
WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Senator Edward Pulsford on women's' suffrage

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

So far as I feel my heart-strings pulled at all, I may say that both my heart and brain act together in antagonism to the principle of women's suffrage. I am not prepared to describe women's suffrage as a blessing. I would rather describe it as an attempt to throw a portion of the white man's burden upon the white woman.

Senator Thomas Glassey on women's suffrage

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I could never see the justice of withholding the franchise from women simply on the ground that they are women. If it be right that males should have the privilege of voting for men to make the laws of their country, then it is only justice that women should enjoy the same privilege. I know of nothing in the decalogue, or in any moral law, which says that women, because

they are women, should be denied the right of a voice in the making of the laws of the country in which they live. I should like some honorable senator who is opposed to the principle of womanhood suffrage - if there are any honorable senators who object to it they are exceedingly few who oppose it on the ground that it is not just - to tell us where we can find any evidence of injustice so far as the enfranchisement of women is concerned.

Senator Albert Gould on women's suffrage

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

Has it been shown, on behalf of the women of the Commonwealth as a whole, that there is any demand for the extension of the franchise? I admit that a large number of ladies have been very energetic and persistent in advocating the extension of the suffrage to women. They have argued it as a matter of abstract justice and right, contending that it would make Parliaments better and purer, and that better men would be returned to Parliament. Such advantages have

been pointed out as a probable result of the extension of the suffrage. But there has never yet been a movement by a large section of the women of the Commonwealth in favour of the principle. I admit at once that if it were shown that there were a large number of women in the community who were desirous of having the suffrage extended to them it would be only a matter of right and justice that it should be extended. But I do not think that the Legislature is bound to extend the franchise to a large section of the community unless that section indicates that a majority of it desires to be enfranchised. In any community it will be found that until there is a large section desirous of some course of legislation being pursued that legislation is not enacted. If it can be shown that a majority of the women are desirous of having the franchise extended to them, give it to them by all means. I have no fear that the extension of the suffrage would do the slightest injury to our legislation. I believe that the

women would cast their votes honestly and with integrity, and with a desire to do justice. "But I know that there are a large number of women who say - "We do not want the franchise, and would rather be without it."

Sir William Lyne on women's suffrage

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

Some years ago, when I was very young in politics and probably my thoughts were less matured, I was hostile to the proposal. Gradually, however, as the result of my reading, and in consequence of the advance of thought which has taken place upon this question, not only in Australia, but throughout the world, I was induced to take an opposite view of the matter. Thus it came about that some ten or twelve years ago I formed the conclusion that not only was it just to accord women the vote, but that it was in the best interests of the entire community.

I am surprised to hear the honorable member for South Sydney say that there are as many bad women

as bad men. My opinion is that in proportion to their numbers women are much better than men, and those who are bad have been made so by men.

Joseph Cook on women's suffrage

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

The last speaker informed honorable members that in his opinion a woman's place, whether she be wife, daughter, mother, or sister, is her home. May I remind the honorable member - and I do it in all sincerity - that there are thousands of women who are not so fortunately circumstanced as those dependent upon him, and it is on their behalf that we plead for some greater measure of liberality in the laws of the country, so that they may be enabled to help themselves in a way they have not done before.

Mr Sawers - Cannot we be trusted to help them?

Mr Cook - I am sorry to say that I cannot trust the honorable member to help them, particularly after having heard his opinions upon the

franchise question as a whole. I would not care to commit the economic and social condition of women to one who does not believe in the great principle of manhood suffrage, and who is opposed to proportional voting.

