

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Concept

Entry ID: AWE6438

Women in Politics

Summary

Australian women have had an active role in Australian politics since Henrietta Dugdale formed the first Australian women's suffrage society in 1884. Just over ten years later, in 1895, South Australian women became the first Australian women eligible to vote. When the Commonwealth Franchise Act was passed in 1902, all women (except for Aboriginal women) were eligible to vote for, and sit in, Federal Parliament.

In 1921 Edith Cowan became the first woman to be elected into any Australian Parliament when she was elected to the Legislative Assembly as a member for West Perth. In 1943, Dame Enid Lyons and Senator Dorothy Tangney became the first women elected into the Commonwealth parliament, with Lyons to the House of Representatives as a member of the United Australia Party and Tangney to the Senate as a member of the Australian Party.

As of January 2019, there are 45 (30%) women in the lower house and 30 (39.47%) in the upper house, meaning women only make up a third of all people in the Commonwealth Parliament.

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Created 19 February 2019

Last modified 1 March 2019