

9

Women's changing rights and freedoms in the post-WWII period

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- ✦ How have the rights and freedoms of women as a group in Australia changed during the post-WWII period?

In the 1950s, society expected Australian women to follow the saying 'a woman's place is in the home'. In the 1960s, Australian women began to rebel against this way of life and, at the same time, take up the ideas and debates of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Women wanted a permanent place in the paid workforce, equal pay and careers rather than just jobs. They campaigned to make people aware of how society denied women opportunities and key roles in its decision making. They fought for and achieved improved education, representation in parliament and anti-discrimination legislation.

They took control of their own lives. Some symbolically burned their bras to express their liberation.



A photograph of protesters, including Germaine Greer, at a women's liberation march in 1972

9.1

Women's roles and role models c.1945–c.1965

With World War II over, women gave up their 'male' jobs to make way for the men they had replaced. Governments and societies that only five years earlier had encouraged women to move into the paid workforce now presented a different view of women's roles.

SOURCE 9.1

Two images of women's roles: at left is a World War II poster of the American shipyard worker Rosie the Riveter, and at right is a 1950s image showing 'Woman the home-maker'.



SOURCE QUESTION

Identify and explain the contradictory messages shown in the images in source 9.1.

SOURCE 9.2

An extract from the *Australian Women's Weekly*, 16 May 1956

SOURCE QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify the expectations of a woman's role that are evident in source 9.2.
- 2 What does the last paragraph imply regarding a woman not satisfied with this role?

In 1950s Australia, education, patterns of paid employment, religion and social attitudes all reinforced the principle that 'a woman's place is in the home'. Her role was primarily to be a good wife and mother. From birth onwards, family, school, church and popular magazines trained girls to accept this view unquestioningly.

Society expected women to conform to the idea of woman as homemaker, and it reflected this in its attitude towards women. Typical wedding vows had the female partner promise to 'love, honour and obey' her husband while he promised only to 'love and honour' his wife. The law reinforced women's subservient role within marriage and within society by generally assuming that women required a male to look after their interests. The law provided little protection for women against males who failed to do so; in New South Wales, for example, rape within marriage did not become a criminal offence until 1981.

Whatever she is — rich or poor, young or old, pretty or plain — every mother has that quality of unselfish love which her children take for granted.

To her baby, she is everything. From her comes warmth, security, food, shelter and life itself — gifts he grabs in his grubby fists and takes for granted.

To her school age children she's just someone who is always there. She's the one who feeds him when he is hungry, praises him when he succeeds, comforts him when he's

sad, and scolds him when he's bad. This is no more than he expects ...

Looked at like this, it seems that being a mother is a most unrewarding role. But every mother knows that this is not so. She knows that in motherhood, even when it is taken for granted, lies the greatest joy of womanhood.

It is the joy of loving and giving without thought of reward. And it's a rare mother who would exchange that joy for any other riches the world might offer.

nuclear family: the basic family unit comprising parents and children

sex-role stereotyping: the defining of a person according to the supposed characteristics of their sex; an oversimplified concept, such as 'Men like sport' or 'Women like shopping'

breadwinner: the person responsible for earning the income necessary to support a family or household

The **nuclear family** living in a home in the suburbs became the centrepiece of an image of security. Society expected men to participate in the public world of work and decision making, and women to provide a haven for them in the private sphere of the home. Advertising reinforced **sex-role stereotyping** and created a 'need' for the products that reflected this outlook. The man would be the **breadwinner** and head of the house and the woman would seek satisfaction in the consumer products that aided her role.

American television series like *The Donna Reed Show* and *Father Knows Best* provided further role models that reflected this view and promoted the belief that happiness came from males and females living up to their assigned roles.

SOURCE 9.3 A 1950s advertisement for Kelvinator products

This Christmas give mother this thrilling new way of living...



Give mother a **Kelvinator** Home Freezer...

Here is the gift of all Christmas gifts! For, by giving Mother this magnificent Home Freezer, you're saying in effect: "Now, at last, you'll spend less time working and cooking, and you'll have more time for leisure, as we've always wanted you to have."

What a wonderful, wonderful gift . . . to bring Mother a new way of living! Yes, easier living, better living! That's the promise of home freezing for your entire family. With a Kelvinator

Home Freezer in your home, you own your own food store — one that is open 365 days a year! With the help of this 20th century appliance miracle, you can, if you wish, enjoy a whole week-

end — free from cooking. You can prepare meals in advance — serve them months later. You can increase the variety of the dishes you serve — enjoy seasonal food all year 'round. You can cut your food costs down to rock-bottom . . . eat food that's always delicious and full of nutrition.

What is Home Freezing? Home Freezing is the preservation of food at sub-zero temperatures. This is the best means known to science of keeping food fresh. By freezing foods fast and keeping them at the below zero temperatures they hold their nutritive value and stay just as fresh and as attractive as on the day they were frozen. This applies to almost all foods — all meats, poultry, fish, pastry and liquids and practically all fruit and vegetables.

You'll save money. You'll buy food in bulk, when prices are low, and during

seasonal gluts. If you grow your own vegetables, you'll be able to keep what you grow. You'll save, too, by cutting down on your shopping trips. And, just as you'll save money through Home Freezing, you'll enjoy better meals.

Yes, you'll live better! Make up your mind now to live this wonderful new way! But choose the Freezer you can be sure of. Buy the kind of dependability that stems from a genuine "built-in" quality. Choose a Kelvinator Home Freezer—the smart, modern Kelvinator, powered by the world-famous "Polar-sphere" Sealed Unit.

See the Kelvinator Home Freezers at your local Kelvinator Retailer, or mail the coupon in this advertisement for further information. **5-Year Protection Plan—Lowest Deposit—Easiest Terms.**

Precision built by Kelvinator Australia Limited.



(Above) Kelvinator Chest-type Home Freezer, holds 310-lbs. of food. Price £185.
(Left) Kelvinator Upright Home Freezer, 19 cubic feet capacity. Price £175/75.
(Prices slightly higher in country areas.)

CHOOSE A
Kelvinator
HOME FREEZER
for better living

FREE LITERATURE FOR YOU!
Send this coupon now, for information on Home Freezing to Kelvinator Australia Limited, P.O. Box 1347, Adelaide.
Name: _____
Address: _____
State: _____

SOURCE QUESTION

Identify the message, audience and purpose of source 9.3.

Women and the world beyond the home

In the late 1940s and 1950s, girls' school education incorporated the maintenance of traditional 'female' skills in sewing and cooking and did little to promote the development of their technical and academic talents. The view generally accepted within society was that higher levels of education were wasted on girls, who would only be in the workforce for a short time before leaving to pursue their **vocation** in home-making. Boys strongly outnumbered girls in the senior years in high schools and at universities. This created barriers to women's achievement of their potential and to the types of jobs for which they could train.

vocation: an activity or career to which someone has a special calling

Working historically

Source captions usually provide information that will help you to understand more about the source, and the source itself often provides clues about the perspective of its author.

