



# DEEP DIVE: Women's Rights in Australia



Australia is an ever-evolving nation, with endless abundance and opportunity. But we also have a rich history, and at times, history serves as a great reminder of how far we have come, as well as the long journey ahead.

In the **late 19th and early 20th century**, the **suffragettes** largely pioneered women rights in Australia. The suffragettes were recognised as groups of women, across the globe in countries including America, England and New Zealand, who strived to achieve women's suffrage, also known as the **right to vote**.

The suffragettes adopted and campaigned with colours of **green**, **white** and **violet** – **Give Women Votes**, serving as an early testament to the wit of womankind.

The right to vote, which we tend to take for granted, was critical for women and children to be adequately accommodated in society through it's inherent capacity to **reform laws**, including property and guardianship rights.

The right to vote for women in New South Wales (NSW) came in **1902**, with the enticing promise of change. The first woman in NSW elected to the Legislative Assembly, responsible for representing the people and forming laws, was in **1925**.

Coinciding with this period, the first female barrister in NSW was admitted in **1921**. Though, this did not come without obstacles including entry to the study of law, and the controversial rules of admission to practise.

A century onwards, while we certainly have made progress, woman continue to face barriers. Of note, since 1902, Australia's general makeup too has altered, with woman now coming from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.

Contemporary issues include **equal pay**, where women on average are paid **17.5% less** than men for the same amount of work. However, as the suffragettes have shown us, we have the power to compel change.

