



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION	Victorian Association Of Benevolent Societies
ACCESSION NO	1987.0131
CATEGORY	Community and Political, organisations
ACTIVITY	Welfare organisations
DATE RANGE	1911-1987
SIZE OF COLLECTION	5 archive boxes
HISTORICAL NOTE	The Association of Victorian Benevolent Societies was formed following the initiative of the Kew Society in calling a Conference of delegates of metropolitan Ladies' Benevolent Societies in May 1911. The name "Victorian Association of Ladies' Benevolent Societies" appears in the minute book for 1931-1934. The Central Council of Victorian Benevolent Societies was formed in 1930 (the record prior to July 1931 is missing), its chief concern being unemployment and homelessness among women and girls. On 27 October 1939 the Central Council resolved to amalgamate with the VALBS in 1939. The Association ceased to exist on 21 May 1987 for want of funding and people to serve on its Executive.
DATE OF TRANSFER	20/05/1987
ACCESS CONDITIONS	Access: Open
DESCRIPTION	Statement relating to the formation of the Association, May 1911; Minutes 1911-1987; Newscuttings 1940's; Gladswood Home (for aged and needy women) Committee minutes 2 July 1950-6 October 1950 and 1st Annual Report; Central Council of Benevolent Societies Minutes 1931-1939. Caulfield Ladies' Benevolent Society Minutes 1935-1972. Preston Ladies' Benevolent Society Minutes 1937-1965.
LISTED BY	Cecily Close
DATE	20/09/1989

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES

ADDRESS: Defunct. Formerly 10th floor, Capitol House, Swanston Street.

MAIN ACTIVITY: To provide a means of cooperation among Ladies' Benevolent Societies.

PLACE OF ACTIVITY: Melbourne.

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1911 - 1987

QUANTITY: 5 archives boxes - 60 cm. ACCESS: 0

DATE OF TRANSFER: 20 May 1987.

TRANSFEROR: Mrs. Anne Brain

TRANSFEROR'S ADDRESS: Honorary Secretary VABS at time of dissolution. Address unknown.

HISTORICAL NOTE: An Association was formed on the initiative of the Kew Society in calling a Conference of delegates of metropolitan Ladies' Benevolent Societies in May 1911. The second meeting of the Executive Committee of the "Association of Victorian Benevolent Societies" was held on 8 Aug. 1911. The name "Victorian Association of Ladies' Benevolent Societies" appears in the minute book for 1931-1934. The Central Council of Victorian Benevolent Societies was formed in 1930 (the record prior to July 1931 is missing). Its chief concern was with unemployment and homelessness among women and girls. An account of the Council's involvement first with the Unemployed Girls' Relief Movement, and then with the Girls' Employment and Welfare Movement, is given by Muriel Heagney in her *Are Women Taking Men's Jobs*, Melb. 1935, pp. 110 - 126. On 27 Oct. 1939 the Central Council resolved to amalgamate with the Victorian Association of Ladies' Benevolent Societies, a proposal for which had been discussed without success in 1938. Its final meeting was held on 22 Oct. 1939. On 21 May 1987 the Association ceased to exist for want of funding and lack of people willing to serve on its Executive.

List of Records

1. Loose items found in minute books.

1/1 "Statement relative to the suggested Association of Ladies' Benevolent Societies issued for the information of the members of the Metropolitan Ladies' Benevolent Societies". Kew, 29 May 1911. 4 ts.

The Statement, furnished by the Kew Society, refers to their letter of 1 May 1911 sent to all the Metropolitan Societies inviting attendance at a Conference in the Melbourne Town Hall on 22 May "to consider the advisability of the formation of an Association of Ladies' Benevolent Societies". The letter had also suggested that an opportunity for discussion was desirable "in view of the altered conditions now obtaining in the administration of Charitable relief". Mr. W. Warren Kerr, husband of the President of the Kew Society, had attended the meeting of 22 May, further advocated association the proposal which seemed peculiarly opportune in the light of "the experience gained by the Societies in the distribution of the Government Compassionate allowance and by the granting of the Old Age and Invalid pensions". Other advantages were interchange of thought and experience, facilities for cooperation, protection against overlapping and imposition, and the possibility of influencing legislation.