You can also learn more through researching biographical details about the author, if the person is well known. For example, the following extract is from

a book by R. Auchmuty. Based on source information and additional research, we can discover that Professor Rosemary Auchmuty is an expert in women's studies, property law and legal issues affecting women. She lectures within the Law School at the University of Reading (UK) and also at the University of Paris X-Nanterre.

Time period being described — 1950s Perth

Author of extract

SOURCE 9.4 'What it means to be 13', an extract from Bronwyn Murdoch's account of

Clues about the perspective of the writer

- I enjoyed discussions about things which school didn't teach — religion, censorship, philosophical free will. We had to blow our own minds because others at school wouldn't.
- I remember the general feeling that girls were underachieving, that being clever brought immediate kudos but no hope of a long-time career. Success was judged through the achievements of your boyfriend, and the ability to hold one at all.
- I was a victim of that syndrome. I accepted it was much more fun to be adored and sexy and cherished than to work for an independent future. My game was channelled to beating people on society's terms, not my own.

R. Auchmuty, *Women and Society: Australia's Daughters*, Methuen, Sydney 1978, p. 49.

Author of book

Date book published

SOURCE QUESTION

Explain how source 9.4 could be useful to a historian investigating Australian girls' education in the 1950s. Your answer should *at least* comment on (a) what kind of source this is, (b) the perspective of the writer, and (c) the accuracy of the content.

Many employers — such as banks, the NSW postal service, and the Commonwealth public service (until 1966) — would not employ married women in permanent positions and expected existing female employees to resign if they did marry.

Some women proved that they had talents in areas beyond the confines of their traditional roles. In sport, Dawn Fraser and Shirley Strickland provided role models of strong and capable women. In the political arena, Dorothy Tangney and Enid Lyons began to tackle the unequal representation of women in parliament. In the arts, opera singer Joan Sutherland was establishing an outstanding stage and recording career.

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1 List the evidence of sex-role stereotyping that you would expect to find in a 1950s home in the allocation of household chores.

2 Identify the limitations that a woman's traditional role placed on her.

3 What evidence was there in the 1950s to show that women were moving beyond society's view of 'their place'?

9.2 The Women's Liberation Movement

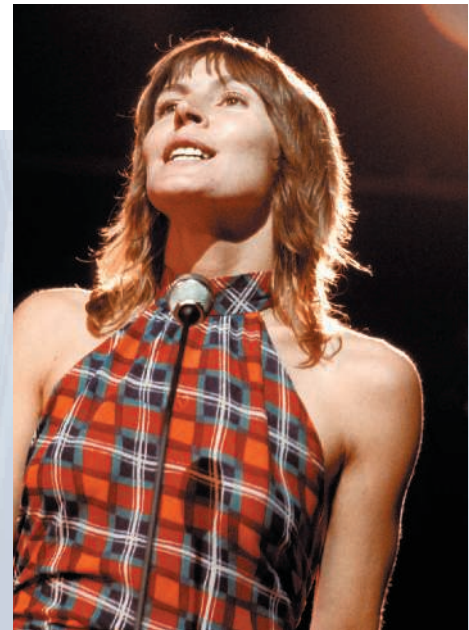
In many areas of the world, the 1960s was an era characterised by questioning of the political, economic and social status quo. It was a decade of protest, and many people demanded changes to society's organisation and priorities. Amid debate over civil rights, the pill, marijuana, conscription and the Vietnam War, women embarked on a campaign to have their rights recognised and to be liberated from the limitations associated with their traditional role.

Women's Liberation Movement: the movement aimed at achieving recognition of women's rights, which began in the United States in the late 1960s

The movement became known as the **Women's Liberation Movement (WLM)**, and it became a force in Australia from the late 1960s onwards. Its supporters were known as women's liberationists or 'women's libbers'. Australian singer Helen Reddy's 1972 international hit song *I Am Woman* became a theme for the Women's Liberation Movement. Accepting the 1973 Grammy award for it, Reddy thanked God 'because she makes everything possible'.

SOURCE 9.5

Photograph showing Helen Reddy performing in 1975



I am woman, hear me roar
In numbers too big to ignore
And I know too much to go back an' pretend.
'cause I've heard it all before
and I've been down there on the floor
No one's ever gonna keep me down again.

Oh yes I am wise
But it's wisdom born of pain.
Yes, I've paid the price
But look how much I've gained.
If I have to, I can do anything.
I am strong
I am invincible
I am woman.

I Am Woman. Words by Helen Reddy. Music by Ray Burton © 1971 IRVING MUSIC, INC. AND BUGGERLUGS MUSIC CO. Copyright renewed. All rights administered by IRVING MUSIC, INC. All rights reserved, used by permission.

SOURCE 9.6

The first verse and chorus of Helen Reddy's *I Am Woman*

RETROFILE

In 1914, the British writer Rebecca West described the difficulties in defining feminism: 'I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.'

feminist: someone who believes in equal rights and opportunities for women, especially in activities beyond their traditional role as home-makers

SOURCE QUESTIONS

- 1 What do sources 9.5 and 9.6 indicate about the methods Helen Reddy used to promote women's liberation?
- 2 Use source 9.6 to explain why *I Am Woman* became a worldwide anthem for the Women's Liberation Movement.

Whereas Australia's earlier turn-of-the-century **feminists** had fought mainly for woman's suffrage, the 'second wave' feminists of the late 1960s and 1970s had wider goals and interests. They wanted to:

- overturn the idea that women were inferior to men
- make society see women as people who could control their own lives.

Women's liberationists made other women think about and question their traditional roles, their relationships with men and ways of creating change. In March 1965, two early women's libbers, Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner, staged a protest against laws banning women from drinking in hotels. Adapting the tactics of the late nineteenth-century suffragists, they chained themselves to the bar in Brisbane's Regatta Hotel.

SOURCE 9.7

Photograph showing Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner chained to the rail of the bar in the Regatta Hotel Brisbane on 31 March 1965



SOURCE QUESTION

How do you think the police and hotel patrons might have reacted to Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner's protest as shown in source 9.7? Give reasons for your answer.

discrimination: treating an individual or a group differently on the basis of age, race, religion, sex or some other factor

Women drew inspiration from one another and from works such as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* and, significantly, from Australian writer Germaine Greer's 1970 bestseller, *The Female Eunuch* (see page 364). *The Female Eunuch* inspired women to question the way they lived their lives and to take action to change women's place in society.

There was no formal women's liberation organisation. Instead women throughout Australia established hundreds of new groups to provide support for one another and to campaign for specific women's causes.

They saw themselves as part of a revolutionary movement, focused

on achieving equality in the workplace and in education, and seeking justice for women in issues such as:

- the choice of whether or not to have children
- the availability of child care
- **discrimination** by banks and lending institutions
- divorce
- domestic violence
- family planning
- parental leave.

Women's experiences within the WLM

'Consciousness raising' was an important group activity. Through talking to one another about these issues, women became more aware of the different ways in which society limited their freedom and ignored their rights. Many women also came to realise that they were not alone in the problems they faced. Other women shared similar experiences.

