, (eds), *Turning Points in Australian History*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2009, 116.

³⁷ Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 110-111. The British Government saw this as an opportunity of relieving unemployment post-World War One in Britain. Additional information about the scheme can

promise of 'Work for All', and in 1933 Collier again became Premier, remaining in office until August 1936.³⁸ At the same time as the 1933 state election, a referendum was held to decide if the state was to secede from the federation. Led by the Dominion League that was formed in July 1930, there was a two to one majority for secession, but this was not supported by Collier and thus failed. Furthermore, had the petition for secession been presented to Westminster, it would have been deemed as 'constitutionally improper'.³⁹ In late 1930 the WSG had engaged several speakers who outlined grievances the State had against the Federal government, suggesting 'it was purely on the business side of the partnership' that the state had suffered under Federation.⁴⁰ However, it is unknown if the WSG were in support of Western Australia seceding. As the economy improved earlier than the other states, discontent in Western Australia subsided and with it agitation for secession.⁴¹ This economic recovery was led in the late 1930s by resurgence in gold mining.⁴²

Like Western Australia, the 1930s in South Australia were years of political turmoil and change. There were four changes of government in quick succession. Richard Layton Butler, Liberal Federation party, was premier until 5 April 1930 when he was succeeded by Lionel Hill, Labor. Hill had to tackle the worsening fiscal situation and incurred the wrath of many people. This included from a large group of unemployed who assembled in January 1931 in Adelaide and Port Adelaide to protest at the government's substitution of rationed beef for mutton. The press reported a dietician asserted mutton was more nutritious.⁴³ This riot was later referred to as the Beef Riot. It was also stated that the riot was staged to make the Prime Minister aware of the gravity of the unemployment situation. Some of the unemployed complained eating mutton would prove monotonous if it were substituted. There were also complaints that the meat ration was insufficient as it consisted mostly of bone reducing the useable amount, for example four pounds included three pounds of bone. Others were concerned it was the beginning of further ration cuts. One reported:

be obtained from John Philip Gabbedy, *Group Settlement (Part 1) – Its Origins (Volume 1)*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1988. Refer also to Appendix 4 which lists numerous Group Settlement locations where Western Australia's CWA branches were established.

³⁸ Parliamentary Library of Western Australia, 'Premiers of WA', [https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/intranet/libpages.nsf/WebFiles/Fact+Sheets+Premiers+of+WA/\\$FILE/Fact+Sheets+Premiers+of+WA.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/intranet/libpages.nsf/WebFiles/Fact+Sheets+Premiers+of+WA/$FILE/Fact+Sheets+Premiers+of+WA.pdf) viewed 17 March 2021.

³⁹ Greg Craven, 'Secession', in Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (eds), *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Crawley, 2009, 800-801.

⁴⁰ 'The Negative Side', *West Australian*, 13 August 1930, 10; 'Secession', *West Australian*, 3 November 1930, 8; 'Annual Reports. Perth', *Dawn*, 20 May 1931, 7.

⁴¹ Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 120, 124, 125.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴³ "'Good Red Beef" Demanded by Wives of Workless', *Mail*, 10 January 1931, 1.

We would not mind so much if the meat were eatable [sic], but it is mostly the scrag pieces and ends. When cooked it is not sufficient nourishment to sustain a man who is looking for work'.⁴⁴

However, the Government believed the riot was the work of 'communist agitators' and did not give it the attention it deserved.⁴⁵ The Beef Riot illustrates how some unemployed people responded to Government decisions during the Great Depression.

In addition, there was unrest from the Aboriginal community which later came to the attention of the WNPA. Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal (or mixed descent) children under the age of twenty-one were placed under the control of the Chief Protector of Aborigines as their 'legal guardian' in accord with the *Aborigines Act 1911*. The Chief Protector had the 'power to remove them [the children] as he saw fit'.⁴⁶ This was irrespective of whether their parents were alive. In 1926 the Aborigines Protection League was formed and urged the 'establishment of a 'Model Aboriginal State', to be governed by Aboriginal people themselves'. While this failed, Ernabella mission was set up in 1937 by Dr Charles Duguid, President of the Aborigines Protection League.⁴⁷ Later committee members of the League included Constance Ternent Cooke and Amy Tomkinson, both members of the WNPA.

Furthermore, Hill had accepted the Premiers' Plan of 1931 which reduced Government spending, public works, wages, and pensions. This led to a split in the Labor Party, requiring Hill to obtain the support of the conservatives to continue to govern. In February 1933 Hill, appointed Agent-General in London, resigned as Premier; his position was taken in the interim by Robert Richards.⁴⁸ The Labor government was voted out with Richard Butler, Liberal and Country League, serving as premier from April 1933 to November 1938. Thomas Playford then took office as Premier from November 1938 until March 1965.⁴⁹

It was during the 1930s the CWA offered more practical assistance to those in need, as opposed to organisations that focussed on agitating for policy reforms that took much longer to achieve. This approach made the CWA more relevant than either the WSG or the WNPA because it was so often that urgent practical assistance was required at this time. The

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁵ Sendziuk and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, 125.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁸ 'Agent-General For London. Mr. Hill's Appointment Endorsed', *Recorder*, 9 February 1933, 1; 'How Mr. Hill Escaped the Dole', *Recorder*, 27 February 1933, 4.

⁴⁹ Parliament of South Australia, Premiers of South Australia, <https://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/en/Members/Premiers-of-South-Australia> viewed 20 March 2021. See also Sendziuk and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, 127. Sendziuk and Foster noted this was the beginning of thirty-two years governance by the Liberal and Country League.

widespread establishment of CWA branches throughout both Western Australia and South Australia allowed a greater distribution of relief packages and services to those living in outlying rural areas affected by drought, the Depression and unemployment. The following examines the CWA organisation in Western Australia during the 1930s.

The Country Women's Association of Western Australia in the 1930s

In July 1930, Ixia, penname of Western Australian journalist Emily Harriet Pelloe, supported the work of the CWA when she wrote:

The present depression falls heavily on country women. Low prices for wheat, and wool have hit primary producers badly and economy forced by circumstances lessens opportunities for country women to alleviate the monotony and hardships of life on farms and horticultural holdings. The activities of the Country Women's Association all over the State were never more necessary than at present.⁵⁰

Ixia's summary of the Depression highlighted the issues faced by farmers and other rural workers during this period, and the role CWA members could play in assisting these people in distress. Nungarin was one rural area that was affected.

A history of the Nungarin CWA branch reveals that '[d]uring the depression the distress in the drought-stricken districts north of Nungarin was brought before the notice of members, and it was decided to render all possible help'.⁵¹ Nungarin, previously referred to in Chapter Five, and site of Western Australia's first CWA branch, was situated in the state's wheat belt area. Like so many other rural areas, Nungarin's farmers struggled to survive during the 1930s. The previous decade saw farmers increase their financial debt as they were encouraged to both expand their land holdings as well as mechanise. Furthermore, farming opportunities were also available for returned servicemen, many unsuited to farming pursuits or located on holdings too small to be sustainable. Local historian Olga Joukovsky-Vaisvila noted Western Australia's policy of land development was followed by successful farming in the 1910s and 1920s when the gold mining industry declined, but this was heavily dependent on the 'stability of world markets'.⁵² However, one of the effects of the world wide Great Depression was the collapse of world markets – wheat prices in both Western

⁵⁰ Ixia, 'Woman's Interests. Country Women', *West Australian*, 18 July 1930, 4. See also Noël Stewart, 'Pelloe, Emily Harriet', *Australian Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/pelloe-emily-harriet-8012> viewed 28 January 2019; Noël Stewart, *As I Remember Them*, Artlook Books, Perth, 1987, 107-112. Also refer to Appendix 1.

⁵¹ Anonymous, *Branch History Nungarin CWA 1924-1971*, unpublished manuscript, CWA of Western Australia, Perth, 1971, 16.

⁵² Olga Joukovsky-Vaisvila, *Around the Rock: A History of the Shire of Nungarin Western Australia*, Nungarin Shire Council, Nungarin, 1978, 44.

Australia and South Australia tumbled to a point where few farmers were able to 'cover production costs'.⁵³

Not only were farmers impacted by reductions in wheat and wool prices, but weather conditions that affected the wheat belt area resulted in unusual dry periods followed by flooding rains. Historically, the 1914 drought was noted as disastrous for the newly established Nungarin area with some farmers selling out for little money.⁵⁴ In the early 1930s low prices for wheat and wool were as challenging to farmers as had been the early droughts.⁵⁵ Joukovsky-Vaisvila explained many farmers in the Nungarin district were able to survive by diversifying what they grew. Some farmers became self-sufficient during the hard times of the Depression, a decided advantage in contrast to city dwellers. As well, there was often an enforced return to horsepower as machinery was re-possessed.⁵⁶ A few farmers were unable to cope and abandoned their properties without financial remuneration and never returned. Writing to the press in February 1931, 'Old Time Farmer' of Nungarin confirmed the difficult conditions some farmers experienced but was critical when he stated:

They have free water and firewood and plenty of rabbits around their door. Some have not paid their land rents, water rates, road rates, car licences and cart licences for years, and have had Government help for years.⁵⁷

Nungarin was gazetted in 1912 and settled as part of the 1909 Civil Service Land Settlement Scheme which attracted retired or redundant civil servants willing to become farmers. It is most likely that some of these former civil servants were without previous farming experience. As well, World War One saw a decline in their numbers due either to their death, or injury and incapacitation while on active service, or decision not to return to their holdings.⁵⁸ The numbers who did not return are unknown, but one such person was Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas John Todd who died overseas and left his estate to Mrs R Francis a member of the Nungarin CWA – both are mentioned in Chapter Five.⁵⁹ There were, however, other documented instances of the effects of the Depression in Western Australia and its people.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁴ 'Land Settlement. The Civil Service Scheme of 1909', *Sunday Times*, 15 November 1931, 20.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁶ Joukovsky-Vaisvila, *Around the Rock: A History of the Shire of Nungarin Western Australia*, 49.

⁵⁷ 'Old Time Farmer, 'Assistance to Farmers'', *West Australian*, 14 February 1931, 6.

⁵⁸ 'Land Settlement. The Civil Service Scheme of 1909', *Sunday Times*, 15 November 1931, 20.

⁵⁹ B2455, Thomas John Todd, National Archives of Australia, <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8391711> viewed 31 January 2019. Mrs R Francis was also known as Annie M Pippin. Also refer to Supreme Court of WA, *Divorce and Matrimonial Causes. Pippin v Pippin* 6 June 1917, Cons 3404, Item 1917/33 037, State Record Office, Western Australia for information of her first marriage.

The account of John Clements is especially interesting because it provides background for a community that formed a CWA branch. Clements went to work on a wheat farm at Gabbin as a newly arrived English immigrant in 1929, and later moved to a potato farm. He mentioned the difficult life experienced by labourers and farmers alike.⁶⁰ Clements also referred to the post-World War One Soldier Settler scheme at Gabbin which he described as having blocks 'much too small and ... completely virgin with heavy timber on them' that were only able to be cleared manually with an axe. Before settlers were able to access bank loans it was a requirement to 'clear [the land] from boundary fence to boundary fence'.⁶¹ These blocks proved too small to provide a living for the settler and his family. Clements added that the first farmer who employed him walked off the land. Later, blocks were integrated into larger allotments that proved more economically viable.⁶²

The town of Gabbin, gazetted in 1918, was situated 256 kilometres north east of Perth and eighty-four kilometres from Nungarin in the wheat belt region, and was the site of a CWA branch established in 1933.⁶³ In August 1933, at their ninth annual conference, the CWA resolved to 'organise the distribution of fruit and vegetables in the wheat belt' region.⁶⁴ This was to ensure children had access to fresh fruit and vegetables for nutritional and health reasons. It is also an example of the type of practical assistance the CWA organised in Western Australia during the Depression. Aside from Clements, there were other accounts of the conditions that some people were facing during this period.

Living conditions for the unemployed were crude and basic as the following attests:

Sustenance workers' camps in Western Australia do not have fly-proof doors. Neither do they have carpets nor linoleums; mother earth is the floor; the tent poles the wardrobe; the kerosene tin the bath and washtub; the mouth organ the music (if there be a heaven sent musician), the newspapers flung from passing trains by charitable passengers, the library.⁶⁵

Sustenance, or 'susso', was the equivalent to unemployment benefits. Bolton noted that in Western Australia, 'the standard sustenance allowance was seven shillings a week for a single man, fourteen shillings for a married couple, and seven shillings for each child under fourteen up to a maximum of five children'.⁶⁶ This was given in cash with a small proportion

⁶⁰ Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, 150-156.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 152.

⁶³ Government of Western Australia, Landgate, <https://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/maps-and-imagery/wa-geographic-names/name-history/historical-town-names> viewed 7 December 2018.

⁶⁴ 'Country Women', *Western Mail*, 24 August 1933, 23.

⁶⁵ 'Workers Wives and the Tragedy of their Kiddies', *Sunday Times*, 15 January 1939, 11.

⁶⁶ Bolton, *A Fine Country to Starve In*, 98.

allocated 'in the form of orders for food, meals, or beds for the single men'.⁶⁷ However, many considered sustenance as a last resort and those who received benefits during this period were stigmatised. Unemployment was seen as shameful, and some suggested the unemployed were to blame.⁶⁸

The CWA branches, such as the one at Gabbin, supported the local residents. The growing number of CWA branches in Western Australia during the 1930s demonstrates the organisation's expansion. However, there are some difficulties in ascertaining total membership numbers. In her own research, Scott noted a lack of membership rolls for the Queensland CWA during the interwar years. This suggests membership rolls were either not maintained or were lost over time.⁶⁹ A similar situation occurred in Western Australia during the 1930s with membership numbers for the CWA either unavailable or limited to a few brief lists. CWA membership details are examined in this section while the WSG is discussed later.

The Annual Reports of the CWA in Western Australia do not give the total numbers of members. Some branch reports provided numbers of financial members, while others made no mention of this. For example, Hyden located 339 kilometres east of Perth in Western Australia formed a branch in August 1936 with just nine members.⁷⁰ Nungarin, the site of Western Australia's first official branch had forty members in 1934, while Doodlakine situated approximately seventy-nine kilometres south west from Nungarin had thirteen.⁷¹

There are also discrepancies in the available records. For example, in the 1934 Annual Report figures were given for the Burracoppin branch twice – it was reported membership was twenty but later noted as nine in the same report.⁷² It is possible that in one instance Burracoppin was mistaken for the name of another branch, as figures show their membership at seventeen in 1930 and nineteen in 1931, supporting the probability of twenty in 1934.⁷³

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁹ Scott, 'Generic Resemblances'? *Women and Work in Queensland, 1919-1939*, 85.

⁷⁰ 'Country Women's Association', *Western Australian*, 12 August 1936, 7.

⁷¹ *Countrywoman of Western Australia*, October 1934, Vol. 1, No. 3; *Countrywoman of Western Australia*, December 1934, Vol. 1, No. 5; Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, The Country Women's Association of Western Australia, Perth, 1974, 109-114.

⁷² CWA of WA, Annual Report, July 1934.

⁷³ CWA of WA, Annual Report, July 1930; CWA of WA, Annual Report, July 1931.

The names of the CWA branches in Western Australia, together with the year of commencement and disbandment where known are published in *Her Name is Woman*.⁷⁴ The names and the year of establishment of CWA branches in Western Australia are given in Appendix 4. As well, information obtained from the CWA's monthly paper *The Countrywoman of Western Australia* has been used to extract data for the following tables. However, Figure 6.1 does not factor in either the number of disbanded branches or numbers of re-formed branches in Western Australia. The numbers of these are shown separately in Table 6.1.

The number of disbanded branches in Western Australia, as shown in Table 6.1, was small in comparison to the total number of branches formed. The table also reveals four branches were re-formed during the period examined. Further branches were re-formed during and after the Second World War but that is beyond the scope of this thesis. For most branches, the reasons for disbandment are unknown. However, in Western Australia, some mining towns where CWA branches were located closed, and other towns established as part of settlement schemes suffered the same fate as settlers left the district. For example, the branch situated at Leeds which was part of the Group Settlement Scheme and located 366 kilometres south of Perth had failed when residents moved from the district due to the difficult farming conditions.⁷⁵ In addition, some branches merged with others that were too small to survive. In August 1935 branches at Goomalling, Wahkinup, Campion, Mollerin and Jingymia were too small to continue; some members were absorbed into nearby CWA branches.⁷⁶

Table 6.1: Western Australia CWA Disbanded and Re-Formed Branches 1930-1939. These figures do not include Younger Set branches.

(Source: Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, 109-114.)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA	NUMBERS
Total Number of Branches formed to 1939	233
Number of Disbanded CWA Branches 1930-1939	28
Number of Branches Re-Formed 1930-1939	4

⁷⁴ Erickson, Gibbings and Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, 109-114.

⁷⁵ Refer to Appendix 4.

⁷⁶ 'Country Women's Conference', *Sunday Times*, 18 August 1935, 22.

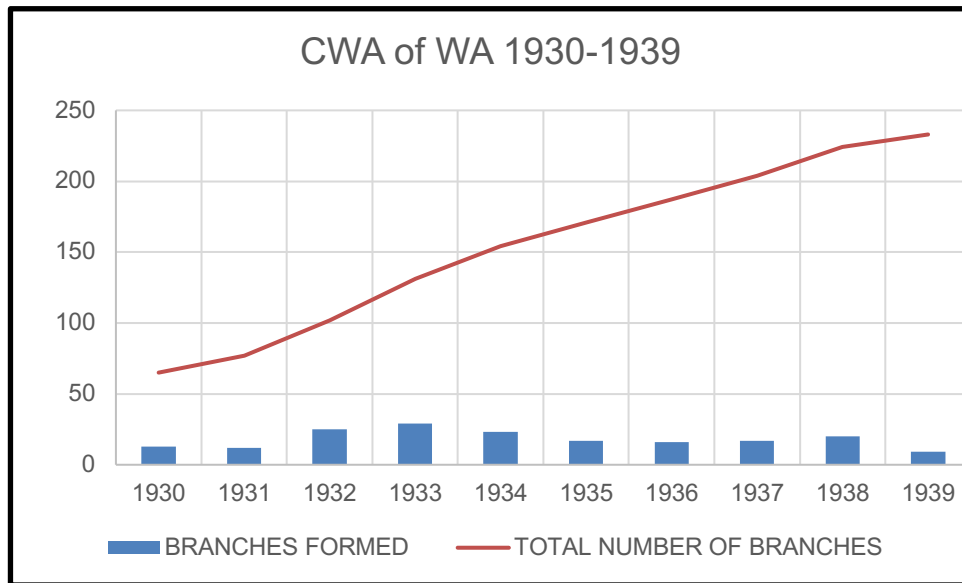


Figure 6.1: Western Australian CWA Branches 1930 to 1939.

(Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, 109-114; *Countrywoman of Western Australia*, Country Women's Association of Western Australia).

Figure 6.1 shows the number of CWA branches established in Western Australia in the years from 1930 to 1939. By 1939 there appears to be a very small flattening of the graph in terms of the number of branches established as compared to the previous two years, and this is confirmed by the bar graph. This may be attributed to the commencement of the Second World War, and the establishment of the military auxiliaries that attracted some younger women as members. However, additional research to include data from the 1940s is required to confirm this assumption and is something that could be undertaken post-thesis.

With an increase in, and scattering of branches over a large area, and a presumed enlarging membership base, the CWA of Western Australia required a means of connecting and communicating with their members. In 1934 despite the tough times, they proceeded with their publication of *The Countrywoman of Western Australia*.⁷⁷ Branches shown in the map in Figure 6.2 extended from the south and south-west of the state, to Koolan Island 1900 kilometres north of Perth. Due to the limitations in the map size, not all branches are shown. The Editor reported that owing to the 'rapid growth of the Association', management of the organisation had become difficult. The magazine therefore addressed the problem of circulating information to its members. It was also a 'members only' publication that included items such as their Annual Reports, obviating the need to rely on the public press which had

⁷⁷ Country Women's Association of Western Australia (CWA of WA), *60 Years of The Countrywoman of Western Australia 1934-1994: Special Commemorative Edition*, CWA of WA, Perth, 1994, 10.

previously printed news of 'Branch Activities' in their daily editions.⁷⁸ The Great Depression affected the WSG organisation in other ways.



Figure 6.2: Western Australia's CWA Branch Distribution.
(Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*).

The Women's Service Guilds in the 1930s

Not only rural people and organisations were affected by the Depression, but also their city counterparts. However, historians have suggested that those who managed to maintain their

⁷⁸ Country Women's Association of Western Australia (CWA of WA), *60 Years of The Countrywoman of Western Australia 1934-1994: Special Commemorative Edition*, CWA of WA, Perth, 1994, 9-10.

jobs, especially in the towns and cities, were only minimally affected in contrast to the rural sector. For example, in Sydney Nadia Wheatley examined two suburbs to identify whether the rich were better off in Woollahra during the Depression than the working-class in Balmain. She concluded there were inequalities between the two classes that were quite marked during the Depression with the working class more likely to descend into poverty than the middle and upper classes.⁷⁹ Life was a struggle for many and required some adjustments and sacrifices. The WSG too was affected by the Great Depression.

The WSG had formed a number of branches within Western Australia as shown in Figure 6.3. Most were established before 1920 and were located at Albany, Fremantle, Claremont

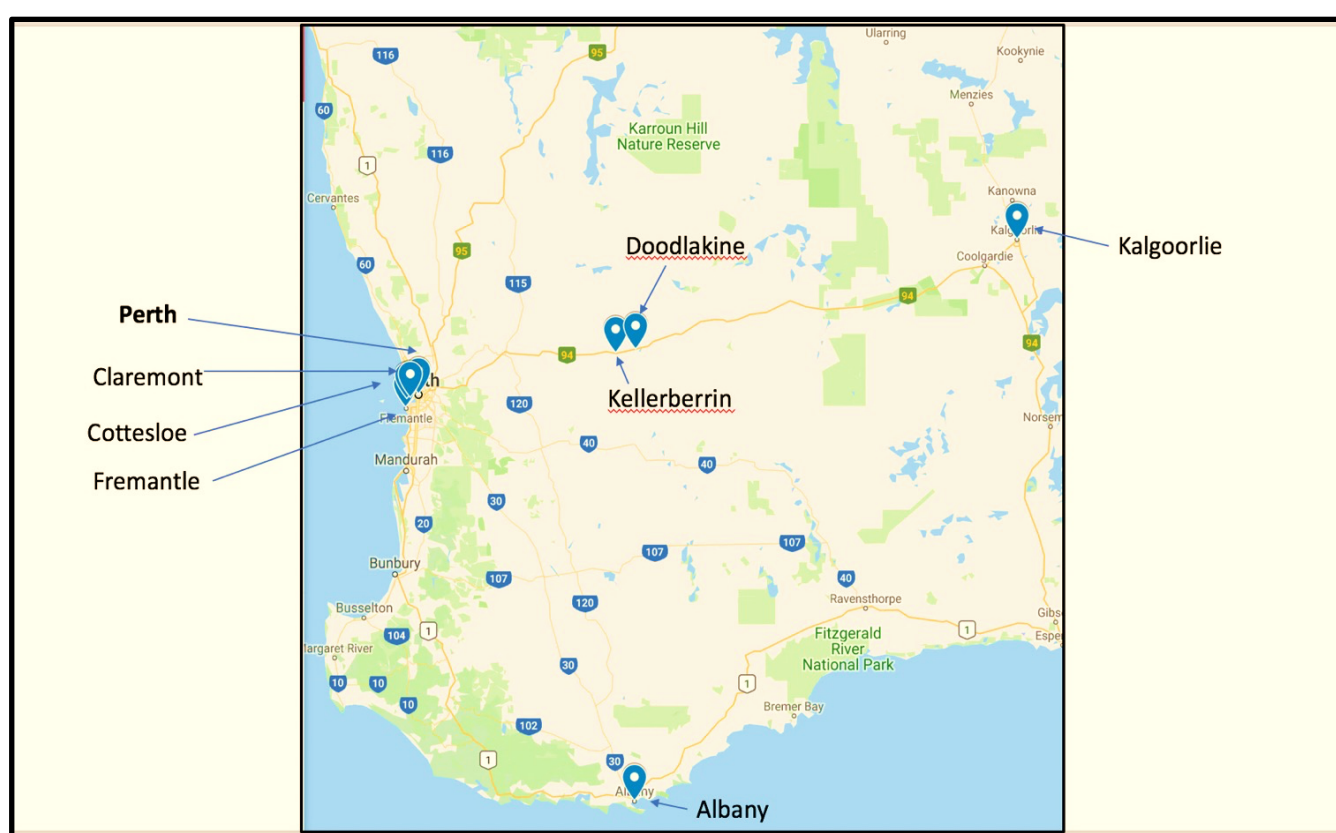


Figure 6.3: Western Australia's WSG Branches. Port Hedland, Kalamunda, Nedlands, Swanbourne, and Subiaco are not shown.

and Cottesloe. There were also the 'country circles' at Kalgoorlie, Kellerberrin, Doodlakine, and Donnybrook.⁸⁰ Bessie Rischbieth noted 'country circles' were formed as early as 1912 because women isolated by distance wished to become members of the WSG. New

⁷⁹ Nadia Wheatley, 'All in the Same Boat?: Sydney's Rich and Poor in the Great Depression', in Verity Burgmann and Jenny Lee (eds), *Making a Life: A People's History of Australia since 1788*, McPhee Gribble/Penguin, Victoria, 1988, 205-225.

⁸⁰ Dianne Davidson, *Women on the Warpath. Feminists of the First Wave*, University of Western Australia Press, 1997, 87.

branches known as guilds were also established in the mid 1920s to early 1930s at Nedlands, Swanbourne, Subiaco, Carlisle, Gosnells, and Kalamunda though some of these were of very short duration. In May 1931 Nedlands reported they had several new members but overall, their 'membership remains practically the same'.⁸¹ A year later, May Vallance, President of the Nedlands Guild reported:

The year just closed has been one of difficulty, due in some measure to the national economic situation, and helped by the fact that members have not yet awakened to the responsibilities which the franchise carries with it.⁸²

She added that this guild was 'handicapped by having a president who does not reside in the district', and the secretary's role had been performed by the treasurer as no-one was willing to take that position. By June 1933, the Nedlands Guild had closed.⁸³ This suggests there were several factors leading to this branch's demise. The impact of the Depression was one. There were also issues with official positions within the organisation with women failing for whatever reason to become more closely involved. The President also admitted the difficulties of not being resident within the district which lessened her contact with members.

Communication with these distant branches and circles was initially by hand-written letters suggesting a long and slow process. Rischbieth noted Henrietta Burns of Narrogin, (later a foundation member and Vice-President of the Nungarin CWA), was an early member of a country circle although she did not elaborate which one.⁸⁴ In total there were nine branches or guilds of the WSG, and four country circles. Therefore, the WSG did establish a presence in outback areas such as at Kalgoorlie, a mining town approximately 593 kilometres east of Perth, as well as Port Hedland 1322 kilometres north of Perth, the latter formed in September 1932. Membership of country circles entitled women to become associate members of the WSG.⁸⁵ It is unknown whether the country circles continued into the 1930s, although Rischbieth suggested they may have been the precursor of the Western Australian CWA. It is possible its members, like Henrietta Burns, joined the newly formed CWA. Like the CWA branches, country circles were initiated to reduce the loneliness and isolation of

⁸¹ 'Nedlands', *Dawn*, 20 May 1931, 8. Nedlands was located seven kilometres west-south-west of Perth; Swanbourne a coastal suburb ten kilometres west of Perth; Subiaco four kilometres west of Perth; Carlisle situated eight kilometres south-east of Perth; Gosnells is located twenty kilometres south-east of Perth; and Kalamunda twenty-seven kilometres east of Perth.

⁸² 'Annual Reports', *Dawn*, 18 May 1932, 8. Also refer to Appendix 1 for brief details of May Vallance.

⁸³ 'Summing Up the Year's Activities', *Dawn*, 28 June 1933, 3.

⁸⁴ Bessie M Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women: A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal Citizenship*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964, 31. See also 'Social Notes', *West Australian*, 14 August 1916, 8, for mention of Nurse Burns of Narrogin and the WSG.

⁸⁵ Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women: A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal Citizenship*, 31.

women in rural locations in Western Australia.⁸⁶ The attempt to include areas further north of Perth appears to have failed as Port Hedland does not feature in Annual Reports beyond 1933 when it was reported its President Mrs A P Davis (nee Catherine Dunnet) had departed for the south. She was the wife of a medical practitioner and they moved to Dalkeith near Perth after their Port Hedland stay.⁸⁷

Ascertaining membership numbers for the WSG has also been difficult. In Chapter Four, Table 4.1 figures available to 1919 have been shown, but even this had gaps. Later figures have not been found. In April 1930, the foundation branch of the WSG, now known as the Perth Guild, reported at their Annual Meeting they had eighty-two new members. But what was not mentioned was how many members had withdrawn from the organisation, or the total membership.⁸⁸ During June 1930, the organisation attempted to increase membership fees from two shillings and six pence to five shillings which included a copy of the *Dawn*. The *Dawn* was adopted by the WSG in May 1920 as their official newsletter to disseminate news and other information to members, including from comparable overseas organisations. It had been commenced by the Fremantle Guild in 1918, and was published monthly, initially costing two shillings per annum.⁸⁹ Dianne Davidson discusses the *Dawn* in greater detail in her history of the organisation.⁹⁰ In 1930 they reported on the progress made on the women's maternity hospital which the organisation had fought for many years to establish. The King Edward Memorial Hospital was by then 'handling as many as 122 cases in a month'.⁹¹ Compare this to the original twenty beds when the facility opened, and a total of 100 in the first six months of operation. It was an enormous success.

However, the attempt to introduce a fee increase was rejected.⁹² The WSG had recently moved into new premises at a time when the Depression was impacting the community and probably the members, therefore it was understandable the planned increase in the membership fee would have sparked concern. It is thus difficult to compare the WSG and other organisations on the basis of their membership numbers, or to create tables and charts without either actual figures or subscription details from balance sheets the latter of which could not be found. For example, in May 1931 the Swanbourne Guild stated they had a

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁷ 'Port Hedland Notes', *Northern Times*, 15 February 1933, 2.

⁸⁸ 'Women's Service Guild', *West Australian*, 25 April 1930, 5.

⁸⁹ 'Advertising', *Dawn*, 12 January 1921, 1.

⁹⁰ Davidson, *Women on the Warpath*, 105-119.

⁹¹ 'A Hospital for Mothers', *Dawn*, 22 January 1930, 3.

⁹² 'Women's Service Guilds', *West Australian*, 18 June 1930, 16.

'satisfactory membership' without giving an actual figure.⁹³ In South Australia, the ramifications of the Great Depression were also felt by the various women's organisations.

South Australia's Country Women's Association in the 1930s

During the 1930s, the CWA in South Australia supported rural people in several ways. For example, Burra CWA's annual report for 1932 noted the movement of fifteen families to Queensland from South Australia's West Coast, an area which suffered greatly during the drought and from depressed wheat and wool prices.⁹⁴ The report added that South Australia's CWA President, out of concern for these families, had communicated with Queensland CWA's State President to ensure they contacted the departing citizens. Exact reasons for these families moving to Queensland are unknown because of a lack of records. However, the families may have chosen to leave South Australia in the hope of gaining employment because of the lower unemployment rate in the early years of the Depression in Queensland compared to the rest of Australia. Queensland's economy was dependent on agriculture rather than urban manufacturing.⁹⁵

Families such as these were not the only concern for the CWA. In 1939 the Minnipa CWA Branch resolved to consider the issue of 'farmers being forced off their farms'.⁹⁶ Minnipa, proclaimed in 1915, was located on Eyre Peninsula 180 kilometres east of Ceduna on the West Coast of South Australia.⁹⁷ Earlier in January 1931, John Christian of Yaninee referred to the previous four years as a period of 'hardships and continual disappointments'.⁹⁸ Christian confirmed that 'unprecedented ... drought and the continued fall in wheat and wool prices' coupled with costs associated with land clearance, 'high freight [charges] (both ways), and latterly high rates of interest' were detrimental to farmers. He cited costs of nine shillings per acre to clear scrub before World War One, but post war the price had risen to at least twenty five shillings per acre.⁹⁹ Wudinna farmer and later Liberal candidate for Flinders, Alfred William Hurtle Barns, also lamented that insurmountable debt was being accrued by

⁹³ 'Swanbourne', *Dawn*, 20 May 1931, 8.

⁹⁴ SACWA, *Annual Report for year ending 30 June 1932*, SACWA Archives, Kent Town. 'Mrs. Peter Farrelly, of Booborowie, reported that fifteen families had left the West Coast of South Australia to make homes in Queensland'.

⁹⁵ Brian J Costar, *Labor, Politics and Unemployment: Queensland During the Great Depression*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1981, 2.

⁹⁶ South Australian Country Women's Association, *Minutes – Conference Reports 15 September 1930-8 October 1934*, SACWA Archives, Kent Town.

⁹⁷ Geoffrey H Manning, *Manning's Place Names of South Australia*, Geoffrey H Manning, Adelaide, 1990, 206.

⁹⁸ J Christian, 'West Coast Farmers. Pioneering Hardships', *Advertiser*, 9 January 1931, 18. This was John Reinhold Christian.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

farmers in their quest to eke out a living for which they ran the risk of bankruptcy.¹⁰⁰ Both Yaninee, twenty-one kilometres from Wudinna, and the latter forty-five kilometres from Minnipa, are located on Eyre Peninsula on South Australia's West Coast. Not only this but freight charges had also been a longstanding issue. During the Great Depression, the South Australian CWA rose to prominence by providing relief to outback settlers and farmers in many isolated areas through their Outback Relief programme. This programme is discussed in Chapter Seven. The organisation also continued to grow during the 1930s.

In 1937, the Metropolitan branch in Adelaide had a total of 334 members, and by 30 June 1940 there were 416 members. The much smaller settlement of Poochera on South Australia's West Coast had just twelve members in 1938 but twenty-five members in 1939.¹⁰¹ This also shows major variations between branches, not only in terms of distance from Adelaide and each other, but also in terms of membership numbers, the latter often reflecting the district population. The population of rural areas, particularly the outlying ones, was much smaller than either metropolitan areas or regional commercial centres.

In 1935 the South Australian CWA Annual Report included total membership numbers for all states other than South Australia and Western Australia. It is unclear why South Australia and Western Australia's numbers were not given. This may have been because early membership records were not maintained and therefore these figures were unavailable. Instead, the total number of branches are noted for these two states as a means of indicating their growth and success. The total membership where known, and the number of branches including the Younger Set are displayed in Table 6.2. The Younger Set branches were inaugurated between 1931 and 1937 to attract young members, usually daughters of current members. It was hoped to instil in them the virtues of belonging to the CWA in the expectation that they would provide continued generational membership. Scott added this was also a way to 'facilitate the[ir] involvement in voluntary activity'.¹⁰² Scott also noted that the CWA was not the only organisation at this time to establish groups similar to the Younger Set. The Australian Red Cross, Girl Guides and some Church organisations provide further examples.¹⁰³ Even the WNPA formed a Junior Women's Non-Party Association in July 1931 to 'study duties and responsibilities of citizenship'.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ A W H Barns, "'Farmers' Debts and a Way Out'", *Advertiser*, 9 January 1931, 18. This was Alfred William Henry Barns.

¹⁰¹ SACWA Annual Report 30 June 1939; SACWA Annual Report, 30 June 1940.

¹⁰² Scott, 'Generic Resemblances'? *Women and Work in Queensland, 1919-1939*, 85.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁰⁴ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1932.

However, by 1940 the Younger Set in South Australia had closed perhaps due to the formation and demand for auxiliary organisations for the Second World War effort. Kate Darian-Smith reported 'hundreds of voluntary women's auxiliary and paramilitary organisations were established' nationally prior to 1940.¹⁰⁵ In the same way as many of the older generation had been attracted to patriotic organisations during World War One, younger women, particularly those who were single, would have responded to wartime needs in the late 1930s and the 1940s.

Table 6.2: Australian CWA Branches and Membership Totals.
Source: SACWA *Annual Report*, 30 June 1935.

STATE	NUMBER OF BRANCHES IN 1935	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP
South Australia	33 + 4 Younger Set	Unknown
Western Australia	137 + 22 Younger Set	Unknown
New South Wales	324 + 146 Younger Set	18,000
Queensland	340 + 69 Younger Set	16,545
Victoria	211 + 37 Younger Set	10,300
Tasmania	Not Given	Not Given

Therefore, due to difficulties in ascertaining the actual membership numbers for South Australia's CWA, the total number of branches formed has been used to provide an indication of the success of the organisation. The South Australian CWA branches are shown in Figure 6.4 although not all branches could be included in the small map. Nor shown are the Northern Territory branches which the South Australian CWA assisted in establishing. Appendix 5 gives the names and locations of the branches established prior to the end of 1939 in South Australia. Table 6.2 and Figure 6.4 are not exact as they may include disbanded branches within their figures. For example, Loxton situated on the River Murray formed a branch in 1930 but this was disbanded the following year, yet the Loxton CWA is included in the total number of branches.

Loxton is a small town situated on the River Murray 240 kilometres east of Adelaide. The Loxton CWA disbanded owing to the reported 'bad times in the district' and the branch's

¹⁰⁵ Kate Darian-Smith, 'War and Australian Society', in Joan Beaumont (ed.), *Australia's War 1939-45*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996, 61.

subsequent inability to continue.¹⁰⁶ Various histories for the area note it had suffered a succession of droughts, sandstorms, and the effects of the Great Depression in the 1920s and early 1930s. Not only this, but in Loxton's early years rabbits caused damage to cereal and other plantings, and this plus the loss of stock to dingos were further factors that made life difficult for farmers and graziers in the district.¹⁰⁷ A Loxton Vermin Board was established in 1910 to control these animals, but in 1930 plans were in place for its cessation.¹⁰⁸ Local resident and historian Marjory Cassan referred to the extent of the difficulties when she stated:

Something of the old community spirit which had nourished the district's growth in its early years seemed to be dissipated during this unhappy period of drought and prolonged depression. ... among business men, unhealthy policies of almost unlimited credit brought disaster in the end to farm and town alike.¹⁰⁹

Loxton had been proclaimed in 1907, but it was not until post-World War Two that the district became home to soldier settlers and the number of fruit blocks expanded, therefore this was not a factor for the disbandment of their CWA branch.¹¹⁰ Cassan added that the first seven years of Loxton's settlement were successful, but this was followed by twenty-five years of hardship owing to droughts and the depression.¹¹¹ The disbanding of the Loxton CWA signified the depth of community distress permeating through all levels of society at that time. The Loxton branch did re-form in 1945, a date beyond the scope of this thesis. This suggests several other factors, including the Great Depression, influenced the CWA branch's decision to disband not long after it was formed.

Aside from Loxton, the CWA continued to grow with new branches established throughout the state during the 1930s, but in 1939 there appears to be a slight decrease. Under the direction of the South Australian CWA, two branches were also established in the Northern Territory, at Alice Springs in 1933 and Tennant Creek in 1936.¹¹² Good leadership, and a clarity of mission and focus may have been reasons for the growth of the CWA. The

¹⁰⁶ SACWA, Annual Report, June 1931.

¹⁰⁷ Malvern Bonython Jones and the Loxton District Council, *Loxton. The First 75 Years. 1907-1982*, Loxton District Council, Loxton, 1982, 5, 7

¹⁰⁸ For more details read 'Loxton Vermin-Proof Fence', *Chronicle*, 20 August 1910, 13; 'Exit Loxton Vermin Board', *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, 18 April 1930, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Marjory Rose Cassan and W R C Hirst, *Loxton District and Town*, The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1972, 94. Cassan died in 1965 and the final three chapters of this book were written by Mrs W R C Hirst of the University of Adelaide. Her Christian names are unknown.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹¹² Christine Doran, *Women in Isolation: A History of the Country Women's Association in the Northern Territory 1933-1990*, The Country Women's Association of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 1992, 8, 11.

organisation appealed to a broad range of rural women, with former country members encouraged to join the Metropolitan branch in Adelaide. South Australia had a total of ninety-two branches between 1926 and 1939 inclusive.

The numbers of new CWA branches established each year in South Australia, together with the total number of branches that had been formed or were in existence at the same time are shown in Figures 6.4 and 6.5. The overall number of CWA branches in South Australia had been steadily increasing, particularly after 1931 when the Depression's impact was at its greatest.

