International Women’s Day Teaching Resources

International Women’s Day has its origins in a strike by women workers in the garment and laundry industry in New York on 8 March 1908.

Australian women began to celebrate the day in 1920 and the day has been celebrated ever since on 8 March.

Australia led the world in granting political rights to women. However, despite granting the vote to all women in 1903, progress was slow in other areas, and it was not until 1926 that women were able to both vote and stand for all Houses of Parliament in all parts of the Commonwealth.

The right to vote and sit in Parliament was confined to men and women over the age of 21 years.

While the Centenary of Women’s Suffrage is great cause for celebration, it is important to recognise that the Commonwealth Franchise Act did not enfranchise Indigenous women. In fact, although some states had granted these men and women the vote prior to 1902, full voting rights were not granted to Indigenous Australians until 1962, when the Commonwealth Electoral Act was amended.

The Commonwealth rights excluded Aboriginal natives of Australia, Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands except New Zealand, unless they already had the franchise at the State level. Aboriginal Australians were not granted the full franchise at the Federal level until 1962.

At the Federation referendums of the late-1890s and the first Federal Election in 1901, only women from South Australia and Western Australia were entitled to vote.

The first woman to win election to an Australian Parliament was Edith Cowan. She was elected to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly district of West Perth in 1921 and held the seat until 1924.

The first country to grant women the right to vote was New Zealand in 1893

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Right to Vote</th>
<th>Right To Sit</th>
<th>First Woman Elected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1959</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1918 LA</td>
<td>1925 LA</td>
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<td>1926 LC</td>
<td>1931 LC</td>
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<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1929</td>
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<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1933</td>
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Reference: http://australianpolitics.com/voting/electoral-system/women-and-the-right-to-vote
Resources/ Teaching Activities

• Collect articles and items about women from the newspapers all week. What areas of women's lives are covered? Where are the gaps? How much coverage does women in sport receive?

• Research famous women (or students can do this). Put up a display in classroom. Students can compile a book or paint posters.

• Develop a quiz about famous Australian women. Run a competition in the school. Have prizes in purple, green and white.

• Have ribbons in purple, green and white for sale. Prize for anyone who can explain what the colours mean (see AEU Women's Program webpage for answer).

• Students could search "girls websites" and answer question or analyse content (Girl power but still a big emphasis on how you look and getting your man):
  gURL.com http://www.gurl.com/
  smartgirl http://www.smartgirl.org/

• Research the success of Australian women in the arts, media and popular music. Who are the female bands in Australia? Collect profiles of women singers. How many women have won film awards?

• Who are the influential women in Australia? What is their contribution to society, politics etc? What makes them successful? Write a script for an interview including what you believe would be their recipe for success in their chosen career or lifestyle. Conduct the interview as a class presentation.

• Look at films which show strong female lead characters as making a difference and stepping outside of stereotypes.

• Look at articles that describe the plight of women in certain parts of the world.

• Asking other faculties to try and include an activity on that day (or week) which focuses on women’s rights/issues

• Ask students to interview a woman who has been influential in their lives. Ask students to analyse why.

• Have a discussion about "Why is there an International Women's Day?"
A History of International Women's Day Australia: The Nineteen Seventies and Eighties

http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/stevens/70s80s.htm

Australian Dictionary of biography - Women
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/scripts/adbpent_search.php?paramtext=&submit=Go%21&paramname=NAME&gendtext=Female&xdaterange=&sdaterange=&edaterange=&placetext=&splacetext=&culitext%5B%5D=&culitype=all&relitext%5B%5D=&relitype=all&functext=&fdaterange=&fplacetype=all&svoltext=

Australian Education Union

Australian migrant women
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/bsah/people.html

Australian Women
http://www.womenaustralia.info/br_a_women.htm

Australian Women in Science
http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/wisa/

Australian Women making sporting history
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html

Famous Aboriginals & Torres Strait Islanders

Famous Indigenous Australians
http://www.aussieeducator.org.au/reference/famousaustralians.html#indig

I AM A GIRL - Education Toolkit

This education toolkit contains carefully crafted study guides for different subject areas in the high school curriculum. It includes one guide for Society and Culture; Family and Community; Sociology Studies; and one guide prepared by ATOM (Australian Teachers of Media), which has relevance to other subjects including Health and Physical Education, Values Education, Civics and Citizenship, Cross-cultural and Gender Studies, English, Personal Development, Psychology and Media Studies.

Loris Williams- Aboriginal activist and Archivist
http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE2286b.htm

Showcase for students in WA schools


Women’s Hall of Fame
Some of these activities have an American flavour but easily adapt to the Australian setting.

Compare the Suffrage Movement in two Different Countries
http://www.congressforkids.net/games/Constitution_righttovote/2_righttovote.htm

Courageous women
http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/IMOW.html

International Women’s Day lesson plan
http://eslholidaylessons.com/03/international_womens_day.html

International Women’s Day Resources
http://www.internationalwomensday.com/resources.asp

Mini doco on the first women’s union. It has good teacher notes and other pieces of women’s history too

Teaching Tips 48
http://www.developingteachers.com/tips/pasttips48.htm#women

Women’s History

Women: Struggle and Triumph
http://www.loc.gov/search/?q=women%3Astruggle+and+triumph

Women’s Suffrage for grades 3-5
http://content.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=562

Women who changed history
http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/women/