

Barbara Mary Hale was born in New Zealand on 5 April 1924. She graduated from the University of New Zealand with a Master's Degree in English before moving to Australia and settling in Perth, where she joined the staff of the University of Western Australia Library in 1961. Completing a UK Master's degree in Librarianship at the Library School of Sheffield University, she served as Deputy University Librarian at UWA from 1966 until her retirement in 1984. During her tenure she was elected by academic staff to serve on the University Senate, the first woman to be so elected.

In retirement, she gave generously of her time to both the Australian Federation of University Women (now Australian Graduate Women) and its State association in Western Australia (GWWA). As federal President 1985-88, she led the Australian delegation to the 1986 International Federation of University Women (IFUW) Christchurch Conference and was many times a voting delegate at subsequent IFUW Conferences. Within AFUW(WA) Inc. she held a variety of positions, including President, Secretary, and Membership Convener. Especially active in the management of the association's various postgraduate bursaries to assist women in the completion of a higher degree by research, she established and was a long-term mainstay of the AFUW(WA) Education Trust, which administers these bursaries.

As well as her work within AFUW, she was an active and vigorous member of other University and community groups. These included the Friends of the UWA Library, which she served with distinction as Vice-President for ten years. A member of the St Catherine's College Council (1977-99), she was elected an Honorary Fellow of the College in 2003.

Her significant contribution to the National Trust of Australia (WA) was recognised by the award of life membership in 2003. She was a Charter member of the Zonta Club of Perth at its formation in 1972, Vice-President (1974-76) and President (1976-78). An enthusiastic bird-watcher, she played a leading role in the WA group of Birds Australia. In 2011 she received the 50 Years Volunteer Service Badge of the government of Western Australia.

Barbara Hale died at Nedlands, Western Australia, on 5 June 2013.