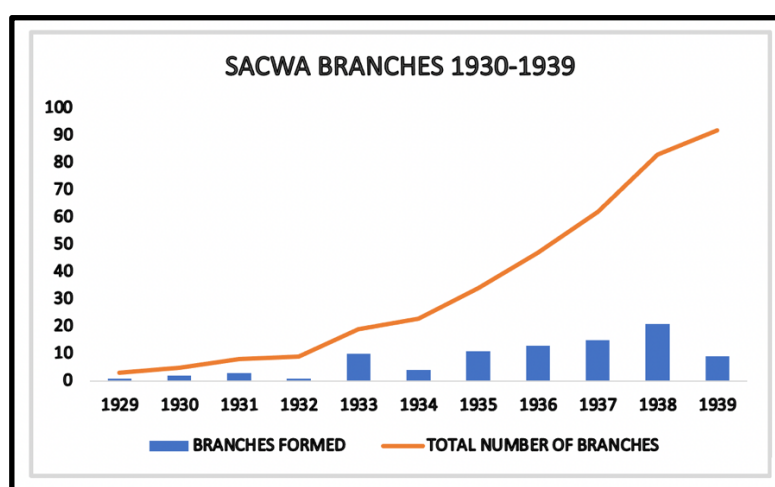


Figure 6.4: South Australian CWA Branches 1930 to 1939.
(Heather Parker, *The First Fifty Years: Golden Jubilee History of the South Australian Country Women's Association*, South Australian Country Women's Association, Adelaide, 1979; and Annual Reports).

This suggests that the CWA was a significant organisation in South Australia during the 1930s, providing women with alternative volunteer work to replace their patriotic experiences during World War One, as well as providing physical assistance to country people in times of need. The Great Depression ushered in new opportunities for women to volunteer. But like the CWA of Western Australia, the bar graph confirms a drop in the number of branches formed in 1939. As for Western Australia's CWA, with war imminent, young women may have chosen to join the patriotic organisations that formed at this time. The Women's Voluntary National Register is discussed in Chapter Seven, and it can provide some insight into what young women may have been doing then. Using the daily press, the CWA was able to maintain communication with its scattered branches and members, disseminating information and ideas, particularly for those who were not able to attend meetings.



Figure 6.5: South Australian CWA Branch Distribution. (Source: Annual Reports).

The South Australian CWA used the *Rural Review* from 11 October 1935 as their 'official publicity medium'.¹¹³ The proprietors of the *Rural Review* dedicated one page 'to effect a much closer liaison between branches that were scattered in distant parts of the State'.¹¹⁴ A brief list of subscriber locations published by the *Rural Review* confirms the paper's wide

¹¹³ 'Country Women's Association', 11 October 1935, *Rural Review*, 5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

distribution in South Australia, parts of the Northern Territory, and Broken Hill in New South Wales; these are included in Appendix 3. The *Rural Review* was a weekly publication for all primary producers, not just for CWA members. It included a section specifically for women and it was here that the CWA information was generally published. This was also available for the public to read.

One notable member of the South Australian CWA was Mrs J P Morice otherwise Lucy Spence Morice – her name is mentioned in a later list of members, as well as in the minutes of a meeting held 14 March 1930. In contrast to her involvement with the WNPA in the early 1900s, it appears she did not take an active role in the CWA and may have joined out of interest.¹¹⁵ In June 1936, by then aged in her mid-seventies, she was awarded an MBE for her philanthropic work, mostly with kindergartens. At that time, she stated she had '[g]radually ... relinquished most of her activities to devote her time to the free kindergarten work' although she 'finds continual avenues down which she wanders in search of further knowledge'.¹¹⁶ The CWA may have been one means by which she achieved her quest for further knowledge in September 1931 as together with other members of the organisation, she visited the Waite Agricultural Research Institute at Urrbrae. At the Institute CWA members viewed 'experimental plots and laboratories'.¹¹⁷ Other members present included those from Port Lincoln, Burra, Kimba, Mount Gambier and visitors from Sale in Victoria and Canada.¹¹⁸ The exact date of Lucy Morice joining the CWA or how long she remained a member of the CWA is unknown.

In contrast to the CWA, the WNPA had many fewer branches or members. During the 1930s they continued to lobby for legislative changes for improvement in the lives of women. The impact of the Great Depression on the WNPA is discussed in the following section.

Women's Non-Party Association in the 1930s

The WNPA acknowledged the financial crisis and the difficulties Australians faced. They added that women ought to have had some control of the 'allotment of public money & handling' believing the future required cautious investment for which they were often well-suited.¹¹⁹ Amongst their resolutions they stated:

¹¹⁵ SACWA, *Metropolitan Branch Meeting Minutes, 21 August 1928-29 July 1930*, SACWA Archives, Kent Town. Membership list contained at the end of the book, and an apology for the meeting held 14 March 1930.

¹¹⁶ 'Honored by the King – Mrs. Morice A Link With Other Days', *Mail*, 27 June 1936, 2.

¹¹⁷ 'Country Women Visit Urrbrae', *Chronicle*, 24 September 1931, 60.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹¹⁹ LWVSA, 5 November 1930, *General Minutes*, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

The Association calls upon its members, and appeals to all citizens, to refrain from hasty judgment & useless recrimination in considering the causes of the present financial situation; to realise that behind the recklessness of Governments has lain the apathy of electors; and to turn their faces to the future with the firm determination to work together in friendliness, cheerfully making every necessary sacrifice, for the welfare of Australia.¹²⁰

This statement although blaming the state and federal governments because of their economic policies, also apportioned some of the blame on uninformed voters.

The WNPA did not establish any new branches during the 1930s. They had established two branches in the 1920s only one of which survived into the early 1930s. In July 1924 the WNPA formed a branch at Blackwood with ten members.¹²¹ Blackwood is located sixteen kilometres south of Adelaide where the main branch of the WNPA was located. Presumably, the new branch was formed to allow women to attend meetings without the inconvenience of travelling to the city particularly if there were evening meetings. A branch had also been established the same year at Henley Beach eleven and a half kilometres west of Adelaide.¹²² These two branches, in relation to Adelaide where the main branch was situated, are shown in Figure 6.6. On 31 July 1934, the Blackwood Branch of the WNPA went into permanent recess owing to a lack of members. It was reported that while there had been twenty two members in November 1925, only four women were present at the final meeting signifying a subsequent demise of the branch.¹²³ Henley Beach had closed much earlier in 1929 owing to a decline in 'interest in the district to maintain a Branch', this was despite their ability to arrange speakers for meetings.¹²⁴ Sendziuk and Foster acknowledged that during the Depression social and sporting clubs declined as members could no longer afford subscriptions or to entertain.¹²⁵ Therefore, it is possible that the Great Depression affected members of these branches, making it difficult for them to continue.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, SLSA.

¹²¹ LWVSA, July 1924, Blackwood Branch Minute Book 1924-1934, SRG116/18/1-2, SLSA. Refer also to Chapter Four.

¹²² WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1925. Also refer to Chapter Four.

¹²³ LWVSA, 31 July 1934, Blackwood Branch Minute Book 1924-1934, SRG116/18/1-2, SLSA.

¹²⁴ WNPA, *Annual Report*, July 1929.

¹²⁵ Sendziuk and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, 120.

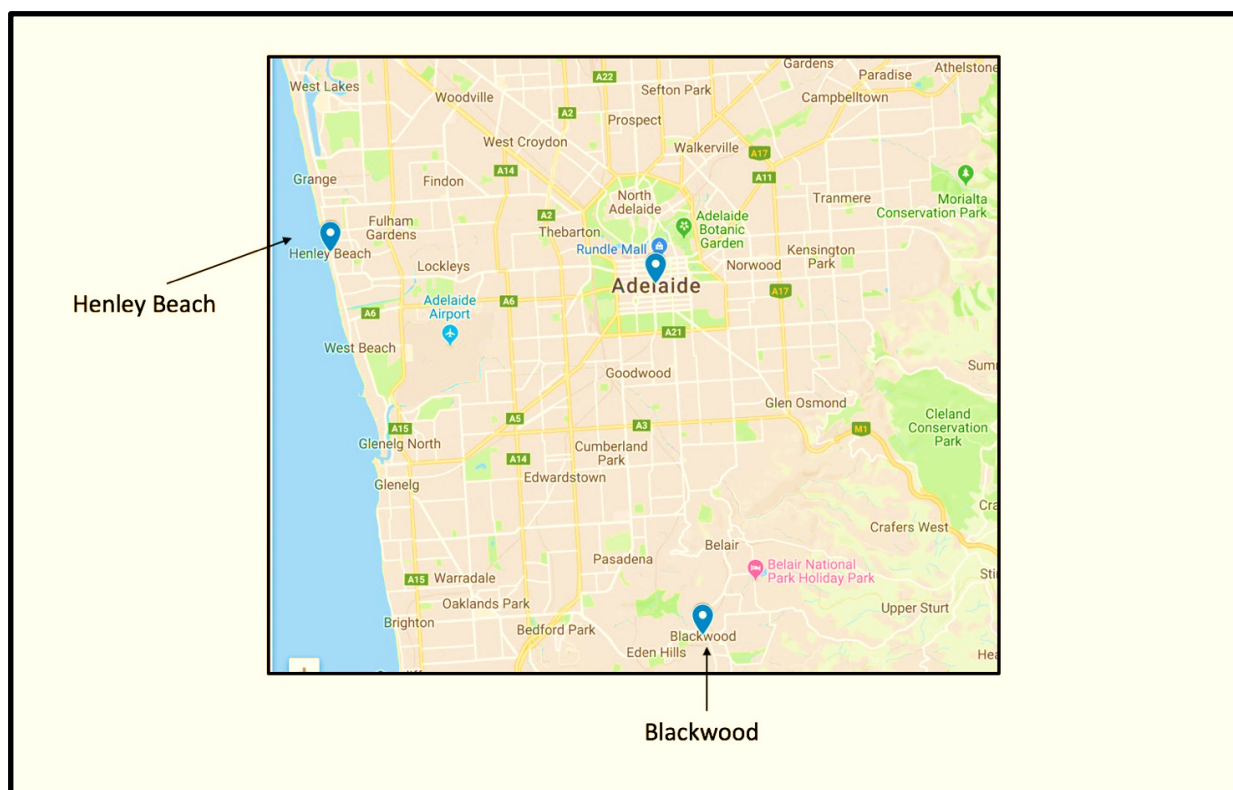


Figure 6.6: South Australia's WNPA Branches.

As membership numbers for the WNPA are not available, subscription totals expressed as pence have been used to give an indication of the organisation's progress. These figures have been taken from Annual Reports which published details of the organisation's finances. Difficulties arise in determining the cost of a single subscription, whether subscriptions were for ordinary membership or life membership, the latter incurring a higher fee, or changes in subscription fees. In April 1931, the WNPA's *Non-Party News* banner for the first time included the cost of subscription as five shillings per member, plus an additional one shilling for postage of their paper.¹²⁶ The *Non-Party News*, published from July 1923 to September 1933, was used to disseminate information to the WNPA's members, and included national and international topics.¹²⁷ However, due to the Depression, the number of businesses using their pages to advertise declined leading to the cessation of the publication beyond September 1933. Subscriptions alone were not sufficient to ensure the survival of *Non-Party News*.

¹²⁶ Women's Non-Party Association, *Non-Party News*, Women's Non-Party Association of South Australia, Adelaide, 1923-1933, April 1931, Vol. 7, No. 7, 1.

¹²⁷ League of Women Voters of South Australia (LWVSA), SRG 116/1/11, 'The Work and Achievements of the League of Women Voters of S.A.', Paper presented by Ellinor Walker at the 70th Annual meeting of the League of Women Voters of S.A., 27 July 1979; *Non-Party News*, Women's Non-Party Association, Adelaide, 12 July 1923-September 1933, SLSA.

At a special meeting of the WNPA in September 1931, it was decided to reduce subscriptions for country members by half, that is to two shillings and six pence.¹²⁸ To be eligible, it was originally proposed country members were those who lived beyond a radius of twenty miles from the WNPA headquarters. However, it was decided a country member was someone who lived beyond the suburban train or tram routes at that time.¹²⁹ But numbers of country members are unknown. The reduction in subscription for country women was incorporated in the Constitution, suggesting it became a permanent feature of the organisation. A basic membership roll or list of names from 1909 or shortly thereafter includes early members such as Miss Catherine Helen Spence who died in April 1910 and Madam Mouchette.¹³⁰ It is unclear if this list was added to over the years. The list shows there were 105 women with one giving her address as Sheoak Hills Station, Yarcowie a rural location 240 kilometres north of Adelaide.¹³¹ Other addresses (where listed) included the city of Adelaide and surrounding suburbs, but it is unclear whether any of these were beyond suburban train or tram routes.¹³² There were no separate membership rolls for the 1920s or 1930s. Despite a lack of country branches, the reduction in the cost of country member subscriptions suggests an acknowledgement by the WNPA of the issues rural women were experiencing at that time. This was affirmation the WNPA did not ignore country women.

The total amount in subscription payments received irrespective of how many ordinary and how many life memberships there were in a particular year, and how many women were country members have been used to provide an estimate of membership. Not every year appears to have included life membership details, and it is therefore assumed these were also few. However, the lack of membership numbers for the WSG, together with issues about subscription amounts and totals severely limits this study.

Subscription totals expressed in pence to indicate the membership of the WNPA are shown in Figure 6.7. A steady decline to 1939 is clear. The decrease in membership may indicate the organisation's declining importance in the face of the Great Depression, as well as growing unemployment and international instability. As a result, some members may not

¹²⁸ WNPA, *Non-Party News*, November 1931, Vol. 8, No. 2, 3.

¹²⁹ LWVSA, *General Minutes*, SRG116/1/1, SLSA, 20 September 1931.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Yarcowie is now known as Whyte-Yarcowie. For further information see Geoffrey H Manning, *Manning's Place Names of South Australia*, G H Manning, Adelaide, 1990, 334. Mrs Sawers was probably Dorothy Sawers, wife of Kenneth Pryor Primrose Sawers, pastoralist of Yarcowie and other areas, although may have been his mother Rosina Sawers who died in 1935 at Glenelg.

¹³² WNPA, SRG 116/1/1, Members of the Women's Political Association of S.A.

have been able to afford the cost of membership or the time. In July 1939, the President Leonora Polkinghorne wrote in her Annual Report that:

The year under review has been one of considerable unrest. International crises have followed one another with alarming frequency and in this as in other countries such emphasis is being laid upon military preparations. Thus the attainment of the ideals for which the Association stands seems to become more difficult, whilst an ever increasing watchfulness is needed to prevent an encroachment upon liberties hitherto enjoyed!¹³³

However, the 1939 figure is an approximation only, as the State of Receipts and Expenditure were not included in the year's report which had been typed and not printed. Because the report was typed suggests a lack of funds to allow its professional printing or printer issues such as paper or ink shortages. This report mentioned the 'Finance Committee' and stated '... in comparison with the previous financial year subscriptions were diminished by approximately £5.'¹³⁴ This confirms a small reduction in membership numbers.

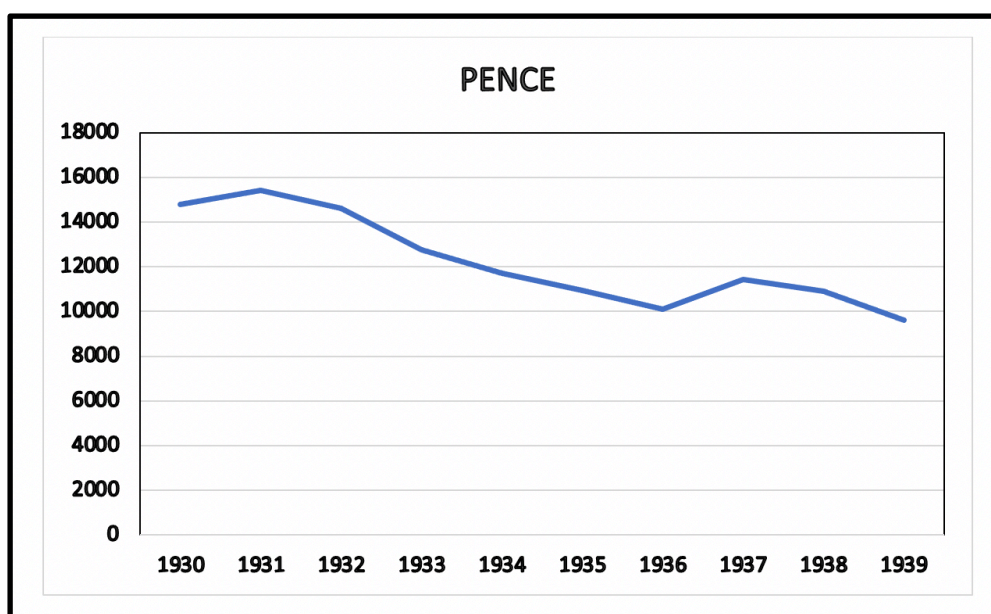


Figure 6.7: WNPA membership (in pence) 1930 to 1939 inclusive.
(Annual Reports 1930-1939).

Furthermore, even though it was in mid 1931 that country members' subscriptions were halved, there was a slow decline until 1936 which was followed by a small but brief rally in membership. These changes in subscription figures may indicate an overall decline in WNPA membership but without figures beyond 1939, this cannot be ascertained with certainty. However, it can be inferred that either the Depression affected WNPA members' ability to pay their subscriptions, or that the organisation's relevance was waning. Possible

¹³³ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1939.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1939.

evidence of the WNPA's waning relevance in the 1930s can be seen in comments made by Lucy Spence Morice, and the WNPA's association with the Emergency Committee. It was a period where physical aid became more important than the long-drawn-out campaigns for legislative improvements.

In 1929, Lucy Spence Morice expressed general disappointment and a certain amount of disillusionment about the WNPA when she said:

It does not seem to me now ... that women voters have done any of the great things that were hoped. Women are certainly treated more politely since they have the vote; but the great reforms which seemed just ahead are further away than ever.¹³⁵

The disillusionment of other women may also have contributed to the WNPA's falling membership. Certainly, the response by the Emergency Committee towards the WNPA suggests the organisation's public interface was diminishing as is shown in the following paragraphs.

South Australia's Emergency Committee and the Women's Non-Party Association

The Citizens' League was a conservative or right-wing political organisation. In other states similar organisations went by names such as the All for Australia League.¹³⁶ In New South Wales, the complex background and development of paramilitary organisations in the early 1930s – for example the Old Guard – has been explored by Andrew Moore.¹³⁷

These organisations originated out of a fear of a 'Bolshevik-style revolution' during the Depression.¹³⁸ In South Australia during April 1931 an Emergency Committee was formed with Archibald Grenfell Price as its Chairman.¹³⁹ Grenfell Price, later knighted, was an historian and geographer. Concerned with rising inflation and communism, he held a firm belief that the Federal government had been impotent in its handling of the economic crisis. The formation of the Emergency Committee was a direct response by Price to those

¹³⁵ 'Prison Reform. Responsibility of Women Voters. Interview with Mrs. J. P. Morice', *Observer*, 19 January 1929, 61.

¹³⁶ 'Citizens' League', *News*, 21 March 1931, 3.

¹³⁷ Andrew Moore, *The Secret Army and the Premier: Conservative Paramilitary Organisations in New South Wales 1930-1932*, New South Wales University Press, Sydney, 1989.

¹³⁸ Mark Peel and Christina Twomey, *A History of Australia*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2011, 192.

¹³⁹ Ronald Leslie Heathcote, 'Price, Sir Archibald Grenfell (Archie) (1892-1977)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/price-sir-archibald-grenfell-archie-11458> viewed 20 November 2018.

concerns, and in particular, to what he viewed as 'militant socialism during the Depression'.¹⁴⁰ Reporting on the new Emergency Committee the press stated:

In an effort to co-ordinate all sections of public opinion opposed to repudiation, inflation, and financial drift, a conference representing five important public organisations was held on Wednesday evening, and a committee appointed to investigate the possibilities of co-operation.¹⁴¹

Those 'five important public organisations' were the Citizens' League, Country Party, Liberal Federation, Political Reform League, and the Producers' and Business Men's Political Committee. The Labor Party had declined to participate.¹⁴² Of the twenty delegates only one was a woman – Mrs Emma Sarah Morris of the Liberal Federation. Mrs Morris was president of the women's branch of the Liberal Federation, and known for her political work as well as for being a Vice-President of the National Council of Women in South Australia.¹⁴³ She was typical of a number of middle-class women at that time with concurrent membership and positions on various organisations.

On 13 May 1931 at the Executive meeting of the WNPA, some annoyance was expressed that their members were not invited to join the Emergency Committee.¹⁴⁴ Particularly, as earlier in November 1930 the WNPA was asked to co-operate with the League – they had replied 'provided their ideals conform with our [WNPA] own'.¹⁴⁵ The Executive decided to take their concerns to Grenfell Price. In his reply, Grenfell Price stated the committee was limited to the already named groups which the WNPA considered 'unsatisfactory'.¹⁴⁶ However, he extended an invitation to the WNPA Executive and other interested members to attend a special meeting to be held on 10 June 1931 where he addressed a gathering of women.¹⁴⁷ This date coincided with the Citizens' League Conference in Adelaide at which two representatives from the WNPA had previously accepted an invitation to attend.¹⁴⁸ The special meeting, held at the Adelaide Town Hall, was specifically advertised for the purpose of informing women of 'Australia's financial position and the plans of the Emergency Committee'.¹⁴⁹ Grenfell Price informed the women present that there was a single objective

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ 'Adelaide's Campaign Against Financial Drift', *Chronicle*, 9 April 1931, 46.

¹⁴² 'Citizens' League. Burra Sub-Branch', *Burra Record*, 1 July 1931, 1.

¹⁴³ 'Adelaide's Campaign Against Financial Drift', *Chronicle*, 9 April 1931, 46; 'Death of Mrs. C. R. Morris', *Advertiser*, 12 June 1934, 8. Refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁴⁴ LWVSA, 13 May 1931, Committee Minutes, SRG116/2/3.

¹⁴⁵ LWVSA, 28 November 1930, General Minutes, SRG116/1/2.

¹⁴⁶ LWVSA, 13 May 1931, Committee Minutes, SRG116/2/3.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ 'Citizens' League Conference', *Advertiser and Register*, 22 May 1931, 16; LWVSA, 8 April 1931, Committee Minutes, SRG116/2/3.

¹⁴⁹ 'Address to Women', *News*, 4 June 1931, 9; 'Need for Sacrifice', *News*, 10 June 1931, 5.

for the committee, and that was 'to install in Canberra a Government which would reconstruct the country under the experts' advice'.¹⁵⁰ The experts were those working with the Government to formalise a plan of management during the budget crisis. Grenfell Price added, with an emphasis on Federal rather than State government, that a 'reduction of Government expenditure' was vital.¹⁵¹ He also reported the League's support for the incumbent Prime Minister Joseph Lyons.¹⁵² A report of the special meeting was tendered at the following WNPA Executive committee meeting but that document is no longer available, and there was no further comment made in the WNPA Executive minutes.¹⁵³ Nonetheless comments by Bessie Rischbieth provide additional information.

In April 1931, Bessie Rischbieth, in her role as President of the Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV), penned an open letter published in the WNPA's *Non-Party News* that urged members to unite to 'save the nation'.¹⁵⁴ Rischbieth wrote:

Dear Fellow Women

This appeal goes forth to Australian women in this crisis to unite throughout the Commonwealth in a demand for a **better method of Government** than the present party system of representation of the people.

In order to save Australia from worse chaos, let us with one accord insist on an **All-Party Administration** by the immediate formation of a Federal Administration consisting of members drawn from all political parties and sections in the Federal House to **preserve the authority of Government**.¹⁵⁵ [bold type as in original].

Rischbieth added this was a Citizens' Federation of Western Australia campaign, which was a similar organisation to the Citizens' League, that had been endorsed by the WSG at a special meeting held in March 1931.¹⁵⁶ She further stated that a 'nation-wide campaign is essential to prevent a catastrophe'. As well, the Australian Federation of Women Voters was about to liaise with the Citizens' League of South Australia.¹⁵⁷ With this context, it is easy to understand the dissatisfaction of the WNPA when omitted from the Emergency Committee founded by the Citizens' League of South Australia. The WSG in Western Australia was quite clearly involved with the comparable local organisation, yet in South Australia the WNPA was ignored. In just over twenty years since its inception, engaging in political

¹⁵⁰ 'Address to Women', *News*, 4 June 1931, 9; 'Need for Sacrifice', *News*, 10 June 1931, 5.

¹⁵¹ 'Address to Women', *News*, 4 June 1931, 9; 'Need for Sacrifice', *News*, 10 June 1931, 5.

¹⁵² 'National League. Citizens' League Conference', *Guyra Argus*, 26 Mar 1931, 5.

¹⁵³ LWVSA, 10 June 1931, Committee Minutes, SRG116/2/3.

¹⁵⁴ 'A Plan to Unite Australian Women to Save the Nation', *Non-Party News*, April 1931, Vol. 7, No. 7, 7-8. Letter originally published in the *Dawn*.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵⁶ 'Women's Service Guilds. Support Elective Ministers', *Daily News*, 2 March 1931, 4.

¹⁵⁷ 'A Plan to Unite Australian Women to Save the Nation', *Non-Party News*, April 1931 Vol. 7, No. 7, 8.

activism and working towards legislative changes for women and children, the WNPA must have been greatly disappointed in Grenfell Price and the Citizens' League of South Australia in their failure to acknowledge their existence or potential. As a political organisation this may be construed as a snub. It again suggests the WNPA's waning relevance at the time as well as their failure to secure credibility, particularly among men.

Conclusion

The examination of the CWA organisations in both Western Australia and South Australia highlighted their growth at a difficult and complex period due to the worldwide economic crisis that had an impact on all Australians and organisations. At this time, the WSG and the WNPA saw their influence wane as they sought legislative reforms that took much longer to achieve than the almost immediate relief-type service the CWA organisations had to offer to people in distress. Together with concerns surrounding local weather-related events such as the drought, coupled with falling prices of export commodities such as wool and wheat, plus widespread fears of a Bolshevik style revolution, these factors could not have failed to have affected so many Australians. The CWA's primary focus was rural women and children.

While the actual CWA membership numbers could not be accurately defined, the numbers of established branches of the CWA far outweighed those of both the WSG and the WNPA giving a sense of their increasing dominance. The WSG did attempt to communicate with and organise branches in rural settings and the WNPA made a concession in reducing the price of subscriptions for country members who lived beyond the train and tram transport routes. By doing so, the urban based organisations acknowledged the rural locations but as they were not principally a service organisation, contact with country members was limited or reduced to newsletters which took time to be delivered.

The CWA membership of the WNPA's former early president, Lucy Spence Morice in the latter years of her life, is of interest. Her comments regarding the work of the WNPA are enlightening. In Western Australia Henrietta Burns became a member of both the WSG and the CWA. Burns was a nurse who witnessed life in a rural area, and was a member of a WSG country circle, and later a vice-president of the newly formed Nungarin CWA. This reflects the interests both organisations held for these women.

The final chapter addresses some of these organisations' accomplishments during the interwar years, and includes the Outback Relief programme of the CWA, which brought it to public notice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS POST-WORLD WAR ONE

Effort has not been lacking, but there is still much to be achieved
for the attainment of many of our goals.

Mrs W H Evans,

State President, Women's Service Guilds, July 1939¹

Late in July 1939 at their Annual Conference, the outgoing President of the Women's Service Guilds, Mrs W H Evans, also known as Olive Evans and sister of Bessie Rischbieth, reflected on the first thirty years of the organisation. She gave a brief overview of the Women's Service Guilds when she stated:

... while members had often been disheartened at the slow realisation of some of their goals, much had been accomplished. We have learnt tolerance, and the appreciation of views which may differ from our own, for one thing ... The organisation has become a bureau of information on a variety of subjects. It has created the opportunity for self-education by members. It has made valuable contacts throughout Australia, and overseas, and passed on the fruit of such contacts. It has assisted in the building of bridges such as the Australian Federation of Women Voters, and the Pan-Pacific Women's Association, the British Commonwealth League, and the International Women's [sic] Suffrage Alliance. This constitutes the machinery for much useful co-operation, and while machinery needs the life force through it to be effective, such machinery in itself is still an accomplishment.²

¹ 'Co-Operation for Social Justice, Peace and Democracy', *Dawn*, 16 August 1939, 2.

² 'State President's Address. Mrs. W. H. Evans's Message to Conference', *Dawn*, 16 August 1939, 3. Also refer to Appendix 1 for a brief biography of Olive Evans. The Pan-Pacific Women's Association was established in 1931 to bring women together to study and understand the social and political conditions of the region. This Association arose out of the Pan-Pacific Conferences held in 1928 and 1930 under the auspices of the Pan-Pacific Union which was founded in 1917. The British Commonwealth League was founded in 1925 to promote equality between men and women in the Commonwealth countries. The International Woman Suffrage Alliance was founded in 1902 by leading American suffragists, and constituted in Berlin in 1904 at their second meeting. Additional information about the Pan-Pacific, South-East Asian Women's Association and the International Woman Suffrage Alliance can be found at: New Zealand History, 'Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association 1932-'

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/pan-pacific-and-south-east-asia-womens-association>, viewed 26 April 2021; Commonwealth Countries League, <https://the-ccl.org/our-story>, viewed 26 April 2021; International Alliance of Women, <https://www.womenalliance.org/what-is-iaaw/>, viewed 26 April 2021.

She added that the organisation had not been idle, but had been working hard to achieve its objectives, and that there was still much work to be done. Her statements reflected the nature of the challenge for feminist organisations, such as the Women's Service Guilds (WSG) and the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA), to achieve legislative reforms to improve the lives of women and children. There were no quick fix solutions for what they sought. It was a long and drawn-out process without the guarantee of success. They also needed to maintain the interest and support of their members.

While the slow progress of working towards their goals was acknowledged, Mrs Evans focussed on the benefits of belonging to the organisation. This included self-education, and links with other organisations in Australia and overseas. For example, in May 1923 Bessie Rischbieth was one of three delegates from Western Australia to attend the Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance held in Rome, Italy.³ She represented both the WSG and the Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV). Mrs Ethel Joyner was another delegate from the WSG who also went to the Congress. Mrs Joyner's organisational activities were not limited to the WSG but a multitude of other organisations, including the Children's Protection Society and the National Council of Women (NCW).⁴ The Congress, declared open by Italy's leader Benito Mussolini 'accompanied by his black-shirtguards', had provided an opportunity to meet with like-minded women from other nations where they discussed matters concerning women including suffrage.⁵ Forty-three countries including India, Japan and Egypt were represented. Of the Australian delegates (see Figure 7.1), South Australia was represented by Misses Eleanor Allen and Constance Davey, although the latter was unable to be present.⁶ The photograph also includes Harriet Newcomb of the British Commonwealth League. Newcomb was a teacher and a suffragist living in London but had spent some time in Australia and New Zealand.⁷

³ 'West Australia's Delegates to International Women [sic] Suffrage Alliance Congress I Rome, May, 1923', *Dawn*, 14 March 1923, 4.

⁴ Refer to Appendix 1.

⁵ International Women's Suffrage Alliance, *Papers of Bessie Rischbieth*, National Library of Australia, MS 2004, Series 8, Item 195-244, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-250831564/findingaid#collection-summary> viewed 30 April 2021.

⁶ 'Women of All Nations', *Register*, 20 March 1923, 7. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographies of Eleanor A Allen and Constance Davey.

⁷ For information about Harriet Newcomb, refer to Margaret Bettison, 'Newcomb, Harriet Christina (1854-1942)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/newcomb-harriet-christina-13270> viewed 1 May 2021.



Figure 7.1: Australian delegates to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress held in Rome in May 1923.

Top row, left to right: Mrs A E Joyner, WSG; Mrs Giblin, Tasmania; Miss E A Allen, WNPA; Dr Ethel Remfrey Morris, New South Wales; Mrs Emily Bennett, New South Wales; Miss Stella George, New South Wales; Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Clapham, Western Australia. Bottom row, left to right: Miss Harriett Newcomb, Britain; Bessie Rischbieth, WSG; Mrs Jameson Williams, New South Wales. (International Women's Suffrage Alliance, *Papers of Bessie Rischbieth*, National Library of Australia, MS 2004, Series 8, Item 195-244, nla.obj-428577500).

In August 1928, Bessie Rischbieth again travelled, this time to Honolulu, Hawaii. Her travel companions included women delegates from various Australian organisations attending the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference held under the auspices of the Pan-Pacific Union.⁸ Other Australian delegates included Britomarte James (mentioned in Chapter Three) representing the AFWV and the Victorian Women Citizen's Movement, and Miss Lena Swann who

⁸ See also *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, 1928, Vol. 6, No. 2, <https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10524/35573> viewed 7 May 2021; *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, 1928, Vol. 6, No. 3, <https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10524/35574> viewed 7 May 2021. These two volumes include the agenda for the conference, and a report of proceedings.

represented the WNPA, the AFWV and the NCW of South Australia.⁹ A photograph of the international delegates was published in the *Dawn* (see Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2: Delegates to the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in 1928.
(‘The Pan-Pacific Conference’, *Dawn*, 26 September 1928, 3).

The main aim of this conference was to bring together women from various Pan-Pacific countries, to discuss matters that affected their local communities, as well as sharing an interest in world affairs and international relationships. While it is not possible to identify the Australian delegates in the photograph, women from various Pan-Pacific countries included Japan, China, the USA and New Zealand as well as Australia. Topics discussed included women's suffrage, equality with men, maternal and child health, and women's working conditions.¹⁰ Following these conferences, Australian delegates were able to report back to their organisations on what women in other countries were doing. Some women, such as Bessie Rischbieth who served as President of the AFWV and as Vice-President of the WSG, also attended other international conferences.

This chapter focusses on the achievements of not only the WSG and the WNPA during the interwar period, but also of the CWA organisations in Western Australia and South Australia. While the term ‘achievements’ infers success, this was so often not the case for these

⁹ ‘Women's Conference. Official List of Delegates’, *West Australian*, 3 August 1928, 7; ‘Pan-Pacific Conference’, *West Australian*, 19 September 1928, 17.

¹⁰ *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, 1928, Vol. 6. No. 3, 210.

organisations. Involvement (or engagement) with various topics and issues is perhaps a better term to use than 'achievements'. Irrespective, it becomes clear that the service or philanthropic type organisations such as the CWA had greater success in a shorter amount of time than the feminist organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA, which lobbied for legislative changes that took longer to achieve or were unable to be achieved. Therefore, some of the following includes issues with which the WSG and the WNPA became involved. Only a few of the accomplishments or interests of these organisations are discussed in this chapter. WSG attempts to have women elected to Parliament to represent their needs are not examined. While Edith Cowan, a foundation member of the WSG, became the first woman elected to a State Parliament in 1921, she had already severed her ties with the WSG. Nor does this chapter address the establishment of seaside homes by both state CWA organisations. These were modelled on those offered by the New South Wales CWA and provided holiday venues for rural women and children, some of whom had never seen the sea. During the Depression years, handicrafts were used to recycle household items such as re-covering chairs. This led to a long tradition of learning new handicrafts and making items for which the CWA became well-known. However, this is not discussed here.

Firstly, for clarification, in May 1939 it was announced that the WNPA would be known as the League of Women Voters, subtitled Women's Non-Party Association. The new name was formally adopted by the organisation at their thirtieth annual meeting in July 1939.¹¹ For simplicity I will continue to refer to them as the WNPA in this chapter. The following examines topics such as Aboriginal welfare, child and maternal endowment, prison reforms, and children's protection. These are ordered by organisation, firstly Western Australia's WSG and South Australia's WNPA. Then, the CWA organisations of Western Australia and South Australia are featured later in the chapter. This is ordered in this fashion here because some issues involved more than one of these organisations at the same time.

Western Australia and the WSG

In her 1939 summary of the WSG, Olive Evans did not name specific interwar achievements that benefitted women and children in the community. However, many issues had been identified previously with some discussed at the WSG's 1939 conference. These issues included child welfare; maternal and infant welfare, particularly the deaths of mothers in childbirth; equal status for women; liquor law reform including working with the Western Australian Alliance (established to effect legislative liquor reform) and the Woman's Christian

¹¹ 'Non-Party Women to Change Name', *Advertiser*, 31 May 1939, 8; 'New Name for W.N.P.A.', *Advertiser*, 21 July 1939, 10.

Temperance Union; the welfare of Aboriginal people; world peace; various pieces of new legislation to learn and understand to allow informed decisions; and issues surrounding gambling. This was a very broad agenda and encompassed some topics discussed during the early years of the organisation, but which had remained unresolved, had only yielded minor gains until that time, or remained works in progress.

Often these organisations did not work alone but joined with other groups to approach the government of the day to either lobby for legislative reforms, or to instigate other changes as the following shows. Some members of the WSG were also members of the Town Planning Association of Western Australia. Likewise, in South Australia some WNPA members were also members of the South Australian Town Planning Association.¹² The WSG members included Bessie Rischbieth and Ethel Joyner. They encouraged the establishment of parks and playgrounds for children which was in keeping with the objectives of the WSG.¹³ A Town Planning Association deputation approached the Western Australian Premier Sir James Mitchell in 1921 to introduce legislation that would provide for parks and playgrounds but this was not successful at that time.¹⁴

As well, the WSG worked together with the Cottesloe Silver Chain nursing branch in Western Australia, to ensure the establishment and opening in April 1926 of the Cottesloe Infant Health Centre. Such Centres gave advice to mothers on nutrition and hygiene for the care of their babies in the hope infant mortality rates would decline. Elsie Jones, a Truby King trained nurse from New Zealand was appointed to the new centre. Funding of £100 per annum was contributed by the government in addition to one-off amounts: £25 from the Cottesloe Municipal Council, and £20 each from the WSG and the Silver Chain Nursing League.¹⁵ Earlier in 1923 the establishment of Infant Health Centres was discussed by the

¹² For further information regarding South Australia refer to Christine Garnaut and Kerrie Round, "Pedlars of new ideas': promoting town planning in South Australia 1914-24', in Robert Freestone (ed.), *Cities, Citizens and Environmental Reform: Histories of Australian Town Planning Associations*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2009, 120-147. In South Australia the organisation was known as the South Australian Town Planning and Housing Association.

¹³ Jenny Gregory, "Let our watchword be "order" and our beacon "beauty": achieving town planning legislation in Western Australia", in Robert Freestone (ed.), *Cities, Citizens and Environmental Reform: Histories of Australian Town Planning Associations*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2009, 191, 192, 197, 200.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 199,

¹⁵ 'Infant Health. Opening of Cottesloe Centre', *West Australian*, 30 April 1926, 7. Truby King was a New Zealand medical practitioner with an interest in infant welfare and nutrition who initially established the Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children, later known as the Plunket Society. This society aimed to 'promote breast feeding, train nurses in maternal and infant welfare and educate parents in domestic hygiene'. See Barbara Brookes, 'King, Frederic Truby', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2k8/king-frederic-truby> viewed 27 April 2021.

Children's Protection Society, an organisation that was formed in 1906 in Western Australia to ensure the safety of children.¹⁶ These centres were often opened in partnership with other organisations and partially funded by the government.¹⁷ The WSG's Olive Evans (see Figure 7.3) was a strong advocate for the setting up of these centres.¹⁸ In this instance the WSG worked with another organisation to ensure the success of the establishment of the Cottesloe Infant Health Centre. However, not every topic or issue attracting WSG engagement was as easily resolved as the following illustrates.



Figure 7.3: Mrs W H Evans (nee Olive Earle).
(*Daily News*, 30 May 1935, 1).

Aboriginal welfare was an on-going issue which the WSG was unable to resolve. It was a protracted process for these organisations in dealing with issues that affected Aboriginal people, in particular Aboriginal women, and children. In her 1964 history of the WSG Bessie Rischbieth stated that concerns had been raised regarding Aboriginal people since the organisation's inception, especially of those who lived in the North West of Western Australia. She added that there was an increasing 'half-caste problem ... springing up in our country, and we seemed powerless to prevent it'.¹⁹ These concerns were based on fears of miscegenation leading some to believe the organisation was more concerned about

¹⁶ 'The Children's Protection Society', *West Australian*, 21 July 1906, 5.

¹⁷ Jean Chetkovich and Deborah Gare, *A Chain of Care: A History of the Silver Chain Nursing Association 1905-2005*, University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, 2005, 51. Other Health Centres had been opened in 1923 at Leederville, North Perth, Fremantle and Kalgoorlie.