Women advanced their liberation by joining in protest marches, taking part in bra-burning ceremonies and attending conferences so that they could become better informed about feminist issues. They pressured governments to change existing laws and to create new legislation that would:

- make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex
- promote equal opportunity for women
- provide protection of women's rights.

They took action to solve women's problems by working to establish childcare facilities, women's refuges and rape crisis centres.

From 1972 onwards women in Australia began rallying each year on International Women's Day on 8 March. They used marches to show their support for one another and to make other people more aware of what motivated their actions.

About 4000 women took part in the 1972 Sydney march between the Town Hall and Hyde Park, chanting verses such as the one in source 9.9 (p. 322). Among the group was Germaine Greer, who became the target for an egg thrower. By making *this* the focus of their news reports, journalists showed they were still not taking women's issues seriously.

Working historically



/// The annotations to source 9.8 below provide examples of the types of information that photographs can reveal about past events: the nature of the event (a protest rally); the extent of support for it (note the size of the crowd); the supporters (note the sex and age of participants); issues important to women in the mid 1970s (note placards); and women's fashion of the mid 1970s (note the type of clothing and design features).

SOURCE 9.8

Photograph showing some of the estimated 3000–5000 participants in the International Women's Day march in Melbourne on 8 March 1975. Four policewomen led the march.

Size of crowd indicates that this event has strong support, that Australian women are part of the Women's Liberation Movement and that they welcome International Women's Year.

Clothing of participants is casual and reflects both the fashions of the time and the increased freedom in women's lives.



T-shirt logo is the UN logo for International Women's Year, the symbol for women within the dove of peace. Created by graphic designer Valerie Pettis, the logo became a powerful symbol of the 1970s women's movement.

Women are generally young.

Placards highlight some of the issues for which the women are marching.

SOURCE QUESTIONS

- 1 Where possible, identify the messages shown on the placards in source 9.8. What issues do they relate to? What do you think was the significance of four policewomen leading the march?
- 2 Write new captions for the photographs shown in sources 9.7 and 9.8 from (a) a 'women's lib' perspective and (b) the perspective of a traditional Aussie male.

SOURCE 9.9

A popular women's chant
from the 1970s

Men like birds; birds live in cages.
They have done for ages, on second-class wages.
Women's Liberation's going to smash that cage,
Come join us now and rage, rage, rage.

**SOURCE QUESTION**

Identify the message of source 9.9. What do you think motivated it?

The role and experiences of the Women's Electoral Lobby

The Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) began in February 1972 when 10 women met in the Melbourne home of feminist Beatrice Faust to discuss ways of playing a more influential role in the election planned for December of that year. These women then organised a survey to identify the attitudes of existing members of parliament (MPs) towards women's issues.

They designed the survey in the style of a racing form guide. A racing form guide provides an analysis of horses' past performances in different conditions and other matters that may affect their current condition. This helps people judge which horses are likely to perform well in a particular race. WEL surveyed election candidates to find out their attitudes to child care, education, knowledge of women's issues, planned parenthood and workplace equality. They then ranked candidates on the basis of their responses as 'risky', 'plodder', 'promising' or 'winner'.

SOURCE 9.10

A poster from the
Women's Electoral Lobby
in the 1970s



The results, when published in a national magazine,

indicated that the MPs either:

- didn't take women seriously, *or*
- had a very poor understanding of the issues which affected them.

Membership of WEL grew rapidly, especially after a second, more comprehensive, survey demonstrated even more clearly the arrogant attitudes of some politicians towards women. WEL was heartened by the more understanding responses of some Labor Party politicians and so was glad to see Labor's 1972 electoral victory. Four hundred women attended WEL's first national conference in 1973.

SOURCE QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify the general audience for this poster and the specific group[s] it is addressing within this category.
- 2 What aim does WEL claim in this poster?
- 3 What is its message to women?

Women were keen to join an organisation dedicated to ending the injustices they were no longer willing to tolerate. WEL benefited from the expertise of members from the universities, the professions, the media and special-interest groups.

They were well informed and well organised, lobbying politicians, formulating petitions and taking out advertisements to advance their goals. They learned how to attract media attention. For example, WEL members in the 1970s gained television coverage for their cause — support for a Bill to legalise advertising of contraceptives — by carrying sticks with condoms attached to them as they demonstrated outside the Victorian Parliament.

The year 1975 was International Women's Year. This provoked questioning of WEL's role and the development of a new strategy. WEL now wanted to advance its goals by encouraging members to take on roles *within* parliament, trade unions and the public service. While the movement as a whole criticised and ridiculed these organisations, WEL sought to reform them from within.

Gail Radford, for example (see source 9.11), supported this by a career change — from veterinary surgeon to working within the public service to establish equal employment opportunity programs.

Since its inauguration in 1972, WEL has continued to work for the promotion of women's rights: lobbying governments and political parties to adopt policies supporting child care, family planning and women's health, and facilitating opportunities for women to become more involved in the public sphere of life beyond the home.

SOURCE 9.11

An Australian feminist reflects on the Women's Electoral Lobby

WEL was a great success. Why? Partly because there was so much wrong for women that we just simply had to succeed in getting some things changed. It was inevitable.

What was wrong? There was overt discrimination against women in education, employment, employment conditions, virtually no childcare or family planning clinics, you could not advertise contraceptives, abortion was illegal (does this one sound familiar?), obtaining finance practically impossible. The list was endless.

A very large part of WEL's success was due to the women who worked for it. WEL was successful in attracting many women to work for it, because there was so much wrong. The women had been confronted by these problems in their daily lives and were not going to put up with them any longer. It was as simple as that . . .

In 1972 we had the greatest gimmick of them all. We were going to interview all the candidates for the Federal Election and publish their views in a Form Guide, so women could decide whether to vote for them or not. Women all around Australia mobilised and we did it.

We published the Form Guide as a green liftout supplement in *The Age* newspaper. It was copied all around Australia. We handed out copies on polling booths. We received excellent publicity.

The new Whitlam government immediately acted on numbers of our demands. The government announced that it would support the Equal Pay Case, the luxury tax on contraceptives was removed, the Prime Minister appointed a Women's Adviser, Elizabeth Reid.

WEL was seen to be a success. WEL women were appointed to committees and asked to put in submissions. Governments were asking: 'What does WEL think about it?' 'What does WEL think?' they wanted to know.

Speech by Gail Radford to the WEL ACT 30th Anniversary Dinner, 11 April 2002.

SOURCE QUESTIONS

- 1 Using source 9.11, identify the issues that WEL wished to tackle.
- 2 Explain what attracted members to WEL.
- 3 What does the term 'form guide' usually refer to? What was this form guide?
- 4 What were the results of this early WEL campaign?

Achievements of the Women's Movement

Many women's groups in Australia — from conservative groups like the Country Women's Association, whose members were more likely to seek minimal change, to radical groups wanting complete rejection of existing social relationships — became involved in the new ideas put forward by the WLM.

Women with a broad range of views participated in activities for the 1975 International Women's Year. Advertisements and television programs slowly began to present women in less stereotypical ways. Women began to delete the 'obey' from their marriage vows and use the title 'Ms' rather than 'Miss' or 'Mrs' (so that they would not be judged according to whether or not they were married).

