

MARION'S SUFFRAGISTS

Welcome to the first of three newsletters about local Suffragists of Marion.



The City of Marion is recognising the extraordinary efforts of the suffragists in the late 19th and early 20th century, through raising awareness in the community about the movement towards gender equality and our continuing efforts for positive change.

Their Triumph, our motivation is the theme to celebrate the 125th anniversary of women's suffrage in South Australia. A landmark Victory for Women's Rights in South Australia with the first election in Australia to include women voters in the state election on 25 April 1895.

The Adult Suffrage Bill passed on 18 December 1894, awarding South Australian women the right to vote in general elections and to stand for parliament – for the first time anywhere in Australia.

People who did not want women to vote argued that women were too busy looking after babies or doing housework, and they didn't have time to be interested in politics. Supporters of women voting argued that women:

- › Were educated and intelligent
- › Represented half the community of women
- › Paid taxes so should be eligible to vote
- › Were advocating for a strong need for better laws protecting and supporting women and families, so women should have a say in electing people that would pass these laws.

KEY FACTS ABOUT WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

- › 18 December 2019 is the 125th anniversary of women's suffrage.
- › Suffrage is a term that refers to a person's ability to participate in society by being able to vote at elections. Being able to vote is a key part of citizenship and allows each person to have their say about what is important to them and what they think their lives should be like.
- › Achieving women's suffrage was the end result of years of campaigning by dedicated women and men, including the South Australian Women's Suffrage League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.
- › 22 July 1885: Women's suffrage first introduced into South Australian Parliament by Dr. Edward Stirling. This resolution moved in favour of enabling widows and single women who owned property to vote, but not married women. The resolution passed.
- › 23 August 1894: A huge petition tied with a yellow ribbon was presented to the House of Assembly consisting of 11,600 signatures. Around a third of the signatures collected from men. The petition was officially tabled on 30 August
- › On the same day, the Constitution Amendment Bill is introduced in the Assembly by John Cockburn.

125

Their triumph, our motivation

#SASuffrage125



NEWSLETTER 1 of 3

ABORIGINAL VOTING RIGHTS

Aboriginal men living in South Australia had the right to vote since the passing of the South Australian Constitution in 1856. While the right to vote under colonial laws was extended to South Australian Aboriginal women in 1894, they were often not informed of this right or supported to enrol to vote. In some cases, Aboriginal people were actively discouraged from enrolling or voting.

At the Ngarrindjeri mission at Point McLeay, a number of Aboriginal women insisted on enrolling on the electoral roll and voting in the 1896 election, even though they were actively discouraged by the white manager of the mission.

The 1902 Commonwealth Franchise Act removed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's right to vote in Federal elections. This right was reinstated in the 1962 Commonwealth Electoral Act, however it was not until the 1967 Referendum that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were included in the census.

It is important that we acknowledge the hurt, shame and disrespect of this disenfranchising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the ongoing racism and disempowerment they experience.

RESEARCH CAPTURED

A dedicated group of City of Marion volunteers will be researching the topic from July to October. Their research will be the time period 1888–1950 to capture suffragists as well as women who benefited from the Suffrage Bill and became leaders in society. This material will be deposited in the Marion Heritage Centre Archival Collection as a historical record for the benefit of current and future generations. Residents and visitors are welcome to visit the centre and view this information in February 2020.

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED!

- › Attend the following events Learn more about the 125th anniversary of women's suffrage in South Australia at officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/SAsuffrage125
- › Spread the word about the project to your family, friends and community network
- › Look out for the second Suffragists of Marion newsletter highlighting some of the research we have found.
- › Attend the following events:

125

Their triumph, our motivation

#SASuffrage125



NEWSLETTER 1 of 3

FILM SCREENING OF LOCAL SA DOCUMENTARY, MURIEL MATTERS WITH SPECIAL GUESTS.

This locally produced short documentary is about Adelaide-born actress Muriel Matters, who made international headlines in 1909 as 'that daring Australian girl' for her bold escapes in the struggle for women's rights in Britain.



Through archive, interviews, dramatic reconstruction and animated sequences, the documentary explores how this extraordinary woman got lost from history. It reveals what her story tells us about the links between art, politics and women's rights in England and Australia.

Save the date: **Saturday 16 November, 2pm**

Domain Theatre, Marion Cultural Centre
287 Diagonal Rd, Oaklands Park

Special guest speakers to be confirmed.

Bookings will be on Eventbrite and it will be a free event.

ART PROJECT

The final stage of the Suffragists of Marion project, will be an art piece displaying information and images collected from the research volunteers.

The public are welcome to attend the launch (date to be confirmed later) to celebrate the work community members have done through research, education, knowledge gained and involvement in the art project.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please pick up a copy of the dedicated Suffragists of Marion newsletters to keep informed about the project from

- › Glandore Community Centre, Coominda, Mitchell Park and Trott Park Neighbourhood Centres
- › Park Holme and Marion libraries, Cove Civic Centre, Living Kaurna Cultural Centre, MCC.
- › CoM Website: www.marion.sa.gov.au/womenssuffrage

Contact Keeley Manning, Neighbourhood Centre Officer
T 7420 6400 or email Keeley.Manning@marion.sa.gov.au