

---

# **Nancy-Bird Walton AO OBE**

Australian aviation  
trailblazer (1915-2009)

Western Sydney's new international airport is named in recognition of pioneering Australian aviator, Nancy-Bird Walton.



*Images source: State Library of NSW*



## **Nancy-Bird Walton AO OBE, an Australian aviation trailblazer (1915-2009)**

In 1934, at the age of 19, Nancy-Bird Walton became the youngest woman in the British Empire to gain a Commercial Pilot's Licence.

Taking her first flying lesson from Charles Kingsford Smith, Nancy-Bird pioneered outback health services and founded the Australian Women Pilots' Association. Her legacy continues to inspire generations of female pilots and adventurers everywhere.

Nancy-Bird is described as the 'Angel of the Outback'. In 1935, as a 20-year-old, she began operating the Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme, using her Gipsy Moth as an air ambulance.

She is remembered as a talented aviator who helped save lives through her work transporting doctors and nurses across outback communities in regional New South Wales.

During the Second World War Nancy-Bird played a vital role in recruiting and training women for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF).

In 1950 she founded the Australian Women Pilots' Association which continues to encourage and support women across all parts of the aviation industry.

Nancy-Bird Walton remains an inspiration to Australian aviation and the Australian Government is proud to honour her achievements through the name of Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport.