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|  | ***UNCSW-Feminism in Australia*** |
| TOPIC- ADDRESSING UNCSWFOR 21stCENTURY |

Australia has a long-standing association with the protection and creation of women's rights. Australia was the second country in the world to give women the right to vote (after New Zealand in 1893) and the first to give women the right to be elected to a national parliament. The Australian state of South Australia, then a British colony, was the first parliament in the world to grant women full suffrage rights. Australia has since had multiple notable women serving in public office as well as other fields. Women in Australia with the notable exception of Indigenous women, were granted the right to vote and to be elected at federal elections in 1902.

Australia has also been home to several prominent feminist activists and writers, including Germaine Greer, author of *The Female Eunuch*; Julia Gillard, former prime minister; Vida Goldstein, suffragist; and Edith Cowan, the first woman to be elected to an Australian parliament. Feminist action seeking equal opportunity in employment has resulted in partially successful legislation. Laws against sex discrimination exist and women's units in government departments have been established. Australian feminists have fought for and won the right to federally funded child care and women's refuges. The success gained by feminists entering the Australian public service and changing policy led to the descriptive term 'femocrats'.

Germaine Greer's 1970 novel *The Female Eunuch* became a global bestseller and a highly influential text in the feminist movement. It discusses and challenges the role of Australian housewives as a homemaker, which Greer suggests leads to a repression. The predominate critical theory of feminism in Australia is that male dominance of business, politics, law and the media has resulted in gender inequality. Feminism research has expanded the scope of political science in Australia to include issues related to femininity, motherhood and violence against women.

Joanna Murray-Smith, a Melbourne-based newspaper columnist claimed in a 2004 column that 'feminism had failed us'. Virginia Haussegger has also criticised feminism for promising she 'could have it all'. Miranda Devine and [Cathy Sherry](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cathy_Sherry&action=edit&redlink=1) have consistently argued that feminism has been a mistake and failed to liberate. In 2016, feminist and sociologist Eva Cox writing in The Conversation said that feminism has failed and needs a radical rethink using, "feminist perspectives to set social goals that are sustainable, and create social resilience".

Notable Australian feminists

Australia has and has had several notable feminist authors, academics and activists whose work has been recognised internationally. Perhaps most widely recognised is Germaine Greer, whose book *The Female Eunuch* was held in high acclaim after its publication. The book's content was considered highly radical at the time of its publication in 1970, with Greer recommending female practices like tasting their own [menstrual blood](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Germaine_Greer).

From June 2010 to June 2013, Australia was led by its first female prime minister, Julia Gillard. Gillard is perhaps best known, internationally, for the Misogyny Speech delivered in the Australian Federal Parliament on 9 October 2012 to then Federal Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott.

Australia has had several feminist organisations during its history, many of which helped the push for basic women's rights like granting of full suffrage, financial independence from husbands, access to abortions, and equal pay. Other high-profile Australian feminists include Eva Cox and Jocelynne Scutt.

## Cultural theory

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***Submitted by-***

***Name: ARYA MUKHERJEE***

***Country: Australia***

***Committee: World Trade Organisation***