They criticised terminology such as 'man' instead of 'human', 'mankind' instead of 'humankind' and 'chairman' instead of 'chairperson'. They worked to encourage language that was **inclusive** and gender neutral rather than language which recognised men and treated women as invisible. Nowadays, it is common for government departments, educational institutions and business corporations to develop guidelines to ensure that staff use inclusive language.

The Women's Movement encouraged women to pursue tertiary education and a career. It lobbied for the broadening of their educational opportunities to study 'male' subjects such as carpentry or pursue what were previously 'male only' careers such as working as a pilot on a commercial airline.

inclusive language:
language that allows for the participation of women as well as men

SOURCE 9.12

Photo showing Deborah Wardley and fellow trainee Felicity Bush in an Ansett aircraft in 1981. Wardley became the first Australian woman to work as a pilot for a major domestic airline. After many refusals, Ansett finally admitted her after her lengthy fight through the Victorian Equal Opportunity Board, the Victorian Supreme Court and the High Court of Australia.



SOURCE QUESTION

Create a newspaper headline to convey the significance of the event depicted in source 9.12.

One of the long-term achievements of the Women's Movement was the introduction of specialist courses in women's studies at universities throughout Australia. In the field of history, academics began to ask questions about *herstory* as well as *history*. They sought to go beyond the simple approach of studying famous women to one that included women in terms of the dates, time periods and themes that were relevant to understanding *their* experiences of the past.

Australia was slowly beginning to introduce changes that supported women's rights and freedoms. Governments and legal and medical experts began to tackle women's issues through legislation, improved educational opportunities, the introduction of women's health services and the establishment of childcare facilities, women's refuges and rape crisis centres.

In 1975, at the instigation of Treasurer Bill Hayden, the government also provided financial assistance to 'Elsie', the first women's refuge in New South Wales. A group of committed women, including Kris Melmouth and Anne Summers, created 'Elsie' to provide accommodation and support for women who were desperate to leave their

partners but who lacked money of their own to do so. Anne Summers would also become famous in 1975 with the publication of her groundbreaking book *Damned Whores and God's Police*.

Creating equality of opportunity

By the 1980s, women had forced governments and society generally to recognise their rights and to make women's issues a central concern.

Government	Initiative/legislation	Significance
Whitlam government 1972–1975	<p>1973: Appointed Elizabeth Reid as the first Women's Adviser to the Prime Minister</p> <p>1975: <i>Family Law Act 1975</i> (Cwlth)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showed commitment to improving women's status and facilitating opportunities for women to play an active role outside the home • Established no-fault divorce, helping to remove the social stigma that had accompanied divorce in the past; a woman who left her husband to escape an abusive relationship could no longer be labelled the 'guilty' party, which had made it difficult to obtain property and gain custody of children
Fraser government 1975–1983	<p>1978: Established the National Women's Advisory Council with Dame Beryl Beaurepaire as its first convenor</p> <p>1979: Ratified (approved) the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new means of communication between the federal Government and women • Signified willingness to comply with international standards
Hawke government 1983–1993	<p>1983: Created the Office of the Status of Women</p> <p>1984: Helen Williams appointed to head a Commonwealth department</p> <p>1984: <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> (Cwlth) made it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of sex, marital status and pregnancy and also made sexual harassment illegal</p> <p>1984: Created the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)</p> <p>1986: Passed the <i>Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act</i> (Cwlth). Workplaces with over 100 employees had to appoint someone to implement affirmative action and provide public reports on progress</p> <p>1987: Mary Gaudron appointed as a judge of the High Court of Australia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing means of advising the PM on women's issues • The first woman head of a Commonwealth department • This legislation put into effect Australia's obligation to implement CEDAW; it also identified structures, procedures, rules and behaviours that lead to indirect discrimination • HREOC investigates and attempts to resolve complaints about breaches of the <i>Sex Discrimination Act</i> and can also order compensation • Required individual workplaces to identify discriminatory policies and practices and put in place strategies to allow women to progress; public reporting (removed in 1996 by the Howard government) created the incentive for them to do this • The first woman justice of the High Court

no-fault divorce: the basic principle of the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cwlth); it helped remove the social stigma previously associated with divorce

affirmative action: a government policy requiring employers to encourage disadvantaged groups, particularly women, to gain promotion or employment

SOURCE 9.13

Cartoon by Geoff Pryor, published in the *Canberra Times* on 7 June 1984 during the debates leading up to the passing of the affirmative action legislation



SOURCE QUESTION

Outline Pryor's view of affirmative action as expressed in source 9.13.

RETROFILE

- By the mid 1980s, there were six women in the House of Representatives and eight in the Senate.
- In 2008, there were 40 female members of the House of Representatives, 27 female members of the Senate, females in the positions of Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, a female Governor-General, a female Governor in New South Wales, a female Governor in Queensland, a female Premier in Queensland, a female Deputy Premier of New South Wales, and two female justices on the High Court of Australia.

From the mid 1980s onwards, activists have engaged in the 'third wave' of the women's struggle. Their focus has been on gaining equality in the workplace, home and government, seeking protection for women against sexual harassment and domestic violence, and seeking to empower women more generally. Federal and state legislation and government-sponsored publicity campaigns have tackled both of these two latter issues with partial success.

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Imagine you are a 1970s 'women's liberator' being questioned by a reporter on what you wanted to achieve. What would you say?
- 2 List the kinds of activities included in the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM).
- 3 Create a dot-point summary of the achievements of the WLM.

RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATE

- 4 Try to view the documentary *Elsie* (ABC *Timeframe*, 1996). It tells the story of the first women's refuge established in Sydney in 1974. Write a commentary on it that is suitable for publication in a weekly television guide.
- 5 Use the **I Am Woman** weblink in your eBookPLUS to read all the lyrics of Helen Reddy's song.
- 6 In 1998 WEL introduced the EDNA awards (after activist Edna Ryan) to recognise 'the troublemakers, stirrers, battlers' whose efforts have improved women's status. Write a paragraph to support a woman you would like to nominate for this award.

eBookplus

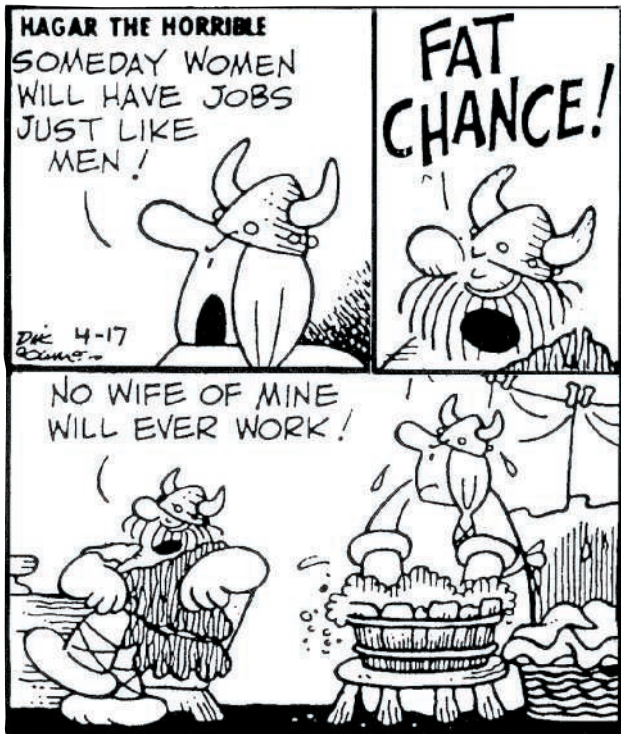
9.3

Equal pay and its significance for women

The equal pay issue

SOURCE 9.14

Cartoon strip Hagar the Horrible comments on women's work.



