• Digitisation [1]
The hugely popular Australian Woman's Mirror [2] (1924–1961) has been digitised and is available through Trove.

The magazine was launched in November 1924 as an offshoot of the Bulletin, which, according to the Mirror's first editorial, had been knocking back a 'large amount of purely feminine writing'. The new weekly magazine would supply women in the city and the bush with conversation material: about theatre, film, music, sport 'and a little about books and the people who write them'.

The Mirror lived up to its promise and was rewarded with impressive circulation figures, reaching over 160,000 copies in the 1930s. This rapid rise in sales was unprecedented in Australian magazine publishing. Until the advent of the Australian Women's Weekly [3] in 1933, it was the most popular women's magazine, in competition with titles such as New Idea and Woman's Budget.

Flapper fashions and ads for beauty products are highlights of the 1920s and 30s Mirror. It published short stories and poems — by writers such as Dorothea Mackellar, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Myra Morris and Llywelyn Lucas — alongside dress patterns, health tips and household hints. A woman solicitor gave regular advice on issues including custody of children and making a will.

The Mirror's high sales figures continued, and it secured rights to the Phantom comic strip from the United States in 1936.

The magazine was still profitable in 1960 when it was purchased by the Weekly's owner Australian Consolidated Press, yet publication was stopped the following year.

I recently mined the Mirror to find poet and journalist Zora Cross' interviews with women writers [4] — published under the pseudonym Bernice May — which are often the only information available about these once popular writers.

But the Mirror is also a rich source of material on careers, leisure pursuits, literary styles and reading habits, arts and crafts, fashion, food, advertising and much more.

The Australian Woman's Mirror joins a wealth of twentieth-century magazines recently added to Trove. It has been digitised and made searchable online as part of the Library's Digital Excellence program, a major initiative of the NSW Government.

Browse the Australian Woman's Mirror [2].

Cathy Perkins

Source URL: https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/blogs/australian-womans-mirror-now-online

Links