¹⁸ 'Infant Health Association', *West Australian*, 24 April 1923, 9. The Silver Chain Nursing League or Association commenced in the early 1900s following on from a children's club run by the *Western Mail*. Refer to 'Infant Health Association', *West Australian*, 24 April 1923, 9; Silver Chain, <https://www.silverchain.org.au/about-us/our-history/> viewed 27 April 2021.

¹⁹ Bessie M Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women: A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal Citizenship*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964, 47.

upholding the White Australia policy rather than the welfare of Aboriginal women and children. In the early years, the North West of the state was very remote with limited access to white people. However, with the establishment of large cattle stations and later the mining industry, white settlers increasingly encountered Aboriginal people in this region of Western Australia. Rischbieth also referred to the work of Daisy Bates who she claimed was made an honorary member of the WSG. Early Annual Reports published in the press do not mention these concerns either.²⁰ WSG historian Dianne Davidson cast doubts on Rischbieth's claim that the organisation had always taken Aboriginal people into account.²¹ However, according to local press accounts, in 1913 Daisy Bates gave a presentation on Aboriginal people and their circumstances to the WSG, a year before she presented to the WNPA in Adelaide.²² Her speech was intended to gain support for her appointment as a Protector of Aborigines, which the WSG had approved. The Annual Reports thereafter do not appear to mention Aboriginal people or their issues.

Fiona Paisley argues that it was not until the 1920s and 1930s that women activists 'campaign[ed] to improve the status and conditions of Aboriginal people'.²³ Davidson adds that the WSG became involved with Aboriginal issues following the sexual assault of an Aboriginal woman at Nungarin.²⁴ This was perpetrated by two inebriated but well-known unnamed white men in December 1921; it was brought to the notice of the WSG, and later reported in the press in January 1922.²⁵ Nungarin did not have a police presence and the matter does not appear to have gone any further than this brief newspaper mention. It was a wheat-growing area with 'many reputable farmers', but also a 'floating population', the latter of which allegedly gave the district the reputation for 'drunkenness and disorderliness'.²⁶ Some locals were outraged about the event, believing that the incident reflected poorly on the town, and wondered if the situation would have been different if the victim had been a white woman. Local Aboriginal people threatened reprisal although they were described as 'very meek and mild', and it was doubted they would retaliate.²⁷ The Editor also asked: 'Has the poor unfortunate [A]boriginal woman no rights at all in the land which gave her birth?

²⁰ It is possible they were recorded in the early minutes of the WSG but these could not be located at the time of visiting the archival repository in Perth.

²¹ Dianne Davidson, *Women on the Warpath: Feminists of the First Wave*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1997, 139.

²² 'The Women's Service Guild. A Year's Work', *The West Australian*, 2 May 1913, 8.

²³ Fiona Paisley, *Loving Protection? Australian Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Rights, 1919-1939*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2000, 1.

²⁴ Davidson, *Women on the Warpath*, 139-164. Also refer to Chapter Eight, 'Quest for 'An Honorable Policy': The Australian Aborigines'.

²⁵ 'Drink and Devilry', *Sunday Times*, 15 January 1922, 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

With everything else taken from her, cannot she even claim her virtue as sacred against the brutish white ravisher?'.²⁸ The Editor appears to have had some insight into the plight of Aboriginal women. While authorities were eventually notified, little else is known about this case. However, some residents' reactions show that, while sympathising with the Aboriginal girl's plight, there was a division in the district between white and Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people throughout Australia suffered discrimination and marginalisation by white people, their lives often seen as valueless compared to that of a white person. Residents, therefore, may have been more concerned with their town and how it was viewed by the public rather than the victim's well-being.

Davidson claims that at first, the organisation was more concerned about the seriousness of the actual crime, but over the next twenty years the WSG broadened their interest in Aboriginal welfare to include questions surrounding the 'legal and political status of Aborigines and their right to citizenship'.²⁹ Paisley claimed that during the interwar years women's organisations such as the AFWV, WSG and the WNPA did important work towards reforming Aboriginal policy so that Aboriginal women could have more control over their lives.³⁰ In 1931, the WSG requested the government set aside 'more adequate reserves' for Aboriginal people.³¹ In August 1933, the Country Women's Association in Western Australia urged 'steps be taken to provide community settlements for the [A]borigines of the state' indicating their concerns.³² In September 1933, following pressure from various groups including the WSG, the Western Australian government agreed to a Royal Commission into the treatment of Aboriginal people, particularly those living in the North West of the state. The following month, the WSG together with other organisations including the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association, requested the appointment of a woman on the Royal Commission. They stated that one of the key issues that could be addressed was 'the half-caste problem', believing that the solution rested with Aboriginal women. They added that appointing a white woman to the Commission would resolve this issue by acting as the Aboriginal women's

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁹ Davidson, *Women on the Warpath*, 140.

³⁰ Paisley, *Loving Protection?*, 3-6.

³¹ 'Guild Activities', *Dawn*, 21 January 1931, 11.

³² 'Country Women's Association', *Sunday Times*, 20 August 1933, 6.

representative.³³ However, in February 1934 it was announced there was to be one Commissioner, Henry Doyle Moseley, a Perth magistrate.³⁴

Among those women who gave evidence at the Commission were Bessie Rischbieth representing the AFWV, and Mary Montgomerie Bennett for the WSG. Part of Bennett's testimony was published in the daily press. English born Bennett was a teacher and an advocate for Aboriginal rights and had lived and worked with some of the Aboriginal people.³⁵ It was reported in the local press that she 'gave sensational evidence' about the 'deplorable condition of the natives' which she added was due to the 'wholesale prostitution of native women, through-out the North'. The 'starvation by dispossession' and squatter condoning of conditions worsened the situation.³⁶ Bennett also claimed that only one 'half-caste' child had been recognised by its squatter father, with the rest ignored, although the total number of these children was not given. These mixed descent children were at risk of being taken from their mothers who could have otherwise provided them a home within their cultural setting, the mother instead 'deemed an offender', and the white father 'fined £1 for cohabiting with native women'.³⁷ Bennett stated that the legislation in place to protect Aboriginal women had failed – 'in practice the [A]borigines were wholly at the disposal of the settlers and the police'.³⁸ Rischbieth urged the government to allow mixed descent children to remain with their parents, adding 'the system ... should be improved in order that they might keep their children'.³⁹ As early as 1910 Rischbieth had warned of the inadvisability of separating children from their mothers to place them in government run institutions, although at that time she was referring to white children, but this indicates her awareness of the detrimental effects this practice caused. However, evidence from women representing the various organisations including the WSG, the AFWV and the Woman's Christian

³³ 'Commission on Aborigines', *West Australian*, 4 October 1933, 16. Other organisations were the National Council of Women, Labour Women's Organisation, Women's Justice Association, the United Aborigines' Mission and the Australian Aborigines' Amelioration Association. Refer also to 'Helping Black Sister', *Mirror*, 7 October 1933, 7.

³⁴ G C Bolton, 'Moseley, Henry Doyle (1884-1956)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/moseley-henry-doyle-11183> viewed 9 May 2021.

³⁵ G C Bolton and H J Gibbney, 'Bennett, Mary Montgomerie (1881-1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bennett-mary-montgomerie-5212> viewed 9 May 2021. Also refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Mary Montgomerie Bennett.

³⁶ 'Traffic in Gins is Grave Problem', *Daily News*, 19 March 1934, 1. Also refer to G C Bolton and H J Gibbney, 'Bennett, Mary Montgomerie (1881-1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bennett-mary-montgomerie-5212> viewed 9 May 2021.

³⁷ 'Traffic in Gins is Grave Problem', *Daily News*, 19 March 1934, 1.

³⁸ 'The Aborigines', *West Australian*, 20 March 1934, 7.

³⁹ Bessie Rischbieth cited in Paisley, *Loving Protection?*, 123.

Temperance Union, 'was almost completely excised from the final report'.⁴⁰ Nor was the evidence from some Aboriginal women included.

Therefore, claimed Anna Haebich, the 'overall impact' of the women's evidence on government policy was marginal. Moseley and the government accepted the advice of the Aboriginal administrator Auber Octavius Neville, ignoring facts provided by the women's organisations and Aboriginal people, resulting in a white dominated paternalistic outcome.⁴¹ Moseley's report was published in 1935.⁴² At the WSG's Annual Conference congratulations were extended to the Commissioner for the 'fine report', but they called upon the government to 'introduce legislation in accordance with the recommendations of the report'.⁴³ However, in June 1935, the WSG sent a deputation to Acting Prime Minister, Dr Earle Page, requesting the 'establishment of a Federal Department of Native Affairs', because of their increasing concerns surrounding the numbers of 'half-caste' Aboriginal children.⁴⁴ Page responded indicating it would be difficult given each state wanted to care for their own Aboriginal population.

In July 1936, the WSG's Annual Report reported the organisation had again urged the government to act on some of the recommendations of the Moseley Report, despite the government's tardiness or hesitation due to fiscal constraints.⁴⁵ In September 1936, Olive Evans wrote to the Editor of the *West Australian* highlighting that the:

organisation for many years, through meetings, letters to Ministers and Government departments, deputations and pamphlets, ... [had] drawn attention to the dire need for a drastic change in policy' regarding the plight of Aboriginal people.⁴⁶

Evans's letter emphasised the long-term importance to improve Aboriginal people's living conditions, health and welfare. Almost two years later in 1938, the Western Australian branch of the Australian Aborigines' Amelioration Association convened a meeting to discuss and protest for the disallowance of proposed regulations to the *Aboriginal*

⁴⁰ Paisley, *Loving Protection?*, 119; Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2000, 339.

⁴¹ Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*, 339. Refer also to Anna Haebich and R H W Reece, 'Neville, Auber Octavius (1875-1954)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/neville-auber-octavius-7821> viewed 9 May 2021.

⁴² Refer to 1935 *Western Australia Report of the Royal Commissioner Appointed to Investigate, Report, and Advise upon matters in relation to the Condition and Treatment of Aborigines*, Government Printer, Perth, 1935
https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/digitised_collections/remove/93309.pdf viewed 9 May 2021.

⁴³ 'Service Guild Conference', *West Australian*, 31 May 1935, 7.

⁴⁴ 'Native Problem', *West Australian*, 27 June 1935, 19.

⁴⁵ 'Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia (Incorporated)', *Dawn*, 22 July 1936, 3.

⁴⁶ 'Care of Natives', *West Australian*, 19 September 1936, 23.

Administration Act.⁴⁷ The matter of the new regulations had been widely reported in the press and raised the ire of many people including some members of Parliament and extended beyond the State borders. Both the WSG and the WNPA were concerned about the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women and the subsequent removal of their mixed descent children. In South Australia, the WNPA reported they had sent a letter to the Minister of Native Affairs in Perth to express their opposition to the adoption of the new regulations. As a result, the protest by these organisations went towards the disallowance of the new regulations.⁴⁸ Other organisations represented at the meeting included the National Council of Women and the Housewives' Association.⁴⁹ The Australian Aborigines' Amelioration Association stated: 'There was a general feeling that the Act as it stood placed too much power in the hands of one individual – the Chief Protector (Mr. A. O. Neville) ...'.⁵⁰ Henry Reynolds added the changes would have given the Chief Protector of Aborigines additional power and control over part-Aboriginal children. As it was, the 1936 legislative changes had given him 'almost complete control', and his title was changed to the Commissioner of Native Affairs.⁵¹ Neville's callous attitude was that 'half-caste' girls were put to work in domestic service. He stated:

these children grow up as whites, knowing nothing of their own environment. Our policy is to send them out into the white community, and if a girl comes back pregnant, our rule is to keep her for two years. The child is then taken away from the mother, and sometimes never sees her again. At the expiration of the period of two years, the mother goes back into service, so it really does not matter if she has half a dozen children.⁵²

Ostensibly protectionist policies, the many acts dealing with Aboriginal people were more about power and white dominance over Aboriginal women and children, especially those of mixed descent, rather than altruistic concerns. In April 1939 it was reported the WSG had written to the Minister for the Interior, John McEwen, requesting the appointment of 'women protectors of [A]borigines, and the appointment of trained women police at Darwin' to improve the care of Aboriginal women and children.⁵³ This reflects the ongoing issue of

⁴⁷ 'Control of Natives', *West Australian*, 10 August 1938, 14.

⁴⁸ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1939.

⁴⁹ 'Control of Natives. The New Regulations', *West Australian*, 10 August 1938, 14. The Western Australian organisations who met at a meeting arranged by the Australian Aborigines' Amelioration Association to protest against these regulations included the WSG, the National Council of Women, the Housewives' Association, the Presbyterian Church, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Labour Women's Organisation.

⁵⁰ 'Aborigines of W.A. Need For a Board. Protector's Excessive Powers', *The Ladder*, October 1936, 1.

⁵¹ Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain?*, Viking, Melbourne, 2001, 152.

⁵² A O Neville, cited in *The Ladder*, June 1938, 3.

⁵³ 'What Are Women's Organisations Doing?', *Dawn*, 19 April 1939, 3. John McEwen was Minister for the Interior in Joseph Lyon's United Australia Party-Country Party coalition from 29 November 1937 to 26 April 1939. For further information refer to 'Prime Ministers of Australia. John McEwen', National

Aboriginal welfare that was without resolution. However, concerns about the welfare of Aboriginal people were not the only issue the WSG pursued.

As early as September 1910, WSG member Mrs Stanway-Tapp presented a paper to the organisation on 'Prison Reform' in Western Australia. She suggested the separation of women prisoners at Fremantle Gaol dependent on the severity of their crime and sentence; as well as a recommendation that men do their own laundry and not rely on women prisoners.⁵⁴ Stanway-Tapp further suggested initiating a system of educating women such as teaching them knitting and straw plaiting that could be used once they were released back into the community where these skills would be useful.⁵⁵ In October 1914, the WSG formed a sub-committee to monitor women's prisons as well as the Old Women's Homes.⁵⁶ In May 1924 the WSG had advocated 'farm colonies' for 'good conduct prisoners'; the aim was learning farming practices to allow employment for prisoners following their release.⁵⁷ By June 1924 the WSG reported that:

Ever since the Women's Service Guilds were formed 15 years ago we have consistently taken an interest in Prison Reform, and were responsible for many of the improvements which have since taken place at Fremantle Prison. One of our members, Mrs. Farrelly, was instrumental last year in getting whole wheatmeal bread added to the dietry [sic] of the prisoners.... Scientific methods of Prison Reform are steadily supplanting the old regime, and we are hoping soon to see Farm Colonies started for the good conduct of prisoners.⁵⁸

However, the matter of prison reform continued to be discussed at their Annual Conferences. In March 1926, an address by the President of the WSG, Mrs Amelia Macdonald mentioned 'drastic reform' was necessary.⁵⁹ She added that while the changes at the Fremantle Prison were pleasing, the entire penal system needed overhauling. Once again, the WSG pressed for a 'prison farm where social outcasts might gain a chance to become worthwhile citizens in learning practical farming' in preparation for life outside prison.⁶⁰ Amelia Macdonald also referred to Canada's first female Member of Parliament, Agnes C MacPhail and her thoughts on Canadian prison reform. According to MacPhail, prisoners needed to work and be paid a decent wage out of which their expenses were

Museum of Australia, <https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/features/prime-ministers/john-mcewen> viewed 15 May 2021.

⁵⁴ 'Conference of Women. Questions of National Import.', *Western Mail*, 17 September 1910, 44.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁶ 'Women's Guild Of Perth', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 October 1914, 7.

⁵⁷ 'Women's Service Guild' *West Australian*, 27 May 1924, 8.

⁵⁸ 'Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia', *Dawn*, 14 June 1924, 6.

⁵⁹ For brief biographical details of Amelia Macdonald, refer to Appendix 1.

⁶⁰ 'Women's Service Guild' [sic], *West Australian*, 5 March 1926, 6.

deducted. She added that the prisoner's family also suffers while they are in prison.⁶¹ There needed to be a system that guided the prisoner once released. Macdonald emphasised there was also a need for a prison psychologist.⁶² This demonstrates how influential and important some transnational connections were.

In December 1933, State President May Vallance led representatives of the various Guilds to the Old Women's Home and the Fremantle Gaol, an annual occurrence. At the Old Women's Home, the youngest inmate was a five-month-old baby whose mother was incarcerated there. The Guild decided to 'urge upon the Government the necessity for a suitable home for such girls and young women, one removed from the influence of the city', adding the baby had a 'wistful sadness in the expression'.⁶³ It is not clear why the young woman and her baby were in the Old Women's Home but in 1902 it was reported there was a lying-in section, this may have continued in 1933. The Home was also for 'delinquent girls'.⁶⁴ In 1933 the WSG joined a deputation to the Minister of Child Welfare urging new facilities. At the prison there were only seven women but more than 200 men. According to Olive Hancock of the Swanbourne Guild the women's wing of the prison had 'a very still and bleak air', otherwise the WSG was pleased with the state of the prison that included a 'sparkling kitchen' serving 'steaming hot and very good' soup.⁶⁵ The topic of prison reforms was an ongoing issue for the WSG extending beyond 1939. Small gains were made but more needed to be achieved.

The 1930s also witnessed debates surrounding the benefits of the Federal Government introducing Child Endowment in all Australian states and territories. The WSG in Western Australia and other women's organisations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, expressed support for the introduction of Child Endowment. The history of the implementation of Child Endowment also indicates it was a lengthy process. A Royal Commission lasting eighteen months, was appointed in September 1927 to determine if

⁶¹ 'Prison Reform. Advocated by Canadian Woman Member', *Dawn*, 14 August 1925, 7. Dated 19 March 1925. Also refer to the following speech given by Agnes MacPhail in the House of Commons in Ontario, Ottawa. The Agnes MacPhail Digital Collection, House of Commons Debates, 6 February 1928, 225, <https://images.ourontario.ca/Macphail/24971/image/59190> viewed 16 May 2021.

⁶² 'Women's Service Guild' [sic], *West Australian*, 5 March 1926, 6.

⁶³ 'Annual Visits to Women's Home and Prison', *Dawn*, 20 December 1933, 8.

⁶⁴ 'The Old Women's Home', *Daily News*, 20 June 1902, 4; 'Delinquent Girls', *Dawn*, 23 August 1933, 8. The Old Women's Home may have originally been the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum which was closed in 1909 with the transfer of mentally ill patients to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The building was then used to house a women's home. Refer to 'Women's Home, Fremantle', Find&Connect, <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/wa/WE01151> viewed 3 November 2021 and 'Fremantle Asylum', State Records of Western Australia, <https://archive.sro.wa.gov.au/index.php/fremantle-asylum-au-wa-a660> viewed 3 November 2021.

⁶⁵ 'Annual Visits to Women's Home and Prison', *Dawn*, 20 December 1933, 8.

there was a case for the allocation of child endowment.⁶⁶ Its provisions attracted both proponents and opponents. These discussions built on an existing national system of maternity allowance. The following provides a brief history of welfare payments which covered the birth and care of children. As this was a federal issue, both the WSG and the WNPA in South Australia are mentioned in the following discussion.

The Federal *Maternity Allowance Act* received assent on 10 October 1912 and commenced on 1 November that year. The Bill had been introduced into Parliament by Labor Prime Minister Andrew Fisher. All white women, married or unmarried, received five pounds on the birth of their child irrespective of whether the child was born alive, died shortly after birth, or was stillborn.⁶⁷ The money was to assist with medical expenses, and at that time was the equivalent of two weeks wages. Aboriginal women, those of Asian descent and Pacific Islanders were excluded, a reflection of the White Australia Policy.⁶⁸ According to Thomas Kewley, this legislation related to the 1910 report of Commonwealth Statistician George Knibbs to Parliament on European schemes.⁶⁹ However, not everyone was in support of this payment. Dr Richard Arthur (mentioned in Chapter Five as an early proponent for the establishment of the CWA in New South Wales), was a vocal opponent, as was the South Australian branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Their opposition, according to Marilyn Lake, was premised by a fear it would 'condone immorality, lead to an increase in illegitimacy, undermine marriage and destroy the family'.⁷⁰ Clare Ozich noted however, that the WSG in Western Australia supported the measure.⁷¹ Lake argued that the allowance was the result of women attaining 'political power' following their suffrage in 1902, the year

⁶⁶ NAA: 'Monthly Notes', May 1929, A460 F5/32, 4 November 1927 to 4 August 1939. For additional information on Child Endowment refer to Parliament of Australia, 'Social Security Payments for People Caring for Children, 1912-2009: a chronology – tables 2-4', https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/0809/childrenpartb viewed 19 December 2018.

⁶⁷ Clare Ozich, "'The Great Bond of Motherhood': Maternal Citizenship and Perth Feminists in the 1920s', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 1999, Vol. 19, 127; Marilyn Lake, 'State Socialism for Australian Mothers: Andrew Fisher's Radical Maternalism in its International and Local Contexts', *Labour History*, No. 102, May 2012, 60.

⁶⁸ 'The Maternity Allowance. Act Assented To. To Operate From November 1', *West Australian*, 11 October 1912, 7; *Maternity Act 1912*; Marilyn Lake, 'State Socialism for Australian Mothers: Andrew Fisher's Radical Maternalism in its International and Local Contexts', *Labour History*, No. 102, May 2012, 61.

⁶⁹ Thomas Henry Kewley, *Social Security in Australia 1900-72*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1973, 99. Kewley refers to George Handley Knibbs and the following publication. Commonwealth Statistician, *Social Insurance: Report by the Commonwealth Statistician, G. H. Knibbs to the Honorable F. G. Tudor*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1910.

⁷⁰ Lake, 'State Socialism for Australian Mothers: Andrew Fisher's Radical Maternalism in its International and Local Contexts', 57.

⁷¹ Ozich, "'The Great Bond of Motherhood': Maternal Citizenship and Perth Feminists in the 1920s', 127.

of granting women the vote federally.⁷² With an impending federal election in May 1913 this was an important move by Fisher to ensure he garnered women's votes.⁷³ He failed to win the election but the Maternity Allowance was instituted. Its supporters referred to it as an acknowledgement of women's important role as mothers providing the nation with children for the future; others believed it was charity which should be ended or limited to impoverished women only.⁷⁴

In 1927 the Royal Commission into Child Endowment 'did not recommend a federal scheme', as a system had already been introduced by Premier Jack Lang in New South Wales that year, but this was unavailable elsewhere in Australia.⁷⁵ The provision of child endowment solely in New South Wales, and not in the other states, was described as 'an anomalous situation' which needed rectifying.⁷⁶ Brian Dickey noted that the Royal Commission needed to determine whether the New South Wales scheme could be linked with 'wage fixation' and made national.⁷⁷ New South Wales imposed limitations on their child endowment – the allowance was payable to dependent children under fourteen years of age with a family income of less than the 'living wage' (basic wage).⁷⁸ The Basic Wage was described as the 'the lowest wage which can be paid to an unskilled labourer on the basis of "the normal needs of an average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilized community"'.⁷⁹ The basic weekly wage varied according to the state in which the person lived. The Royal Commission faced a major issue in assessing the basic wage in each state and then linking this with an allowance scheme. On 20 April 1927, the WSG agreed:

⁷² Lake, 'State Socialism for Australian Mothers: Andrew Fisher's Radical Maternalism in its International and Local Contexts', 55.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁷⁴ Ozich, "'The Great Bond of Motherhood': Maternal Citizenship and Perth Feminists in the 1920s', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 135-136. Refer also to 'Conference of Women', *Western Mail*, 17 September 1910, 44. Stanway-Tap suggested that any mother could claim endowment adding that 'there should be no such thing as charity in the matter'.

⁷⁵ Ozich, "'The Great Bond of Motherhood': Maternal Citizenship and Perth Feminists in the 1920s', 137; The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Report of the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances*, Parliamentary Paper No. 20, Government Printer, Canberra, 1929, 29.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, 'Child Endowment. Australian Commission on Child Endowment', *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1927, 93.

⁷⁷ Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1980, 169.

⁷⁸ The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Report of the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances*, Parliamentary Paper No. 20, 1929, Government Printer, Canberra, 30.

⁷⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia, 1932*, Chapter XXVI. – Labour, Wages, and Prices, 787-788.

that endowment should be adequate, and that it should be paid to the mother, but it was not considered that dependents other than children need be endowed, as they would be provided for through other channels, such as the old-age and invalid pensions.⁸⁰

However, in June 1927, the Executive of the WNPA approached South Australia's Premier Richard Butler prior to a Premiers' Conference where child endowment was to be discussed, to inform him the Association supported an endowment scheme. They reported that Butler 'was frankly not in favour of Child Endowment but discussed the matter very courteously'.⁸¹ In August 1927, the Association held a debate into the benefits of Child Endowment. Members agreed that the cost of living was rising, and 'the burden of Mothers with large families [was] becoming more difficult'.⁸² At their Annual Conference in Perth in 1927, the WSG was determined to press for a Commonwealth Motherhood Endowment Scheme.⁸³ However, the Government took little notice of these organisations.

The WSG acknowledged that there were other individual schemes besides the New South Wales Endowment Scheme. These were the Commonwealth Public Service Scheme, established in 1920, which paid five shillings per week for a dependent child under fourteen years of age provided the 'full income [did] not exceed £500, inclusive of allowances'.⁸⁴ From 1927 banks in New South Wales were 'required to pay to their officers allowances of £29 per annum for each child under fourteen, or under sixteen if still at school. Salary plus allowances must not exceed £750'. As well there was a Methodist Church Children's Fund 'for all children of Methodist Ministers'.⁸⁵ The amount varied from state to state. For example, in 1937 in South Australia, each child was 'granted £12 per annum' until that child attained the age of seventeen.⁸⁶ Each of these schemes appeared quite generous. The WSG suggested a 'Contributory Child Endowment Scheme' with contributions from the employer, the employee, and the Government. This, they reported, would provide for 'a nation of well-cared for and A1 children', that is children they considered the very best, presumably white, healthy, and intelligent.⁸⁷

In 1931 the Federal Government proposed lowering the Maternity Allowance from five pounds to four pounds in order to save money.⁸⁸ This was part of Prime Minister Scullin's

⁸⁰ LWVSA, 20 April 1927, *General Minutes*, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

⁸¹ LWVSA, 15 June 1927, *General Minutes*, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

⁸² LWVSA, 3 August 1927, *General Minutes*, SRG116/1/1, SLSA.

⁸³ 'Women's Viewpoints. Social Service Conference', *Register*, 28 September 1927, 14.

⁸⁴ 'Family Endowment', *Dawn*, 19 July 1939, 4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁶ 'Family Endowment', *Dawn*, 19 July 1939, 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁸ LWVSA, 12 August 1931, *Committee Minutes*, SRG116/2/1, SLSA.

plans to reduce overall expenditure owing to the Great Depression. Writing to Prime Minister Lyons in 1933, Mrs George Woodbury of Inverell, New South Wales asked if the child endowment scheme was going to be ceased. She feared the abolition of child endowment stating:

I know from my own experience with my own family what am I going to do my Husband earns very little he is a fruit & vegetable Hawker people has not the money to spend you cannot get work what he earns only partly feeds them & the endowment does the rest towards them feeding & clothings them. [Lack of punctuation as in the original].⁸⁹

Mrs Woodbury valued Child Endowment because it increased the amount of money coming into the family. As working-class people, this allowance enabled the Woodbury's to survive the difficult 1930s when her husband was unable to earn enough to provide for the family due to the prevailing economic conditions.

In July 1939, the WSG paper the *Dawn* noted that they had worked for years on the question of 'family endowment' bearing in mind this was separate to the maternity allowance. They added they had:

sent on to the government various resolutions on the matter ... but apart from the fact that these resolutions "have been noted", nothing else has transpired to make family endowment an accomplished fact.⁹⁰

In addition, in 1939 in South Australia the WNPA reported they had approached the government to provide Maternity Allowance, Old Age and Invalid Pensions to the 'civilised [A]borigines' but this was unsuccessful.⁹¹ It would not be until July 1941 that a national scheme of Child Endowment was finally introduced by the Federal Government in Australia under Prime Minister Robert Menzies which included some, but not all, Aboriginal children.⁹² South Australia's situation was not dissimilar to that of the WSG. They too were concerned about child endowment because it was a national problem. The implementation of a Child Endowment system exemplified the lengthy and often difficult process that feminist organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA went through to achieve legislative change. The WNPA, like their Western Australian counterparts, was challenged not only by

⁸⁹ NAA, Letter from Mrs George Woodbury 9 May 1933, 'Personal Papers of Prime Minister Lyons', CP30/3, 89.

⁹⁰ 'Family Endowment', *Dawn*, 19 July 1939, 4.

⁹¹ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1939.

⁹² Anonymous, 'Scientific Events. Child Endowment in Australia', *Science*, 19 December 1941, 579. Refer to the *Child Endowment Act 1941*, and the *Child Endowment Act 1942*. Aboriginal children, unless nomadic or dependent on the State or Commonwealth for their support, were eligible for child endowment. The 1942 Act amended this to include Aboriginal children in missions.

discontent within the organisation, but also its continued work towards legislative reforms that took many years to achieve if at all.

South Australia and the WNPA

In July 1939 in their Thirtieth Annual Report, the WNPA too alluded to discontent within the organisation about 'past methods of work'.⁹³ It was recommended that they rearrange their agenda and prioritise Parliamentary matters. As well, it was suggested 'the Association should concentrate on specific reforms and persistently follow them to fruition', this perhaps indicating disillusionment or frustration with the current rate of success. The President Leonora Polkinghorne opened the report by stating:

This year under review has been one of considerable unrest. International crises have followed one another with alarming frequency, and in this as in other countries such emphasis is being laid upon military preparations. Thus the attainment of the ideals for which the Association stands seems to become more difficult, whilst an ever increasing watchfulness is needed to prevent an encroachment upon liberties hitherto enjoyed.⁹⁴

Having survived the effects of the First World War and the Great Depression, the organisation was now faced with the likelihood of Australia becoming involved in international hostilities again, a daunting and frightening prospect. The report included various aspects the organisation had been working towards.

They too offered a series of lunchtime meetings in winter for women on a variety of topics to increase their knowledge base. These included 'Why do we send People to Prison?' and 'The Aboriginal Woman and her Future', the latter delivered by Mrs Phyllis Duguid whose husband Charles was a medical practitioner and an Aboriginal rights campaigner.⁹⁵ Other topics included Penal Reform and Juvenile Delinquency. The WNPA sought the appointment of a trained probation officer preferably female, but the government appointed someone from within 'its own departmental employees', indicating that despite its best efforts, the organisation came up against barriers.⁹⁶ Other topics included the Six O'Clock Closing Act to limit the sale of alcohol. The WNPA requested a referendum on this matter and approached all Members of Parliament without success. Then there were refugee women from Europe who required assistance when they arrived, their immigration had been arranged via an

⁹³ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1939.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ W H Edwards, 'Duguid, Charles (1884-1986)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duguid-charles-12440> viewed 19 April 2021. Charles Duguid was a Scottish born medical practitioner, social reformer and an Aboriginal rights campaigner, president of the Aboriginal Protection League in 1935, he proposed the establishment of the Ernabella Mission for Aboriginal people. He married his second wife Phyllis Evelyn Lade in 1930 in Adelaide.

⁹⁶ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1939.

association of university women graduates. Mrs Polkinghorne reported that 'though the application went in some time ago the consent of the Federal Government is still awaited'.⁹⁷ It is unknown if the government was able to assist, but these revelations show the organisation had been far from idle.

Convenors of several WNPA committees including the Aboriginal Welfare Committee presented their reports at their annual meetings. Constance Ternent Cooke provided a lengthy report of the Aboriginal Welfare Committee. This included support for the expansion of the North West Aboriginal Reserve to the borders of Ernabella Mission which had opened in 1937. Leases for this area were due for renewal. The report did not indicate if this had been successful.⁹⁸ In addition, the WNPA also contributed parcels of clothing to the Aboriginal people of the Nepabunna Mission in the Northern Flinders Ranges north of Adelaide, an example of their service provision, as well as visited by Mrs Cooke.⁹⁹ The Nepabunna Mission had been founded by the United Aborigines Mission on land donated by the owner of the Balcoona Station, Roy Thomas, for the permanent settlement of those Aboriginal people who had been displaced from their traditional lands. In 1936 Frederick Eaton, in charge of the United Aborigines Mission, indicated the amount of land given, while a kind act by Mr Thomas, was too small and added 'the area was barren and there was not sufficient game to provide food'.¹⁰⁰ The Aborigines Friends Association was approached to consider lobbying the government for additional land. However, in 1938 Eaton reported there were 156 Aboriginal people living at the mission, and it was 'not the barren waste that is sometimes imagined', reflecting a change in his previous assessment, although it is possible additional land had been obtained. He added that a school had been commenced with a nurse who was also the teacher, and that he and his wife were working on the Mission. But he also appealed to the generosity of the 'people of Australia' to provide help.¹⁰¹ By August 1939 it was reported good conditions at the settlement allowed them to make fifteen pounds

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Ernabella Mission was opened after Dr Charles Duguid approached the government to provide an area for the settlement of the Pitjantjatjara people without interference or encroachment by white people. Refer to 'Aboriginal missions in South Australia: Ernabella', https://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions/Ernabella viewed 21 April 2021.

⁹⁹ Refer to 'Aboriginal missions in South Australia: Nepabunna', https://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions/Nepabunna viewed 21 April 2021. Nepabunna Mission allowed for the permanent settlement of the . people.

¹⁰⁰ 'Plight of Nepabunna Natives: Larger Area Sought', *Advertiser*, 7 November 1936, 29.

¹⁰¹ 'Aboriginal Mission Activities. Progress at Nepabunna', *Advertiser*, 12 May 1938, 12.

of goat's butter per week. The planting of a small experimental orchard was also noted, a venture that appeared to be doing well at the time of the report.¹⁰²

Concerns raised by the Committee about the Aboriginal community were not limited to South Australia but included the other states and the Northern Territory. For example, at Christmas several members contributed money towards the Daintree Mission in Queensland. Little is known about this Mission, but it was possibly gazetted as 'an Aboriginal reserve on the Daintree River' in 1926 and may have been known as the Daintree Native Mission which was reportedly managed by women. It appears to have been separate to the mission established later in 1941 by the Assemblies of God and also known as the Daintree River Mission.¹⁰³ As well, the Committee was concerned about the violation by the 'crews of pearling luggers' of Indigenous people living on the Aboriginal Reserves in the Northern Territory; the establishment of an Aboriginal Reserve on Melville Island in Queensland, and concerns about the aforementioned proposed regulations that affected Aboriginal people in Western Australia. Aside from issues regarding Aboriginal welfare in South Australia, the other States, and the Northern Territory, the WNPA's objectives and progress were not unlike the WSG and included a broad array of issues. For example, concerns for individuals under the age of twenty-one exemplify an important WNPA focus.

During January 1930 in South Australia concerns were raised about the employment of young Adelaide girls to work at the mica fields at White Hart Range in the Macdonnell Ranges approximately 190 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs, Northern Territory. It was here the girls aged from sixteen to nineteen were to work in rough bough huts to cut mica; they lived in tents separate to British, Australian, and Aboriginal men. But the camp was without the presence of any women whatsoever other than the owner's twenty-three-year-old daughter as chaperone.¹⁰⁴ This situation came to the notice of the WNPA and other organisations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. An early WNPA objective was to protect boys and girls under the age of twenty-one from perverted and cruel people. The owner of the mica works had a business in Adelaide which he was closing and had planned to move together with the girls and his daughter to the production site to reduce costs. He informed those investigating the matter that their parents or mothers had signed over their guardianship to him, and the girls had already been in his employ for up to two

¹⁰² 'Butter from Goats' Milk', *Transcontinental*, 25 August 1939, 6; 'Work of United Aborigines Mission', *Advertiser*, 26 January 1940, 26.

¹⁰³ 'Daintree News', *Cairns Post*, 21 October 1939, 14; 'Daintree Mission. Opening Ceremony', *Cairns Post*, 5 August 1941, 3; *Queensland Government Gazette*, 16 October 1926, 1590.

¹⁰⁴ 'Central Aust. Mica Fields', *Barrier Miner*, 20 January 1930, 1.

years. However, the WNPA thought 'it was not in the interests of the girls to take them from Adelaide to Central Australia for employment'.¹⁰⁵ One parent was concerned if her daughter did not go to the mica fields, she would be out of work. Her daughter added that she was the only one working, with her money needed to pay the rent.¹⁰⁶ South Australia, as the rest of Australia, was experiencing the effects of the Great Depression and high unemployment. The business owner finally agreed not to take the girls, but it is not known how they or their families fared after they lost their jobs. This was an example of a successful campaign by the WNPA, but it is unknown if they offered the girls any assistance during this period of unemployment and financial difficulty. Similarly, the WNPA took an interest in the case of a fourteen-year-old pregnant girl.

In September 1938, the WNPA expressed concerns about a fourteen-year-old country girl whose doctor requested permission to terminate her pregnancy because it was the result of incest. If allowed, this would have saved the girl from the backyard abortionist if she chose not to continue her pregnancy. State Cabinet declined the request, the Premier added that 'it is felt that an amendment along the lines that have been mentioned would open the door to the unlimited practice of abortion'.¹⁰⁷ The South Australian branch of the British Medical Association would not support the request – this may have influenced the government's response. The law at that time allowed abortions to be performed if the life of the mother was in peril, or the child would not survive labour.¹⁰⁸ Mrs Polkinghorne called a meeting of the WNPA to discuss the case and supported the change of legislation to allow the termination of pregnancy in situations of rape or incest.

Earlier, the press had reported on an English case, acknowledging that increasing numbers of women were performing their own abortions, and 'a great many more that have been assisted are successful, so that we never hear of them'.¹⁰⁹ Gynaecologist Dr Aleck Bourne was acquitted at the Old Bailey in London of performing an abortion in June 1938 at St Mary's Hospital, he believed 'his action was justified as being within the law'.¹¹⁰ In this case, a fourteen year old girl had been raped by five officers of the Royal Horse Guards and subsequently became pregnant. The trial was viewed as a landmark test case. Dr Bourne

¹⁰⁵ 'Transfer of Girls to Mica Fields', *News*, 21 January 1930, 7; 'To Prepare Mineral in Bough Huts 130 miles from Alice Springs', *Register News-Pictorial*, 21 January 1930, 3.

¹⁰⁶ 'Five Girls to Go to Mica Fields in Central Australia', *Register News-Pictorial*, 21 January 1930, 3. See also 'Young Girls for Central Australian Mica Fields', *Observer*, 25 January 1930, 37 which includes a photograph and names of the girls.

¹⁰⁷ 'Case for An Operation', *Chronicle*, 8 September 1938, 47.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰⁹ 'Reluctant Motherhood', *Chronicle*, 8 September 1938, 53.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

admitted that in 1935 he had previously performed an illegal abortion on a fifteen-year-old once he became aware of the circumstances of her pregnancy.¹¹¹ This time he decided to ensure the authorities were notified so he could challenge the 1861 Act in Britain that ruled abortion was not legal unless 'therapeutic', with the term therapeutic contestable and needing clarification. In July he wrote: 'I did not bring the case forward as an attempt to alter the law by direct action, but to obtain a further definition of the present law'.¹¹² He believed the young girl was at great risk psychologically and physically if she was allowed to go to full-term with her pregnancy.¹¹³ There were calls for the law to be amended but this did not happen until many years later. The case became a precedent for cases in Australia, but not in time for the fourteen-year-old South Australian country girl. It is unknown what became of her or her pregnancy. It is also surprising that the British Medical Association branch in South Australia refused to condone an abortion given the recent nature and reporting of the Bourne case in their journal. It was perhaps surprising the WNPA decided to take a stand on the matter. But the girl's age and well-being were probably their primary concern, as well as the fact that she was sexually abused within the family where she should have been safe.

Like the WSG, the WNPA also focussed on other matters such as the well-being of women in gaol during the 1930s.¹¹⁴ It was not the first time women in prisons were on the WNPA agenda. In January 1929 former WNPA president, Lucy Spence Morice, expressed disappointment that very little had been done to improve women's gaols. She stated: 'Women as voters have shown scarcely the slightest interest in their unfortunate fellow-creatures; they seem serenely unconscious that there is a need for reform'.¹¹⁵ Ten years later in June 1939, WNPA member Mrs Elizabeth Georgina Soutar, reported on conditions for women at the Adelaide Gaol.¹¹⁶ She suggested female prisoners should be allowed to 'have their meals together', 'be permitted to converse' during meal times, and be 'given a better balanced diet'.¹¹⁷ Their diet consisted of a large meal at midday of '1 lb. of meat and 1 lb. of potatoes and vegetables and possibly some boiled rice. For breakfast and at night they had bread and tea only'.¹¹⁸ She also added that these women should be provided

¹¹¹ "Acted on Motives of Purest Charity", *Central Queensland Herald*, 21 July 1938, 26.