SOURCE QUESTION

What does source 9.14 indicate is Hagar's definition of 'women's work'?

Despite society's definition of their role, many women in post-war Australia either had to or chose to work outside the home. By 1961 women made up 21 per cent of the workforce, generally working in areas that society believed reflected their 'caring' instincts: domestic service, teaching, nursing, secretarial work and areas that reflected low skill levels. Some worked as clerical assistants or sales staff in the family business.

Reliable birth control, through the arrival of the contraceptive pill in 1961, changed the pattern of women's lives dramatically. With the average number of children per family being 2.2, many married women sought to improve the family's economic security and gain some economic independence of their own by entering paid employment.

A key issue for all working women was wage discrimination in favour of men. The 1907 Harvester Case (see page 33) had enshrined the idea that all men should receive enough pay to support a wife at home and three children, and that women in the paid workforce should earn lower wages than those earned by men. The decision showed that the judge didn't think it important to provide for female breadwinners. It also made it very difficult for women to become financially independent of men.

Women and trade unions protested against this before and during World War II. In 1949–50 two women's organisations – the National Council of Women and the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Clubs – put cases to the Basic Wage Inquiry in support of equal pay. The inquiry established a basic wage for women and increased female wages to 75 per cent of the male rate.

Towards equal pay

The 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights highlighted the issue of equal pay, stating: 'Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.' Australian governments were slow to act on this, as this example from New South Wales indicates:

Legislation	Provisions	Significance
<i>Industrial Arbitration (Female Rates) Amendment Act 1959 (NSW)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granted equal pay to women doing similar or the same work as men No equal pay for women whose work was 'essentially or usually performed by women' To be phased in over five years Women had to apply to the NSW Industrial Commission to establish that their work had equal value to that done by men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first government employer in Australia to introduce equal pay for equal work Equal pay applied only where most of the workers were men

In 1959, the New South Wales Government did grant equal pay to female teachers.

SOURCE 9.15

Photograph of Zelda D'Aprano who, in protest at the 1969 equal pay decision, chained herself to the Commonwealth Building in Melbourne. In January 2004, the government made Dr D'Aprano an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in recognition of her campaigning on women's workplace issues.

The Equal Pay Case, 1969

In theory, the federal Equal Pay Case of 1969 resulted in a requirement that women receive the same wage as men for the same work. In reality, the decision was not the victory it had seemed.

At the same time, the New South Wales Industrial Commission refused to create the same minimum wage for both men and women. It argued that the male minimum wage should be higher, as 'the male wage takes account of family considerations'.

Zelda D'Aprano, a trade union activist, was firmly committed to the achievement of women's rights in the workplace. In 1969, using one of the tactics of the late nineteenth-century suffragists, she chained herself to the doors of the Commonwealth Building in Melbourne. She was protesting against the inadequacy of the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission's decision on equal pay for women.



Case	Decision	Significance
The Equal Pay Case (1969)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 1 October 1969, women doing the same work as men would get at least 85% of the male wage. Women's pay would then increase in stages until 1 January 1972 when they would receive equal pay (100%) to that of men doing the same work. This settlement would not apply in situations 'where the work was essentially or usually performed by women'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women did gain equal payment for doing the same work as men. Equal pay would apply only in areas where most of the workers were men. Australia has one of the most sex-segregated workforces in the world, so it was not surprising that only 18% of its female workforce benefited from the 1969 Equal Pay decision.

SOURCE 9.16

A demonstration by women demanding equal pay, on 11 November 1972 on the steps of Sydney Town Hall



SOURCE QUESTION

Identify the issues that the women were highlighting in the protest in source 9.16.

RETROFILE

In 1970, female shop assistants in major department stores could receive 'male' pay rates if they worked in certain departments such as haberdashery or china and glassware. They received lower 'female' rates for similar work in other areas of the store.

The Equal Pay Case, 1972

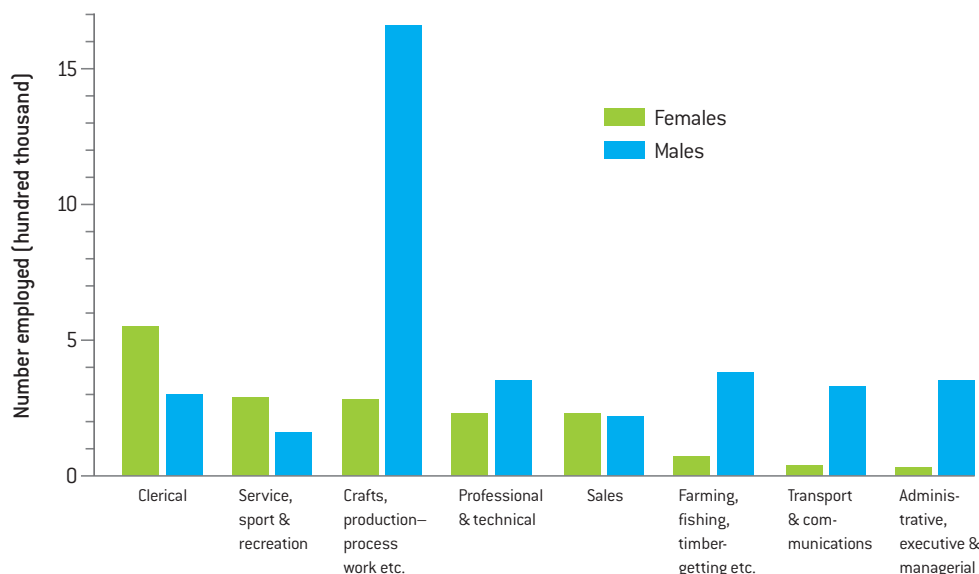
The Whitlam Labor government (1972–75) promised to improve women's position in Australian society. To meet the needs of women who worked in female-dominated industries, the government advocated recognition of the Equal Pay Principle. The Conciliation and Arbitration Commission adopted this on 15 December 1972 by establishing that different jobs with the same worth should be paid at the same rate.

Case	Decision	Significance
The Equal Pay Case (1972)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different jobs with the same worth should be paid at the same rate. This decision applied to the 40% of women workers employed under <i>federal</i> awards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in female-dominated areas of work would get the same pay as men — e.g. some women in the textile industry gained as much as a 35% increase in their weekly pay. The 60% of women working under <i>state</i> awards had to campaign and apply to state industrial commissions to receive the same benefits. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was difficult to implement.

