

Attachment E

Biography of Louisa Lawson

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Louisa Lawson

Louisa Lawson (1848-1920) was a noted Australian social reform writer, publisher, suffragist, feminist and mother of poet Henry Lawson.

Born in Guntawang, near Mudgee, Louisa relocated to Sydney in the late 19th century where she founded the influential magazine 'The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women', which reported on women's activities and issues locally and overseas, and raised public awareness of women's affairs. In editorials, she presented feminist arguments for opening the legal profession to women and giving hospital appointments to female doctors. Louisa edited *The Dawn* at 26 Jamison Street from 1888 to 1905. It was written, laid out and printed solely by women.

Louisa Lawson launched the campaign for female suffrage and announced the formation of the Dawn Club where women met to discuss issues and gain experience in public speaking. Through *The Dawn*, Louisa raised public awareness of women's affairs which helped to move opinion towards giving women the right to vote.

Louisa Lawson was elected to the inaugural Council of Womanhood Suffrage League of NSW in 1891. In its early years, the NSW Women's Suffrage League printed its pamphlets at *The Dawn* free of charge and used its offices for meetings. The NSW Woman's Suffrage Bill was passed in 1902 and Lawson was described in Parliament as "the Mother of Suffrage in New South Wales".

Louisa Lawson died in Gladesville, on 12 August 1920. Louisa Lawson Reserve in Marrickville, where she lived, is named after her.