¹¹² 'Correspondence. Rex v. Bourne', *Lancet*, 30 July 1938, Vol. 232, 280.

¹¹³ 'Medico-Legal. Charge of Procuring Abortion', *British Medical Journal*, 9 July 1938, 97; 'Medico-Legal. Charge of Procuring Abortion', *British Medical Journal*, 23 July 1938, 199; 'The King versus Aleck Bourne', *Medical Journal of Australia*, 17 August 2009, Vol. 191, No. 4, 230-231.

¹¹⁴ LWVSA, 26 May 1939, *General Minutes*, SRG116/1/1, SLISA.

¹¹⁵ 'Prison Reform. Responsibility of Women Voters. Interview with Mrs. J. P. Morice', *Observer*, 19 Jan 1929, 61.

¹¹⁶ For brief biographical details of Elizabeth Georgina Gray refer to Appendix 1.

¹¹⁷ 'Big Movement to Improve Conditions for Women in Adelaide Gaol', *News*, 27 June 1939, 1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

'recreational facilities'.¹¹⁹ According to Mrs Soutar, men fared much better at Yatala prison than women at the Adelaide Gaol. The WNPA supported improvements for women in gaol adding they would approach the Government to review these conditions. Once again, this was a work in progress that extended beyond 1939. There were other issues the organisation pursued including the maintenance of women and children following the breakdown of marriages.

The following examples are from South Australia and demonstrate the difficulties women had in the courts, particularly in cases of domestic abuse. In July 1920, the press reported on a cruelty case in the Adelaide Police Court, that of Percival Crabb, a young man charged with having assaulted his wife Winifred Martha Crabb.¹²⁰ They had one child. Crabb was serving six months in gaol for a previous assault – in February 1920 it was alleged he assaulted his mother-in-law.¹²¹ The court was informed Crabb frequently deserted his wife, failed to provide maintenance, and had threatened to kill her. Crabb appealed to the judge stating he would reform. He asked for another chance, adding he promised 'never to assault my wife again', but then stated he was not totally to blame. Crabb's exhortations that he would not re-offend were not uncommon as Elizabeth Nelson's research shows.¹²² His pleas were rejected. The prosecuting lawyer reminded the court that they had heard all of this before from the defendant. The case was tried under the *Married Women's Protection Act 1896*, and Winifred Crabb was awarded one pound ten shillings weekly. However, Crabb said: 'I will take it out in gaol. It will do me'.¹²³ Enforcement would have been difficult as Crabb was prepared to remain in gaol which meant his wife and child were not given the financial support they were due. Crabb was not a returned serviceman which was often

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁰ South Australia Police Department (SAPD), *Deserting Wives, Families, Etc.*, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 16 October 1918, 333; SAPD, *'Deserting Wives, Families, Etc.'*, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 14 May 1919, 144; SAPD, *'Apprehensions During the Week'*, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 25 February 1920, 72; *Warrants Issued for the Following*, SAPD, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 23 June 1920, 225; *'Warrants Issued for the Following'*, South Australia Police Department, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 30 June 1920, 232; *'Apprehensions During the Week'*, SAPD, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 30 June 1920, 236; *'Apprehensions During the Week'*, SAPD, *South Australian Police Gazette*, Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide, 1862-1947, 1 September 1920, 301.

¹²¹ 'Police Court', *Daily Herald*, 19 February 1920, 3.

¹²² Elizabeth Nelson, *Homefront Hostilities: The First World War and Domestic Violence*, Australian Scholarly, Melbourne, 2014, 3-4.

¹²³ "'Give Me Two Years." An Angry Prisoner. Unusual Cruelty Case', *Journal*, 2 July 1920, 1.

given as a reason for the behaviour. Nelson's research in Victoria showed that domestic violence was present in the civilian community well before World War One. She added that:

violent husbands tended to regard their wives as personal servants who needed to be strictly controlled against outside influences. Men's possessiveness, paranoid suspicion of their wives' infidelity, and dissatisfaction with what they perceived to be their wives' disobedience, were common triggers for beatings and assault.¹²⁴

Crabb found a letter addressed to his wife at their house allegedly from another man 'couched in endearing terms' and suggesting they meet later. Reportedly Crabb said: 'He considered that having evidence of her unfaithfulness he had ample justification for the assault'.¹²⁵ This implies his wife was a chattel he owned, and she had to obey her husband. Nelson's research concluded the war did increase incidences of abuse, and that judges and juries afforded servicemen some leniency in sentencing because of their service to the nation, upholding the masculinist view of the hero, giving them licence to use their 'male aggression'.¹²⁶ This view pervaded the general community irrespective of whether these men were returned servicemen.

Later, in July 1924 maintenance was sought by Ada Moyle for herself and her two youngest children, girls aged sixteen and eight. Ada and her husband Ernest had been married twenty-six years and had a total of seven living children. Nelson's research showed working women were more likely to apply for divorce rather than maintenance, whereas the woman left at home with several children and not working were more apt to do otherwise.¹²⁷ Ada had left her husband several months previously because of his drunkenness and arguments. Physical abuse had not been mentioned, and it is unknown whether this occurred. Nelson notes there was a correlation between the drinking habits of men and the abuse of their wives.¹²⁸ Moyle was charged under the *Married Women's Protection Act*. One of the Moyle's elder married daughters, Vida Cosgrove stated she hated her father for his cruelty to her mother. She added 'He wouldn't give mother sixpence to buy a packet of leaves for her asthma', apparently a common treatment to relieve breathlessness.¹²⁹ The defendant's lawyer, Mr Joseph William Nelligan, reported Moyle was willing to take his wife back. The

¹²⁴ Nelson, *Homefront Hostilities*, 176.

¹²⁵ 'Domestic Troubles', *Daily Herald*, 26 June 1920, 5.

¹²⁶ Nelson, *Homefront Hostilities*, 176.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, xxii.

¹²⁹ 'Maintenance Sought. Information Dismissed', *News*, 7 July 1924, 10; 'Prosecutions for Maintenance', *Register*, 8 July 1924, 10.

case was subsequently dismissed, and so was a request for maintenance for the youngest child who was born in 1916.

In October 1924, Ada Moyle again tried for maintenance pleading for 'money for my little girl'. She had requested ten shillings a week for the youngest child. Ada was living with her daughter Vida by this time. Under cross-examination by Mr Nelligan, Ada refused to continue in the witness box and left, stating "I won't trouble about the case; I'm too ill to stand these questions". Nelligan asked for the case to be dismissed and this was granted. He added: 'It is high time there was a Married Man's Protection Act. A wife can bring her husband here on any pretext, and he is put to the expense every time of defending himself'.¹³⁰ Nelligan was a young lawyer, born in 1900 at Port Wakefield. He had studied law at the University of Adelaide, and in December 1921 was admitted to the bar.¹³¹ At the time of Ada's first appearance in court, Nelligan would have been almost half her age.¹³² He was arrogant, talented, and smart, but his remark about the Married Man's Protection Act would have failed to impress any women. Again, in June 1926 Ada brought her husband to court for his failure to provide her with an 'adequate means of support'. Once again, Nelligan defended him, and once again the claim was dismissed as Moyle had continued to offer a home for his wife. Nelligan again commented: 'It was an unfortunate circumstance that under the existing provisions of the Destitute Persons Act there was nothing to prevent the wife from dragging her husband to court again'.¹³³ Finally, in December 1926, Ada's case against her husband ended. This time the case was dismissed because Ada, at the age of forty-seven, had died suddenly the previous Sunday. According to a press report, this was the sixth occasion she had taken her husband to court to obtain maintenance – none had succeeded.¹³⁴

These two cases highlighted the difficulties faced by some women in their attempts to obtain maintenance and support despite the supposedly protective *Married Women's Protection Act 1896*. Nelson argued that women had remained subordinate to their husbands but were viewed by the courts in a more favourable way if they were not assertive. Ada's consistent

¹³⁰ 'Woman Abandons Case. Objection to Questions', *Barrier Miner*, 2 October 1924, 3; 'Objects to Questions. Woman Abandons Case', *News*, 1 October 1924, 1.

¹³¹ Anonymous, 'Joseph William Nelligan, LL.B', *Who's Who in Australia 1921 to 1922*, The Associated Publishing Service, Adelaide, 1923, 100.

¹³² On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>. Ada was born in January 1879.

¹³³ 'A Husband's Offer Refused', *Advertiser*, 23 June 1926, 7.

¹³⁴ 'In the Courts. Death Intervenes', *Observer*, 11 December 1926, 43; On-line Database Births, Deaths and Marriages, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society (SAGHS), <http://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>.

refusal to accept her husband's offer of a home, which meant living with him again and tolerating drunkenness and verbal abuse, was unacceptable – the court did not look favourably on her. Instead, she was marked as a troublesome woman rather than one who had 'borne her trials quietly'.¹³⁵ Moyle failed to provide financial support and there was no guarantee that he would do so if she moved back to the marital home. It appears his money was spent on alcohol with little if any left for Ada and the younger children. Ada also attempted to use the *Destitute Persons Act* as an avenue for obtaining justice, but that too failed. Like Crabb, Ernest Moyle was not a returned serviceman.

Yet, facing a lawyer such as Nelligan, Ada could not obtain the resolution she needed to maintain herself and her eight-year-old daughter. It is unknown how she managed to live without funds to provide for herself and her daughter. She was in ill-health which probably prevented her doing paid work. As she was living with her married daughter, and had other married children, they may have contributed money towards her care and that of their youngest sibling. After Ada's sudden death the youngest child went to live with her married older sisters rather than stay with her father. In Winifred Crabb's case, she did obtain a positive result in her court dealings, but her husband's failure to honour the order to pay for her maintenance still left her without any means of support. It is unknown what happened to Winifred.

It was for women like Winifred Crabb and Ada Moyle that the WNPA sought legislative reforms to improve their lives. Perhaps if Child Endowment had been introduced in the 1920s with direct payment to mothers, women such Winifred Crabb and Ada Moyle could have avoided resorting to court action for maintenance from their husbands. On 16 December 1926 the *Maintenance Act 1926* was assented and commenced on 7 April 1927. The Act was:

*An Act to consolidate the law relating to State Children, Destitute Persons, the Summary Protection of Married Women and other matters, and to make Provision for granting Assistance to Mothers for the Maintenance of their Children, and for other purposes.*¹³⁶

This Act replaced several acts including the *Married Women's Protection Act 1896*. But this was too late for both women.

¹³⁵ Nelson, *Homefront Hostilities*, 30.

¹³⁶ Find&Connect, 'Maintenance Act 1926 (1927-1972)', <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/sa/SE00267> viewed 4 October 2018.

The WNPA had taken an active part in lobbying for changes to the Maintenance Bill. However, they did not approve of a proposed amalgamation of the Destitute Board with the State Children's Council but were pleased when the new body combined from the two boards consisted of 'an equal number of men and women'.¹³⁷ Brian Dickey referred to the State Children's Council as 'a social fossil of an earlier generation's vision of state social welfare' that needed to be updated.¹³⁸ The new Act provided for updated measures. These two case studies also show how protracted it was to obtain legislative reforms for women and children in distress and need. In the following, the issue of married women and their nationality is briefly discussed. This too was a nation-wide issue and had been discussed by the WSG, the WNPA and the CWA organisations.

The WSG, the WNPA, and the Western Australian and South Australian CWA organisations, became involved in the campaign to reinstate the nationality of married women. This also had transnational proportions with women in the United Kingdom urging their contacts worldwide to lobby their governments for change. The Nationality of Women campaign had its origins in England led by the 1933 Nationality of Married Women Pass the Bill Committee.¹³⁹ Principally, British-born women who had married foreigners and became widowed or divorced were no longer able to resume their British nationality. The British *Naturalisation Act, 1870*, had ensured a British woman became an alien on marrying a foreigner. Conversely, men who married foreign women retained their nationality as British subjects indicating inequality between the sexes. Of Australian women, Harriet Mercer stated that:

From 1920 until the middle of the twentieth century, if a woman from the Commonwealth of Australia married a foreign 'alien' she was automatically stripped of her nationality and not even guaranteed to gain that of her husband. Cast as an alien or as a stateless person, she lost the rights attached to her nationality including political, employment and social welfare rights.¹⁴⁰

As Australia was part of the British Empire, there were legal implications enforcing the citizenship rule. In August 1932, the Burra CWA reported the matter had been discussed at a meeting of the National Council of Women in Adelaide, and that it was likely to be further

¹³⁷ WNPA, *Annual Report*, The Association, Adelaide, 1927.

¹³⁸ Brian Dickey, *Rations, Residences, Resources: A History of Social Welfare in South Australia since 1836*, Wakefield Press, 1986, 173.

¹³⁹ 'Suffragettes in the Public Eye', *Daily News*, 22 June 1933, 5. The Committee consisted of five MPs, five Justices of the Peace and five men.

¹⁴⁰ Mercer, 'Citizens of empire and nation: Australian women's quest for independent nationality rights 1910s-1930s', 213.

discussed at a forthcoming conference in Ottawa, Canada. It was resolved that the women's own nationality ought to be retained.¹⁴¹

In 1936 the WSG also resolved to:

re-affirm their adherence to the principle that husband and wife should each enjoy independently their own personal nationality; that a woman whether married or unmarried should have the same right as a man to retain or to change her nationality and that in every respect there should be equality of the sexes.¹⁴²

The following example highlighted the problems for these women who lost their nationality on their marriage to a foreigner. Muriel Michalos (nee Potter) had been born in Adelaide in 1906 to Australian born parents. She was married twice to South Australian born men and divorced both. However, in April 1938 in Melbourne, Muriel Topham as she was by then known, married for a third time. Her new husband was Constantine Michalos, a chemist born in Greece in 1902. As he was Greek, and not a naturalised Australian, Muriel lost her rights to vote in elections and other benefits she may have held as a British subject. She was now viewed as a Greek citizen, although it is unknown if Greece recognised her as one of their citizens. It would not be until the 1940s when Constantine Michalos applied for and was granted naturalisation as an Australian that Muriel regained her citizenship. This is shown in the 'Declaration of Acquisition of British Nationality' certificate dated 22 March 1943 (see Figure 7.4). Her husband had served in the Australian Army during World War Two, hence his application for naturalisation.

¹⁴¹ 'Country Women's Assoc.', *Burra Record*, 17 August 1932, 4.

¹⁴² 'Service Guilds Conference. National Questions Discussed', *West Australian*, 16 July 1936, 4.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
Nationality Act 1920-1936.

42/1/1206
Form B.

DECLARATION OF ACQUISITION OF BRITISH NATIONALITY.

I, ⁽¹⁾ *Muriel May Michalos.*
 full address, of ⁽²⁾ *92, Abbotsford Street, West Melbourne, Vic*
 being the wife of ⁽³⁾ *Constantine Michael Moraites MICHALOS*
 to whom Certificate of Naturalization (No. *A(1)6752*) was granted on or
 about ⁽⁴⁾ *8th July, 1942* hereby declare
 that I desire to acquire British nationality.

(Declarant's Signature) *M. M. Michalos.*
 Made and subscribed at *Melbourne,*
 this *22nd* day of *March* 19*43*
 before me—
 (Signed) *[Signature]*
 (Title) *Justice of Peace*

Notary, Police, Magistrate, Commissioner of the Peace.

Certified that this is a true copy of the declaration.
 Registered in the Department of the Interior, Canberra, A.C.T., in Register
 No. *12*, page *3847*, this *first*
 day of *April*, 19*43*.
[Signature]
 By authority of the Minister for the Interior.

Figure 7.4: Declaration of Acquisition of British Nationality, Muriel Michalos (Courtesy of Mike Ericson).

Until the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* was enacted on 26 January 1949, Australians were classed as British subjects and bound by British laws.¹⁴³ According to Helen Irvine, a legal expert, there was opposition in Parliament from 'non-Labor parties, including the Liberal party' when the Bill was introduced by Arthur Calwell, then Minister for Information and Immigration.¹⁴⁴ The 1948 Act did make provision for women who had married foreigners (aliens) provided they were a British subject prior to the Act's enforcement.¹⁴⁵ But it had been another protracted campaign for the WNPA and the WSG, together with other organisations including the CWA branches and the National Council of Women until this was achieved.

Western Australia and the CWA

In Western Australia, the CWA was active during the Depression years assisting people in need. John Gabbedy cited the case of Frederick Couldridge, a group settler of Group 5 near Manjimup, and his family of nine children.¹⁴⁶ In 1934 Couldridge had requested financial, medical, and general assistance to be allowed to stay on his property. He was given

¹⁴³ Helen Irving, 'Citizenship and Subject-Hood in Twentieth-Century Australia', in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, Pierre Boyer, Linda Cardinal and David Headon, (eds), University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 2004, 9; Mercer, 'Citizens of empire and nations: Australian women's quest for independent nationality rights 1910s-1930s', 214.

¹⁴⁴ Irving, 'Citizenship and Subject-Hood in Twentieth-Century Australia', 12.

¹⁴⁵ *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*.

¹⁴⁶ J P Gabbedy, *Group Settlement (Part 2) – Its People: Their Life and Times – an Inside View*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1988, 519-521.

'clothing for 8 children and blankets', testimony to the tough conditions of farming on a settlement block in that area.¹⁴⁷ In 1936, attempts were made by the Agricultural Bank to evict them from their property. It was reported that Couldridge was 'an avowed Communist, a troublesome settler and an indifferent provider'.¹⁴⁸ He was a former British soldier and later a railway porter who had emigrated to Western Australia with his wife Lilian and three children in April 1924.¹⁴⁹ He ignored the eviction notices that were continually being served. In May 1936, together with some supporters, Couldridge repelled physical efforts to remove his family and their belongings from the property.¹⁵⁰ In July 1936, a meeting of women was held at Manjimup, it included representatives from the CWA, the WSG, the Women's Immigration Auxiliary and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The meeting had been called to 'show representatives of Perth's women's organisations the conditions under which the wives and children of group settlers were carrying on'.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, one woman indicated the CWA had initially not wanted to become involved 'because the matter was a political one'.¹⁵² Mrs Couldridge believed her husband's political views were the reason for his eviction, not the fact that he was two months behind in his interest payments. Other settlers referred to the difficult conditions on the settlement blocks. Mrs Kjellgren of the Middlesex CWA branch, when confronted with the possibility of having to go onto sustenance said: 'We women will not go on sustenance. What an outlook for the future mothers of Australia to live in tents along the roads like blacks!' for which she was applauded.¹⁵³ Mrs A Burt, CWA President suggested women submit their details so that 'a more complete knowledge of the conditions' was known, and they could subsequently assist in some way. The WSG indicated they were willing to assist the women 'to save them from as many of the hardships as possible'.¹⁵⁴ Gabbedy though, claimed the CWA was the only organisation that helped the Couldridge family, adding they were 'interested only in the welfare of the children'.¹⁵⁵ This suggests the CWA was distancing themselves from the political aspect of the case, something in accordance with their alleged non-political stance. In 1946, Frederick and Lilian Couldridge were listed as owning some land at Victoria Park, Perth indicating they had remained in Western Australia, and had not, like some British settlers, returned to England.¹⁵⁶ The case of the Couldridge family reveals an example of

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 519.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 519.

¹⁴⁹ UK and Ireland, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960, London, April 1924 per Ancestry.com.au.

¹⁵⁰ Gabbedy, *Group Settlement (Part 2)*, 520.

¹⁵¹ 'Aggrieved Settlers', *West Australian*, 29 July 1936, 14.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵⁵ Gabbedy, *Group Settlement (Part 2)*, 521.

¹⁵⁶ Perth, Western Australia, Australia, Rate Book, 1880-1946 per Ancestry.com.au.

several organisations, including the CWA and the WSG, working together to assist a family in need. Although it is difficult, in the light of Gabbedy's claims, to know how much assistance these organisations gave them. In South Australia, the Great Depression's effects, and that of the drought, created a situation where people in country areas were in desperate need of assistance. The CWA branch took it upon themselves to provide some assistance.

South Australia and the CWA

In November 1930, the South Australian *Register* newspaper appealed for the donations of toys 'for country children, who would otherwise have "no Christmas"'.¹⁵⁷ The newspaper asked the Metropolitan branch of the CWA to become involved. Mrs Dorothy Dolling, President of the Metropolitan Branch of the South Australian CWA, requested the 'names of country children in necessitous circumstances' so that they could receive toys.¹⁵⁸ This was testament to the ways in which the CWA was able to assist in the distribution of goods for families. While this fund closed on Christmas Eve 1930, the CWA's work was not finished as a greater relief effort was to follow with the implementation of the Outback Relief Fund.

In April 1931, Dorothy Dolling approached Frederick Dumas, editor of the *Advertiser*, a daily newspaper, asking for assistance to set up a 'subscription list for country relief'.¹⁵⁹ The Far West Coast, Murray Mallee and parts of the north of the state were identified as severely affected to the point where local assistance was no longer possible. Fears were held for the health and well-being of some people, particularly children during the approaching winter season which could be bitterly cold. There was some urgency to ensure these people could be assisted during the impending winter months. Dolling wrote:

The Country Women's Association of South Australia (metropolitan branch) has appealed to "The Advertiser" to bring before the public the severe distress among many outback families, particularly in districts where long-continued droughts have brought about almost universal suffering.

Cut off from neighbourly help, beyond the administration of clothing relief committees, settlers and laborers, with their wives and families, have been reduced to a state of want which can only with difficulty be imagined by city people.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ 'Toy Fund. Register's Appeal to Fill Empty Xmas Stockings', *Register News-Pictorial*, 15 November 1930, 3; 'The Register Toy Fund', *Register News-Pictorial*, 21 November 1930, 6.

¹⁵⁸ 'Register Christmas Toy Fund', *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, 28 November 1930, 10. Refer to Appendix 1 for brief biographical details of Dorothy Dolling.

¹⁵⁹ South Australian Country Women's Association, *Metropolitan Minutes October 1930-1938*, 8 April 1931, SACWA Archives, Kent Town; Heather Parker, *The First Fifty Years: Golden Jubilee History of the South Australian Country Women's Association*, South Australian Country Women's Association, Adelaide, 1979, 22.

¹⁶⁰ 'Call From Outback for Help', *Chronicle*, 30 April 1931, 41.

Perhaps the success of the Toy Fund provided the impetus, and the knowledge necessary to organise an Outback Relief Fund. Because of their widespread number of branches throughout the State, the CWA was able to provide aid. Dolling suggested the procurement of a room in the city where second-hand clothing could be received and sorted for the relief work. In addition to clothing, money was also received. In 1931 at Port Augusta, it was reported forty-nine and a half tonnes of relief goods were distributed by the CWA.¹⁶¹ In May 1931, the South Australian CWA reported that the 'Government has arranged free railway freight for goods consigned to the outback by the committee'.¹⁶² Likewise, the Adelaide Steamship Company provided free freight for parcels dispatched by vessels to various South Australian ports. In August 1931, journalist Elizabeth George published details of the response to the winter appeal: 'Closing weeks of fund: Aim to raise £1500 and the clothing of 500 families. Achieved: over £2300 and clothing for 1300 families'.¹⁶³ From these figures, it is clear that the Outback Relief campaign surpassed initial expectations, and that the numbers who received help far exceeded the original calculations.

The scheme also provides a clear example of voluntary action by the CWA in response to the needs of distressed outback communities in South Australia. The CWA received and distributed parcels of clothing via their many branches, and used money raised to buy boots and other necessities for these people. In August 1933, as State Honorary Treasurer, Dolling emphasised that the objectives of the organisation were to:

improve the welfare and conditions of life of country women and children. We help country women to help themselves. Above all, we are not a charity. We look upon our branches as women's clubs, and our rest rooms as club rooms¹⁶⁴

The Toy Fund and Outback Relief were just two of the ways in which the CWA helped country women and children, co-ordinated by the Metropolitan branch with the aid of their state-wide and scattered branches. By offering practical assistance and with increasing press exposure, the CWA came to the notice of many South Australians although they declared they were not a charity. Therefore, what was charity? Were they not collecting donations of goods and distributing them to the needy? A charity is often considered as an organisation that was set up specifically to assist those in need, as well as voluntarily offering their services and the distribution of goods. The CWA did take on a charitable role in

¹⁶¹ Robert J Anderson, *Solid Town: The History of Port Augusta*, R J Anderson, Port Augusta, 1988, 173.

¹⁶² 'Outback Relief. Appeal Touches Hearts Throughout State. All Helping', *Advertiser and Register*, 5 May 1931, 7.

¹⁶³ Elizabeth George, 'City to Country. Gossip of the Week', *Chronicle*, 13 August 1931, 73.

¹⁶⁴ 'Country Women. Aims of Association. Officers Coming to Peninsula', *Port Lincoln Times*, 4 August 1933, 1.

assisting rural people during the Depression and drought. But they believed they were assisting women to help themselves.¹⁶⁵ Dorothy Dolling's assertion in 1933 that the organisation was not a charity was not entirely accurate and was similar to their long-standing non-political catchcry. It was likely this sentiment was aimed at preserving the dignity of those who received their charitable assistance. The CWA recognised a need and responded by providing a charitable service.

The WSG and WNPA were unable to match the CWA's practical assistance. Instead, they continued to focus on policy reforms that were not a 'quick-fix' solution for people in need. Rischbieth, of the WSG, did note they had performed some service work during the First World War particularly with the Red Cross and Camp Comforts Committees. She added that though necessary, they were 'in a sense of minor importance'.¹⁶⁶ However, with their large and scattered membership, in the late 1930s the CWA was in an ideal position to assist with the distribution of forms for the newly formed Women's National Voluntary Register. They were not the only organisation to do so, as the following shows.

Tensions in Europe were increasing by the end of the 1930s. In 1938, Ivy Brookes, the daughter of former Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, returned from Europe and Britain, where she had experienced such tensions firsthand.¹⁶⁷ She has been remembered as the founder of the Women's National Voluntary Register (WNVR) in Australia. Brookes recognised a need for a National register, similar to that in Britain, to record the names of women and the skills they could offer in times of emergency should Australia become involved in another war.¹⁶⁸ In February 1939, Brookes organised a deputation to the Minister of Defence, Geoffrey Street. Subsequently the register was developed, but it was made clear by the government that women would only be used for more domestic type activities and as voluntary workers.¹⁶⁹ In spite of this, the register was an initiative by women, a significant factor at the time.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ John Mohan and Beth Breeze, *The Logic of Charity: Great Expectations in Hard Times*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016, 3, 8; 'Northern Women Organise. Country Women's Association Has New Branch', *Recorder*, 4 April 1937, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Bessie M Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women: A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal Citizenship*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1964, 22.

¹⁶⁷ For more detail about Ivy Brookes, see Alison Patrick, 'Brookes, Ivy (1883-1970)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/brookes-ivy-5640> viewed 20 May 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Civilian Volunteers in War*, Ohio Publications, Ravenswood, 2002, 104-105.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁷⁰ Melanie Oppenheimer, *Volunteers in Action: Voluntary Work in Australia 1939-1945*, PhD Thesis, Macquarie University, 1993, 161.

Individual State Councils were set-up to organise the register with many women's organisations represented including South Australia's CWA. The South Australian Council of the Women's Voluntary National Register was inaugurated 'for the purposes of propaganda and registration of women for voluntary service'.¹⁷¹ Among members of the Executive Committee was Dorothy Dolling of the South Australian CWA. Seven classes were defined in which to register women. These were for the 'provision of comforts for combatants'; management of 'hostels, rest homes, reading rooms and coffee stalls'; arrangement of entertainment for troops; organisation of volunteer drivers for transport; 'Air Raid Precautions' which ensured women were trained in first aid and offered their service as ambulance drivers; security measures; and 'qualifications enabling them to replace a male worker called up for general service'.¹⁷² Disappointment followed as many women expected to be trained in the use of rifles and other war time activities.

The CWA's Quarterly Report mentioned: 'The Commonwealth Government has asked for a register of all women as a gauge of the woman power of Australia in the time of emergency'.¹⁷³ It was left to CWA Branch Secretaries to distribute and collect the forms, then return all to their main CWA branch where they be were to be forwarded to the State Council. But the formation and maintenance of the Register was probably more about appeasing these women rather than considered as offering a serious and important contribution in times of an emergency such as war.¹⁷⁴

During the 1938 crisis, the Register recorded information about the women and their qualifications. This was then submitted to the Government to be held in case these were required at a critical time. This was not confined to South Australia but was Australia wide. Members of women's organisations in each state were encouraged to register. But importantly, non-members were also given an opportunity to register.¹⁷⁵ In South Australia, eleven stands or booths, manned by representatives of various women's organisations including the CWA, were set up in the city to attract registrants.¹⁷⁶ These places included the Adelaide Town Hall, the Adelaide Railway Station as well as department stores such as

¹⁷¹ NAA, South Australian Council, Women's Voluntary National Register. General Matters from 1939-June 1943, A663 O130/4/120; NAA, A1608 C27/1/4. Letter dated 7 September 1942.

¹⁷² 'War Tasks for Women. Voluntary Register Proposal', *Weekly Times*, 11 Mar 1939, 3; 'Women's National Service Register', *News*, 28 March 1939, 8.

¹⁷³ SACWA Historical Documents, Quarterly Report March 1939.

¹⁷⁴ Oppenheimer, *Volunteers in Action: Voluntary Work in Australia 1939-1945*, 161-162.

¹⁷⁵ 'Plans For Women's Voluntary Register', *Advertiser*, 28 March 1939, 7.

¹⁷⁶ 'Enthusiasm for Register', *Advertiser*, 5 May 1939, 28.

Myers, Birks and Cravens, the latter where the South Australian CWA headquarters was located.

By May 1939, it was reported there had been a pleasing response to the 'drive for the Women's Voluntary National Register'.¹⁷⁷ At the executive committee meeting it was decided to expand the drive to the country areas. While not specifically mentioning the CWA, here was an opportunity for them to take on the role of the distribution and collection of forms in country regions because of their numerous and widespread country branches.

Similar canvassing took place in Western Australia at the same time. Perth's Lady Mayoress Miss Sylvia Harper wrote: 'I desire to stress the fact that the whole of this organisation is voluntary and is a call to Australia's womanhood to signify its willingness to serve in a national emergency'.¹⁷⁸ It is however unknown whether the CWA in Western Australia was as involved as their South Australian counterparts.

Phebe Naomi Watson was appointed Secretary of the South Australian Council for Women's Voluntary National Register.¹⁷⁹ She had trained as a teacher and was involved with various organisations including holding various positions with the National Council of Women in South Australia from 1925 to 1937.¹⁸⁰ In June 1939 Watson wrote to the Minister of Defence complaining that the voluntary registration results were 'disappointing'. She added:

There is a good deal of confusion as to what the registration involves, and, in spite of the Committee's efforts to clarify the position, and having used all possible means to arouse interest, we are still not getting adequate response.¹⁸¹

This included 'working through women's organisations and municipal bodies in metropolitan, suburban and country areas'.¹⁸² It is clear from this letter that the CWA was but one organisation approached. However, their Annual Report for 1939 suggests that they had more success than Miss Watson indicated when it was stated:

Almost 1,000 members signed the forms of the Women's National Voluntary Register, indicating what they could do in time of an emergency. This is a remarkably good record,

¹⁷⁷ 'Keen Interest in Women's Register, *Advertiser*, 2 May 1939, 19.

¹⁷⁸ 'Women's Voluntary Register', *West Australian*, 31 May 1939, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Refer to Appendix 1.

¹⁸⁰ National Archives of Australia (NAA), A663 O130/4/120 South Australian Council, Women's Voluntary National Register. General Matters from 1939-June 1943; Alec H Chisholm (ed.), *Who's Who in Australia*, The Herald Press, Melbourne, 1947, 852.

¹⁸¹ NAA, Watson to the Minister of Defence 26 June 1939, A663 O130/4/120 South Australian Council, Women's Voluntary National Register. General Matters from 1939-June 1943.

¹⁸² NAA, Watson to the Minister of Defence 26 June 1939, A663 O130/4/120 South Australian Council, Women's Voluntary National Register. General Matters from 1939-June 1943.

as the number represents almost one-third of the total number of South Australian women who registered.¹⁸³

The WNVR continued well into the early 1940s. However, the CWA was involved in other voluntary emergency related activities during this period. For example, a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) was formed by the Metropolitan branch in December 1938.¹⁸⁴ Women between the ages of twenty-one and forty and who were trained in first aid and home nursing were able to join.¹⁸⁵ Forty-six members indicated their willingness to do so.¹⁸⁶

The declaration of war in September 1939 brought with it new anxieties. In Western Australia, Bessie Rischbieth lamented: 'It is indeed difficult with any real sincerity to give the greeting, "Happy New Year." 1940 is not going to be a happy year for many millions of people.'¹⁸⁷ The WSG and the WNPA remained in existence until almost the turn of the century when they disbanded.¹⁸⁸ CWA organisations currently remain in existence throughout Australia and are experiencing a resurgence in interest.¹⁸⁹ However, it is doubtful they could match the degree of branch formation or the extent of voluntary service they performed during the 1930s to assist people during the Great Depression.

Conclusion

It becomes clear that legislative reforms for the WSG and the WNPA were long and protracted, often difficult to achieve. Many took years to come into effect, and some efforts continued beyond 1939. Many never came to fruition. This appears to have led to some despondency amongst members of these organisations, particularly during the Great Depression when many people were suffering from the effects of unemployment. As well, these organisations became concerned with the welfare of Aboriginal people.

It also becomes clear that the CWA organisations in Western Australia and South Australia were principally focussed on offering services and distributing goods to needy families, particularly during the 1930s. They fulfilled a need that other organisations or the

¹⁸³ SACWA Annual Report 1939.

¹⁸⁴ 'Metropolitan Branch to Form V.A.D. Detachment', *Rural News*, 16 December 1938, 5.

¹⁸⁵ 'Metropolitan Branch to Form V.A.D. Detachment', *Rural News*, 16 December 1938, 5.

¹⁸⁶ 'Metropolitan Branch to Form V.A.D. Detachment', *Rural News*, 16 December 1938, 5.

¹⁸⁷ *Dawn*, 17 January 1940, Vol. 22, No. 7, 1.

¹⁸⁸ LWVSA, SRG116, SLSA; Cheryl Davenport, 25 June 1997, *Hansard. Government of Western Australia*,

[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hans35.nsf/\(ATT\)/7E404113FD4FE5F2482565FB000DDA7C/\\$file/C0626015.PDF](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hans35.nsf/(ATT)/7E404113FD4FE5F2482565FB000DDA7C/$file/C0626015.PDF) viewed 15 March 2020. The WNPA disbanded on 27 July 1979 and the WSG in 25 June 1997.

¹⁸⁹ South Australian Country Women's Association, <https://www.sacwa.org.au> viewed 28 February 2020; Country Women's Association of Western Australia, <https://www.cwaofwa.asn.au> viewed 28 February 2020.

Government were unable or unwilling to provide. It could be argued that the CWA organisations realised that lobbying for legislative reforms was a protracted exercise compared to providing physical aid, leaving the former to the WSG and the WNPA to pursue. While the WSG and the WNPA did provide some assistance, this was minor in comparison to their work for policy reform

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined four early twentieth-century women's organisations in Western Australia and South Australia. The period from 1909 to 1939 encompasses three important eras, that of post-suffrage, World War One, and the interwar years including the Great Depression. The Women's Service Guild (WSG) and the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA), having evolved from those nineteenth-century women's organisations discussed here to provide context, identified the importance of legislative and social change to bring about greater gender equality, hence their ongoing designation as feminists. On the other hand, both Western Australia and South Australia's Country Women's Association's (CWA), despite emphasis on their non-political assertions clearly deliberately adopted political strategies. The goals of the study were to compare and contrast the emergence and focus of the pre-World War One women's groups with those developing in the 1920s, in order to ascertain not only whether these latter groups were political, but also whether they were feminist.

This study makes an original contribution to knowledge because it is a departure from the usual eastern state focus and includes an examination the CWA in Western Australia and South Australia. It also extends the research of Martin Woods who briefly analysed an aspect of the South Australian CWA, and the earlier works of Jill Margaret Prior, Vivienne Szekeres and Marie Noble who examined different features of the WNPA for their Honours research. As well, this research has shown significant differences in the establishment of the WSG and the WNPA despite similar aims and objectives. Earlier feminist accounts highlighted the fact that women's efforts were often not remembered in the historical record prior to the 1980s. Women were viewed by many male historians as on the periphery of the histories of Australia with a focus instead on men and their achievements, particularly during the First World War. These historians had positioned women in the domestic sphere and as breeders to ensure adherence to the White Australia policy. Both Marilyn Lake's research and Susan Magarey's research countered claims that women in these organisations did little that was noteworthy. This thesis has demonstrated that these women and their organisations worked hard for their accomplishments and were far from idle.

The first chapter of this thesis presented historical context for the nineteenth century in Australia, as well as highlighting transnational influences from Britain and the USA. Evidence suggested continuities between the various organisations established during this period until

the formation of the 1909 women's groups, part of the focus of this thesis. Initially as members of mixed gender groups, women then realised the value of their own organisations where they could meet without the impact or interference of men. Some men were sympathetic, but many were not, attitudes suggesting male insecurities surrounding the changing roles of women. Despite female suffrage, politics were believed by many to be the sole domain of men, but women were beginning to show their political voice. The development of women-only organisations followed the achievement of women's suffrage in South Australia in 1894 and Western Australia in 1899.

Comparatively, Western Australia's geographical isolation, not only from South Australia but also the eastern states, created the setting for different modes of establishment of these organisations. South Australia's proximity to the eastern states, in particular Victoria, allowed for easier communication, and the ready exchange of information between Victoria's Vida Goldstein and her Women's Political Association which was the template for the WNPA. The WSG in Western Australia, on the other hand, arose from the Karrakatta Club, a reading group that had evolved from the smaller St George Reading Circle, neither of which were political organisations. The Karrakatta Club was inaugurated following a visit by American physician Dr Emily Brainerd Ryder. Her influence and encouragement demonstrated the immediate benefit of transnational links for the subsequent establishment of the WSG.

Throughout this thesis there have been continuing threads or themes that were important for the success and progression of these organisations. These themes included transnationalism, networking, and voluntary action. A further constant throughout the thesis was the objective for the representation of women which emanated from women who realised men could not represent women's needs. Ideas and experiences from international regions were conveyed via influential individuals such as vice-regal women and others who could travel, or through the daily press reporting on events going back as far as the 1850 Salem Conference in the USA. Vice-regal women shared information from the Imperial centre to these new women's groups, often from their own learned experiences or the knowledge they gained through the circles in which they moved. This study supports the research of Amanda Andrews and Melanie Oppenheimer who found vice-regal women did have significant roles of their own despite having previously been judged as mere adornments to their husbands. It was through Lady Rachel Forster and her links with the National Council of Women (NCW) that the CWA organisations in Western Australia and South Australia were formed. Noting how well the CWA had functioned in New South Wales, Lady Forster urged the formation of such organisations in Western Australia and South Australia. It was through her patronage of the NCW in New South Wales, previously having

belonged to the organisation in England, that she contacted the presidents of the NCW groups in both Western Australia and South Australia. These individuals have subsequently been credited with the drive to ensure the CWA organisations were instituted. The site of Western Australia's first CWA, Nungarin, was a newly settled location in the wheat belt area with significant challenges in clearing the land and farming. In South Australia, Burra was the site of the first CWA; settled in the 1850s due to copper mining, the district then changed to pastoral interests after the 1870s end of the mining industry. Already there was a subset of women in the district, wives of long-established pastoralists, who were influential and had been prominent in the wartime community events. Nungarin's women, on the other hand, were from a different social class, they included the midwife, the hotel keeper, farmers' wives, and university graduates. Some Nungarin women who joined the CWA became disheartened that the organisation was non-political.

The non-political status of the CWA organisation troubled those women who were keen to improve conditions for women and children living in rural areas by lobbying the authorities to achieve this aim. However, all women living in a community who took an interest in local, state, national or international affairs – many of whom were prepared to challenge the authorities – undertook lobbying, a form of political activism. There was value in becoming a member of a group as it gave women a stronger voice of protest, one that authorities noted particularly as women had the right to vote. Some politicians saw the advantage of wooing women voters to the ballot box. Woods suggested the label 'non-political' was a catch-all term for organisations created after World War One that were in fact conservatively political. In New South Wales, Ethel Page, wife of Earle Page Leader of the Country Party and later a Prime Minister, had believed the CWA was political. Historian Hilary Carey also suggested the organisation was conservatively political. Whether the CWA undertook those lobbying activities on their own or collaborated with other organisations, this did not change the fact that lobbying was a politically activist activity.