In 1974, the Commission awarded a minimum adult wage so that there would be a minimum and equal wage for both sexes. The Commission also abandoned the principle of 'family support' as a consideration in determining wages.

SOURCE 9.17

Graph showing areas of employment for males and females in 1971



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution) Australia.

SOURCE QUESTIONS

From source 9.17, what could you conclude about the early 1970s regarding:

- the types of work in which women predominated
- the types of work in which men predominated
- the ratio of men to women in administrative, executive and managerial roles?

Equal and paid less ...

These changes recognised the injustices of women being paid less than men for the same work and for work of equal value. They recognised equal pay in relation to award rates. However:

- the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was difficult to implement
- the changes did not achieve equality for women in actual rates of pay and income.

Increases in women's employment saw women continue in occupations that reflected traditional expectations of them as carers: teaching, nursing, secretarial work.

Comparatively few women gained entry into the more prestigious 'male' occupations of engineering, law, medicine or the sciences, and fewer still took on managerial positions. Women experienced difficulty in establishing that the work they did was of the same value and skill level as work done by men.

During the 1983 National Wage Case, the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission (ACAC) considered the inequities in male and female wage rates. It concluded:

- that women's work was underpaid and undervalued
- that the Australian economy could not afford to pay women appropriately.

The introduction in 1987 of wage increases based on productivity put women further behind, because productivity is not easily measured in the kinds of work women are traditionally involved in, such as teaching and nursing.

In the late 1980s, it was rare for a woman to be receiving more than 85 per cent of the weekly wage paid to men in the same type of work. For migrant women with poor English, 'outwork' in the textile and clothing industries provided regular employment in their own homes. Outwork is characterised by low wages and a lack of the sickness or leave benefits enforced in the regular workforce. The law has been slow to do something about the exploitation of these women and they continue to campaign to receive the same benefits as other workers.

Sticky floors, glass ceilings and beyond

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's 1997 report *Glass Ceilings and Sticky Floors* was the result of an initiative from Westpac to identify the status of women in the banking industry. It found that women's jobs were largely characterised by:

- being part time
- having lower skill levels than men's jobs
- providing few opportunities for promotion or the acquisition of more advanced skills.

The report found that men continued to dominate senior management positions and that they were reluctant to advance the careers of women with children.

Pay inequity continues

In 2008 women's average weekly wage was 84 per cent that of men.

SOURCE 9.18

May 2008 table from the Australian Bureau of Statistics comparing average weekly earnings for males and females in Australia

	Male	Female	Pay gap %
Western Australia	\$1393.7	\$1011.9	27.4
New South Wales	\$1213.0	\$1026.9	15.3
Victoria	\$1174.9	\$1011.0	13.5
Queensland	\$1135.9	\$969.2	14.7
South Australia	\$1111.7	\$938.7	15.6
Tasmania	\$1046.7	\$949.8	9.3
Northern Territory	\$1179.5	\$982.9	16.7
Australian Capital Territory	\$1419.8	\$1203.3	15.3
Australia	\$1203.4	\$1007.5	16.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings, May 2008.

SOURCE QUESTIONS

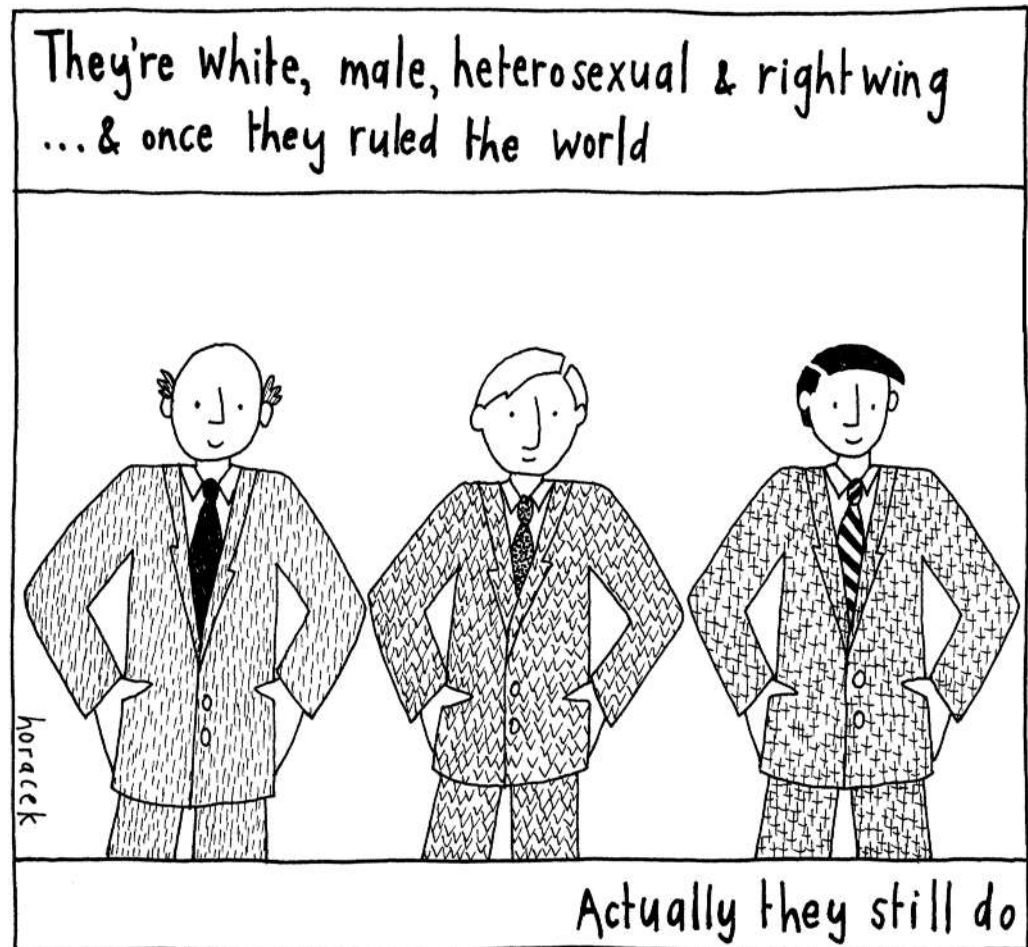
- 1 Use source 9.18 to identify the state/territory with:
 - (a) the highest pay gap between male and female average weekly earnings
 - (b) the lowest pay gap between male and female average weekly earnings.
- 2 Who created this source? How would you rate its reliability?

