

# Women's Stories

## 100 years of Queensland women's right to vote

### Margaret Ogg (1863-1953)

- co-founder Queensland Women's Electoral League (QWEL)
- organising secretary QWEL, 1903-1930
- former WCTU worker

Margaret Ogg came from a strict Presbyterian background – her father was the Ann Street Church minister. She was involved with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union which took up the suffrage campaign in the 1890s.

Margaret travelled western Queensland, visiting women on isolated properties and holding public gatherings in country towns, raising awareness of issues relating to women's voting.

In 1903, she co-founded QWEL with Brisbane Mayoress, Mrs Christina Corrie.

QWEL differed from WEFA: it was conservative, anti-socialist and pro private enterprise. Its membership was drawn from women in professions and wives of businessmen. At its height, there were 60 branches across Queensland and 16000 members.

QWEL continued after women gained the right to vote, seeking other reforms including women in parliament, women police officers, women on government boards, amendments to the Criminal Code to raise the age of consent to 17 and the introduction of the Testators Family Maintenance Act, providing some protection to widows left penniless on the death of their husbands. It also advocated 'equal pay for equal work'.

Margaret remained its organising secretary for 27 years, until 1930.

QWEL merged with the conservative Women's Political Club in 1949