The earlier organisations such as the WSG and the WNPA were undeniably political. They did not hesitate to lobby authorities for social and legislative reforms for improvements in the lives of women and children. Their focus was urban women largely because of their inability to extend into the country areas, an outcome in part due to their limited membership numbers. The Western Australian WSG did form country circles to address a lack of rural membership, but these were associate groups. Therefore, the CWA groups filled the demand for organisations to represent country women so that they could be heard. However, it was the city based Metropolitan and State (known in South Australia as Executive) branches of the CWA which undertook decision-making, policy formation, and the

administration of the Western Australian and South Australia organisations, thus underlining the importance of the urban setting as it was for the WSG and the WNPA.

The objectives of all four organisations related to the well-being of women and children. Education was the key to the advancement of women socially and politically, whether it was linked to using the vote, local presentations to broaden members' knowledge base, or involvement with tertiary education. Knowledge allowed women to make more informed choices, and to refine their aims and objectives. All four organisations undertook to educate women through attendance and/or presentations at meetings, and their involvement in state, national, or international conferences.

As voluntary women's organisations, they used voluntary action, that is philanthropy and mutual aid, during their endeavours. The CWA organisations were principally philanthropic, that is they helped people with material offerings. This was a quick fix activity during times of urgent need such as the rise in unemployment, the Great Depression, or the drought that affected rural farmers and their families. It was for this reason that the CWA became well known. On the other hand, the WSG and the WNPA were principally focussed on legislative reforms that took much longer to achieve, if at all. The WSG and the WNPA were considered remnants of the suffrage campaigns and the Woman Movement. During the war years, they had to change their agendas to survive, adapt meeting schedules, and even offered some philanthropic aid, albeit as a minor undertaking in comparison to their legislative labours. Patriotic organisations that proliferated during the war posed a threat to the membership of these early organisations.

The formation of the CWA organisations emerged from the cessation of the patriotic groups that had seen many women engaged in voluntary war work. Following the First World War, the New Woman emerged. These women had greater independence than those before the war, new skills in managing organisations and public speaking, but this was tempered by the return of soldiers from the war front who were given hero status. Notable women took on positions in the new organisations such as the CWA founded during the interwar years. This was the era of the 'mass organisations', that is their membership numbers eclipsed those of the earlier groups; they were ostensibly non-political. During the 1920s and 1930s there was also an increased focus on Aboriginal women and children, yet it appears the South Australian CWA, unlike their Western Australian counterpart, did not take Aboriginal people into consideration during this period. This is an area worthy of further research.

The CWA organisations also had links with the WSG and the WNPA via the NCW. The NCW in Western Australia had been established by the WSG in 1911. In South Australia,

the NCW was originally commenced in 1902 by Catherine Helen Spence and re-formed in 1920. The WNPA planned to re-form the NCW in South Australia, but the war intervened. Thus, given the CWA was established by the NCW, the indirect links to both the WSG and the WNPA were clear.

The establishment and successful operation of these organisations were the result of women's social networking. Social capital was therefore critical in this process. This was clear when the WSG and the WNPA were formed. The description of contacting various women about a meeting to discuss the formation of the WNPA was apt because it was by word of mouth, or letter, that individuals came together to meet and listen to Vida Goldstein. In Western Australia, the Karrakatta Club consisted of influential women who were known to each other. Similarly, the CWA organisations, particularly in South Australia where the NCW president's connections with family and friends at Burra facilitated the success of the establishment of the CWA in 1926. These were women who knew each other and were able to expand their network by connecting with others. The roles of individual women were very important for the success of these organisations. Women like Catherine Helen Spence, Vida Goldstein, Mary Warnes and Elizabeth Bowman, and Bessie Rischbieth who all became well-known. There were, however, many more who have not been noted elsewhere but who did important work. Some, such as Amy Tomkinson, had political connections through their fathers, husbands or brothers.

However, as with any organisation, there were instances of conflict and antagonism between some members. These rivalries impacted on the subsequent development of these organisations, steering them in a direction that was perhaps different to one originally envisaged. Dr Violet Plummer was in dispute with WNPA members who objected to the mandatory military training of young lads, something that did not meet the organisation's goals yet one of their aims was the welfare of persons under the age of twenty-one. The conflict between Bessie Rischbieth and Edith Cowan and her supporters over the NCW's treatment of the WSG led to the disaffiliation of the WSG from the NCW. There was also a possible rift between Rischbieth and Jessie Street, a well-known activist in New South Wales, which reflected a national dimension of disagreement. Furthermore, Rischbieth refused to amalgamate the WSG with the WNPA and Vida Goldstein's Women's Political Party to form a federating body to ensure its admission into the League of Nations. This suggested rivalries between Rischbieth and Goldstein whose activism took on international proportions. Instead, Rischbieth opted to establish the Australian Federation of Women Voters, an organisation that is open to further research. This decision emphasises Rischbieth's dominance had national implications.

There are many other areas inviting further research. The WSG continued until 1997 and the WNPA to 1979. Research could be undertaken to ascertain how World War Two impacted on these organisations given their persistence beyond this period. The post World War Two period would also be of interest. Similarly, the CWA – which is still in existence in both states – could be further examined to find out how they fared during World War Two and what they did during that period and beyond. It would be interesting to know if there was a heightened awareness of Aboriginal issues by the CWA and in what ways they addressed these issues. This is assuming the organisations were similar to the New South Wales CWA where branches for Aboriginal women were formed in the 1950s. It is quite likely the Western Australian and South Australian CWA branches followed suit given the New South Wales CWA was their role model. The decline of the WSG and the WNPA may have further continued after World War Two, and this is another area where research could identify reasons. Furthermore, a study of these organisations during the period after World War Two could reveal additional transnational links and influences. Additionally, the role of Lady Forster in the Australian context could be further examined.

Finally, the question remains as to whether the CWA organisations were feminist. Further research during the period of World War Two and beyond may provide some insight. This thesis has not been able to definitively support the claim that the CWA was a feminist organisation in the period under examination, but certainly country women were keen for equality with their husbands. Sharon Crozier-De Rosa's suggestion they were a type of feminist organisation requires additional research. Regardless of the way in which the CWA did or did not publicly engage with feminism or gender equality, their aims were to raise the status of women and with this, improve their lives and the lives of their children.

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APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHICAL VIGNETTES OF SOME WOMEN MENTIONED IN THIS THESIS

There were a number of women overseas who were of background significance: Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Josephine Butler (1828-1906), Harriet Taylor Mill (1807-1858), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928), Christabel Pankhurst (1880-1958), and Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960). Their details are not included in this Appendix. Nor do I include Lady Aberdeen, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, and Lady Rachel Forster. The former two have a large amount of biographical material already published, and Lady Rachel Forster's details are included within this thesis. Main sources used include the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, and digitised newspapers available on Trove (National Library of Australia), other records available at Ancestry, Findmypast and the South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society's databases.

Jessie A Ackermann (1857-1951)

Jessie Ackermann was born in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, the daughter of Charles Ackermann and Amanda French. Her date of birth has been contentious, but the 1870 United States Federal Census shows her as age 13 therefore she was born circa 1857. At that time, she was living with her parents and siblings in Chicago, Illinois. By the June 1880 Census she was listed as a Dressmaker living with her widowed mother and siblings. That year she allegedly attended the University of California but did not graduate. In 1881 she joined the Independent Order of Good Templars in California. Later in 1888 she was a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). In 1889 she became the WCTU's around the world missionary and travelled to New Zealand and Australia. The *Boston Herald* of 29 May 1904 notes she had been appointed that year by the Universal Peace Union of Philadelphia to visit European capitals 'in the interests of peace'. Jessie Ackermann travelled extensively around the world in her role with the WCTU.

Eleanor Alice Allen (1867-1937)

Eleanor Allen was born at Clarendon, South Australia in 1867, the daughter of the Reverend James Allen and his wife Anna Maria Mann. Her father was a Methodist minister. In 1914 Eleanor was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Adelaide. Later she received a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of London in 1926. She was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association and the Australian Federation of Women Voters. In 1932 she became the President for two years of the Lyceum Club in Adelaide and was also a member of the Adelaide University Women Graduates' Association. When she returned from London after gaining her PhD, she took up the position of psychologist at the Children's Hospital in Adelaide and maintained a private practice. Her focus was vocational guidance. She died at the Memorial Hospital, North Adelaide.

Esther Louise Anderson (1871-?)

Esther Anderson was born in Chicago, Illinois, USA, to Swedish-born parents in 1871. Her father's name has been variously given as Andrew J Anderson, or John A Anderson, but her mother's name remains unknown. In 1907, Esther was appointed to the position as general secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Adelaide, South Australia. Representing the YWCA, she became an early delegate to the Women's Non-Party Association. Esther had a Bachelor of Philosophy (university unknown) and had been secretary of the Detroit YWCA from 1899 until she was sent to Australia. Later in 1916, she was appointed the National general secretary for the YWCA in Australia and New Zealand, a position that required her to live in Sydney. She held this position until 1926 when she returned to the USA. Often referred to as Esther L Anderson it is unknown where or when she died.

Elsie Euphemia Andrews (1888-1948)

Elsie Andrews was born at Huirangi, Taranaki, New Zealand the daughter of John Andrews and Emily Young in 1888. Elsie became president of the New Zealand Women Teachers' Association, and in 1934 represented the organisation at the Pan-Pacific Women's Association in Honolulu. She was also a member of the Women's Division of the New Zealand Farmers' Union. She unsuccessfully stood for election in 1935 as an Independent. In 1938 she was awarded an MBE. In 1947 she formed a junior Red Cross branch at north Taranaki. She was also a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the National Council of Women in New Zealand.

Lady Clara Barron (1858-1936)

Lady Clara Barron's birth was registered in Watford, England. She was the daughter of Major-General Thomas Conyngham Kelly and Clara Ward. In 1877 she married Sir Harry Barron who later became the Governor of Tasmania from September 1909 to March 1913, and Western Australia from 17 March 1913 to 27 March 1921. Lady Barron, at the request of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, established the British Red Cross Society in Western Australia during World War One. She died at Weybridge, Surrey in 1936 leaving an estate valued at £4371 4s 6d.

Jean Beadle (1868-1942)

Jean Beadle was born at Clunes, Victoria as Jane, the daughter of George Darlington Miller and Sarah Jane Spencer. In 1888 she married Henry (Harry) Beadle who was a committed and forceful trade unionist. In 1890 she joined what later became the Australian Labor Party, and later assisted in organising the first Victorian Women's Labor Organisation. She represented the organisation at the Victorian Labor Council meetings. In 1901 Jean, Harry and family moved to Fremantle, Western Australia where she formed the first Labor Women's Organisation in that state. In 1906 they moved to the Western Australian goldfields, and while there she assisted with the organisation of the Eastern Goldfields Women's Labor Party and became its inaugural President. She was appointed a Justice of the Peace, served as magistrate for the Children's Courts, and was a foundation member of the Women's Justice Association in Western Australia. Jean became its vice-president and later President. In 1909 Jean was involved in the lobbying for a maternity hospital and was appointed to the Advisory Board of the King Edward Memorial Hospital when it opened in 1916. During World War One she was involved with the Soldiers' Reception Committee. As well she was an official visitor to the women's section of the Fremantle Gaol. In 1927, Jean became vice-president and later President of the newly formed Labor Women's Central Executive. During the Great Depression she became the treasurer of the West Perth Relief Committee formed to help those in need. She was also a member of the Women's Suffrage Alliance.

Mary Montgomerie Bennett (1881-1961)

Mary Montgomerie (sometimes Montgomery) Bennett was born in London, the daughter of Robert Christison, a Scottish born Queensland pastoralist and his wife Mary Godsall, an artist and sculptor. Mary Bennett was also referred to as Mimi. Her parents came out to Australia where her father was an early pioneer with pastoral interests in Queensland. Two younger siblings were born in Australia. However, her mother not liking Australian life returned with the children to London. Mary studied at the Royal Academy of Arts 1903-1908. In the 1911 UK Census she was living with her parents, siblings and servants at Burwell Park, Lincolnshire. The family was listed as of 'private means'. Mary returned to Australia with her father when he decided to sell his property. Her father had been sympathetic towards Aboriginal people on his property and this no doubt influenced Mary. In London, she became a member of the British Empire League. In August 1914 she married Charles Douglas Bennett (born 1856) a merchant sailor and sea Captain. In 1922 her mother had returned to Tenterfield, New South Wales, perhaps visiting, and died there in November leaving her estate of £705 6s 8d to her daughter Mary. Mary senior's address was given as Lammermoor, Burwell Park, England in the UK Probate record. Charles Bennett retired to London in 1921 and died at Kensington, Middlesex in 1927. He had visited Australia several times during his career. Charles left his estate to his wife which amounted to £323 7s 5d. After his death, Mary returned to Australia where she became a teacher and advocate of Aboriginal rights. She lived at several Aboriginal missions in Western Australia. It was reported she was fluent in French and German, but had not learnt any Aboriginal languages, and taught in English. She died at Kalgoorlie, Western

Australia in October 1961. UK Probate indicates her estate was valued at £1630 2s 1d. She did not have children.

Helen Rosetta Birks (1843-1932)

Helen Rosetta Birks, born near Nailsworth, South Australia, was the eldest daughter of William Kyffin Thomas and Mary Jane Good. Her father had arrived in South Australia in 1836 age fifteen with his parents, Robert and Mary Thomas, on board the *Africaine*. Robert Thomas was the owner and proprietor of the *Register* newspaper in the fledgling colony. William Kyffin Thomas later became the proprietor of the *Register*, and the *Adelaide Observer* and the *Evening Journal* newspapers. Helen Rosetta Thomas married George Napier Birks, a pharmacist, and they lived at Kadina for thirteen years. They moved to Glenelg, and her husband formed a partnership with his brother William Hanson Birks, maintaining a chemist store in Adelaide. George, his wife, and several children moved to Paraguay *circa* 1894, settling at a 'communistic New Australia in the wilds of South America' where he died in 1895. After her husband's death, Helen Rosetta returned to South Australia. Her daughter Helen Mary Birks was born at Kadina in December 1863. She married in 1888 at Glenelg to Albert Henry Chartier and was a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Women's Non-Party Political Association, a committee member of Estcourt House for the blind and President of the Wayville Branch of the Red Cross Society.

Edith Maude Bottrill (1880-1960)

Edith Bottrill was born at McLaren Vale, South Australia the daughter of Stephen Bottrill and Eliza Thomas. She completed her general nurse training at the Wakefield Street Hospital in Adelaide, and midwifery at the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies at Woolwich near London, England. Edith enrolled as a midwife on the Midwifery Register in England on 21 February 1914. Following this she worked in Somerset as a relief nurse. During World War One she joined the British Red Cross Society and worked as a nurse in the auxiliary military hospitals in England and France in 1915. Edith returned to Australia in August 1916. Later she did her Infant Welfare training at Tresillian, an institution established by the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies at Petersham, New South Wales. An infant welfare training school had commenced there in 1921. On her retirement, it was noted she had been Assistant Superintendent of the District and Bush Nursing Society and was previously at the District Trained Nursing Society in Adelaide. She died in August 1960 at Wayville, South Australia.

Elizabeth Haigh Bowman (1869-1939)

Elizabeth Bowman was born in 1869 at Cooyamulta, South Australia the daughter of John Love, a pastoralist near Port Lincoln, and his wife Jessie Aitken Tennant. In 1893 she married Thomas Richard Bowman aged 58 in Adelaide when she was 24. He had been a well-known pastoralist at Crystal Brook and Lake Albert in South Australia, a descendant of a pioneering South Australian family. After their marriage, they lived on South Terrace, Adelaide. There were no children of this marriage, although her husband had two daughters from his first marriage. When he died, he left a substantial estate to which his wife was entitled to a five-hundred-pound annuity. She was a well-known philanthropic worker. Elizabeth Bowman, also known as Mrs T R Bowman, was the President of the National Council of Women, South Australian branch. She, together with Mary Warnes (see entry below), was instrumental in the establishment of a Country Women's Association branch at Burra in 1926. Elizabeth was honoured as the inaugural Patron of the organisation in South Australia.

Henrietta Lancaster Burns (1873-1941)

Henrietta Burns was born in Bradford, Yorkshire the daughter of William Ambler and Esther Lancaster. She married at Nelson, Lancashire in August 1899 to Fred Blackburn, a cotton weaver. The 1901 Census for Nelson, Lancashire shows Fred Blackburn age 26, cotton weaver, Henrietta Blackburn age 28, dressmaker, and their daughter Anne Blackburn age three months. In 1911, Henrietta was still a dressmaker working at home, but there was another daughter, Louie, two years younger than Anne. Henrietta arrived at Fremantle on 11 June 1912 with her daughters Anne and Louie but without her husband Fred who stayed behind in England, allegedly due to his ill-health – he died in 1945. In Western Australia, she registered as a midwifery nurse, uncertificated, on 28 March 1913 stating she had practised since June 1909. Her address was

given as Wickepin where she was the owner and matron of the local hospital. In late 1920, with her husband Thomas Burns, a farmer, she moved to a newly acquired farm at Nungarin. It is unlikely the couple were formally married. She was a foundation member and vice-president of the Country Women's Association at Nungarin in 1924, and in 1925 helped form the Women's Section of the Primary Producer's Association and was its foundation president. Henrietta had also been elected the State President of the Country Women's Association but stood down in favour of Mrs H A Craven-Griffiths (see entry below). It appears her membership of the Country Women's Association was short-lived, possibly due to their non-political stance. She was also a member of the Women's Section of the Country Party, Women's Justice Association, Juvenile Delinquency Movement and President of the committee for the Home for Delinquent Girls, and the Housewives' Association in Western Australia. She was also vice-president of the Cottesloe branch of the Returned Soldiers' League women's auxiliary. Henrietta was a country member of the Women's Service Guilds, and a member of the National Council of Women.

Belinda Shannon Christophers (1864-1930)

Belinda Christophers was possibly born Johanna Shannon Johns, daughter of Nicholas Johns and Johanna Shannon at Kapunda in 1864. In 1887, she married Henry Thomas Christophers at Kapunda. In 1883, she trained as a teacher and taught at Moonta, Woodside and then Kapunda until her marriage. Belinda was appointed a Justice of Peace in 1917. She held various memberships of different organisations during her life. These included memberships of the War Savings Council, the Advisory Committee for Soldiers' Dependants, and the Liberal Women's Educational Association. She was also active in the Sailors, Soldiers, and Nurses' Relatives' Association during the First World War. As well she was a member of the South Australian Repatriation Committee; convened the first Red Cross Circle in South Australia at Thebarton in August 1914 and became its treasurer; a member of the Junior Red Cross Committee. Other memberships included the Destitute Board for seven years, the Housewives' Association, Thebarton State School Committee, Justices' Association, and a director of the Adelaide Co-operative Society Limited. She also worked in the Children's Court. Belinda was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association and on the Executive for eleven years.

Kate Cocks (1875-1954)

Kate Cocks was born as Fanny Kate Boadicea Cock at East Moonta, the daughter of Anthony Cock and Elizabeth George. A teacher, in 1901 she became Assistant Matron of the Edwardstown Industrial School, a home for State children. In 1903 she joined the State Children's Department as a clerk. In 1906 she was appointed to the first position as a juvenile court probation officer. Then in December 1915 she became the first woman police constable in South Australia, together with Annie Ross (see entry below). Their office was located at 9 Landowna Terrace, in a row of houses on the eastern side of Victoria Square. Kate was awarded an MBE in 1935 when she retired. She had also been concerned with the welfare of young, single, and pregnant women, and eventually the Methodist Church secured a home which was later renamed the Kate Cocks Babies' Home.

Constance Mary Ternent Cooke (1882-1967)

Constance Ternent Cooke was born at Kent Town, Adelaide, the daughter of Percival Edward Hoare and Susette Gameau. In 1907 she married Dr William Ternent Cooke, University of Adelaide lecturer in chemistry, at St Peter's College Chapel in Adelaide. Her surname sometimes is referred to as Ternent-Cooke. She became president of the Women's Non-Party Association 1924-1927. Constance was an Aboriginal rights activist, and she encouraged the organisation to take up their cause. In 1929, Constance was appointed to the Advisory Council of Aborigines, and in 1939 to the Aborigines Protection League. She was a delegate to the British Commonwealth League conference in London in 1927; she represented the Australian Federation of Women Voters at the Pan Pacific Conference in 1930 in Honolulu. After her husband died, she moved to Sydney to be closer to her family, and it was there that she died in 1967.

Madge Cort (1871-1958)

Madge Cort was born Julia Ellen Margaret Knight in Sydney, daughter of Henry Knight and Margaret Maud Regan. Julia had a son Maurice in 1893, but the father of her child was not named. In 1902 in Western Australia, she married William Henry Cort. Her husband, however, was

sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for uttering, that is forging for financial gain, the magistrate stating drinking and horseracing was to blame. He was later described as an habitual criminal. In 1907 she was charged, as Madge Cort together with her son Maurice Driscoll, with stealing and receiving firewood. While charges against her were dropped, and her young son fined, the magistrate believed she was the instigator. Julia divorced her husband in 1912. She remarried in 1913 to Albert William Bevan and was sometimes referred to as Madge Cort-Bevan. He enlisted during World War One. In 1908 she was the secretary of the North-Suburban Women's Political Labour League. Madge was a frequent writer to the press, letters generally pertaining to workers' rights, children, and the socialists who she thought were permeating the Labor party. In 1913 she advertised as a teacher of piano, theory, singing and dancing. She was also an advocate of conscription and supported the referendum. Madge was a member of various political organisations such as the secretary of the Women's Labor League; organising secretary of the Young Australia National Party; organising secretary of the women's section of the General Workers' Union, and a member of the Australian Women's National League. In her role as secretary of the Women's Workers' Union, she supported the resolution that the King Edward Memorial Hospital was for all women, married or single. She died in 1958 at Geraldton, Western Australia.

Edith Dircksey Cowan (1861-1932)

Edith Cowan was born at Glengarry near Geraldton, Western Australia the daughter of Kenneth Brown and Mary Eliza Dircksey. She has been described as a social worker and a politician. Her mother later died in childbirth, and her father was found guilty of the murder of his second wife and hung. Edith married James Cowan, registrar and master of the Supreme Court in 1879. In 1894 she was the secretary of the Karrakatta Club, and later its vice-president and president. She was also involved in the Ministering Children's League from 1891, and the House of Mercy for unmarried mothers from 1894. In 1906 she was a foundation member of the Children's Protection Society and was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1920. In 1923 she became a member of the Anglican Synod. As well, she was a foundation member of the Women's Service Guild in 1909, and vice-president in 1917. Edith was also involved in the establishment of the King Edward Memorial Hospital for women which was opened in 1916. She was also a foundation member of Western Australia's National Council of Women, and its president from 1913 to 1921, and vice-president until her death. Edith stood for election in the Western Australian Parliament, becoming the first Australian woman to be elected. She travelled overseas to Britain and Europe in 1903 and 1912; and the USA in 1925 as a delegate to the sixth convention of the International Council. During World War One, she undertook war work and was awarded an OBE in 1920. She was also a founder of the Western Australia Historical Society in 1926. She died in June 1932 after a long period of ill-health.

Mabel Craven-Griffiths (1884-1966)

Mabel Craven-Griffiths was born in Sydney, New South Wales, the daughter of Frederick George Sawkins, a bricklayer, and Ada Marigold, both English immigrants. The family moved to Western Australia where her father was a goldminer near Coolgardie. In 1902 Mabel married her first husband, William Edward White, a grocer. He died in tragic circumstances in 1914 leaving her with five children under the age of twelve. In 1918 she re-married, as his second wife, Harry Albert Craven-Griffiths, a Western Australian Member of Parliament. After her second husband died in March 1935, she unsuccessfully contested his seat in Parliament. Mabel was awarded an MBE in 1938 for her child welfare work. As well as being a member of the Country Women's Association, she was also a member of the Red Cross, and president of the Perth branch of Silver Chain. Other organisations in which she was associated included the Parkerville Children's Homes, the Mental After-Care Committee, the Workers' Section, Primary Producers' Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association.

Eliza Hornabrook Crewes (1861-1937)

Eliza Crewes was born at Mintaro, South Australia the daughter of William Tickle and Ellizabeth Essery Pearce. She married Ernest William Crewes a businessman at Yongala in 1882. Her husband became the Mayor of Burra. Eliza was inaugural President of the Burra Red Cross Society.

Daisy Rose Curtis (1892-1973)

Daisy Curtis was born at Lyndoch, South Australia the twin daughter of Thomas William Curtis and Elizabeth Annie Trenorden. She was a teacher from 1910 to 1918. On 1 January 1921 she was appointed a probationary woman police officer, and twelve months later appointed as a woman police officer. She transferred to Port Pirie where she remained as the principal woman police officer for sixteen years. In December 1925 she became the third Catherine Helen Spence scholar which allowed her to undertake a year's study at the University of Adelaide in 1926. This was followed by travel overseas for further study in 1927. In 1940, she was appointed Principal of women police in South Australia. She retired in 1951, died in 1973 and is buried at Willaston General Cemetery.

Constance Muriel Davey (1882-1963)

Constance Davey was born at Nuriootpa, the daughter of Stephen Henry Davey, a bank manager, and Emily Mary Roberts. She gained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Adelaide in 1915, and in 1918 a Master of Arts. In 1921 she won the Catherine Helen Spence scholarship that allowed her to study in London. In 1924 she was awarded a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of London. Returning to Adelaide, she was the psychologist with the South Australian Education Department until 1942 and taught at the University of Adelaide. She had a clinic at the Children's Hospital as well as being involved with the Children's Court in Adelaide. Constance was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association, the Australian Federation of Women Voters, the Lyceum Club, and was awarded an OBE in 1955.

Eva Roubel d'Arenberg (1872-1932)

Eva d'Arenberg was born in Adelaide in 1872, the daughter of Reverend Francis Williams and Celia Roubel Laurie. Her father was appointed third master of St Peter's College in 1861 and from October 1882 was headmaster. He died suddenly in 1895. She attended the Advanced School for Girls in Adelaide. In 1894 she married, at St Peters College, Frederick Augustus D'Arenberg, a solicitor and law lecturer. Frederick was much older than his bride. He died in October 1923 age 73. The couple had two children. A Mrs D'Arenberg, possibly Eva, was a member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association in 1914. In the 1920s she became part-owner of the Piccadilly Tea Rooms, North Terrace, Adelaide with widow Violet Twiss. The tea rooms were taken over by Birks' Store and relocated to their second floor in Rundle Street in May 1931 with Violet Twiss as head. Eva had a women's page in the press under the *nom de plume* of Ariel. She also wrote various letters on social issues that were published by the daily press in her own name. After her daughter Helen's death following childbirth in December 1926, she moved to China where she died suddenly in December 1932 at Tsingtao, North China. She did charitable work in China. She was known by many as Darry.

Lillian de Lissa (1885-1967)

Lillian de Lissa was born at Darlinghurst, Sydney, New South Wales the daughter of Montague de Lissa and Julia Joseph. Her parents were Jewish. In 1902 she trained at the Kindergarten College, Sydney. In 1905, Lillian went to Adelaide to teach new kindergarten methods, later becoming the director of Adelaide's first free kindergarten. She was instrumental in the establishment of a Kindergarten Training College in Adelaide in 1907. That year she was a foundation member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association. She was a member of the first committee for the School for Mothers. In 1912, she gave evidence at a Royal Commission into education in South Australia. Lillian married in 1918 to Harold Turner-Thompson but the couple had divorced by 1930. She travelled overseas to study Maria Montessori's methods in Rome in 1913, and then to England in 1917 where she was the foundation principal of Gipsy Hill College, Surrey. In 1923, a Nursery School Association in Great Britain and Northern Ireland was founded with her assistance. She became the first vice-president, and later chairman of the executive in 1929-1938. In 1946 she retired in England but returned to Adelaide for the golden jubilee of the Kindergarten Union in 1955. She died at Dorking, Surrey in 1967.

Edith Margaret Devitt (1876-1955)

Edith Devitt was born at Loughton, Essex the daughter of Joseph Devitt, merchant, and Edith Anna Woolley. She was baptised 18 September 1883 at St Paul's, Tower Hamlets, London. It is believed

her parents became missionaries, taking eighteen-month-old Edith to South Africa, but she spent much of her childhood in London. In the 1890s, she attended the Battersea Polytechnic where she trained in domestic science. At the 1901 Census she is noted as a schoolteacher living at Llandilofawr, Carmarthenshire, Wales. She arrived in Western Australia in August 1901 to teach, but by 1904 had returned to London. Late in 1909 she arrived in Adelaide and was appointed Instructress of domestic subjects from 1 February 1910. Edith was appointed the head of domestic science in the Education Department, but in November 1925 she relinquished this position to become a missionary in New Guinea commencing in early 1926. She was stationed for three years on a small island north east of Papua. It was reported on 4 February 1953 that she had spent nineteen years as a missionary in New Guinea. Edith died in Adelaide in 1955. She never married.

Cecilia Emma Dixon (1872-1964)

Cecilia Dixon was born in Adelaide, daughter of Alfred Dixon and Eliza Skegg. Cecilia was the employment secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and matron of the Travellers' Aid Society. She travelled to England in 1913 to examine the work of the Travellers' Aid Society and the immigration of girls. In 1915 she was appointed a Justice of the Peace and urged the establishment of a women's police presence in South Australia. Dixon was concerned for the safety of girls and young women in Adelaide, particularly new arrivals, and would often meet immigrant ships arriving at Outer Harbour or Port Adelaide. She died at North Adelaide in April 1964.

Dorothy Eleanor Ethel Victoria Georgina Barber Clarke Dolling (1897-1967)

Dorothy Dolling was born in Dunedin, New Zealand the daughter of Edgar Scott Clarke and Alice Jane Barber. Dorothy Dolling gained a Bachelor of Science, and a Master of Science from the University of Otago, New Zealand. In 1923 she married Charles Dolling, a medical practitioner, in Adelaide. She was also a journalist writing under various pseudonyms including 'Eleanor Barbour', whose women's pages in the *Chronicle* newspaper were well-received. The *Chronicle* was widely read by country people. She also wrote as 'Marian March' in the women's pages of the *Advertiser*. Dolling was a capable organiser with skills that stood her in good stead within the Country Women's Association. She was an inspirational leader who continued to guide the organisation until she died in 1967. Heather Parker, author, paid tribute to Dorothy noting she had been influential in both her commitment to the Country Women's Association and her career as a journalist. She died in June 1967.

Olive Louisa Evans (1876-1960)

Olive Louisa Evans was born in September 1876, the daughter of William Earle and Jane Anna Carvosso. She was a younger sister of Bessie Rischbieth (see her entry below). Olive married William Herbert Evans in Perth in 1905. She was a founding member of the Women's Service Guild and later a President. During World War One she hosted the Red Cross Sewing Circle. She was a secretary of the Cottesloe Infant Health Centre that opened in April 1926. Her daughter Rachel Evans married Donald MacKinnon Cleland, lawyer and later first Administrator of Papua New Guinea. He was knighted for his work.

Annie Marie Francis (1878-1962)

Annie Marie Francis was born in Victoria, Australia in 1878 the daughter of James MacDonald and Rose Boyd, and married Arthur Francis Pippen in Perth in October 1901. However, the marriage was not a happy one, and the couple divorced in June 1917. There was one child, born in 1903, of whom she was granted custody. Finding herself effectively a single mother, and bearing the new surname of Francis, perhaps to distance herself from her estranged husband before their divorce, Annie managed the Bellevue Hotel near Fremantle in 1912. Later, in an interview with a Queensland newspaper, she stated she had been involved in sheep and wheat farming at 'Mali Brae', Nungarin since 1912, and in the beginning had physically helped to clear the land. The 1925 electoral roll listed her as a farmer of 'Mali Brae', Nungarin. She inherited the property from Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas John Todd, an Australian officer who died in Egypt in January 1919. Todd had been the licensee of the Bellevue Hotel until late 1911, early 1912 so it likely the couple moved to Nungarin around the same time. Annie was publican of the Nungarin Hotel for a short period from January 1929 to August 1929. She became Foundation President of the Nungarin

Country Women's Association for two years; and Vice-President from 1933 to 1935. She continued to farm 'Mali Brae', Nungarin.

Lady Marie Galway (1876-1962)

Lady Marie Galway was born in London as Marie Carola Franciska Roselyne daughter of Sir Rowland Blennerhasset and his wife Countess Charlotte Julia de Leyden. Lady Galway was well educated. In 1894 she married Baron Raphael d'Erlanger, a zoologist and Professor at the University of Heidelberg, and they had two children. He died in 1897. In 1913 she remarried in London to Sir Henry Lionel Galway. He was appointed Governor of South Australia in 1914. In Adelaide Lady Galway inaugurated the Adelaide branch of the Alliance Francaise. In August 1914, at Lady Helen Munro Ferguson's request, she founded the British Red Cross Society in South Australia. She was also involved with the Belgian Relief fund. In 1919 she returned to England and chaired the Mothercraft Training Society and a committee of the Women's Organisations. In 1924 to 1925 she was on the women's committee of the British Empire Exhibition. She died in Cornwall in 1962 having been pre-deceased by her son and her husband.

Mary Jane George (ca 1854-1920)

Mary George was possibly born in 1854 in Victoria, Australia the daughter of Edward George and Maria Bawden. Her parents had arrived in Australia in 1852 from Cornwall, and her father may have been a mine agent. She became the Secretary of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Adelaide. Little is known about her. She died in January 1920 age 65 years. Her funeral procession left from the WCTU rooms, Wakefield Street, Adelaide for her burial at West Terrace Cemetery. Her mother Maria, aged 87, predeceased her in April 1918 at Wayville, Adelaide.

Vida Jane Goldstein (1869-1949)

Vida Goldstein was born in Portland, Victoria the eldest child of Jacob Goldstein and his wife Isabella Hawkins. Her paternal grandfather was of Polish-Jewish heritage. She was influenced by her mother who has been described as both a feminist and pacifist, as well as a teetotaler by biographer Janette Bomford. Vida never married, devoting her life to her work and causes. She founded the Women's Political Association in Victoria in 1903; edited the *Women's Sphere* 1900-1905, and later the *Woman Voter*. A long supporter of women's suffrage, Vida travelled overseas in support of the English suffragists. Much has already been written and published about Vida Goldstein.

Agnes Knight Goode (1872-1947)

Agnes Goode was born at Strathalbyn, South Australia the daughter of James Fleming and Charlotte Knight. In July 1896 she married William Edward Goode at Mile End, South Australia. During World War One, Agnes was a vice-president of the Women's State Recruiting Committee. She also became the secretary and later president of the Liberal Women's Educational Association. In 1916 she was appointed a Justice of the Peace and was a member of the State Children's Council. She also visited the Adelaide Gaol and the Parkside Mental Hospital as a visiting justice and official visitor. In 1917 she was appointed to the Advisory Board of Censors to deal with 'cinema films'. As well she became president of the women's branch of the Liberal Federation and stood at both State and Adelaide City Council elections becoming a councillor for the Hackney Ward in 1925. She was also a member of the National Council of Women, the Women's Non-Party Association, and was the inaugural president of the Housewives' Association. At her death it was noted that she had been associated with the Kindergarten Union for over twenty-five years. Her interests in this area included membership of the Lady Gowrie Pre-School Centre committee, president of the Stepney Pre-School Nursery and as a representative of the union to the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development.

Florence Mary White Gordon (1860-1928)

Florence Gordon was born in Hampstead, Middlesex, England and baptised at Camden St Paul 24 May 1860. She was the daughter of Charles Newton Gordon, a distiller, and his wife (and cousin) Annie Catherine Newton. She was the second youngest child of sixteen. It is unknown when she arrived in Australia but in January 1895, she presented a paper to the Hebrew Literature and Debating Society in Sydney. Florence was a free-lance journalist and wrote under the aliases of

'F.G.' and 'Urbania'. Her earliest journalistic work appears to have been at the *Tamworth Observer*. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Country Women's Association in New South Wales and was the organisation's inaugural honorary secretary. She died in January 1928 at her residence, 'The Combers', Newport near Sydney. At her death it was noted her late parents were of The Manor House, Elstree, Hertfordshire; her youngest sister Ethel Beatrice Gordon, a music teacher, had predeceased her in July 1927 in Sydney; and a brother Archibald Gordon was living in Tasmania.

Janetta Griffiths-Foulkes (1862-1952)

Janetta Griffiths-Foulkes was born in Dysart, Fife, Scotland the daughter of the Reverend Charles Jameson and Grace Chalmers. In 1892 she married in Perth, Western Australia to John Charles Griffiths-Foulkes, a solicitor. He was a member of Parliament. Sometimes her surname appears as Foulkes, and other times Griffiths-Foulkes. She was a vice-president of the Women's Service Guild. She was also president of the Western Australian Women's Franchise League 1895; president of the Karrakatta Club 1898-1899; and a member of the Lyceum Club in London. The couple moved to England in 1914. In 1921, Janetta and her husband visited Western Australia but otherwise remained in England until their deaths. Her brother was Dr Adam Jameson, a physician, and Western Australia's Minister for Lands from December 1901 to January 1903, and later a Transvaal (South African) government official where he died in 1907 following a railway accident. Janetta died in London in February 1952.

Ida Gertrude Margaret Halley (1867-1939)

Known as Gertrude, Ida Gertrude Margaret Halley was born in Ballarat, Victoria the daughter of the Reverend Jacob John Halley and Margaret Ann Fletcher. She studied medicine at Melbourne University, followed by medical research in Shanghai and London. On returning to Australia, she practised medicine for a time in Melbourne, and in 1906 established 'the medical inspection of schools in Tasmania' where she remained for four years. Following this she moved to Sydney where she lectured at the Teachers' Training College. In 1913 she moved to Adelaide where she was associated with the Education Department for many years as their chief medical officer. In 1917 she was appointed as a Justice of the Peace. She was also a member of the National Council of Women, and Chairman of the League of Loyal Women, and a member of the South Australian Branch of the British Science Guild. As well, she was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association. She retired from her medical position in 1931. She died eight years later at Maylands, a suburb of Adelaide.

Marion Hawkins (1879-1962)

Marion Hawkins was born in Victoria the daughter of John Haines and Martha Ward. A nurse, she trained at the Queen's Home, Rose Park, South Australia in 1915, and then moved to Port Hedland, Western Australia where she became the sister-in-charge of the Presbyterian Hospital also known as the Australian Inland Mission General Hospital. She married in 1917 to Frederick Garnet Hawkins manager of the Union Bank in Port Hedland. Later they moved to Gawler and Port Adelaide, South Australia where he was manager of the bank. Marion became president of the Gawler women's branch of the Liberal Federation; a committee member of the District Nursing Society, and later President of the Semaphore and Largs women's branch of the Liberal Federation. She was also involved with the National Council of Women. In July 1927 Marion became President of the South Australian branch of the newly formed Housewives' Association.

Minnie Hearman (1879-1960)

Minnie Hearman was born in Plymouth, Devon, the daughter of John Merrifield, a mathematics teacher, and his second wife Annie Maria Palmer. In 1906 she married Walter Edgar Hearman at Charles the Martyr Church, Plymouth, Devon. In England Walter was listed as a metallurgist at his marriage and was later involved in the motor industry. The couple, with their two children, arrived in Australia circa 1913 and settled at Donnybrook, Western Australia where he became a farmer. She became a member of the Country Women's Association.

Alice Henry (1857-1943)

Alice Henry was born at Richmond, Melbourne the daughter of Charles Ferguson Henry and

Margaret Walker. Her parents were Scottish born. She became a journalist and woman's rights advocate. Amongst her friends were Catherine Helen Spence and Vida Goldstein (see entries below). In 1905 she travelled to England, and later that year to New York, USA to gain information about women's suffrage and social reforms as well as to travel. In 1923 she became an American citizen but returned to Australia in 1933 following financial hardship. After this date, she was a member of the Playgrounds' Association, and the National Council of Women in Victoria.