Pay inequity continues for a number of reasons:

- Women in the paid workforce face both *direct and indirect discrimination*. Legislation provides some protection from direct discrimination, where women have been treated unfairly in some obvious way related perhaps to pregnancy or maternity leave. Indirect discrimination, where women are disadvantaged because of other factors such as interrupted work patterns due to childcare responsibilities, has been more difficult to remove.
- The Australian workforce has one of the highest levels of segregation into 'male' and 'female' jobs of any nation in the developed world and *women's work remains undervalued* and so is paid less than 'men's work'.
- Australian women have *fewer opportunities to reach the levels of pay that men do*. Women speak of 'sticky floors' which keep them from advancing in their careers and 'glass ceilings', through which they can see (but not attain) the upper management positions dominated by men. Indigenous and migrant women often experience the 'glass door' which serves as a barrier to any junior management roles.
- *Women's household responsibilities limit their opportunities* to seek paid employment, to work full time, to gain promotion and to earn additional wages through overtime. Many women have the double burden of unpaid domestic labour and a job in the paid workforce.
- *Fewer women than men receive bonuses and over-award payments* which supplement the amounts they are paid in wages.
- Men tend to reach higher levels in their work more easily than do women. This can result from *family-related interruptions in women's work lives* and also from discrimination.

SOURCE 9.19

Judy Horacek's 1995 cartoon 'Once they ruled the world' from her book *I Am Woman Hear Me Draw*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p. 28



SOURCE QUESTION

Based on your knowledge of women's changing rights and freedoms, to what extent do you agree with the message of source 9.19?



SOURCE QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify the messages Horacek wants to convey in source 9.20.
- 2 List the ways in which its content is similar to that of source 9.14 [page 327].

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Write a response of 15–20 lines in answer to the following question:
 What have been the advances and barriers to women's attempts to obtain pay equal to that of their male counterparts?
 Your response should include key terms relevant to this topic.

RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATE

- 2 Use the **Judy Horacek** weblink in your eBookPLUS to research this Australian cartoonist and writer. What women's issues does she comment on in her cartoons? What perspective do her cartoons reveal?

WORKSHEETS

- Worksheet 9.1 Women word find
- Worksheet 9.2 Tracks of time

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TIMELINE

- 1945** End of World War II; women return to traditional roles
- 1961** Contraceptive pill becomes available
- 1965** Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner protest the banning of women drinking in hotels
- 1966** Women employed by the government no longer required to resign on marriage
- 1969** Equal Pay Case
- 1970** Publication of *The Female Eunuch* by Germaine Greer
- 1972** Helen Reddy's hit song *I Am Woman*
Women participate in marches to highlight International Women's Day
Formation of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL)
Equal Pay Case
- 1973** *Maternity Leave Act 1973*
Elizabeth Reid appointed as first Women's Adviser to the Prime Minister
- 1974** Conciliation and Arbitration Commission award a minimum adult wage, i.e. minimum and equal wage for both sexes
- 1975** International Women's Year
Family Law Act 1975 (Cwlth)
Government provides financial assistance to women's refuge 'Elsie'
Publication of *Damned Whores and God's Police* by Anne Summers
- 1977** *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* passed
- 1978** National Women's Advisory Council established
- 1979** Government ratifies international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- 1981** Female pilots first accepted by a major Australian airline, Ansett
Rape within marriage becomes a criminal offence
- 1983** National Wage Case
Government creates Office of the Status of Women
- 1984** *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cwlth)
Creation of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)

1986 *Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act 1986* (Cwlth)

1987 First woman appointed as a judge of the High Court of Australia

1997 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report *Glass Ceilings and Sticky Floors*

SUMMARY

- In the immediate post–World War II era, women in Australia assumed and/or continued their traditional roles as mothers, wives and homemakers. Social attitudes and expectations and limited educational opportunities encouraged the continuation of this situation.
- From the 1960s onwards, the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) focused women's attention on participation in the world beyond the home and on supporting one another in their quest for:
 - a broader role within society
 - equality of opportunity.
- Women became active through:
 - protests
 - membership of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL)
 - lobbying politicians
 - gaining an increased understanding of the structures and practices which had denied them equality.
- Women succeeded in gaining:
 - anti-discrimination legislation
 - community and government recognition of women's issues
 - educational and work opportunities
 - progress towards achievement of their rights.
- Women have campaigned successfully for increased participation in the paid workforce and protection of their rights within it and for progress towards the achievement of equal pay.
- In the early twenty-first century, women assume that 'a woman's place is everywhere'. They exercise choice, expect to be free to move beyond traditional roles and opportunities and expect to be treated equally with men.
- With a gender pay gap of about 16 per cent (2008), pay equity is something women have yet to achieve.
- The liberation of men from their traditional roles has moved at a much slower pace, with the result that women often continue to experience the double burden of work inside and outside the home. They have also become victims of increased incidences of domestic violence which governments and police have failed to tackle adequately.

Multiple choice

Choose the letter that best answers the question.

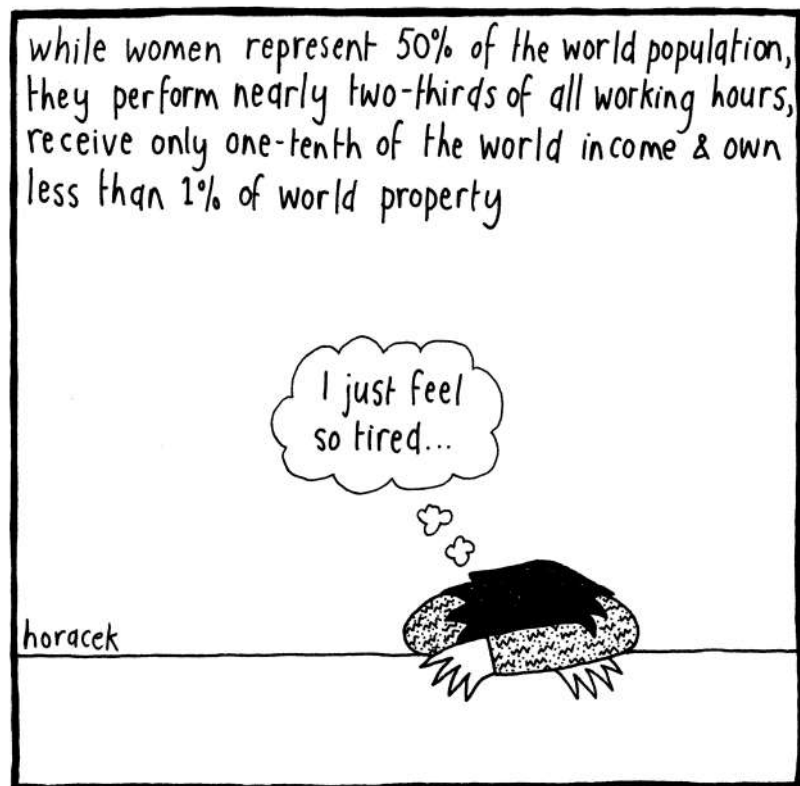
- What was society's message to Australian women who worked in 'male' jobs during World War II?
 - 'Thanks girls and goodbye.'
 - 'You've proved you're as good as a man.'
 - 'You've carried a double burden very well.'
 - 'You deserve equal pay.'
- What was women's traditional role?
 - It was in the private sphere of marriage, motherhood and unpaid work.
 - It was to gain a good education so that they could better educate their own children.
 - It was in the public sphere of paid work and political activism.
 - It combined marriage and motherhood with a role in the paid workforce.
- How was sex-role stereotyping reinforced?
 - By schools, 1950s television series and Germaine Greer
 - By church leaders, the Harvester judgement and women's libbers
 - By social attitudes, 1950s television series and advertising
 - By women's liberationists, church leaders and the education system
- Until 1972, what did the minimum wage take into account?
 - Women's family responsibilities
 - Men's family responsibilities
 - Equal pay for work of equal value
 - Equal pay for the same work
- What do government initiatives in support of women's rights include?
 - Legislation
 - Organising the International Women's Day marches
 - Promoting indirect discrimination of women
 - Creating a minimum adult wage
- What did the decision in the 1969 Equal Pay Case do?
 - It gave women the same wage as men for the same work.
 - It benefited 82 per cent of Australian women workers.
 - It gave women the same wage as men for the same work in areas where most workers were men.
 - It ended sex segregation in the Australian workforce.
- What event gave support for improving women's position in society?
 - The introduction of no-fault divorce in 1975
 - The creation of the Office of the Status of Women
 - The Commonwealth Government's ratification of CEDAW
 - All of the above
- What does the term 'sticky floors' refer to?
 - The poor housekeeping skills of women's liberationists
 - The problems faced by women in managerial roles
 - The barriers to women's promotion in the workforce
 - Discrimination against migrant women in the workforce