The proposal received general approval, a further meeting on 19 June to be held to confirm this following consultation by delegates with their societies.

- 1/2 Melbourne Ladies' Benevolent Society, "The Pioneer Welfare Organisation in Victoria. Begun 1845. "Ravenswood" for lonely women - 1950". Letter to Hon. Sec., VABS, 24 July 1952.
Advises that the Melbourne Society is withdrawing from the Association "because of increasing work due to the present unemployment situation and the necessity to maintain their own Home "Ravenswood".
- 1/3 A.L. Brain, Hon. Sec. VABS to Concetta Benn, Deputy Director General Community Services Victoria, 14 Ap. 1987.
Advises of decision to cease operations as at the end of May 1987 as they have been unable to obtain any State Government funding for four years to operate Office, and have found it difficult to recruit members to the Executive.
Attached to the above: undated circular from Concetta Benn to Mrs. F.E. Drummond-Carr, President VABS, advising her of rejection of application for funds for 1987, though ruled eligible.
- 1/4 Anne L. Brain, Hon. Sec. to Secretary, VABS, 28 Ap. 1987. Sends list of secretaries of affiliated Societies (not with letter), advises that Emergency Relief Funding from the Federal Government, which should now be applied for by Societies directly instead of through the VABS, and explains how to apply for grants from the Lord Mayor's Fund.
2. Executive Committee of Delegates Minutes 8 Aug. 1911-6 Oct. 1914 (4to book)
3. Meetings of Delegates Minute Book 21 May 1931 - 16 Nov. 1939;
4. Executive Minutes unbound 7 Dec. 1939 - 16 June 1950 (folder);
5. Executive and General Minute Book (pencil draft) 16 Sept. 1949 - 17 Aug. 1950 with minutes of the Gladswood Home Committee at back of book, 27 Jan. 1950 - 6 Oct. 1950 (also in pencil);
6. Executive and General Minute Book (signed minutes) 21 July 1950-19 Mar. 1954 37x25x3cm.
7. Executive and General Minute Book 23 Ap. 1954 - 23 June 1963. 38x26x6cm. (was in binder which had come away from sheets; now in 3 folders).
8. Executive Minutes unbound 18 Nov. 1966 - 20 Nov. 1970 (folder);
9. Executive and General Minutes 19 Feb. 1971 - 24 Ap. 1987 (was in loose-leaf folder which had come away from sheets; now in 3 folders: includes Amended Constitution 1970, and Rules.
10. Annual Meetings 14 Sept. 1951 - 15 Aug. 1986; (Minutes of Final Meeting, 21 May 1987 (according to letter Anne Brain to Frank Strahan, 28 Ap. 1987) but dated 21 April 1987, were received on with the request that they be added to this Minute Book.
11. Central Council of Victorian Benevolent Societies Minute Book, Executive Committee and General Meetings 29 July 1931 - 21 July 1934. 37x24x2.5cm.
12. Ditto 17 Aug. 1934 - 22 Oct. 1939. 34x23x6cm.
13. Newscutting Book 1940 - 1945. Cuttings concerning the Association, social needs, etc. Some cuttings are loose, some pasted. Attached to an undated cutting concerning the transfer of the almoners' course from the Board of Social Studies to the University is the Association's circular requesting that delegates be instructed how to vote on the matter of contributing funds to support training.
14. Gladswood Home (for aged women) First Annual Report, 1951.
15. Caulfield Ladies' Benevolent Society Minute Book 28 Oct. 1935 (new constitution being adopted) - 9 June 1943;
16. Ditto 18 Aug. 1943 - 10 Ap. 1972.
17. Preston Ladies' Benevolent Society Minute Book 13 July 1937 - 24 June 1948
18. Minute Book 28 Oct. 1948 - 20 June 1955;
19. Minute Book 20 June 1955 - Nov. 1965.

20/9/86