Norma Eleanor Sarah Herbert Heritage (1880-1948)

Norma Heritage was born at Mount Pleasant, South Australia in 1880, the daughter of Caleb Heritage and Sarah Eleanor Herbert. She trained in nursing for three years at the Adelaide Hospital and received a Gold medal for her examination results in 1906. Norma then trained in women's diseases and midwifery at the Women's Public Hospital, Melbourne. Later she obtained a Royal Sanitary Institute of London certificate. In February and April 1912, she oversaw disinfecting immigrants for possible smallpox at the Torrens Island quarantine facility near Adelaide. In May 1913 Norma was appointed an inspector in the Education Department, working with Dr Gertrude Halley and visiting various schools. She remained in the Education Department for three years, although in November 1914 she attested for the Australian Army Nursing Service. Part of her duties was to provide care aboard transport ships from Egypt to Australia. She saw service with the No. 2 Australian General Hospital at Mena near Cairo, Egypt, and was later transferred to Marseilles and Boulogne, France. At Boulogne she became ill, was sent to England to recuperate, then returned to Australia in April 1917. Norma became the sister in charge for three years of a ward at No. 7, Australian General Hospital at Keswick near Adelaide. In September 1917, her brother Lieutenant Felix Heritage was killed in action in Belgium. She became Matron of the Lady Galway (Red Cross) Convalescent Home for soldiers at Henley Beach, also known as the Lady Galway Clubhouse. During a state visit in July 1921, Lord and Lady Forster visited the facility. In March 1925 Norma married widower John Hazen Garden, proprietor of the Adelaide Tyre Company, at the Clayton Congregational Church, Kensington. They moved to Mannum where he died in December 1933. She returned to Adelaide and died in February 1948 and is buried at the North Road Cemetery. She had been an early member of the Women's Non-Party Association.

Marion Louisa Holmes (1856-1921)

Marion Louisa Holmes was born at Koorunga (Burra), South Australia, the daughter of Joseph Charles Genders and Albina Louisa Perry. She married in Adelaide in 1878 to Henry Diggins Holmes, a banker. Marion moved to Perth in 1890 when her husband was appointed the manager of the Western Australian Bank. In 1891 they founded the Ministering Children's League, a British organisation. The organisation's aim was to teach children to help other children who were less fortunate. Marion became secretary of this organisation until 1914, vice-president from 1897 to 1913 and president from 1913 until her death in 1921. She was also a foundation member of the Karrakatta Club, as well as of the Women's Service Guild, and a member of the Executive of the National Council of Women on its inauguration. As a means to raise funds for the Ministering Children's League, Marion decided to plant mulberry trees, raise silkworms, harvest and sell the silk. Ill-health however, prevented her from continuing this operation.

Harriet Hooton (1875-1960)

Also known as Etta, Harriet Hooton was born near Gulgong, New South Wales, the daughter of Thomas Hooton and Louisa Howson. She moved to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia in the 1890s. Harriet joined the Australian Natives' Association in 1908. She was a foundation member of the Women's Service Guild in 1909, National Council of Women and the Perth branch of the Australian Labor Federation from 1916, the latter because they opposed conscription. Harriet was also the inaugural secretary of the Western Australian Parents' and Citizens' Association in 1920, and secretary of the Women's Economic Council. She lived at Mount Hawthorn in Perth and became secretary of the Mount Hawthorn Progress Association. From 1926 she edited the women's page of the *Westralian Worker* under the pseudonym of 'Vision'. She was also secretary to Bessie Rischbieth, and President of the Citizens' Committee for the Relief of Unemployed Girls during the Great Depression. Harriet was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1936.

Annie Hornabrook (1865-1938)

Annie Hornabrook was born in Adelaide, the daughter of Charles Atkins Hornabrook, an Archdeacon, and Eliza Maria Saward. She was an early member of the Women's Non-Party Association and later Principal of the School for Mothers. Annie was a social welfare activist with concerns for the welfare of women and children. Together with Dr Helen Mayo (see entry below) and Harriet Stirling, she helped to establish the Mareeba Babies Hospital at Woodville that opened in 1917. In 1916 Annie stood unsuccessfully as a candidate, with the support of the Women's Non-Party Association, for the Adelaide City Council. She was also the first Honorary Treasurer of the Lyceum Club, formed in 1922 in Adelaide for women with university qualifications and an interest in 'art, science, music and literature'. Annie was also a member of the South Australian Branch of the British Science Guild.

Emily Marie Irvine (1872-1959)

Emily Marie Irvine was born in Queensland the daughter of Alfred William Compigne, formerly a member of the Queensland Legislative Council, police magistrate and pastoralist, and Jessy Lambert Collins. In Queensland she married in 1894 George Henry Irvine, chemist, assayer, and later manager of the Mount Morgan Goldmining Company's works. Her middle name was originally Mary, but she changed it to Marie. She was an author and journalist. In 1913 she was noted as a member of the women's branch of the Liberation Association of New South Wales. In 1914 she was the editor of the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*. During the First World War she became the Commandant of the Darlinghurst Volunteer Aid Detachment. In March 1921 she visited London. She returned to Australia and in 1922 became the organising secretary of the Country Women's Association in New South Wales. She died in Sydney in August 1959. In documents, she is often referred to as E Marie Irvine.

Sarah Elizabeth Jackson (1890-1923)

Sarah Elizabeth Jackson was born at Ovingham, a suburb of Adelaide, the daughter of Richard Jackson, a Methodist minister, and his wife Sarah Ann Canning. She was known as Elizabeth. Elizabeth studied at the University of Adelaide and gained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1911. She also graduated with Honours in 1913, a Master of Arts in 1914, and worked as a teacher at her old school, Methodist Ladies' College. After a period of ill-health, Elizabeth became a tutor at the University of Adelaide. During the last year of her life, she was the editor of *The Woman's Record*, a South Australian magazine which was managed by women. She was also a foundation member of the Women's Union, the Women Graduates' Club, the Debating Club and the Graduates' Association. When time permitted, she assisted her father in his pastoral duties. Elizabeth was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association.

Elizabeth Britomarte James (1867-1943)

Elizabeth Britomarte James was born in Ballarat, Victoria and known as Britomarte. She was the daughter of Reverend Ebenezer James, later the chaplain to the Victorian Seamen's Mission, and Clara Elizabeth Maisey. In 1889 she married her cousin George Henry James who was a head teacher, and Captain, later Colonel of the Cadet Rifles at Echuca in Victoria. She was a journalist and initially wrote for the *Riverine Herald* under the name of 'Pansy'. She was also the founder and President of the Wattle League, the Victoria Centenary Club and the Victorian Imperial Ex-Servicewomen's Association. As well, she was a member of the Town Planning Association, and vice-president of the National Theatre Movement; also, a Justice of the Peace, and awarded an OBE. During the First World War, she became Unit administrator of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in England and France following the wounding of her eldest son in late 1916. Both of her sons served during the First World War while her husband obtained leave to train the military in the use of rifles. She was later associated with the South Melbourne sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers' League as well as the Vice-President of the Victorian Women Citizen's Movement.

Eleanora Marie Gwenifryd James (1869-1938)

Eleanora Marie Gwenifryd James (known as Gwenifred or Gwyneforde) was born at Llanllwch, Carmarthenshire, Wales, the daughter of George Jonathan Hearder, Doctor of Medicine, and Marie Kirk Dixon. In 1892 she married at Albany, Western Australia, Walter Hartwell James (later Sir Walter), fifth Premier of Western Australia from July 1902 to August 1904. She was a founding member of the Karrakatta Club and the foundation President of the Women's Service Guild. Lady

James also served as President of the National Council of Women in Western Australia and the Ministering Children's League. In 1921, Lady James was appointed a vice-president of the Victoria League in Western Australia. In 1925 she was the Divisional Commander of the Girl Guides, Perth and a vice-president of the Red Cross Society in Western Australia. She represented Australia at a British Red Cross Conference in London in 1930. Lady James received an OBE (Order of the British Empire) in March 1918 for her services to the Red Cross during the First World War. She died in November 1938 in Perth.

Lady Lucy Jervois (1832-1895)

Lady Lucy Jervois was born in London, the daughter of William Norsworthy, and Lucy Wood. She married William Francis Drummond Jervois, Captain of the Royal Engineers, in 1850 in London. He was later knighted and became Governor of the Straits Settlements 1875 to 1877; South Australia from 2 October 1877 to 8 January 1883; and New Zealand 1883 to 1889. She was the founder and inaugural president of the Girls Friendly Society in Adelaide in 1879. Her daughters were also involved. Lady Jervois was also instrumental in the establishment of the Girls Friendly Society in Auckland and Wellington in 1883. She died in Berkshire in 1895.

Rose Matilda Johnson (1870-1940)

Rose Matilda Johnson was born in Greenock, Scotland, the daughter of Caesar Jervis and Elizabeth Ann Sergeant. She was awarded a Lady of Literary Arts (LLA) from St Andrews University in Edinburgh, Scotland, and became a schoolteacher. In 1900 she married John Henry (Harry) Johnson, and the couple with their children emigrated to South Africa. From there they moved to Western Australia in 1913 and settled on an acreage near Nungarin. Rose became State Vice-President of the Women's Section of the Primary Producers Association, and State President from 1928 to 1934. She was the foundation secretary of the newly formed Nungarin Country Women's Association in 1924 and became its President in 1926 and 1927.

Ethel Rose Paterson Joyner (1873-1952)

Ethel Joyner was born at Pinjarra, Western Australia in 1873, the daughter of Frederick Davis and Sarah Margaret Paterson. Her early years were spent in Adelaide, South Australia. In January 1897 she married, at Magill near Adelaide businessman Alfred Ernest Joyner. After the birth of their first child Muriel in 1898, they moved to Western Australia. Ethel was involved with many organisations. She was a foundation member of the Children's Protection Society, of the Girl Guides' Association, Chairman of the Cottage Homes House Committee of the Silver Chain District and Bush Nursing Association, member of the Town Planning Association of Western Australia, the Victoria League, the University Women's College Fund Committee and on the Fairbridge Farm School Committee. She was also a member of the Women's Service Guilds, the Australian Federation of Women Voters and the National Council of Women. As well, Ethel was a foundation member of the League of Nations Union. Following the death of her youngest daughter Barbara age three in 1919, she commenced the Little Citizens' League in her honour. Alfred and Ethel also had a son Edwin Sturt Paterson in 1912 who only lived fourteen hours.

Roberta Henrietta Margaritta Jull (1872-1961)

Roberta Jull was born in Glasgow, Scotland the daughter of Robert Stewart, a clergyman, and his wife Isabella Henrietta Fergusson. She was a follower of John Stuart Mill who gave her the inspiration to study medicine at Glasgow University. She qualified in 1896 and moved to Western Australia to join her brother's medical practice. Roberta became a member of the women's reading group, the Karrakatta Club in 1897, and established a branch of the British Medical Association in Perth. Later, she was the first woman in Western Australia to set up her own private practice in 1898. That same year she married Martin Edward Jull, a public servant. She was a foundation member of the Children's Protection Society, and the Women's Service Guild. Roberta was a member of the National Council of Women in Western Australia from 1913. In 1923 she established the Association of University Women and was its inaugural president.

Winifred Kiek (1884-1975)

Winifred Kiek was born in Manchester, England, the daughter of Robert Jackson and his wife Margaret Harker. Her parents were Quakers. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the

Victoria University of Manchester in 1904 and became a schoolteacher. In 1911 in England, she married Edward Sidney Kiek, a Congregational minister. Both were fluent in French, and they also learnt Esperanto. They were also Pacifists. The family arrived in Adelaide in 1920. Winifred studied Theology through the Melbourne College of Divinity and was the first woman ordained as a minister in any church in Australia. She also had a Master of Arts from the University of Adelaide. She became a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the National Council of Women, the Women's Non-Party Association, and the Australian Federation of Women Voters. From 1927 to 1931 she was the convenor of the Committee for Equal Moral Standards as part of the centenary celebrations of the birth of British social activist Josephine Butler.

Helen King (1862-1956)

Helen King was born in Glenelg, South Australia the daughter of James Storrie and Agnes Tassie. In 1883 she married at Glenelg to Albert Edward King, an accountant. Albert King worked for G and R Wills, managed by Henry Rischbieth, husband of Bessie Rischbieth (see entry below). In 1892, the family moved to Perth. Helen joined the Children's Protection Society in Western Australia and was inaugural secretary of the Women's Service Guilds. She was a foundation member of the Kindergarten Union of Western Australia, and in the 1920s its vice-president.

Mary Lee (1821-1909)

Mary Lee was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, the daughter of John Walsh or Welsh. Her mother's name is unknown. Her early life is subject to speculation. She married George Lee in 1844 and had seven children. It appears George, born in Newry, Ireland, was a teacher in England, and Mary was listed variously as a school mistress in 1851 in Cambridge, England, and principal of a boarding school in London in 1861. Several children are listed in the census records for England and include Mary Lilas Jane (probably Lily who later married Alfred Malcolm Poland), George Henry, Eva (Eveline), Malcolm, Charles, and John B S Lee. She arrived in South Australia in 1879 with her daughter Evelyn to visit her terminally ill son John Benjamin Stedham Lee – he was born in Cambridge in 1856. After his death in 1880 she remained in Adelaide and became secretary of the Women's Suffrage League. She was the secretary of the Social Purity Society in 1883, and secretary of the Working Women's Trade Union in 1890. She advocated for the rights of women, and the working class, and wrote many letters to the press. In January 1896 she was appointed an honorary visitor to the Parkside Lunatic Asylum. Owing to increasing age and ill-health she announced her retirement in January 1909. She was in poverty when she died. Her daughter Evelyn or Eveline was known as Eva and died in December 1927. A death notice noted her as Mary Lee's youngest daughter and aunt of Alfred Poland who also lived in Adelaide.

Ellen (Ellie) Le Souef (1873-1947)

Ellen Le Souef, often known as Ellie, was born in Victoria, Australia, the daughter of Reverend Friedrich Angus Hagenauer and Louisa Christian Knobloch. Her German born father was a Moravian missionary to the Aboriginal Mission Station near Lake Wellington, Gippsland. He was naturalised in 1863. This station was later known as Ramahyuck. She married Ernest Le Souef in 1899 at Ramahyuck. Her husband was initially an accountant and later became a veterinary surgeon. In 1897 he moved from Victoria to Perth as director of the Perth Zoological Gardens. In 1900 she became a member of the Karrakatta Club. Later, as secretary of the Women's Service Guild Ellie organised speaker's lessons given by Lionel Logue for the Guild's members. She was also the International secretary of the National Council of Women, and a member of the Liberal League. In 1930 she became a vice-president of the Perth Women's Service Guild. Other organisations Ellie was involved with included the Australian Federation of Women Voters as a vice-president, the League of Nations Union, the Western Australian Alliance and the Young Women's Christian Association as well as the University Women's College Fund Committee. She was later a member of the Red Cross and the Camp Comforts Fund during World War Two.

Marie Lion (1855-1922)

Marie Lion was born in Marseillan, France the daughter of Louis Jean-Marie Lion and Anne Deguilhem Pemilhat. She was the sister of Madam Mouchette (see entry below). Together with her sister and brother-in-law, Marie arrived in Melbourne in 1881. She was an artist, teacher, and writer. Her life appears to mirror her sister's and they both moved to Adelaide after the death of

Madam Mouchette's husband. Following overseas trips and voluntary war work, she died in Adelaide in May 1922.

Marie Wilhelmine Rhea Loessel (1872-1946)

Known as Rhea, she was born in Adelaide in 1872, the daughter of Karl Emil Johannes (John) Loessel, a merchant, and Dorothea Juliane Johnanna Eggers. Rhea was taught piano by her mother, and in 1913 was listed as a teacher living in Angas Street, Adelaide. In 1875, her father had died by drowning in Cromwell, New Zealand after he had been declared insolvent in Adelaide. Rhea's mother died in 1902. Rhea later moved to Switzerland where she died in 1946. She never married.

Amelia Morrison Fraser Macdonald (1865 -1946)

Amelia Macdonald was born in Whitburn, Linlithgow, West Lothian, Scotland, the daughter of Peter Fraser and Isabella McRae. She was a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Western Australia. Amelia was appointed a Justice of the Peace and was a founder and later President of the Womens Justices' Association. She was also a foundation member of the Women's Immigration and Auxiliary Council, inaugural treasurer of the Women's Service Guild and its second president. As well, she had an interest in the Kindergarten Union, and was a member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Living at Glen Forest near Perth for thirty years, she was president of the Parents' and Citizens' Association, and of the local Red Cross Branch. Amelia was also a member of the Co-Masonic Order, and St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and was a foundation member of the National Council of Women in Perth.

Jean Irvn MacKenzie (1870-1926)

Jean Irvn MacKenzie was possibly born Jane Irvn Everall at One Tree Hill, South Australia the daughter of John Everall and Anna Willison Graham. She married James MacKenzie in 1897 at Norwood, South Australia. She was a poet and had a page for ladies in the *Daily Herald* from 1919 to 1922 writing as Irvn. Irvn also wrote a small piece in the *News* under the heading 'Cheer-Up Talks' from July 1923 until her death in August 1926, offering thoughts and advice to women. She was not only a journalist, but also arranged aid for expectant mothers and young children.

Ada Florence Manning (1881-1938)

Ada Manning was born in Perth, Western Australia, the daughter of Robert Henry Habgood and Blanche Mary Eliza Brown. Ada married Colonel Charles Henry Ernest Manning in 1905. He had been director of Migration and Settlement in London and was later private secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir James Mitchell in Western Australia. He also served in France with the Australian Imperial Force. Her maternal aunt was Edith Cowan (see entry above). During the First World War in London, Ada worked for the Red Cross, and became a member of the Soldiers' Welcome Committee and in 1915 the Friendly Union of Soldiers' Wives, Mothers, Sisters and Daughters. She was president of the Union until 1934 when she retired owing to ill-health. Ada was also the foundation president of the Women's Immigration Auxiliary established in 1921. She was also a president of the National Council of Women in Perth, and a member of the Country Women's Association. In 1934 Ada was awarded an OBE for her services to the State.

Muriel Lilah Matters (1877-1969)

Muriel Matters was born in Adelaide, daughter of John Leonard Matters and Emma Alma Warburton. She was an elocutionist, actress and suffragist. Muriel lived in Britain from 1905, and took part in the suffrage movement, in particular as a member of the Women's Freedom League in England. In 1908 she was sent to Holloway Prison for one month following chaining herself to the grille in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons. In 1914 Muriel married divorced dentist, William Arnold Porter and became known as Muriel Lilah Matters Porter. She unsuccessfully stood as a Labour candidate for the seat of Hastings in England in 1924. A colleague was Vida Goldstein (see entry above). Muriel died in England in 1969.

Helen Mary Mayo (1878-1967)

Helen Mayo was born in Adelaide, South Australia, the daughter of George Gibbes Mayo and Henrietta Mary Donaldson. She attended the University of Adelaide to study medicine. After

graduating, she gained experience in London, Dublin and Delhi. In 1906 she set up private practice in Adelaide. She was a foundation member of the Women's Non-Party Association in 1909, first president of the Lyceum Club for professional women, and later the Australian Federation of University Women. In 1913 together with Harriet Stirling, a social worker, she set up a clinic for mothers and babies. In 1917 Helen, Harriet Stirling, and Amy Hornabrook (see entry above) established the Mareeba Babies' Hospital at Woodville. Helen was awarded an OBE for services to medicine in 1935.

Adelaide Laetitia Miethke (1881-1962)

Adelaide Miethke was born at Manoora, South Australia, the daughter of Carl Rudolph Alexander Miethke and Emma Carolina Schultze. Adelaide became a teacher after studying teaching at the University Training College in 1903 and 1904. From 1915 to 1917 Adelaide organised the South Australian Children's Patriotic Fund. In 1916 she was the first female vice-president of the South Australian Public School Teachers' Union. She was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1924, and that same year appointed Inspector of Schools. From 1925 to 1939 she held the position of Commissioner of the school's division of the Girl Guides Association. And she was appointed President of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. In 1936, Adelaide became the President of the Women's Centenary Council of South Australia, and the following year was awarded an OBE for her services. She was also appointed President of the National Council of Women Australia 1936-1942, and the National Council of Women South Australia 1934-1940.

Agnes Anderson Milne (1851-1919)

Agnes Milne was born at Lambeth Walk, London, in 1851, the daughter of William Inglis and Lydia King. She arrived in South Australia in 1855, and in 1873 married Henry Milne, a saddler. Agnes was a foundation member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Adelaide, and a member of the first executive of the Working Women's Trade Union in 1889. She was also a delegate to the United Trades and Labor Council. Agnes, formerly a shirtmaker, was appointed the second female factory inspector following the death of Augusta Zadow in 1896.

Louise (Lucy) Spence Morice (1859-1951)

Known as Lucy, she was born in Adelaide, the daughter of John Brodie Spence and Jessie Cumming. Her father's sister was Catherine Helen Spence (see entry below). In 1886, Lucy married James Percy Morice, parliamentary librarian and clerk. In August 1895, together with Catherine Spence, Lucy founded the Women's League which aimed to educate women on social and political matters. In 1902, she was a shareholder with Catherine Spence in the all-female South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company. She was also a member of the United Trades and Labor Council in 1905 and was instrumental in forming the Women's Employment Mutual Association. In 1905 she was also involved in the formation of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia. In 1909, with her aunt Catherine Spence, she formed the Women's Non-Party Association (originally known as the Women's Political Association and later the Women's Non-Party Political Association). She was also the inaugural president of the School for Mothers. Lucy and her husband had both been early members of the Fabian Society. Also, a member of the Lyceum Club. In 1936 she was honoured with an MBE for her philanthropic work. In later life she was also a member the Country Women's Association.

Emma Sarah Morris (1864-1934)

Emma Morris was born in Adelaide, the daughter of William Mitton and Mary Norman. In 1887 she married Charles Richard Morris at Hindmarsh, South Australia. Charles was a timber merchant and businessman; later he became the Mayor of Port Adelaide and was a member of the Legislative Council in South Australia. During her life she was Mayoress of Port Adelaide; Chairman of the women's branch of the Liberal Federation; President of the Liberal Women's Education Association; Vice-President of the National Council of Women in South Australia; President of the Travellers' Aid Society; a member of the Picture Censorship Board, and on the executive of the League of Nations and the Workers' Educational Association. Emma also worked towards the establishment of the Unley Soldiers' Memorial Garden and Heywood Park.

Berthe Julie Lucie Mouchette (1846-1928)

Berthe Mouchette was born in Forcalquier, France, the daughter of Louis Jean-Marie Lion and Anne Deguilhem Pemilhat. She studied art in Paris. In 1872, she married Nicolas Emile Mouchette. In 1881, together with her husband and her sister Marie Lion (see entry above), Madam Mouchette sailed for Melbourne, Victoria. After her husband died in 1884, she and her sister Marie Lion (see entry above) in the following year bought a girls' boarding school, 'Oberwyl' which they ran, and where they conducted art and linguistic classes. They also commenced the first Alliance Francais in Melbourne in 1890. With the loss of capital due to the Depression of the 1890s and poor decisions regarding the purchase of land and following the sale of the school and their artwork, Madam Mouchette and her sister moved to Adelaide. It was at Madam Mouchette's art studio in Currie Street, Adelaide that the Women's Non-Party Association (as the Women's Political Association) held their meeting to discuss the establishment of the organisation. The sisters were early members. They both spent time overseas including voluntary war work during the First World War but came back to Adelaide to live. In 1922 Madam Mouchette returned to France following the death of her sister in Adelaide earlier that year. She remained in France where she died in 1928.

Grace Emily Munro (1879-1964)

Grace Munro was born at Gragin, Warialda, New South Wales the daughter of George Hollinworth Gordon, a grazier, and Eliza Frances Macdonald. In 1898 she married Hugh Robert Munro, a pastoralist. She was the organising secretary and later president of the Australian Army Medical Corps' comforts fund in 1915 and worked for the Red Cross during the First World War. She became a serving sister of St John of Jerusalem and assisted returning servicemen. In 1922 she helped establish the Country Women's Association in New South Wales and became its inaugural President. She was made an Officer of the Order of St Jerusalem in 1929, and in 1935 was awarded an MBE for her voluntary work.

Ethel Richmond Naylor (1875-1950)

Ethel Naylor was born in Adelaide the daughter of Alexander MacKenzie Wilson and Emma Graham. In January 1916 she married Henry Darnley Naylor in Adelaide – his first wife had died in 1913. Ethel had been a nurse prior to her marriage. Cambridge educated Naylor was Professor of Classics at the University of Adelaide in 1907 and was previously at the University of Melbourne. In 1919, Ethel became a vice-president of the Women's Non-Party Association. In 1921, she was a South Australian delegate at the Geneva Conference; and was also involved in the League of Nations Union. In 1927 Naylor resigned from the University of Adelaide and moved to Geneva, Switzerland for several months in his work with the League of Nations. The family then moved to Cumberland, England where Naylor died in 1945. Ethel and her son John Stuart Darnley-Naylor returned to Australia, and she died in Adelaide in 1950.

Elizabeth Webb Nicholls (1850-1943)

Elizabeth Nicholls was born at North Adelaide, the daughter of Samuel Bakewell an early colonist and businessman, later Member of Parliament, and Mary Ann Pye. In 1870 she married Alfred Richard Nicholls. Alfred Nicholls was a Methodist lay preacher and worked with the firm G and R Wills Company rising to departmental manager. He died in November 1920. She became president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Adelaide, South Australian State President, and Australasian President of the organisation. Elizabeth was also on the Executive of the Women's Suffrage League and was a vice-president of the National Prohibition League. In 1900, Elizabeth was a delegate at the Peace Conference in Paris. She also represented the WCTU and the Australian Federation of Women Voters at the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship in Geneva in 1920. Elizabeth was also appointed a member of the Adelaide Hospital Board of Management in 1895 and remained on the board for twenty-six years. She was appointed as a Justice of the Peace. As well, she was a foundation member of the Democratic Women's Association, and a member of the Women's Non-Party Association.

Ethel Esther Page (1875-1958)

Ethel Page was born in Sydney, New South Wales the daughter of Frederick Blunt and Mary Richey. Ethel became a nurse. In 1906 she married Earle Christmas Grafton Page, knighted in 1938, and later Prime Minister for twenty days in 1939. He was a medical doctor. After their marriage, she became a member of the Country Party from 1920 until her death. She was also a

member of the Feminist Club, the Lyceum Club, Red Cross, National Council of Women in New South Wales, and the Country Women's Association.

Emily Harriet Pelloe (1877-1941)

Emily Pelloe was born in St Kilda, Victoria, the daughter of John Samuel Sims Sundercombe, bootmaker, property speculator and Councillor of St Kilda, Victoria, and Sarah Elizabeth Heard. Her father became insolvent in 1890 owing to the decrease in real estate values and the depression. She moved with her parents to Perth, Western Australia where in 1901 she married Theodore Parker Pelloe, a bank manager. Described as a botanist, artist and journalist, she wrote a column called 'Women's Interests' under the pseudonym of 'Ixia' for the *West Australian* newspaper in the 1920s. An accomplished horse woman, she had been president of the women's auxiliary of the West Australian Hunt Club. Also, a member of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club where she pursued her interest in botany and painting of wildflowers. As well she was a member of the Country Women's Association and a president of the Women Writers' Club.

Violet May Plummer (1873-1962)

Violet Plummer was born at Camperdown, New South Wales, the daughter of Isaac Arthur Plummer, a school inspector, and Eleanor Alice Newland. Violet commenced studying medicine at the University of Adelaide but owing to a hospital dispute she had to finish her training at the University of Melbourne. She was the first woman medical practitioner to practise in Adelaide. Violet was also a member of the Women's Non-Party Association, and in September 1910 offered her consulting rooms as a meeting venue for sub-committee meetings in the evenings. In 1924 the Lyceum Club, of which she was a foundation member, was moved to the top flat of Violet's residence on North Terrace, Adelaide. She was also a member of the Queen Adelaide Club, the Victoria League, and the Overseas League. As well, she was the inaugural president of the Medical Women's Society in Adelaide. Violet also influenced the establishment of St Ann's College at Brougham Place, North Adelaide which provided residential facilities for female students whilst studying at the University of Adelaide. (Businessman and pastoralist Sidney Wilcox contributed £5000 towards its establishment. Wilcox had previously sought Violet's advice when he asked her what he should do with his money as he had never married).

Leonora Ethel Polkinghorne (1873-1953)

Leonora Polkinghorne was born in Victoria, the daughter of Edward Twiss and Mary Jane Newman. She married Oswald Polkinghorne at Woodforde in the Norwood district of Adelaide in 1910. Leonora was a teacher at the time of her marriage. In 1909 she was the honorary treasurer of the Registered Governesses' Association that disbanded the following year. She became a foundation member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association (Women's Non-Party Association – WNPA), and later a vice-president of the organisation. Leonora left the WNPA on the conscription issue during World War One. She was also President of the Housewives' Association from 1928-1929. In 1930, with the support of the WNPA she stood unsuccessfully as an Independent candidate for the Sturt electorate in the State election. Leonora also wrote poems and stories under the *nom de plume* of Cecil Warren. She died in 1953 at Columbo when travelling by ship to Copenhagen, Denmark to represent the South Australian branch of the Union of Australian Women at the Women's World Congress. She was buried at Columbo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

Rhoda Emma Mary Preedy (1875-1942)

Rhoda Preedy was born in London in 1875, the daughter of William Henry Hewson and Emma Paice. In 1896 Rhoda married in Albert Preedy in Adelaide. Her husband was a painter and she a dressmaker. She later became a secretary. Rhoda was left to raise her children alone. In August 1912 she was granted a divorce from her husband who had moved to Victoria, Australia. In 1920 she was appointed as a Justice of the Peace. In 1928, Rhoda married Thomas Flint, a widower and chairman of an Adelaide business. He was also a member of the Adelaide Council representing the Gawler ward. Both Rhoda and her husband were members of the Liberal Club, later the Liberal and Country League. She also held the position of general secretary of the Liberal Federation, secretary of the Liberal Club, and secretary of Liberal Publishers during the absence of their secretary. At her death in 1942 it was noted she had given thirty years service to the League. Her daughter Winifred became a well-known Adelaide dentist.

Bessie Mabel Rischbieth (1874-1967)

Bessie Rischbieth was born in Adelaide, the daughter of William Earle and Jane Anna Carvosso. Her early childhood years were spent with her uncle and aunt, William Rounsevell, a South Australian Member of Parliament, and pastoralist, and his second wife Louisa Ann Carvosso. Her sister was Olive Evans – see her entry above. In 1898 in Adelaide, Bessie married Henry Wills Rischbieth, a wool merchant. His mother was a niece of George and Richard Wills, founders of G and R Wills Company. He later traded as Henry Wills and Company. The couple moved to Perth in 1899. She was a foundation member of the Children's Protection Society in 1906; inaugural vice-president and president of the Women's Service Guild (WSG) and involved in the establishment of free kindergartens in Western Australia. In 1920, she was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and in 1925 became Secretary of the Western Australian Women's Justice Association. In 1921 she was a foundation member and inaugural president of the Australian Federation of Women Voters (formerly the Australian Federation of Women's Societies). Bessie was also the honorary editor of the *Dawn*, the WSG's monthly journal. As well, she was co-founder of the British Commonwealth League of Women in 1925 and its inaugural vice-president. She was awarded an OBE in 1935. Bessie had also been a member of the National Council of Women, Kindergarten Union, Girl Guides, King Edward Memorial Hospital, Housewives' Association, Civilian Widows' Association, The Tree Society, Preservation of King's Park and the Committee for the Preservation of the Swan River. She donated money to various community organisations and the Women's Service Guilds. Bessie and her husband were childless.

Annie Ross (1883-1965)

Annie Ross was born at Koorunga, South Australia the daughter of Alexander Ross and Phillis Moody. She was appointed a nurse at the Industrial School on 22 March 1909, later becoming an attendant at the Girls Reformatory at Redruth near Burra. She returned to the Industrial School. She was attached to the State Children's Department and in November 1915 was appointed with Kate Cocks (see entry above) as a policewoman. In January 1927 she married Frederick Southall from Renmark at the Port Adelaide Methodist Church. As Mrs Fred Southall, she was appointed a Justice of the Peace in October 1927 and was noted as the first lady justice in the Renmark district. Annie also had an interest in the Girl Guide Association and was in charge of the 1st Renmark Company. She was also involved with the Mothers' and Babies' Health Association.

Frances Martha Ruffy Hill (1863-1955)

Frances Ruffy Hill was born in Chelsea, Middlesex, England, the daughter of Christopher Edgar Ruffy, merchant's clerk and accountant, and Mary Smith. In 1886 she married Harry Arthur Graham Hill in Suva, Fiji. The son of a planter, Hill worked for Customs in Fiji and later in Perth. The couple had lived in New South Wales and Victoria before making their home in Perth. Frances obtained a Diploma for Speech Training and Drama in Melbourne, and in 1896 she advertised as a teacher of Elocution and Gesticulation at the Fremantle Academy of Elocution in Western Australia. She was also a member of Western Australia's Women's Suffrage League Council, and later the Women's Franchise League, writing letters to the press in support of the franchise of women. Frances also claimed to have worked with Rose Scott for two years when interstate. (Rose Scott was an Australian women's right's activist who lived in New South Wales). Frances was a foundation member of the Women's Service Guild, later becoming its president. Also, she was a president of the Women Workers' Union prior to her journey to England in 1910. Frances stayed in Zurich, Switzerland for almost two years and returned to Australia in 1912.

Emily Brainerd Ryder (1844-1913)

Emily Ryder, also known as Emma Brainerd Ryder, she was born in Vermont, USA, the daughter of Otis Brainerd and Clarissa Baker. In January 1869 she married George Wellington Ryder. Her husband was a Professor of Music and died in 1871 aged in his early thirties in California. Emily did not remarry. Originally a teacher, she trained as a physician at the Medical College and Hospital for Women in New York, graduating in 1875 with a gold medal. She also received a diploma from the New York Ophthalmic Hospital, and travelled to Vienna, Austria for further study, and later to England. She practised in New York until 1888 when she left for India where she established a hospital and medical school for women in Bombay. Emily was a member of the New

York City Sorosis Club for professional and literary women which dated from 1868. In India in 1889 Esther founded the Bombay Sorosis Club with an initial membership of thirty. During the early 1890s she visited Australia where she conducted her women's health lectures and encouraged the foundation of the Karrakatta Club in Perth.

Alexandrine Seager (1870-1950)

Alexandrine Seager was born at Ballarat, Victoria, the daughter of William Laidlaw and Helen Mickel Dickson. In 1891 she married a widower, Clarendon James Seager. In 1908 they settled in Adelaide. Alexandrine ran the Scholastic Agency in Adelaide which supplied governesses and servants to country people. In 1909 the Governesses' Association was formed and Alexandrine was on the Executive Committee. Her husband had been a Life Assurance Agent, moving from town to town, and eventually living on his creditors. In June 1909 he faced court for insolvency. During the First World War Alexandrine established the Cheer-Up Society. She was the organiser and the secretary. Their three sons all enlisted. Alexandrine and her husband later moved to Kangaroo Island to live with one of their sons who was a soldier settler. They both died at Kingscote.

Emmeline Fanny Scott-Broad (1860-1933)

Emmeline Scott-Broad was born in Southwark, Surrey, England the daughter of Robert Ray and Elizabeth Broad. Her father was a medical practitioner and had married in Adelaide in 1853. When the family returned to Australia from England, they went to live in Victoria until her father's early death in 1883 after being thrown from a buggy. Emmeline later married Alfred Scott Broad in Adelaide in 1884. Alfred Scott Broad was a watercolour artist and later, an importer in Adelaide. Emmeline was a writer and artist, who also published in various daily newspapers. Her book *The Sex Problem* was published in 1911. She was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association. Emmeline and her husband had several children, including Hilda Scott Broad who mysteriously disappeared from her bedroom in July 1913 and was never seen or heard from again.

Elizabeth Georgina Soutar (1898-1993)

Elizabeth Georgina Soutar was born in Acton, Middlesex, England, and baptised at All Saints South Acton in November 1898, the daughter of George Olive Gray, a laundry proprietor, and Rosa Ann Brook. She married 29 December 1918 in London to Scottish-born James McGregor Soutar, a French polisher who was serving in the Australian military during World War One. The couple left England in December 1927 accompanied by their two children to live in South Australia. Her husband became an Alderman of the Town and City of Unley from 1933 to 1937, and Mayor in 1937 to 1939. She assisted her husband as Mayoress of Unley. He was also a councillor for the Goodwood South Ward from 1927 to 1932, and 1939 to 1949. Elizabeth has been described as a social reformer and was a member of the Women's Non-Party Association serving as assistant secretary and later a vice-president. She was also President of the Unley Women's Service Association, the Unley branch of the Mothers' and Babies' Health Association as well as the Northfield Auxiliary of the Red Cross.

Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910)

Catherine Spence was born near Melrose, Scotland, the daughter of David Spence and Helen Brodie. The family came to South Australia in November 1839. Catherine was variously a governess, teacher, and a writer. Much has been written about her and by her. Her niece was Lucy Spence Morice (see entry above). In 1859 after reading John Stuart Mills' review of Thomas Hare's proportional representation, Catherine worked for electoral reform. In 1892 she proposed a modified version of proportional representation which became known as the Hare- Spence system. In 1895 she formed the Effective Voting League and became its vice-president. She supported franchise for women and was a member and vice-president of the Women's Suffrage League. In 1895, together with Lucy Spence Morice, she founded the Women's League. In 1902, she was a shareholder together with Lucy in the all-female South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company. She was also co-founder and inaugural president of the Women's Non-Party Association (previously known as the Women's Political Association and the Women's Non-Party Political Association). Catherine Spence was also a member of the State Children's Council and the Destitute Board at the time of her death. She never married.

Millicent Fanny Preston Stanley (1883-1955)

Millicent Preston Stanley was born in Sydney, New South Wales the daughter of Augustine Gregory Stanley and Fanny Helen Preston. She married widower Crawford Vaughan in 1934. Vaughan's first wife Evelyn Vaughan died in 1927 (see entry below). He was a former Premier of South Australia. Millicent Preston Stanley was a member of the Women's Liberal League, President of the Feminist Club in 1914 and a member of the Nationalist Party when elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1925 until 1927. She was also amongst the first women in New South Wales appointed as a Justice of the Peace and became President of the Women's Justice Association.

Gertrude Anne Stanway-Tapp (1866-1926)

Gertrude Stanway-Tapp was born at Burghfield, Berkshire, England, the daughter of Alfred Stevenson and Ann Wheddon. She married Percy Stanway-Tapp, an artist, in 1900 in Christ Church, Kensington, England. Gertrude was an author and wrote poems and letters to the press. She was a member of the Girls' Friendly Society in Perth, and a foundation and committee member of the Women's Service Guild. As well, she was a member of Western Australia's National Council of Women, and a member of the Women's Commonwealth Patriotic Association. Gertrude was also a member of the Karrakatta Club, and the Theosophical Society. She died at Fremantle after contracting typhoid on a trip with her husband to India.

Harriet Adelaide Stirling (1878-1943)

Harriet Stirling was born in London the daughter of Edward Charles Stirling (later Sir Charles), surgeon, and Jane Gilbert. She was interested in the welfare of babies and children. She became the first woman to be appointed as President of the State Children's Department in South Australia. In 1917, Harriet was appointed a Justice of the Peace, a position she resigned owing to ill-health in June 1942. She had been a member of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board, resigning in 1941 for health reasons; was a foundation member of the Lyceum Club, and the Babies' Aid Society. In 1917, together with Dr Helen Mayo and Annie Hornabrook, the Mareeba Babies' Hospital was established at Woodville. Also, with Dr Helen Mayo she set up a clinic which became the School for Mothers, and later the Mothers' and Babies' Health Association. In 1936 she was awarded an OBE. She died at Mount Lofty in May 1943 and was buried at North Road Cemetery. She never married.

Ada Marcella Street (1869-1954)

Ada Street was born in Bishop Auckland, Durham, England, the daughter of William James Hopper and Elizabeth Beacham. Ada arrived in Melbourne, Victoria in March 1871 with her parents and siblings. In 1894 she married Charles James Lee Street in Sydney. Her husband attended university in Sydney where he obtained a Master of Arts. He was a headmaster, and posted to Broken Hill, New South Wales where he remained until his transfer to Auburn, New South Wales in April 1926. Ada Street was the foundation president of the Country Women's Association branch in Broken Hill, as well as the President of the women's committee of the District Trained Nurses' Association. In January 1924 she spoke in Adelaide to the Women's Non-Party Association of her Country Women's Association work.