Senator Dorothy Tangney on the removal of the Marriage Bar

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I think much more could have been accomplished for the female members of the Public Service if the Government, instead of introducing this measure, had agreed to the proposal we advanced recently for equal pay. It seems to me to be rather ironical that fulsome praise should have been lavished on women in the Public Service and that their achievements and ability should have been acknowledged. It seems that women are entitled to everything but equal pay. All this talk about the manner in which this legislation will benefit female members of the Public Service is rather ironical. I doubt whether a very big proportion of women in

the Public Service will take advantage of the legislation. I think that most women who leave to get married have the maternal instinct; they wish to make a home and have children. A home in which the mother goes out to work is not a complete entity. In saying that I hope I shall not be regarded as being a traitor to the feminist cause. I have never believed in the feminist cause as such.

Senator John Gorton on the removal of the Marriage Bar

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

The Bill removes an element of discrimination against one section of our work force, or potential work force - an element deriving from social attitudes of another era. It must not be thought that when the Bill becomes law, married women will for the first time be eligible for employment in the Commonwealth Public Service. Nothing could be further from the truth. Married women are employed in the Public Service now. In fact they presently comprise about one-

third of all temporary female employees. But henceforth the Commonwealth will be permitted to retain on its permanent staff trained and experienced female officers who marry, and to recruit qualified married women. Thus, this group of women will not be denied the opportunity to pursue a full and satisfying career in the Commonwealth Public Service.

Senator Ivy Wedgwood on the removal of the Marriage Bar

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

Briefly, the legislation will do three things, all of which I consider to be most desirable. It means that women will be able to retain their positions in the Public Service after marriage. This will be of benefit to some women - perhaps not to a great number of women - but to the women who desire to carry on their careers. It will be exceptionally beneficial to the professional women who, instead of having to resign and perhaps accept a position in another area of work altogether, will be entitled now to carry on their professional work. By this

change, the Public Service and the nation will have the benefit of their professional training and ability.

Dame Enid Lyons' first speech

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

It would be strange indeed were I not tonight deeply conscious of the fact, if not a little awed by the knowledge, that my shoulders rests a great weight of responsibility; because this is the first occasion upon which a woman has addressed this house. For that reason it is an occasion which, for every woman in the Commonwealth, marks in some degree a turning point in history. I am well aware that, as I acquit myself in the work that I have undertaken for the next three years, so shall I either prejudice or enhance the prospects of those women who may wish to follow me in public service in the years to come. I know that many honorable members have viewed the advent of women to the legislative halls with something approaching alarm; they have feared, I have no doubt, the somewhat too vigorous use of a new broom. I wish

to reassure them. I hold very sound views on brooms, and sweeping. Although I quite realize that a new broom is a very useful adjunct to the work of the housewife, I also know that it undoubtedly is very unpopular in the broom cupboard; and this particular new broom knows that she has a very great deal to learn from the occupants of I dare not say this particular cupboard.

Dorothy Tangney's first speech

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I realize the great honour which has been done to me in affording me the opportunity to move this Address-in-Reply. I also realize my great honour in being the first woman to be elected to the Senate. But it is not as a woman that I have been elected to this chamber. It is as a citizen of the Commonwealth; and I take my place here with the full privileges and rights of all honorable senators, and, what is still more important, with the full responsibilities which such a high office entails. I trust that I shall carry

out my duties in this chamber with every regard for the dignity and honour of the Senate, and also of the party to which I have the honour to belong.

Julia Gillard's "misogyny speech"

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and in so doing I say to the Leader of the Opposition: I will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man. I will not. The government will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man—not now, not ever. The Leader of the Opposition says that people who hold sexist views and who are misogynists are not appropriate for high office. Well, I hope the Leader of the Opposition has a piece of paper and he is writing out his resignation, because if he wants to know what misogyny looks like in modern Australia he does not need a motion in the House of Representatives; he needs a mirror. That is what he needs.

screens in George Lucas's magnificent space opera in 1977. I do point out, Senator Smith, that I was 12, and I thought Mark Hamill was actually quite handy. C-3PO and R2-D2 started us on a journey that traversed hyperspace. The movie transcended a generation. I remember my two boys, Will and Henry, at a very young age being transfixed by their remote controlled Darth Vader.