Use source A to answer question 9.

- The cartoonist is expressing the perspective of someone who:
 - supports equal rights for women
 - believes women should emphasise their femininity
 - is campaigning for female suffrage
 - is a female politician.

Source A

Judy Horacek's 1994 cartoon 'I just feel so tired'



- 10 What is the correct order for the following?
- Family Law Act*, founding of WEL, *Sex Discrimination Act*, availability of 'the pill'
 - Availability of 'the pill', founding of WEL, *Sex Discrimination Act*, *Family Law Act*
 - Sex Discrimination Act*, availability of 'the pill', *Family Law Act*, founding of WEL
 - Availability of 'the pill', founding of WEL, *Family Law Act*, *Sex Discrimination Act*
- 11 What is one of the main reasons for ongoing inequity between male and female wages?
- Women's laziness
 - Opportunities lost to women because of their household responsibilities
 - The high level of segregation within the Australian workforce
 - Governments' reluctance to encourage equality of opportunity for women
- 12 In 2008, what was women's average weekly wage?
- 90 per cent that of men
 - 97 per cent that of men
 - 84 per cent that of men
 - 75 per cent that of men

Short answer questions

Your responses to these questions should be 5–10 lines in length.

- Describe Australian women's roles in the immediate post-World War II period.
- Outline the barriers to women fully exercising their potential in the period c.1950–c.1960.
- Describe the experiences of women's liberationists in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Outline ways in which the Women's Liberation Movement has affected life in Australian society.
- Identify changing goals of feminists in post-World War II Australian society.

Extended response questions

Your responses to these questions should be about 25–30 lines in length and should:

- demonstrate care in the selection and organisation of your information so as to demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of relevant content
 - incorporate appropriate use of historical terms and concepts
 - communicate your response clearly, logically and effectively.
- Explain how the rights and freedoms of Australian women have changed during the post-World War II period.
Your response should refer to:
 - Australian women's position at the end of World War II
 - events and developments that have provided for increased recognition of the rights and freedoms of Australian women post-World War II
 - the significance of these for changing the rights and freedoms of Australian women post-World War II
 - areas where women are still working to have their rights and freedoms recognised.
 - Explain the role of the campaign for equal pay in the changing rights and freedoms of women in Australia. Include reference to the following, as well as to any other issues you think are important:
 - your understanding of the term 'equal pay'
 - key events in the campaign for equal pay and their significance
 - the extent to which women in Australia have achieved equal pay.
 - Explain how legislation has contributed to the changing rights and freedoms of Australian women from the 1970s onwards. Include reference to the following:
 - the nature of legislation affecting the rights and freedoms of Australian women
 - the significance of this legislation for women's changing rights and freedoms
 - areas affecting women's rights and freedoms that legislation has not tackled effectively.

eLesson

WOMEN'S CHANGING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN THE POST-WWII PERIOD

Meet Dr Sarah Paddle, Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning in the School of History, Heritage and Society at Deakin University, to learn about the achievements of the women's movement in the post-World War II period. You will learn about women's liberationists and the impact their work has had on the rights of women in the twenty-first century.

SEARCHLIGHT ID: ELES-0259



Learning Object

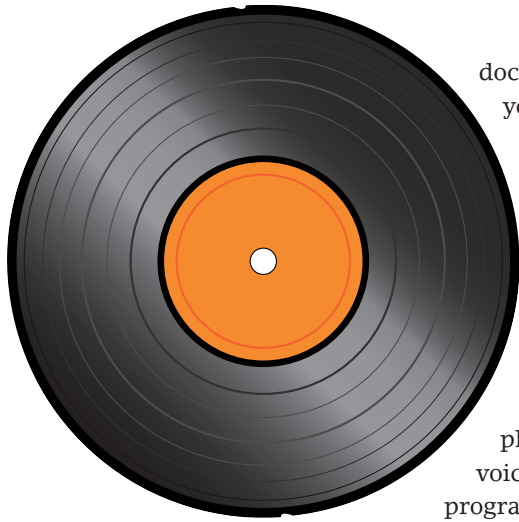
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Download this interactive learning object and test your knowledge of the changing rights and freedoms for women in Australia after World War II. Answer all 15 questions and receive instant feedback. You can even print your results to hand in to your teacher.

SEARCHLIGHT ID: T0224



These ICT activities are available in this chapter's Student Resources tab inside your eBookPLUS. Visit www.jacplus.com.au to locate your digital resources.



document from your Media Centre and arrange a time for your interviews. You can record the interviews using your mobile phone or a free voice-recording program like

Audacity, Garage Band or Windows recording software. Ask your sources if they can provide you with any images from life in Sydney in the 1960s to use in your slideshow. It is

likely they will have family photos from this era.

- When your interviews are recorded, share the audio files and photos you have gathered with the other members of your group. You should then work together to select the images and audio quotes that you would like to include in your voiceover. You may also like to record your own introduction and conclusion to the slideshow. Use the storyboard template in your Media Centre to help you plan your final presentation.
- Edit your voiceover using appropriate sound editing software and create a final soundtrack for your slideshow. (*Note:* Wavepad is a great free program for editing MP3s.)
- Use iPhoto, PowerPoint or other software to compile your photo slideshow, ensuring that the audio matches up with the images you have selected.
- Print your research report from ProjectsPLUS and hand it in to your teacher with your final slideshow.

SUGGESTED SOFTWARE

- ProjectsPLUS
- Audacity, Garage Band or other voice-recording software
- Microsoft PowerPoint, iPhoto or other slideshow software



Your ProjectsPLUS application is available in this chapter's Student Resources tab inside your eBookPLUS. Visit www.jacplus.com.au to locate your digital resources.



MEDIA CENTRE

Your Media Centre contains:

- a selection of images from the 1960s
- suggested questions for your interviews
- a storyboard template to plan your slideshow
- an assessment rubric.