Lady Edeline Strickland (1870-1918)

Lady Strickland was born as Lady Edeline Sackville-West, the daughter of Reginald Windsor Sackville, the 7th Earl De La Warr, and Constance Mary Elizabeth Cochrane-Wishart-Baillie. In 1890 she married Sir Gerald Strickland. Her husband became the Governor of Tasmania from 1904 to 1909; Western Australia from 1909 to 1913; and New South Wales from 1913 to 1917. He was also Prime Minister of Malta from 1927 to 1932. She encouraged the formation of the National Council of Women in Western Australia in 1911 and became its inaugural President. Lady Strickland was later president of the New South Wales Red Cross. The Lady Edeline Hospital, at Rose Bay, New South Wales was also named after her. She died at Villa Bologna, Malta in December 1918 where ill-health interrupted her journey to England.

Rhoda Florence Stuart (ca 1872-1932)

Rhoda Stuart was born in Brighton, England, the daughter of Joseph Silver Collings and Mary Ann Dyke. The family emigrated to Queensland in 1883. In 1895, she married John (Julian) Alexander Salman Stuart in Brisbane, Queensland, and they moved to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. He was a unionist and labour journalist. Rhoda was an ardent supporter of the enfranchisement of women. She contributed newspaper items using the pseudonyms of 'Hypatia' and 'Adohr' for the *Westralian Worker* of which her husband was editor 1903-1906. The paper was relocated to Perth in 1912.

Margaret Barr Tennant (1867-1954)

Margaret Tennant was born at Mount Wedge, Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, the daughter of John Love and Jessie Aitken Tennant. In 1898 she married John Tennant, pastoralist of Princess Royal Station near Burra. Margaret was a foundation member of the Red Cross and the Country Women's Association at Burra. She was a sister of Elizabeth Haigh Bowman (see entry above), President of the National Trust of South Australia, and was instrumental in the formation of the Country Women's Association at Burra together with Mary Warnes in 1926 (see entry below).

Violet Ellen Anstey Tillard (1874-1922)

Violet Tillard was born in India the daughter of George Henry Tillard and Louisa Fanny Anstey. Violet trained as a nurse at Poplar and Great Ormond Street Hospitals. She went to the USA for three years to care for a paralysed boy. Violet was a member of the Women's Freedom League in England and was one of the women imprisoned at Holloway in 1908 for their involvement in chaining themselves to the Ladies' Gallery grille of the House of Commons. She became a friend of Muriel Matters (see entry above) and they both visited Australia in 1910. In 1918 she became the General Secretary of the No Conscription Fellowship in England. She was also a member of the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee which aimed to help famine affected people. In 1921 Violet went to Russia, contracted Typhus, and died there in February 1922.

Amy Louisa Tomkinson (1856-1943)

Amy Tomkinson was born in Adelaide, the daughter of Samuel Tomkinson and Louisa MacDermott. Her father was a member of the Legislative Council in South Australia. Amy was an inaugural member and vice-president of the Women's Non-Party Political Association, later the Women's Non-Party Association. She was also a committee member on the Aborigines Protection League, the Adelaide Women's Club, and the School for Mothers. Amy was also a committee member of the South Australian branch of the League of Nations Union and was appointed librarian in 1928, as well as a member of the South Australian Branch of the British Science Guild. She was also a vice-president of the Adelaide Women's Club with Phebe Watson (see her entry below). She was a sister of Mary Harriet Tomkinson (see entry below).

Mary Harriet Tomkinson (1863-1943)

Mary Tomkinson was born in Adelaide, the daughter of Samuel Tomkinson and Louisa MacDermott. She was a sister of Amy Louisa Tomkinson (see entry above). Mary was appointed Treasurer of the Women's Non-Party Political Association in 1909. Later she became secretary of the Lady Victoria Buxton Girls Club until 1923 when ill-health forced her to relinquish this position. She was made a life member of the organisation in 1931 for her services to the committee. Mary was also Treasurer and later the President of the Travellers' Aid Society and became a member of the Adelaide Women's Club. She was also a member of the Army Nurses' Fund (formerly the Edith Cavell Army Nurses' Fund); Honorary Treasurer of the Adelaide Rescue Society (1928), and Member of the May Club (1899).

Violet Ethel Jane Twiss (1881-1974)

Violet Twiss was born in 1881 at Macclesfield, South Australia, the daughter of George Richard Lowe and Jane Reed. She married Edward George Newton Twiss, an accountant and later mining secretary, at North Adelaide in March 1905. He died on pneumonia in May 1920. Her sister-in-law was Leonora Twiss (later Polkinghorne whose entry is above). Little is known about Violet. In December 1926 she bought a house on Northcote Terrace, Medindie from Justice Thomas Slaney Poole, but sold this in September 1930. In the 1920s Violet was in partnership with Eva d'Arenberg (see her entry) with the Piccadilly Tea Rooms which were located on North Terrace. In May 1931 the tea rooms were relocated to Birks' Store in Rundle Street, Adelaide, probably following their

sale. Violet was appointed head. From 1936 she lived in Perth for several years and kept a boarding house. Her only child, a son, remained in Adelaide and served in the Second World War. Violet attended her son's marriage early in 1942 in Adelaide. By 1948 she had returned and was living at St Peters. She died in May 1974 and is buried at North Road Cemetery.

May Barron Vallance (1885-1952)

May Vallance was born at East Retford, Nottinghamshire, England in 1885, the daughter of Charles Aspinall Barron, an accountant, and his wife Sarah Elizabeth Smith. May trained as a nurse at both the Halifax Royal and the City of London Hospitals, possibly as both a general nurse and midwife as she is referred to as Double Certificated in some press reports. In 1911 she was working at the Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester. She may have arrived, as a single woman, in Western Australia in 1912 per the SS *Runic*. She married Joseph Barron in 1915 in Western Australia and they had two daughters. May was an early supporter of the Government maternity hospital which became the King Edward Memorial Hospital, and later a President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the Youth League of Citizenship. She was also State president of the Women's Service Guilds and appointed a Justice of the Peace serving in the Married Women's Court. May also served as President of the short-lived Nedlands Guild. As well, she was secretary of the Australian Aborigines Amelioration Association. She died in February 1952 in a private hospital in Subiaco.

Dorothy Vaughan (1881-1974)

Dorothy Vaughan was born at Norwood, South Australia, the daughter of Alfred Vaughan and Louisa Williams. Dorothy joined the United Labor Party in 1910. She was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1917 and became a member of the Women's Justice Association. Dorothy was also a member of the Women's Non-Party Association and assisted in re-drafting their platform in 1912. She was also a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In 1916, she was appointed to the State Children's Council. In 1927 she became a member of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board. Dorothy was a sister of Crawford Vaughan and Howard Vaughan. She was also co-founder and first secretary of the Women's Political Education Association; member of the Housewives' Association; a member of the National Council of Women, and a director of the Adelaide Co-operative Society Limited.

Evelyn Maria Vaughan (1877-1927)

Evelyn Vaughan was born at Canowie in South Australia's mid-north, the daughter of Thomas Goode and Margaret Wilson. She married Crawford Vaughan in 1906 at Norwood. Crawford Vaughan, Member of Parliament was South Australia's Premier 1915-1917. Evelyn supported her husband's political career. She was an early member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association (later the Women's Non-Party Association), and a member of the British Red Cross. Evelyn was also a member of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia. A pianist, author and public speaker, she received an OBE in 1920. Evelyn, her husband, and daughter moved to Sydney where she died in 1927.

Ellinor Gertrude Walker (1893-1990)

Ellinor Walker was born in Melbourne the daughter of Arthur Walker and Frances Sophie Sinclair. In her late teens, together with a friend, Ellinor formed a group to study politics and the value of using the vote. In 1914 she joined the Women's Non-Party Political Association (later the Women's Non-Party Association or WNPA), and also the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In 1917 she studied at the Adelaide Kindergarten Training School whose principal was Lillian de Lissa (see entry above). Ellinor opened her own Montessori school at Fullarton. She was also secretary of the Australian Federation of Women Voters. In 1971, she received an OBE in 1971. In 1979 she wrote a valedictory address on the cessation of the Women's Non-Party Association, by then known as the League of Women Voters. During her time with the WNPA, she was variously its secretary and a vice-president.

Mary Jane Warnes (1877-1959)

Mary Warnes was born at Fullarton, South Australia the daughter of Thomas Fairbrother, a businessman in Adelaide and his wife Jane Clarke. Mary moved from Adelaide to Burra after her

marriage in 1900 at Unley to Isaac Warnes, a sheep farmer near Burra. She became the vice-president of the Burra Women's Liberal Union branch during World War One; President of the Leighton Ladies' Guild from 1917 to the 1930s. Together with Elizabeth Bowman (see entry above), Mary was instrumental in establishing a Burra branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA) in 1926. She became inaugural president, and later State president of the CWA from 1929 to 1941.

Phebe Naomi Watson (1876-1964)

Phebe Watson was born in Adelaide, the daughter of Edward Watson and Sarah Ann Goldsmith. Her Christian name was also spelt Phoebe. She trained as a teacher in 1897 and eventually became a lecturer at the Teachers' College in Adelaide. She retired from teaching in 1936. Phebe was a co-vice-president with Amy Tomkinson (see entry above), and later president of the Adelaide Women's Club; secretary of the Women Teachers' Association which changed its name in 1915 to the Women Teachers' Progressive League; and secretary of the Children's Patriotic Fund during the First World War. She was also a member of the Women's Non-Party Association.

Annie Beatrice Whitham (1874-1948)

Annie Whitham was born at Norwood, South Australia, the daughter of Charles Lawrence Whitham and Catherine Mary Richards. Her father was initially a Unitarian minister but later became a school inspector in South Australia. She was also known as Nan. Annie studied teaching from 1892 to 1896 in Adelaide and graduated in 1897 as a teacher but resigned in 1904. She also attended the University of Adelaide and gained a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1915, she was appointed by the Public Library Board as the superintendent of the Children's Library. An inaugural member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association, later the Women's Non-Party Association (WNPA), she was its secretary for nine years. In 1916 she became a vice-president of the Workers' Education Association. As well she was a member of the Lyceum Club. In 1926 she represented the WNPA in Paris at the Conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance.

Maude Mary Wilcher (1879-1951)

Maude Wilcher was born in Long Crichel, Dorset, UK, she was baptised 12 October 1879, the daughter of Edward Rossiter, (a farmer employing several men), and Marian Eliza Hodges. It is unknown when she arrived in Australia. She married Lewis George Wilcher in Western Australia in December 1907. Maude had been a nurse at the Fremantle Hospital in Western Australia. Her husband was the superintendent and headmaster of the Swan Boys' Orphanage in Western Australia. He died in late November 1909 at Swan, Western Australia leaving her with an eleven-month-old son, Lewis Charles. On 1 August 1916 Maude was appointed as a woman police constable in South Australia after having joined the Children's Welfare Department as a probation officer. In June 1940 she retired from the police force. She had been a member of the Social Service Council and the National Council of Women. At some stage, she returned to England where she died in January 1951. Her son, a former student of St Peters College in Adelaide, was a Rhodes Scholar, and after his 1935 marriage he moved from Melbourne to Oxford to live and was serving a period as principal of the Gordon Memorial College, Khartoum at the time of his mother's death.

Adelaide Maria Frances Wilkinson (1871-1933)

Adelaide Wilkinson was born at Angaston, South Australia, the daughter of Matthew Nettell, a blacksmith, and Grace Martin Wills. She married Charles Drew Wilkinson, a chemist, at Unley, South Australia in 1899. He was the son of Thomas Wesley Wilkinson, store owner at Koorunga (Burra), and chemist. Adelaide was a member of the Liberal and Country League in Burra, including as vice-president; and a member of the Red Cross Circle as well as the Country Women's Association (CWA). In December 1926 a room at the store she and her husband owned became the first Rest Room of the Burra CWA.

Margaret Wragge (1865-1956)

Margaret Wragge was born at Aberdour, Fife, Scotland, daughter of William Simpson Craig and Frances Margaret Morrison. She married Walter Wragge, a clergyman and Christian Socialist at Trinity Church, Bedford, UK in June 1894. Her husband was appointed warden and tutor at St

Barnabas' College at North Adelaide in 1907. In 1910 Margaret was appointed to the State Children's Council, replacing Catherine Helen Spence who had died. She remained in this position until resigning in April 1916 to return to England with her husband. Margaret was also an early member of the Women's Non-Party Association and its President 1913-1916. She also wrote letters in her various capacities to the press.

Jeanne Forster Young (1866-1955)

Jeanne Young was born at Unley, South Australia, as Sarah Jane Forster to John Goodman Forster and Sarah Jane Jervis. In 1889 she married, as Sarah Jeanne Forster, to journalist Alfred Howard Young. She was a writer and journalist. In 1896, she worked with Catherine Helen Spence (see entry above) in support of proportional representation, and in 1897 became secretary of the Proportional Representation League, later known as the Effective Voting League. After Catherine Spence's death in 1910, Jeanne initiated the C H Spence Scholarship for Women. She also completed Spence's autobiography. In 1917 she was appointed a Justice of the Peace. In 1918 Jeanne unsuccessfully stood for parliament as a non-party candidate. Later, Jeanne was appointed the only female member of the board of governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery in Adelaide. In the 1930s she became president of the Women's Democratic Association. She also stood for the senate in 1937 elections. In 1938 she was awarded an OBE for her philanthropic work.

APPENDIX 2: SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA: PATRIOTIC ORGANISATIONS 1918

Source: South Australian Patriotic Organisations from unpublished data National Archives of Australia, South Australian Patriotic Funds Contributors A2487/1 21/19359; State Records of South Australia. State War Council of South Australia GRG32/20, in the possession of Professor Melanie Oppenheimer.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FUND NAME	NAME OF SECRETARY OR ORGANISER	MALE/FEMALE SECRETARY OR ORGANISER
The Mayor's Patriotic Fund		Not stated
Belgian Relief Fund	Mr J A Riley	Male
Servian and Polish Relief Funds	Register Newspaper, Grenfell St., Adelaide	Not stated
Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Fund		Not stated
Red Cross Society	Miss H (?) K Thomas	Female
Trench Comforts' Fund (TCF) (League of Loyal Women)	Miss E W Wyatt; Miss C Clayton	Female
Children's Patriotic Fund (State School Children)	Miss A L Miethke	Female
Returned Sailors' & Soldiers' Imp League. (SA Branch)	Mr A R G Fearby	Male
YMCA (Army and Navy Dept).	Mr M Maddern	Male
Soldiers' Home League	Mr C J Thomas	Male
Cheer-Up Society	Mrs A Seager	Female
SA Soldiers' Fund (Australia Day Fund)	H E Winterbottom	Male
Wattle Day League	Miss Higgins	Female
Navy League	Mrs R Preedy	Female
French Red Cross Society	Mr J W Canaway	Male
Societe D'Assistance Maternelle et Infantile	Miss Borthwick	Female
Church of England Aust. Fund for Soldiers	Mr E Povey	Male
Army Nurses Fund	Mrs Jas. Wilson	Female
3 rd Light Horse Comforts' Fund	Miss Johnson	Female
9 th Light Horse, T C Fund	Miss G A Kepert	Female
10 th & 50 th Batt T C Fund	Miss Aird	Female
12 th Batt. T C Fund	Miss F Aird	Female
16 th & 48 th Batt Trench Comforts' Fund	Miss Bayly	Female
27 th Batt TCF	Miss I G Lewis	Female
32 nd Batt, TCF	Mrs M Lewis	Female
"Ex Dodo", "Con Amore", Branches, 32 nd Batt	Miss Cass; Miss F M Nelson	Female
43 rd Batt Trench Comforts' Fund	Miss Trott	Female
Artillery TCF,	Mrs J M Woodcock	Female
8 th Machine Gun Club, TCF	Mrs Basedow	Female
3 rd Field Engineers, TCF	Miss A Poulton	Female
Flying Corps TCF	Miss J Wigg	Female
Army Medical TCF	Mrs A M Cudmore	Female

11 th Field Ambulance TCF	Mrs J F Clarke	Female
Army Service Corps TCF	Mr H W Compton	Male
Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Fund	State War Council, Adelaide	Not stated
Edith Cavell Army Nurses' Fund	Mrs A W Hill	Female

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FUND NAME	NAME OF SECRETARY OR ORGANISER	MALE/FEMALE SECRETARY OR ORGANISER
Belgian Relief Fund	West Australian Newspaper Company, Perth	Not stated
Australian Red Cross Society (WA Branch)	[Miss] E D Abel	Female
Bindoon-Chittering Patriotic League	Mrs D H Morley	Female
Belmont Cheer-Up Society	Mrs Shortland-Jones	Female
Busy Bees	Mrs J M Prior	Female
Bridgetown Returned Soldiers' Welcome Association	[Mr] A Waddington, Esq	Male
Broome Boys' Repatriation Committee	[Mr] H Dyson	Male
Church of England Army and Navy Institute	Mr Pady	Male
Collie Soldiers' Welcome Committee	Mr T Burgess and G Young	Males
Croix Rose (WA Branch)	Mrs F B Creath	Female
Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association (Perth Branch)	Mr Buscombe	Male
Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association (Fremantle Branch)	[Mr] F J Kestel	Male
Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association (Subiaco Branch)	[Mr] W Mell	Male
Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association (Claremont Branch)	A M Jackman	?
Church of England Australian Fund for Soldiers	Rev F T Bowen	Male
Dumbleyung Returned Soldiers' Provident Association	Rev W E Freeman	Male
Denmark District Soldiers' Welcome Committee	Mr Stanley Pember	Male
Fremantle District Unemployment Fund and Distress Fund	Hon F A Baglin	Male
French Red Cross Society, WA Branch	[Mr] Vincent J Matthews	Male
Geraldton Lonely Soldiers' League	Mrs Clarence D Brown	Female
Geraldton Patriotic Fund	Rev J G Jenkin	Male

Geraldton Distress Fund	Rev J G Jenkin	Male
Katanning & District Returned Soldiers' & Sailors' Provident Association	[Mr] F C Piesse	Male
Montenegrin Red Cross and Relief Fund	West Australian Newspaper Company, Perth	Not stated
Mt Hawthorn Ladies Patriotic Guild	Mrs H P Partington	Female
Manjimup & Districts Returned Soldiers Welcome & Patriotic Association	[Mr] J J Flanagan	Male
Mt Morgan's War Fund	A H Clark	?
Narrogin Branch Soldiers Repatriation Committee	A Manning	?
Norseman War Patriotic Fund	[Mr] P S Cameron	Male
Northampton Disabled Returned Soldiers' Fund	[Mr] G S Green	Male
Serbian Red Cross Fund	S R Blandel	?
Victoria League and WA Division Australian Comforts Fund	Miss Alice Johnston	Female
War Patriotic Fund of WA	[Mr] I Crawcour	Male
Wagin District Returned Soldiers' Provident Association	[Mr] R Gladstone Esq	Male
Williams War Emergency League	[Mr] H V Carne	Male
WA Spinning Association	Mary E Southern	Female
WA Sandbag Committee	[Mr] W D Chase	Male
WA Returned Invalid War Nurses' Fund	[Mr] C H Lamb Esq	Male
Soldiers' Welcome Committee	Mr J Hammill	Male
YMCA	[Mr] A S Wilson Esq	Male
Broomehill Soldiers' Sailors' & Nurses' Relatives Association	[Mr] E Hinde Esq	Male
Leederville Retired Soldiers' and Sailors' Welcome Home Committee	Mr H J Holland	Male
State School Empire Fund	Director of Education, Perth	Male
Fund for the Starving Children of Lebanon	[Mr] T Raad	Male
Jewish Community Russian and Polish Relief Fund	[Mr] M Gild	Male

APPENDIX 3: DISTRIBUTION OF THE *Rural Review*

NORTH WEST and EAST SOUTH

Throughout the whole length and breadth of the State, goes the

RURAL REVIEW

To all the principal towns, to isolated stations and farms the “RURAL REVIEW” is despatched each week. Here is a brief list showing where the majority of subscribers are located –

Auburn, Arno Bay, Ardrossan, Arthurton, Angaston, Alice Springs,	Nackara, Naracoorte,
Beetaloo Valley, Bendleby, Belton, Booborowie, Binnum, Bute, Booleroo Centre, Broken Hill, Barron Creek, Beltana,	Oodlawirra, Oodnadatta,
Crystal Brook, Caltowie, Clare, Cowell, Carpa, Cleve, Carrow, Colton, Ceduna, Curramulka, Cockburn,	Pekina, Peterborough, Parnaroo, Port Augusta, Pinnaroo, Pt. Pirie, Paskeville, Pt. Lincoln,
Elbow Hill, Edithburgh,	Quorn,
Frances,	Rhynie, Rudall, Robe,
Gulnare, Gladstone, Georgetown, Gawler,	Spalding, Sevenhills, Streaky Bay, Snowtown, Stansbury, Strathalbyn, Springton, Saddleworth,
Huddlestone, Hornsdale, Hallett, Hynam,	Tumby Bay, Tailem Bend, Tibooburra (.NS.W.),
Johnsburg, Jamestown,	Undalya, Ungarra,
Koolunga, Kooringa, Kybybolite, Kadina,	Victor Harbour [sic],
Lock, Lameroo, Lucindale,	Willowie, Wilmington, Wandearah East, Wolloway, Whyte Yarcowie, Watervale, Warrachie, Warooka, Worlds' End, Wirrabara, Wilcannia,
Melrose, Morchard, Mannanarie, Mintaro, Miltalie, Mangalo, Meningie, Minlaton, Moonta, Maitland, Murray Bridge, Mt. Barker, Monarto, Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Gambier, Marree, Millicent, Menindie.	Yongala, Yarcowie, Yabmana, Yeelanna, Yankalilla, Yorketown.

Source: 15 March 1935, *Rural Review*. Not all towns were in South Australia, for example Broken Hill, NSW; Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

APPENDIX 4: WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CWA BRANCHES ESTABLISHED 1924-1939

Place names, years of establishment and of disbandment of the CWA of Western Australia branches are taken from Rica Erickson, Beatrice Gibbings and Lilian Higgins, *Her Name is Woman*, The Country Women's Association of Western Australia, Perth, 1974. Information about places obtained from: Government of Western Australia, Landgate, 'Town Names' and 'Perth and surrounds suburbs names' <https://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/maps-and-imagery/wa-geographic-names/name-history> viewed 24 March 2019. Other sources used as indicated in the column 'Other'. Difficulties have arisen with distances from Perth owing to various means of travel used to get to these destinations. However, the distance given provides a general idea of how far away these places were from Perth.

PLACE	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT OF CWA BRANCH	LOCATION	YEAR CWA BRANCH KNOWN TO DISBAND	OTHER INFORMATION
Agnew	1932	Goldfields town officially proclaimed in 1936. 857 kms north east of Perth.	1955	'Goldmine to Close. Existence of Agnew in Jeopardy', <i>West Australian</i> , 24 January 1948, 3. 'No Title', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 6 February 1949, 18. The Sunday Times reported that 'Agnew's population has dropped from 150 to 25'. It is unusual if the town was closed in 1948 or 1949 that the CWA branch continued until 1955.
Ajana	1934	543 kms north of Perth in the northern wheatbelt. Gazetted in 1915.		Later became Ajana Binnu branch – date unknown but appears to be post 1939.
Albany	1935	Officially named in 1832. On the south coast, 416 kms from Perth.		
Ardath	1938	Originally named Kerkenin in 1914 but changed to Ardath in 1915. 253 kms east of Perth. On the railway line between Corrigin and Bruce Rock.	1962	
Armadale	1935	Railway station in 1893. Gazetted in 1909. 37 kms south west of Perth. Gazetted in 1830.		
Arrino	1932	Gazetted in 1904. 343 kms north of Perth.	1972	

Arthur River	1933	206 kms south east of Perth in the wheatbelt region. Established in the 1850s.		
Augusta	1933	Named in 1830. 316 kms south west of Perth on the coast.		
Baandee	1925	Is on the Great Eastern Highway near Doodlakine and between Kellerberrin and Merredin. Located 230 kms from Perth. Gazetted in April 1912.	1969	
Babakin	1933	Gazetted in 1914. On railway line between Corrigin and Bruce Rock. 255 kms south east of Perth.		
Badgebup, later Badgebup-Rockwell	1934	Badgebup gazetted in 1923, but in 1910 a railway siding. 320 kms south east of Perth. Rockwell refers to Rockwell Hall in the location.		Department of Western Australia, Heritage Council State Heritage Office, 'Rockwell Agricultural Hall' viewed http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/8adb2cf8-a62b-4374-bfc6-f4dba5afdb33 viewed 21 March 2019. Heritage website records: 'The name of Rockwell has been continued with both the CWA Branch and the Farmers' Federation Branch. They are still known as the Badgebup Rockwell members'.
Balingup	1932	Gazetted in 1898. 241 kms south of Perth.		
Ballidu	1928	217 kms north of Perth in the wheatbelt region. Gazetted in 1914.		
Beacon	1933	Gazetted in 1931. 310 kms north east of Perth in the wheatbelt area.		
Bencubbin	1932	272 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1917.		
Benger	1933	149 kms south of Perth. Established <i>circa</i> 1885.	1963	
Benjaberring	1924	193 kms north east of Perth. Wheatbelt town near Wyalkatchem.	1929	
Beverley	1925	Approximately 133 kms south east of Perth and 33 km south		Beverley History, Shire of Beverley, http://www.beverley.wa.gov.au/council/about-

		east of York in the Avon valley. Situated in the wheatbelt region. Townsite land set aside in 1830, but not established until 1868.		beverley/beverley-history.aspx viewed 18 March 2019.
Big Bell	1937	Mine developed in the 1930s. Town gazetted in 1936. 684 kms north east of Perth.	1939	Refer to http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/d38c2341-15fc-46f2-8c92-10433cfa9bfa viewed 24 January 2020.
Bilbarrin	1939	Gazetted as Wogerlin in 1914, and then Bilbarrin in 1916. On the Corrigin and Bruce Rock railway track. 244 kms east of Perth.	1942	
Bindi Bindi	1933	Railway siding and a farming locality in the wheatbelt region and gazetted as a town in 1947. 198 kms north east of Perth.		'Country News', <i>West Australian</i> , 15 August 1933, 3. Report of the formation of a CWA branch at Bindi Bindi, and to meet in the local hall.
Bodallin	1935	Gazetted in 1918. Railway siding between 1894 and 1897 and situated between Merredin and Southern Cross. 320 kms east of Perth.		
Bonnie Rock	1933	Gazetted in 1932. Wheatbelt region. 343 kms north east of Perth.	1940	
Borden	1936	Gazetted in 1916. 361 kms south east of Perth.		
Boulder	1938	Gazetted in 1896. Adjacent to Kalgoorlie. 597 kms east of Perth. Gold mining town.		
Bowgada	1935	Gazetted as Chubble in 1913, and changed to Bowgada in 1914. Northern wheatbelt region. 378 kms north of Perth.	1952	
Boyanup	1934	Gazetted in 1894. 195 kms south of Perth.		
Boyup Brook	1931	Gazetted in 1909. 269 kms south south east of Perth.		
Bridgetown	1937	Gazetted in 1868. 254 kms south of Perth.		

Brookton	1926	Situated between Beverley and Pingelly 138 kms east south east from Perth. An original station on the Great Southern Railway that opened in June 1889. Town gazetted in 1895 as 'Seabrook' but changed to Brookton in 1899. In the wheatbelt area.		
Broomehill	1937	Gazetted in 1890. 305 kms south east of Perth.		
Bruce Rock	1926	Gazetted in 1913. In the wheatbelt district. 243 kms east of Perth.		
Brunswick (Brunswick Junction)	1932	Established <i>circa</i> 1898. 163 kms south of Perth.		
Bunbury	1929	Gazetted in 1839. 168 kms south of Perth. Coastal town.		
Buntine	1937	Railway siding in 1913. Gazetted in 1916. 289 kms north east of Perth.		
Burakin	1937	Gazetted in 1928. Near eastern wheatbelt. 240 kms north east of Perth.		
Burracoppin	1929	Gazetted in 1891. 283 kms east of Perth.	1967	
Busselton	1931	European settlement from 1834. Coastal town. 221 kms south west of Perth.		
Byford	1935	Gazetted as Beenup in 1906. Name changed in 1920. Railway siding. 45 kms south east of Perth.		
Cadoux	1930	Railway siding in 1927 and town gazetted in 1929. 211 kms north east of Perth.		
Calingiri	1925	143 kms north east of Perth near New Norcia. Gazetted in 1917.		
Campion	1932	[Not listed on Landcare database.] Established <i>circa</i>	1935	Country Women's Conference', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 18 August 1935, 22. This article refers to the

		1920. 325 kms north east of Perth.		loss of Goomarin (<i>sic</i>), Wahkinup (<i>sic</i>), Campion, Mollerin (<i>sic</i>), and Jingymia stating 'These branches were very small and scattered, and in most instances the few remaining members were absorbed by the surrounding branches'.
Canterberra = Northcliffe	1934	[Not listed on Landcare database.] Northcliffe – see below.	1937	<p>'Country Women', <i>South Western Times</i>, 4 March 1936, 4. 'The resignations of the Canterberra, Northcliffe and Westcliffe branches were received with regret. It was stated that owing to the exodus of people from these areas, the branches had not a sufficient membership to justify their existence'.</p> <p>Also refer to 'Country Women's Conference', <i>Sunday Times</i>, 18 August 1935, 22, which suggests Canterberra was south of Perth. This article also refers to the loss of Goomarin (<i>sic</i>), Wahkinup, Campion, Mollerin (<i>sic</i>), and Jingymia stating 'These branches were very small and scattered, and in most instances the few remaining members were absorbed by the surrounding branches'.</p>
Capel	1934	Surveyed in the 1870s. Name changed from Coolingup to Capel in 1898. 196 kms south of Perth.		
Carnamah	1931	Gazetted in 1913. 304 kms north east of Perth in the wheatbelt area.		
Carnarvon	1938	Gazetted in 1883. 907 kms north west of Perth.		
Caron-Bunjil	1937	Caron gazetted in 1921. 344 kms north east of Perth. Bunjil is 11 kms from Caron.		
Clackline	1931	Gazetted in 1896. 79 kms north east of Perth.	1933	
Collie	1930	202 kms south south east of Perth. Originally a coal mining district. Gazetted in 1897.		

Cookernup	1932	Gazetted in 1894. 130 kms south of Perth.	1938	
Coolgardie	1930	510 kms east of Perth on the goldfields. Gazetted in 1893.		
Coolup	1938	Gazetted in 1899. 98 kms south of Perth.		
Coomberdale	1933	Site of a railway siding in 1895. Wheatbelt district. 190 kms north of Perth.	1944	
Corrigin	1929	First gazetted as Dondakin in 1913, and changed to Corrigin in 1914. 229 kms east of Perth.		
Cottesloe later Cottesloe-Claremont	1931	First subdivision 1886. Cottesloe now a beachside suburb of Perth. Claremont a nearby suburb to Cottesloe, originally a railway station in the 1880s. Both are 11 kms and 9 kms respectively from Perth.		
Cowaramup	1934	Gazetted in 1925. 255 kms south west of Perth and near Busselton.		
Cranbrook	1933	Gazetted in 1899. 330 kms south east of Perth near Albany.		
Cue	1937	652 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1893. Gold mining district.		
Cunderdin	1929	Central wheatbelt 156 kms east of Perth. Gazetted in 1906.		
Dale. Possibly known as the Dale River Branch.	1930	122 kms east of Perth. 32 kms from Beverley.	1934	'Country Women's Assn. Dale River Branch', <i>Beverley Times</i> , 27 April 1934, 2.
Dalwallinu	1929	251 kms north north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1914.		
Dardanup	1937	Gazetted in 1923. 172 kms south of Perth and near Bunbury.		
Darkan	1938	Gazetted in 1906, but European settlers in the area in the 1860s. 211 kms south east of Perth.		

Denmark	1933	Gazetted in 1909. 51 kms west of Albany, and 420 kms south east of Perth.		
Dinninup	1934	17 kms east of Boyup Brook, and 278 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1915.		
Dixvale	1934	295 kms south east of Perth. Site of a group settlement (Number 5 group).	Amalgamated with Yanmah <i>circa</i> 1936.	Dixvale listed in the Shire of Manjimup Municipal Heritage Inventory, https://www.manjimup.wa.gov.au/our-documents/town-planning/Documents/Municipal%20Heritage%20Inventory%202008.pdf viewed 21 March 2019. See also 'Country News', <i>West Australian</i> , 29 September 1925, 4, re Dixvale (No. 5 Group). 'Yanmah C.W.A.', <i>Manjimup Mail and Jardee-Pemberton-Northcliffe Press</i> , 12 June 1936, 8.
Dongara	1934	351 kms north north west of Perth. European settlers in the 1850s, but town surveyed in 1873.	1939	
Donnybrook	1925	210 kms south of Perth. Fruitgrowing district. Gazetted in 1894.		
Doodlakine	1925	218 kms east north east of Perth in the eastern wheatbelt area. Gazetted in 1894. Another section gazetted in 1899 following the opening of the railway to the goldfields.		
Dowerin	1929	Railway town in the wheatbelt region. Gazetted in 1907. 157 kms north east of Perth.		
Dumbleyung	1930	Gazetted in 1907. 269 kms south east of Perth.		
Ejanding	1938	Originally a railway siding, 20 kms north east of Dowerin, 182 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1930.	1950	

Esperance	1938	Gazetted in 1893. 713 kms south east of Perth, and on Esperance Bay.		
Forest Hill-Denbarker	1939	Forest Hill is located 382 kms south east of Perth, and near Albany. It is 11 kms from Denbarker.		
Fremantle	1939	European settlers 1829. 23 kms south west of Perth.		
Gabbin	1933	Gazetted in 1918. 255 kms north east of Perth.		
Gnowangerup	1930	345 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1908.		
Goomalling	1927	Gazetted in 1903 following the extension of a railway line in 1902 from Northam to Goomalling. Is in the central wheatbelt district 134 kms from Perth.	1937	'Country Women's Conference', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 18 August 1935, 22. This article refers to the loss of Goomarin (<i>sic</i>), Wahkinup (<i>sic</i>), Campion, Mollerin (<i>sic</i>), and Jingymia stating 'These branches were very small and scattered, and in most instances the few remaining members were absorbed by the surrounding branches'.
Gosnells	1936	European settlers from 1829. Gazetted in 1907. 19 kms south east of Perth.		
Grants Patch	1938	Near Ora Banda and Kalgoorlie. Gold mine.	1944	'A Lady's Letter', <i>Kalgoorlie Miner</i> , 14 October 1938, 7. Reference to the formation of the Grant's Patch CWA branch.
Grass Patch	1927	Gazetted in 1923. Located on the Esperance to Coolgardie Highway and 79 kms north of Esperance.		Probably the wrong town – maybe confused with Grants Patch – see above entry.
Greenbushes	1935	Gazetted in 1889. 238 kms south east of Perth.		
Gwalia	1939	828 kms east of Perth. A former gold-mining town.		Gwalia Ghost town and Museum, http://www.gwalia.org.au viewed 22 March 2019.
Harvey	1931	140 kms south of Perth. Private town from the 1890s. Railway station in 1893.		
Hines Hill	1928	240 kms east of Perth on the Great Eastern Highway.		

		Gazetted in 1910. In the wheatbelt district.		
Hyden	1936	339 kms east of Perth. Farming area in the 1920s and 1930s. Gazetted in 1932.		
Jardee	1933	Originally site of a railway siding named Jardanup in 1912. Serviced the No 1 stat Saw Mill built in 1912. Gazetted as Jardee in 1927.		
Jennacubbine	1933	Railway siding from 1902. Not gazetted until 1966. 116 kms north east of Perth, and between Northam and Goomalling.		
Jibberding	1938	314 kms north east of Perth. 38 kms from Wubin.		
Jingymia	1932	Area of wheat production. Railway siding in 1930. The Government failed to standardise the rail line in 1945 owing to a lack of traffic.* Located near Koorda which is 237 kms north east of Perth.	1935	Government of Western Australia, Heritage Council, State Heritage Office, 'Jingymia – Town and Siding Site', http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/d5e4fee6-b66b-47ba-9fad-338ec0d59924 viewed 22 March 2019. 'Country Women's Conference', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 18 August 1935, 22. This article refers to the loss of Goomarin (<i>sic</i>), Wahkinup (<i>sic</i>), Campion, Mollerin (<i>sic</i>), and Jingymia stating 'These branches were very small and scattered, and in most instances the few remaining members were absorbed by the surrounding branches'. * 'Lines in W.A. Non-Conversion Routes. Some Road Services Preferred', <i>West Australian</i> , 19 April 1945, 4.
Jitarning	1936	262 kms south east of Perth. Originally a railway siding. Gazetted in 1917.		
Kalannie	1931	Gazetted in 1929. 260 kms north east of Perth.		

Kalgoorlie	1935	596 kms east of Perth. Goldfields town. Town established in 1894.		
Karlgarin	1929	321 kms east south east of Perth. Soldier settlement area. Gazetted in 1931 despite the Karlgarin Progress Association in 1924 wanting the declaration of the townsite.		
Karloning	1935	325 kms north east of Perth. 32 kms from Mukinbudin. Wheatbelt region.		
Karragullen	1937	36 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1913.		
Karridale	1933	Karridale Mill established in 1884. Not gazetted as a town until 1979. 201 kms south west of Perth.		
Katanning	1930	295 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1898, although had a early railway station in 1889.		
Kellerberrin	1930	Railway station 1895. Gazetted in 1901. 203 kms east of Perth.		
Kintyre (Group 121)	1933	Near Northcliffe 345 kms south of Perth. Part of a Group Settlement Scheme in the 1920s.		Branch Reports', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 26 November 1933, 4. 'A branch of the C.W.A. has been formed at Group 121, which has been named Kintyre, and has a membership of 10'. For further information refer to: 'Group Settlement Progress', <i>West Australian</i> , 4 February 1924, 8; 'Down South-West. Settlements of Interest', <i>West Australian</i> , 16 June 1924, 8.
Kirup	1938	215 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1901.		
Kodj Kodjin	1928	[Not listed on Landcare database.] 247 kms north east of Perth. On the Merredin-Dowering rail line. Wheat growing area near Kellerberin.	1962	State Library of Western Australia, Post Office Directories, 1893-1949, http://slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/wa-heritage/post-office-directories viewed 18 March

				2019 . 1915 Directory notes 'Kodj Kodjin, see Kellerberrin'.
Kojonup	1932	Originally a military post in 1837 followed by European settlement. 263 kms south east of Perth on road to Albany.		
Kondinin	1926	Gazetted in 1915. Located 279 kms east of Perth in the wheatbelt region.		
Koolan Island	1936	1900 kms north of Perth, located off the coast of Western Australia. Site of iron ore deposits with first mining leases in 1907. Although town gazetted in 1962.		BHP Minerals, 'The Koolan Island History – end of an era', YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92krWnUBvA4 viewed 23 March 2019.
Koorda	1931	236 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1917.		
Kukerin	1935	309 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1912.		
Kulin	1929	277 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1914.		
Kulja	1931	Gazetted in 1928 although farmers settled in the area in the early 1920s. 252 kms north east of Perth.		
Kununoppin	1935	247 kms north east of Perth. Wheatbelt town, site of a railway siding. Gazetted in 1911.		
Lake Brown	1932	307 kms north east of Perth. Initially gazetted as Kalkalling in 1924 and later changed to Lake Brown. Site of a railway station.		
Lake Carmody	1934	Salt lake that gave name to subdivision of farming blocks open for selection in 1928. Part of the 'new line of advance in the general trek eastward into the drier areas'. Of the Lake Carmody CWA branch, it was stated in 1936: the 'branch, owing to the hard times and long		'The Wheat Belt. New Line of Advance', <i>West Australian</i> , 19 November 1928, 11. 'Country Women's Association', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 10 May 1936, 3. Meeting held at Hyden at which Lake Carmody members attended. It was reported: 'This branch, [Lake Carmody] owing to the hard times and long distances, had not

		distances, had not met for some time'. Located 381 kms east of Perth.		met for some time. Some members had come 40 miles in trucks'.
Lake King	1938	457 kms south east of Perth. Settled in 1928 as part of the Great Settlement Scheme. Gazetted in 1936.		Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre, 'Lake King', https://www.wheatbelttourism.com/where-to-stay/lake-king/ viewed 23 March 2019.
Lake Varley	1936	416 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted as Varley in 1939.		
Lakeside	1939	New branch of Lakeside announced in April 1939.		'Country Social Jottings', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 2 April 1939, 14.
Lakewood	1939	Located ten kms south east of Kalgoorlie and is now an abandoned goldfields town. Originally a railway station, it was surveyed in 1903 and known as Lakeside. Gazetted as Ngumballa in 1904, but local usage continued to refer to the place as Lakeside. There was another Lakeside near Wiluna, therefore, to avoid confusion, the Lakeside near Kalgoorlie was finally changed to Lakewood in 1947.		
Latham	1938	309 kms north of Perth. Gazetted in 1917.		
Leeds * (107 Group)	1932	Leeds Branch near Northcliffe. Northcliffe 366 kms south of Perth. Refers to the Leeds Settlement Group, Northcliffe.	** President, Mrs Downes. Mrs Grimshaw, President.	* For further information about Group Settlement and Leeds, refer to Mark Brayshay, 'Western Australia's interwar group settlement scheme, a case study of the Leeds Group, 1923-1938', in Roy Jones and Alexandre M A Diniz (eds), <i>Twentieth Century Land Settlement Schemes</i> , Taylor and Francis Ltd., London, 2018, 86-118. ** President Downes may have possibly been the wife of John Downes. Refer to 'Country Women', <i>West Australian</i> , 14 April 1933, 5.

				Also Mrs Grimshaw, President, refer to 'Country Women', <i>West Australian</i> , 30 November 1934, 5.
Maida Vale	1925	First settled in 1873. 22 kms from Perth, and near the Darling Ranges and in the Swan district. Had a separate listing in the Western Australian Post Office directories in 1928, but not from 1929.		State Library of Western Australia, Post Office Directories, 1893-1949, http://slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/wa-heritage/post-office-directories viewed 18 March 2019.
Mandogalup	1934	Suburb of Perth, gazetted in 1946. Previously known as 7 Mile Camp and Balmanup from 1923. 33 kms south of Perth.		
Mandurah	1936	70 kms south of Perth.		
Manjimup	1931	304 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1910.		
Manmanning-Booralaming	1934	202 kms north east of Perth. Railway siding in 1927. Gazetted in 1929.		
Marble Bar	1935	1476 kms north of Perth. Gazetted in 1893. Gold discovered in 1890.		
Margaret River	1931	277 kms south south west of Perth. Gazetted in 1913.		
Marindo	1933	CWA branch formed in May 1933. Located 247 kms north east of Perth.		'Country Women's Association', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 28 May 1933, 5.
Maya	1935	300 kms north north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1913.		
Meckering	1935	132 kms east north east of Perth. Railway siding in 1895. Gazetted as Beebering in 1895 and name changed to Meckering in 1897.		
Meekatharra	1938	765 kms north north east of Perth. On the Murchison goldfields. Gazetted in 1903. Railway station opened in 1910.		

Menzies	1936	728 kms east north east in the eastern goldfields. Gazetted in 1895.	1947	
Merredin	1927	Located 260 kms east of Perth on the Great Eastern Highway. Gazetted in 1891. Is in the Central wheatbelt region.		
Middlesex	1932	302 kms south of Perth, and near Manjimup. Part of the Group Settlement Scheme of the 1920s.		Middlesex 31, 'History', http://middlesex31.com.au/history/ viewed 24 March 2019.
Miling	1930	202 kms north north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1949, but site of a railway and settlement in 1926.		
Mingenew	1929	367 kms north of Perth. Gazetted in 1906 although early settlement in the 1890s.		
Minnivale	1938	180 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1911.		
Mollerin	1932	276 kms north east of Perth. Located in the Shire of Koorda, wheat growing area.	1935	Shire of Koorda, 'About Us – Shire Statistics and History', https://www.koorda.wa.gov.au/the-shire/your-council/shire-history.aspx viewed 24 March 2019. Country Women's Conference', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 18 August 1935, 22. This article refers to the loss of Goomarin (<i>sic</i>), Wahkinup (<i>sic</i>), Campion, Mollerin (<i>sic</i>), and Jingymia stating 'These branches were very small and scattered, and in most instances the few remaining members were absorbed by the surrounding branches'.
Moora	1929	172 kms north of Perth. Railway town, gazetted in 1895.		
Morawa	1932	370 kms north of Perth. Railway town, gazetted in 1913.		
Mount Barker	1938	359 kms south of Perth, and 50 kms north north west of Albany. Railway town in 1889. Gazetted in 1899.		

Mount Helena	1939	41 kms east of Perth near Mundaring. Originally known as Lion Hill, and name changed to Mount Helena in 1924.		
Mount Magnet-Boogardie	1937	Mount Magnet is located 569 kms north east of Perth. Gold found in the 1880s, and town gazetted in 1897. Boogardie, located 7 kms north west of Mount Magnet, was a gold mining site. Gazetted in 1898.		
Mount Palmer	1935	415 kms east of Perth. Gold found in the area in 1934.		
Mukinbudin	1929	293 kms east north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1922.		
Mullewa	1932	450 kms north of Perth. Railway town in 1894, and gazetted the same year.		
Mundaring	1938	Railway siding. First settlement in early 1880s. 34 kms east of Perth.		
Mundijong	1937	54 kms south of Perth. Originally named Jarradale Junction. Railway town. Named in 1893.		
Muntadgin	1932	293 kms east of Perth. Gazetted in 1925.	1942	
Nannup	1937	282 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1890.		
Naraling	1936	470 kms north of Perth. Gazetted in 1912.	1940	'Country Women's Association', <i>Western Mail</i> , 20 June 1940, 26. It was reported that they, together with Smiths Brook and Rothsay, had disbanded.
Narrogin	1929	192 kms south east of Perth. Railway town in 1889. Gazetted in 1897.		
Nevoria	1937	Probable gold mining from 1905. 10 kms south east of Marvel Loch which is 402 kms east of Perth.	1941	Mindat org, 'Nevoria Gold Mine', https://www.mindat.org/loc-16928.html viewed 24 March 2019.

Newdegate	1936	400 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1925.		
No. 1 State Mill = Dean Mill Also known as Deanmill.	1933	State sawmill constructed there in 1912. 297 kms south east of Perth, and 6.5 kms from Manjimup.	1935 (As Dean Mill branch 1949-1970)	Deanmill listed in the Shire of Manjimup Municipal Heritage Inventory, https://www.manjimup.wa.gov.au/our-documents/town-planning/Documents/Municipal%20Heritage%20Inventory%202008.pdf viewed 21 March 2019.
Norseman	1936	724 kms east of Perth. Gold mining town. Gazetted in 1895.		
North Baandee	1928	Near Kellerberin and 205 kms from Perth. Located 33 kms from Baandee.	1934	Australia's Guide Western Australia, https://www.australias.guide/wa/location/north-baandee/ viewed 18 March 2019.
North Dandalup	1934	71 kms south of Perth. Railway station in 1894. Land around the area privately owned. Not gazetted until 1972.		
Northam	1928	105 kms north west of Perth. Town surveyed in 1847.		
Northampton	1930	474 kms north north west of Perth. Gazetted in 1864. Service town for nearby mining district.		
Northcliffe	1932	366 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1924. Centre of a large group settlement scheme.	1936	'Country Women', <i>Harvey Murray Times</i> , 13 Mar 1936, 3. Report of the 'resignation' of the Northcliffe CWA branch.
Nukarni	1934	283 kms east north east of Perth. Railway siding. Gazetted in 1912.		
Nungarin	1924	271 kms east north east of Perth and 40 km from Merredin. Township gazetted in 1912. In the wheatbelt area.		
Nunyle	1933	97 kms north east of Perth. Near Toodyay.	1945	
Nyabing	1933	319 south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1912.		
Ora Banda	1937	662 east north east of Perth. Gold mining district. Gazetted in 1912. Near Grants Patch.	1966	

Peel Estate	1932	Earlier settlement scheme in 1828 devised by Thomas Peel. Later part of the Group Settlement Scheme of the 1920s which was eventually abandoned. 55 kms south of Perth and near Karnup.		'Group Settlements', <i>West Australian</i> , 1 January 1936, 5; 'Government Land. Blocks Open for Selection', <i>West Australian</i> , 25 January 1936, 4. Country News', <i>West Australian</i> , 11 June 1932, 6. Reported a branch of the CWA was formed and known as the Peel Estate branch.
Pemberton	1933	335 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1925 although settlement by 1921.		
Perenjori	1932	348 kms north of Perth. Railway siding in 1913. Gazetted in 1916.		
Pingelly	1936	158 kms east south east of Perth. Railway siding. Gazetted in 1898.		
Pingrup	1933	359 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1924.		
Pinjarra	1925	Located 87 kms south of Perth. Land for township reserved in 1831, with surveys 1836 and settlers 1837. In the Murray district. Generally a fruit growing area. Railway line to Pinjarra opened in May 1893.		Honniball, J H M, 'The Tuckeyes of Mandurah', <i>The Western Australian Historical Society Incorporated Journal and Proceedings</i> , 1961, Vol. V, Part VIII, 29,
Pithara	1929	240 kms north north east of Perth. Railway siding in 1913. Gazetted in 1914.		
Porongorup	1937	389 kms south east of Perth near Albany.		
Port Hedland	1935	1638 kms north of Perth. Gazetted in 1896.		
Quairading	1925	166 kms east of Perth. Gazetted as a town in 1907. Is located between York and Bruce Rock.		
Quinninup	1933	322 kms south of Perth. Part of the Group Settlement Scheme and settled in 1924.	1943	Quinninup Community Association, 'Quinninup the Jewel of the South West', https://quinninup.net.au/#qca viewed 24 March 2019.

Ravensthorpe	1927	Located 541 kms east south east of Perth on the coast. Gazetted in 1901.		
Reedy	1937	771 kms north north east of Perth. In Murchison goldfields. Gazetted in 1934.	1939	
Rockingham	1936	Beachside suburb, 47 kms south of Perth.		
Roleystone	1933	32 kms south east of Perth. In 1902, land subdivided into small orchards and market gardens.		
Rosa Brook (Mowen-Rosa Brook)	1931	Rosa Brook is located 265 kms south west of Perth, and near Margaret River. Part of the Group Settlement Scheme, and gazetted in 1925.		Shire of Augusta, Margaret River, 'Local History', https://www.amrshire.wa.gov.au/region/local-history viewed 24 March 2019. See also 'Shire of Augusta-Margaret River Heritage Inventory (July 2012), https://www.amrshire.wa.gov.au/library/file/0Publications/Documents%20SD/FINAL%20ADOP TED%20AMR%20HERITAGE%20INVENTORY%20AUGUST%202012.pdf viewed 24 March 2019. On page 39 the map shows the Group Settlement locations within the Shire that includes Rosa Brook (Mowen).
Rothsay	1935	422 kms north east of Perth. Goldmining area in 1902. Mine re-opened in 1935 and closed in 1939 with townfolk moving away.	1940	Government of Western Australia, Heritage Council, State Heritage Office, 'Rothsay Townsite (Site)', http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/ee7180d3-4d9e-4a2e-bed6-cc3d4d21a377 viewed 24 March 2019.
Round Hill	1934	194 kms north east of Perth.		Government of Western Australia, Heritage Council, State Heritage Office, 'Round Hill Hall', http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/e93ac7fd-3345-4ba1-9dad-3c30b3b3f617 viewed 24 March 2019. Mentioned the establishment of the CWA in 1934 and use of the hall for meetings.
Ruabon	1938	210 kms south of Perth and 14 kms east of Busselton. Originally gazetted as Abba River in 1925, changed to Ruabon in 1928.		'Among the Groups', <i>West Australian</i> , 16 March 1926, 4.

		Abba River was part of the Group Settlement Scheme.		
Salmon Gums	1938	817 kms south east of Perth and 106 kms north of Esperance. Gazetted in 1925. On a railway line to Esperance.		
Scotsdale	1934	434 kms south east of Perth near Denmark.		
Serpentine	1938	55 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1893. On the Perth to Bunbury railway line.		
Shackleton	1939	209 kms east of Perth. Railway siding in 1913; private town until gazetted in 1951.		
Smithsbrook (Smiths Brook later Smith Brook)	1935	240 kms south east of Perth. Group Settlement Scheme (Group 148).	1940	'Country Women's Association', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 3 March 1935, 5. In March 1935 it was reported Mrs Hearman gave permission for 'a Middlesex sub-branch to form a separate branch, to be known as Smith's Brook'.
Southern Cross	1934	369 kms east north east of Perth. Originally a gold mining town. Gazetted in 1890.		
Stoneville	1938	37 kms east of Perth. Originally known as Dowie Siding in 1905, but changed to Stoneville in 1920.		
Tambellup	1930	317 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1899 although pastoralists in the district in the late 1840s.		
Tammin	1939	179 kms east of Perth. Railway station in 1895. Gazetted in 1899.		
Three Springs	1929	316 kms north of Perth. Pastoral leases in the 1860s. Railway station in 1895.		
Toodyay	1927	86 kms north east of Perth. Located on the Avon River. Surveyed in 1833, but town moved upriver owing to flooding. Gazetted in 1860.		

Trayning	1929	236 kms east north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1912.		
Treslove (also known as Truslove)	1933	743 kms east of Perth. Locality between Salmon Gums and Esperance.	1934	
United = Northcliffe	1933	Refer to Northcliffe.		
Wagerup	1936	124 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1899.		
Wagin	1934	229 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1897 although railway town in 1889.		
Walgoolan	1928	290 kms east north east of Perth. Originally a railway siding between 1895 and 1899. Town gazetted in 1923.		
Walkaway	1932	393 kms north of Perth and 29 kms from Geraldton.		
Wahkinup	1933	Locality near Kojonup, 256 kms south east of Perth.	1935	'Country Women's Association', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 12 March 1933, 5. New branch at Wahkinup opened. Mrs Hearman stated that she 'is convinced they will be a very energetic band of workers, in spite of the fact that Wahkinup is such a tiny place, with not even a store, and only a small hall, which is inadequate for dances, entertainments, etc.'
Waroona	1929	112 kms south of Perth. Gazetted in 1895.	1972	
Watheroo	1933	214 kms north of Perth. Gazetted in 1907.		
Welbungin	1928	287 kms east north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1923.	1934	
Wellard (Peel Estate)	1932	Peel Estate, a settlement scheme planned in 1828 in the new colony of Western Australia by Thomas Peel. Later part of the Group Settlement Scheme in the 1920s. Peel Estate became part of Wellard which is located 40 kms south of Perth.		
West Manjimup	1932	Near Manjimup.	1970	

Westcliffe	1934	Near Manjimup.	1936	'Country Women', <i>Harvey Murray Times</i> , 13 March 1936, 3. Report of the 'resignation' of the Westcliffe CWA branch.
Wialki	1936	341 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1933.		
Wickepin	1929	213 kms east south east of Perth.		
Wilga	1934		1934	
Wilgoyne	1927	[Not listed on Landcare database.] Situated 274 kms from Perth. Site of a homestead vacated in the 1950s. CWA branch in 1941.	1941	Heritage Council, State Heritage Office Western Australia, 'Wilgoyne Well and Homestead site (ruins) and graves', http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/9c87b9a7-0194-4ef5-ade2-b380af112bd6 viewed 18 March 2019.
Wiluna	1934 Reformed 1937	Gold mining town 947 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1898.		'New Goldfields Branches', <i>West Australian</i> , 22 June 1937, 5.
Witchcliffe	1933	286 kms south south west of Perth. Gazetted in 1926.		
Wongan Hills	1929	182 kms north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1911.		
Woodanilling	1934	254 kms south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1892.		
Worsley	1935	189 kms south south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1909.		
Wubin	1937	273 kms north north east of Perth. Gazetted in 1913.		
Wyalkatchem	1926	192 kms east north east of Perth in the wheatbelt region. Gazetted in 1911.		
Yanmah	1932	320 kms south of Perth, and 20 kms north west of Manjimup. Originally a service town for nearby group settlements. Gazetted in 1923.		
Yarloop	1938	126 kms south of Perth. Private town not gazetted until 1962. Timber and rail centre in the 1890s.		
Yealering	1932	220 kms east south east of Perth. Gazetted in 1912.		

York	1925	96 kms east of Perth in the wheatbelt district and on the Avon River. Oldest inland town in Western Australia. Land for the township set aside in 1830.		
Youanmi	1934	570 kms north east of Perth. Gold discovered in 1896. Gazetted in 1910.	Town abandoned in 1942.	'New Goldfields Branches', <i>West Australian</i> , 22 June 1937, 5. Mentioned the formation of a CWA branch at Youanmi which is different to the year 1934 given by Erickson <i>et al.</i> See also 'Country Women's Association', <i>Sunday Times</i> , 27 June 1937, 3. 'Youanmi Dismantlement', <i>Geraldton Guardian and Express</i> , 20 January 1942, 2.
Yuna	1932	503 kms north west of Perth. Gazetted in 1929 although settlement much earlier.		
Yunderup	1934	94 kms south of Perth. Located on islands in the delta of the Murray River. Gazetted in 1898 as Yundurup.		

APPENDIX 5: SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CWA BRANCHES ESTABLISHED 1926-1939

Names of the branches have been obtained from the South Australian Country Women's Association records. Various other sources have been used for the location and distances of these branches from Adelaide. Distances given are variable as in some cases there may be several roads to the location. Towns on Eyre Peninsula can be accessed by the use of a ferry that was not available in the 1920s or 1930s. Sources include Geoffrey H Manning, *Manning's Place Names of South Australia*, G H Manning, Adelaide, 1990; Rodney Cockburn, *What's In A Name? Nomenclature of South Australia*, Ferguson Publications, Adelaide, 1994. Other sources as mentioned in the table.

PLACE	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT OF CWA BRANCH	LOCATION	YEAR CWA BRANCH KNOWN TO DISBAND	OTHER INFORMATION
Adelaide - Metropolitan	1928	Adelaide, South Australia. Founded 1836.		'Country Women in Council. Meetings for Show Week', <i>Register</i> , 4 September 1928, 4. Mention of plan to form a Metropolitan branch. 'Country Women's Association', <i>Advertiser</i> , 28 December 1929, 18. Mrs F W Rymill reported that the Metropolitan branch was formed as Mrs Warnes found it 'impossible to work satisfactorily without city co-operation'.
Aldinga	1938	44 kms south of Adelaide on the Fleurieu Peninsula. Town settled in 1857.		'C.W.A. Branch Formed at Aldinga', <i>Advertiser</i> , 15 October 1938, 19. Reported Aldinga was the 75 th CWA branch formed.
Alice Springs, Northern Territory	1933	Town settled in 1872. 1535 kms north of Adelaide in the Northern Territory.		'Country Women. Activities At Alice Springs', <i>Advertiser</i> , 11 July 1933, 14.
Auburn	1937	111 kms north of Adelaide. Town established in 1849.		'New C.W.A. Branches', <i>Advertiser</i> , 7 August 1937, 25. Reports new branches formed at Auburn and Wilmington.
Beachport	1939	Town established in 1878. 37 kms north-west of Millicent, and 383 kms south east of Adelaide. Located on Rivioli Bay.		According to a manuscript history of the branch (CWA archives) it was the 82 nd branch to be established. Branch formed 29 April 1939. Also refer to 'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Beachport', <i>Border Watch</i> , 4 May 1939, 6.

Beltana	1936	540 kms north of Adelaide. Proclaimed in 1873. Past history of mining, pastoral activities and the location of a railway station.		CWA branch formed circa October 1936. Report of the branch's first birthday 'C.W.A. November Broadcast', <i>Chronicle</i> , 18 November 1937, 56.
Black Springs	1937	33 kms south of Burra and 118 kms north of Adelaide.		'Black Springs. Country Women's Assoc', <i>Burra Record</i> , 30 November 1937, 1. Records the establishment of the CWA branch at Black Springs.
Blinman	1938	511 kms north of Adelaide. Originally copper mining from 1859. Town laid out in 1864.		Records for the first year of the branch were either not maintained or were lost (CWA Archives) but it is accepted it was established in 1938. Blinman CWA branch was represented at a meeting held at Maitland in June 1939. See 'C.W.A. Delegates at Maitland', <i>Recorder</i> , 10 June 1939, 3.
Booleroo Centre	1937	267 kms north of Adelaide in the southern Flinders Ranges. Pastoral activities.		
Bordertown	1937	Town surveyed in 1852. 272 kms south-east of Adelaide. Pastoral activities.		'Bordertown Forms C.W.A. Branch', <i>Advertiser</i> , 20 May 1937, 6; 'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Bordertown', <i>Border Chronicle</i> , 21 May 1937, 6.
Burra	1926	165 kms north of Adelaide. Established in 1845. Site of the Burra Burra Copper Mine opened in 1848. Rural service centre. Pastoral activities. First branch of the South Australian CWA formed.		First branch of the CWA in South Australia established at Burra.
Carrieton	1936	Town proclaimed in 1879. 312 kms north Adelaide in the Flinders Ranges.		'C.W.A. Trip to North', <i>News</i> , 23 November 1936, 8. Reports Carrieton was the newest of the branches to be visited.
Ceduna	1933	Proclaimed in 1901. 778 kms west of Adelaide on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula. Located on Murat Bay.		'The Country Women's Association of South Australia', <i>West Coast Sentinel</i> , 20 October 1933, 3. Refers to the newly formed Ceduna branch.
Clare	1936	144 kms north of Adelaide. Early exploration of the district in 1839. Hundred of Clare proclaimed in 1850.		'Clare Forms C.W.A. Branch', <i>Advertiser</i> , 20 March 1936, 29.

Cleve	1933	Proclaimed 1879. 533 kms north west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'Cleve and District Items', <i>Eyre's Peninsula Tribune</i> , 31 August 1933, 3. Reports formation of the Cleve CWA branch.
Coulta	1936	704 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula. Proclaimed in 1877.		'Advertising', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 6 March 1936, 4. Advertisement for a meeting to form a Coulta CWA branch. Also see 'Tour of Peninsula. Visit to C.W.A. Branches', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 17 April 1936, 6.
Cowell	1938	Proclaimed in 1880. 491 kms west of Adelaide on Franklin Harbour, Eyre Peninsula.		'Reports from Rural Centres', <i>Advertiser</i> , 11 August 1938, 23. Includes a report of the first meeting of the new branch. According to a manuscript branch history (CWA Archives) the Cowell CWA branch was established 23 June 1938.
Cradock	1935	Proclaimed 1879. 356 kms north of Adelaide.		'C.W.A. November Broadcast', <i>Chronicle</i> , 18 November 1937, 56. Report of Cradock's CWA's second birthday. Also refer to 'Cradock's Third Birthday', <i>Rural Review</i> , 21 October 1938, 4.
Crystal Brook	1937	Proclaimed 1874. 202 kms north of Adelaide.		'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Crystal Brook', <i>Recorder</i> , 6 July 1937, 3.
Cummins	1933	Town established 1910. 642 kms north-west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula, and 67 kms north of Port Lincoln.		'Country Women Active at Cummins', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 17 November 1933, 3. Report of the third monthly meeting of the Cummins CWA branch.
Curramulka	1939	Proclaimed in 1878. 190 kms west of Adelaide on Yorke Peninsula.		Possibly formed in 1938 rather than 1939. Minlaton CWA branch held meetings at Curramulka as indicated by 'Minlaton. The Country Women's Association', <i>Pioneer</i> , 18 March 1938, 4. A further newspaper report mentions a 'well attended meeting of the C.W.A. was held at Curramulka recently. Four cars brought members from Minlaton'. Curramulka members supplied afternoon tea – refer to 'Curramulka. The Country Women's Association', <i>Pioneer</i> , 24 June 1938, 3. See also a small, printed branch history by Verna Gower at the CWA Archives.
Elliston	1933	Proclaimed in 1879. 168 kms north west of Port Lincoln and 700 kms from Adelaide		'Reports from Country Centres', <i>Advertiser</i> , 29 August 1933, 13. Elliston branch of the CWA reported as having been formed.

Frances	1937	40 kms north of Naracoorte, and 322 kms south east of Adelaide. Town surveyed in 1881.		'Country Women's Association. Branch Opened at Frances', <i>Narracoorte Herald</i> , 26 November 1937, 2.
Gumeracha	1938	37 kms north of Adelaide in the Adelaide Hills. Established in 1839.		It appears this branch may have originally been known as Forreston. 'Forreston. C.W.A. Officially Opened', <i>Mount Barker Courier & Onkaparinga & Gumeracha Advertiser</i> , 18 August 1938, 3. Yet 'C.W.A. Forreston', <i>Mount Barker Courier & Onkaparinga & Gumeracha Advertiser</i> , 17 November 1938, 3, reports 'The monthly meeting of the Gumeracha branch of the' CWA under the heading of Forreston. (Forreston is situated 3 kms north-east of Gumeracha).
Hawker	1936	380 kms north of Adelaide in the Flinders Ranges. Proclaimed in 1880.		'Hawker', <i>Quorn Mercury</i> , 18 September 1937, 2. Reports a meeting of the newly formed Hawker CWA took place on 16 September.
Iron Knob	1934	Proclaimed in 1915. Iron ore mining. 50 kms west of Whyalla and 379 kms north-west of Adelaide.		'What Outback Women Are Thinking. Country Women's Association', <i>Chronicle</i> , 15 March 1934, 55. Reports first meeting of Iron Knob CWA branch was held 15 February.
Jamestown	1936	207 kms north of Adelaide. Established in 1871.		
Kadina	1936	158 kms north-west of Adelaide on Yorke Peninsula.		'S.A. Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Kadina', <i>Kadina and Wallaroo Times</i> , 2 December 1936, 2.
Kaloonera	1937	676 kms north-west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula. Proclaimed in 1913.		'Country Women Meet' <i>News</i> , 13 September 1937, 8. Reported that Kaloonera was one of fifteen branches formed in the past year.
Kapunda	1937	80 kms north of Adelaide. Originally a mining district with copper discovered in 1842.		'Country Women Meet' <i>News</i> , 13 September 1937, 8. Reported that Kapunda was one of fifteen branches formed in the past year.
Keith	1933	Proclaimed in 1889. Originally named Mount Monster but renamed Keith in 1904. 226 kms south-east of Adelaide. Pastoral area.		'Reports from Rural Centres', <i>Advertiser</i> , 22 August 1933, 4. It was reported a meeting was convened and it was decided to form a CWA branch with officers elected.
Kimba	1931	Proclaimed in 1915. 464 kms north-west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula. Wheatbelt area.		'Country Women [sic] Association. Branch Formation at Kimba', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 29 May 1931, 3.

Kingoonya	Circa 1932	693 kms north-west of Adelaide. Proclaimed in 1928. Located on the East to West rail line.		Newspaper reports indicate a branch of the CWA was in existence at Kingoonya by mid 1932.
Kingston (South East)	1937	Originally a private town laid out in 1858. Since 1940 known as Kingston SE. Located on the shores of Lacedpede Bay. 336 kms south-east of Adelaide via the Dukes Highway, or 293 kms via the Princes Highway.		'Country Women Meet', <i>News</i> , 13 September 1937, 8. Mentions 15 new branches including Kingston.
Kyancutta	1935	Proclaimed in 1917. 555 kms north-west from Adelaide. Wheat belt area, and sheep grazing.		'Country Women Confer. Eight New Branches', <i>News</i> , 17 September 1935, 4.
Kybybolite	1939	Proclaimed in 1905 although occupied as early as 1847 by European settlers. 340 kms south-east of Adelaide via the Dukes Highway. Agricultural centre.		Proposed in July 1939 to disband the Women's Branch of the Agricultural Bureau and form a CWA branch instead – see 'Disbandment of Women's Branch Proposed. Formation of C.W.A. Branch Instead', <i>Narracoorte Herald</i> , 18 July 1939, 1. At the end of August 1939, the CWA branch was formed. 'C.W.A. Branch Formed at Kybybolite', <i>Narracoorte Herald</i> , 1 September 1939, 4.
Lameroo	1939	Proclaimed in 1904. 200 kms south-east of Adelaide.		'C.W.A. Lameroo Branch', <i>Pinnaroo and Border Times</i> , 7 September 1939, 3. Reports first meeting of the branch took place on 25 August. Also refer to Ted Flohr, 'An Historical Look of the First 100 years of Lameroo, Mallee', http://www.murrayriver.com.au/lameroo/lameroo-history/ viewed 20 March 2019. Flohr made a brief mention of the CWA and of its value to the area. He wrote: 'Our branch opened in August 1939, a public organisation embracing all women and working for the universal good of the community. Social and physical problems were for the first time being addressed and women felt their voice was at last being heard'.
Loxton	1930; reformed 1945	225 kms east of Adelaide on the River Murray. Town proclaimed in 1907.	1931	'The Realm of Women. Branch of the Country Women's Assn. Formed at Loxton', <i>Register News-Pictorial</i> , 24 July 1930, 20.

Lucindale	1935	Proclaimed in 1877 although European settlers there in 1843. 343 kms south-east from Adelaide. Pastoral district.		'Lucindale', <i>Narracoorte Herald</i> , 30 April 1935, 4. Inaugural meeting of the CWA branch held 13 April.
Maitland	1936	167 kms north-east of Adelaide on Yorke Peninsula. Proclaimed in 1872.		'C.W.A. November Broadcast', <i>Chronicle</i> , 18 November 1937, 56. First birthday celebrations of the CWA branch held on 8 October.
Marree	1938	Proclaimed 1883. Originally known as Hergott Springs until World War I and the <i>Nomenclature Act 1917</i> when its name was changed to Marree. Located 675 kms north of Adelaide. Originally on the Overland Telegraph Line and the Ghan Railway Line.		Re name change see 'New Place Names', <i>Daily Herald</i> , 21 January 1918, 3. 'News From Country Centres', <i>Chronicle</i> , 7 April 1938, 16. Reports women met in the Marree Hall to form a branch of the CWA. It was added: 'Members agreed to meet and entertain in future women members of the outback who are sometimes compelled to spend a day and night in Marree'.
Millicent	1935	410 kms south-east of Adelaide. Town surveyed in 1870.		'The District', <i>Border Watch</i> , 23 April 1935, 4. Reports on the first meeting of the newly formed Millicent CWA branch.
Minlaton	1935	Proclaimed in 1876. 218 kms west of Adelaide on Yorke Peninsula.		'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Minlaton', <i>Pioneer</i> , 27 November 1936, 3.
Minnipa	1931	Proclaimed 1915. Wheat belt area. 604 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'Country Women's Association', <i>Burra Record</i> , 24 February 1932, 1. Reported that Minnipa had formed a CWA branch. Unclear if this was 1931 or 1932. 'Two Annual Meetings', <i>West Coast Sentinel</i> , 2 September 1932, 7, reported the Annual Meeting of the Minnipa CWA was held 12 August 1932 suggesting the branch was established in 1931.
Mount Barker	1935	33 kms from Adelaide in the Adelaide Hills. Town surveyed in 1940.		'Country Women Confer. Eight New Branches', <i>News</i> , 17 September 1935, 4.
Mount Gambier	1930	449 kms south-east of Adelaide. Town surveyed as early as 1849 but settled in 1854.		'Reports from the Country', <i>Advertiser</i> , 20 September 1930, 23. The formation of the Mount Gambier CWA branch with 100 members was reported.
Mount Hope	1934	Proclaimed 1916. 682 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'C.W.A. Opens Two New Branches', <i>Advertiser</i> , 4 October 1934, 8; Mount Hope and Quorn were opened.

				'Mount Hope C.W.A. Fourth Birthday Celebrated', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 16 September 1938, 2.
Mount Pleasant	1935	Town established circa 1856. 45 kms north-east of Adelaide.		'Country Women's Branch for Mount Pleasant', <i>Advertiser</i> , 9 November 1915, 14.
Naracoorte	1935	Proclaimed in 1870. 333kms south-east of Adelaide. Originally Naracoorte.		'Branch of the Country Women's Association Formed at Naracoorte', <i>Naracoorte Herald</i> , 2 April 1935, 1.
Oodnadatta	1937	Proclaimed in 1890. 1081 kms north of Adelaide. Originally on the railway line from Adelaide to Alice Springs.		'C.W.A. Branch at Oodnadatta', <i>Advertiser</i> , 21 August 1937, 25.
Orroroo	1938	Proclaimed 1876. 273 kms north of Adelaide.		'Country Women's Association. New Branch to be Formed at Orroroo', <i>Times and Northern Advertiser</i> , 13 May 1938, 2.
Penola	1938	Town surveyed in 1867. 383 kms south-east of Adelaide.		'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Penola', <i>Border Watch</i> , 7 April 1938, 3.
Peterborough	1932	Originally named Petersburg but changed by the <i>Nomenclature Act 1917</i> . 259 kms north of Adelaide. Town established circa 1880.		'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Peterborough', <i>Times and Northern Advertiser</i> ,
Pinnaroo	1938	Proclaimed 1904. 242 kms east of Adelaide.		'Country Women's Association. Formation of Branch in Pinnaroo', <i>Pinnaroo and Border Times</i> , 25 August 1938, 1.
Poochera	1934	638 kms north-west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula. Proclaimed in 1920.		'Personal', <i>Chronicle</i> , 20 December 1934, 13. Reported that Poochera women had met to form a CWA branch, and officers elected.
Port Augusta	1935	Town named in 1852. Laid out in 1854. At the top of Spencer Gulf, 310 kms north of Adelaide.		'Gift of Land to C.W.A. At the Beach', <i>Mail</i> , 22 June 1935, 8. Reported that a branch of the CWA was formed at Port Augusta.
Port Lincoln	1933	Names in 1802 by Matthew Flinders. Proclaimed a town 1837. 651 kms north-west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'Country Women Organise. Branch Formed Here. Rest Home Wanted', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 25 August 1933, 10. One of the new Port Lincoln's CWA branch's aim was to secure a rest room for its members.
Port Pirie	1936	Town surveyed in 1871. 223 kms north of Adelaide.		'Port Pirie Forms C.W.A. Branch', <i>Advertiser</i> , 8 April 1936, 8.
Port Victoria	1938	Area explored in 1839, but town proclaimed 1876. 198		According to a manuscript history of Port Victoria branch (CWA Archives) it was formed in July 1938.

		kms west of Adelaide on Yorke Peninsula.		During the second World War members worked for the Red Cross and Comfort Funds.
Postal	1939	Established to provide a means of membership and contact with the CWA for those too isolated to join branches, or where branches did not exist in more populated areas.		'Postal Branch for Country Women', <i>Advertiser</i> , 29 August 1939, 6.
Quorn	1934	Proclaimed in 1878. 337 kms north of Adelaide.		'C.W.A. Opens Two New Branches', <i>Advertiser</i> , 4 October 1934, 8. Quorn and Mount Hope branches opened.
Redhill	1938	Town surveyed in 1869. 177 kms north of Adelaide.		'C.W.A. November Broadcast', <i>Chronicle</i> , 18 November 1937, 56. Reports Redhill was the second new branch opened in the month.
Robe	1935	Town surveyed in 1846. 336 kms south of Adelaide. Coastal town.		'Robe Items of News. Country Women's Association', <i>Narracoorte Herald</i> , 2 April 1935, 4. Formation of the Robe CWA branch discussed. First meeting 13 April 1935.
Saddleworth	1939	Town laid out in 1853 and established in 1868. 112 kms north of Adelaide.		'Women in the Mallee', <i>Advertiser</i> , 22 August 1939, 6. Opening of the Saddleworth branch by Mrs Glen Hawkes of Burra.
Smithfield	1939	Town dates back to circa 1854. 31 kms north of Adelaide.		'C.W.A. Branch Formed at Smithfield', <i>Advertiser</i> , 29 March 1938, 8. Smithfield was the 62 nd branch of the CWA.
Smithville	1939	200 kms east of Adelaide and 24 kms north-west of Lamerloo.		'Women in the Mallee', <i>Advertiser</i> , 22 August 1939, 6. Smithville was one of five new CWA branches formed in August.
Snowtown	1938	Proclaimed in 1878. 146kms north of Adelaide.		'Tuesday Topics', <i>Advertiser</i> , 6 September 1938, 8. Snowtown was one of six new branches formed in the 'last two months'.
Spalding	1928	182 kms north of Adelaide. Subdivision for a town commenced in 1876.		'Country Women in Council. Meetings for Show Week', <i>Register</i> , 4 September 1928, 4. Mention of the establishment of a CWA branch at Spalding.
State	1930			'Country Women's Association', <i>Advertiser</i> , 26 February 1930, 7. First meeting of the State Executive was held on Friday 21 February.
Stirling	1934	Town surveyed in 1854. 16 kms east of Adelaide in the Adelaide Hills.		'C.W.A. New Branch', <i>Advertiser</i> , 27 June 1934, 10. Formation of the Stirling branch of the CWA.
Strathalbyn	1937	56 kms south-east of Adelaide. Town laid out in 1841.		

Tailem Bend	1938	Proclaimed 1886 although European settlers in the area from the 1840s. 96 kms east of Adelaide.		
Tarcoola	1937	Proclaimed in 1901 but not surveyed until 1919. 719 kms north-west of Adelaide. Originally a small gold mine in the district and later a railway town.		'C.W.A. Branch At Tarcoola', <i>Advertiser</i> , 5 July 1937, 10. 30 women were present at a meeting with Mrs Warnes to discuss the formation of the new branch at Tarcoola.
Tarcowie	1938	Proclaimed in 1875. 261 kms north of Adelaide.		'Tuesday Topics', <i>Advertiser</i> , 6 September 1938, 8. Tarcowie was one of six new branches formed in the 'last two months'.
Tennant Creek, Northern Territory	1936	2038 kms north of Adelaide in the Northern Territory. Named in 1860 by John McDouall Stuart.		'Country Readers Exchange Ideas. C.W.A. at Tennant Creek;', <i>Chronicle</i> , 25 March 1937, 52. Reported the Tennant Creek branch of the CWA was opened the previous year with twelve members.
Terowie	1935	Originally proclaimed as Shebbear in 1877. Later laid out as Terowie in 1878. 228 kms north of Adelaide.		'Country Women's Association', <i>Times and Northern Advertiser</i> , 19 July 1935, 3. Mention of the formation of the Terowie branch of the CWA.
Tumby Bay	1933	Named in 1802 by Matthew Flinders. Proclaimed Town of Tumby in 1900. Officially not Tumby Bay until 1984. 604 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'Tumby Bay', <i>Advertiser</i> , 31 August 1933, 13. Mentions formation of the Tumby Bay CWA branch.
Ungarra	1938	Town laid out in 1912. 612 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula, and 32 kms north-north-west of Tumby Bay.		'Country Women's Association. Branch Formed at Ungarra', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 2 September 1938, 8.
Victor Harbor	1938	Names in 1838, and officially became known as Victor Harbor in 1921. Previously known as Port Victor. 86 kms south of Adelaide on the Fleurieu Peninsula.		'C.W.A. Branch Formed At Victor Harbor', <i>Advertiser</i> , 3 December 1938, 27. 43 members enrolled.
Williamstown	1936	Town established circa 1858. 50 kms north-east of Adelaide.		'C.W.A. Branch at Williamstown', <i>News</i> , 8 May 1936, 6.

Wilmington	1937	Town proclaimed in 1876. 294 kms north of Adelaide.		'New C.W.A. Branches', <i>Advertiser</i> , 7 August 1937, 25. Reported that Wilmington and Auburn formed branches.
Wirrulla	1933	Proclaimed in 1916. 685 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'Country Women's Association, Wirrulla', <i>West Coast Sentinel</i> , 8 September 1933, 7. Through the efforts of Mrs F W Rymill and Mrs C Dolling when touring the West Coast, the Wirrulla CWA was formed.
Wudinna	1937	Proclaimed in 1916. 568 kms north-west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula.		'Country Women Meet', <i>News</i> , 13 September 1937, 8. One of fifteen new branches established.
Yankalilla	1937	Town laid out circ 1857. 80 kms south of Adelaide on Fleurieu Peninsula.		'Country Women Meet', <i>News</i> , 13 September 1937, 8. One of fifteen new branches established.
Yeelanna	1933	665 kms west of Adelaide on Eyre Peninsula. European settlers in the district from 1904.		'Another C.W.A. Branch. Yeelanna Women Organise', <i>Port Lincoln Times</i> , 1 September 1933, 3. Salome Blanche Drummond, 'How the C.W.A. Came to Yeelanna', 18 th August 1954, CWA Archives.
Yunta	1939	Proclaimed 1887. 322 kms north of Adelaide.		