

The Age of Suff-Rage

Celebrating the Centenary of Women's Suffrage in Victoria 1908-2008

Second Edition

March 2008

FREE

International Women's Day

Where are the Suffragists?



Whizzed out of the cellar

SPECIAL REPORT MONSTER PETITION

By Liz Prideaux, President League of Women Voters Victoria (LWVV)

I saw the petition for the first time in August 1995 when we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters. It was housed in the cellar of Parliament House, no doubt in the same position where it had been stored in September 1891.

Technically it is owned by the Clerk of the Legislative Council but it now resides in the better controlled climatic conditions of the PRO.

In August 1995 it was displayed as part of the LWVV celebrations in Queens Hall and that is where and when my involvement commenced. In conjunction with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) the League put forward a proposal to seek funding to index the petition.

At the time we had no idea of the physical integrity of the petition, the retention and ownership of the proposed final product, or of the monetary and volunteer resources needed to complete the task.

Discussion also took place re the commercial market for the database and the need for it to be on the web free of charge.

Time passed. In August 2004, the League received a letter from the Speaker Judy Maddigan supporting the project. Indexing commenced in October 2004 by Volunteers from the Genealogical Society of Victoria and the Royal Historical Society Victoria

It was officially launched live and online on Monday 14 November 2005

It was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in August 2007 and to UNESCO's cultural register on 20th February 2008.

I would to thank and acknowledge the support of both Judy Maddigan (Speaker Assembly) and Monica Gould (President Upper House)

In blistering heat

Federation Square was bathed in a sea of purple green and white as it hosted the launch of Victorian Women Vote 1908-2008 on Tuesday the 19th of February. These were the colours adopted by women as traditional



suffrage colours. Angela Pippas was the MC for the event and the Australian Girls Choir and the fabulous Women's Circus stilt walkers entertained the crowds.

Ursula Dutkiewicz and Fern Smith gave out the Age of Suff-Rage newspaper, first edition, in Suffragist attire, which was a big hit with the crowd. Both were heard to comment on how hot it was and sympathised with our foremothers having to wear such outfits. *Continued on page 2*

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The Age of Suff-Rage TRAVELLING ART INSTALLATION

Coming to Your Town Soon

Artists Ursula Dutkiewicz and Fern Smith have joined forces creating *The Age of Suff-Rage* travelling art installation. One hundred ceramic suffragists along with a commemorative banner will be used to demonstrate the courage and determination of the women whose rage brought about the vote for Victorian women. The project illustrates the amazing time when women broke the chains that tied them to the house by becoming political and realizing their power. In Victoria the struggle was harder and took far longer to achieve, being the last state in Australia to give women the vote, as the senate kept blocking bills enabling women's suffrage.

Project Artists

URSULA DUTKIEWICZ

Gasworks Ceramic Artist Ursula Dutkiewicz has worked as a professional artist since completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1993. She is currently a resident artist at the Gasworks Arts Park ceramic studio. Her work ranges from sculpture, ceramic paintings, murals and a range of high fired functional wares. She also creates work for commissions, community projects, residences and designs workshops for people of all ages and abilities.

FERN SMITH

Fern Smith is journeying on the rich diverse use of women artists and demonstration banners from 1870's to 1920 in Australia, England, and America. A banner is a rallying point, a visual form of identity, a clarion call and symbol to re-interpret both genres. Smith an established and accomplished artist utilizes many mediums to convey fragility and respect for the individual, the content informed from extensive research. Smith works held in private collections in England, America and throughout Australia.



Artist Fern Smith working in the newsroom

In blistering heat

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Guests and dignitaries arrived on Yarra Trams "Votes for Women" Circle Line Tram, which will travel the tracks until November this year. Special quest included descendants of people who had signed the petition, former women politicians and relations of prominent Suffragists such as Vida Goldstein.

Wurundjeri elder Annette Xiberras gave a moving Welcome to Country and it was acknowledged that Indigenous women did not get the same rights until the 1960's.

In her speech the Minister for Women's Affairs Maxine Morand said, "Women's participation in democracy is an ongoing journey. Women gained the right to vote in 1908 but it was not until 1933 that the first woman was elected at a Victorian general election and not until 1982 that the first female, Pauline Toner, was appointed to cabinet."

The Deputy Premier the Honourable Rob Hulls commented that, "Only last week I stood listening to the National Apology - a reminder that these principles (equal rights) are as relevant today as they were 100 years ago." For Centenary events go to: www.women.vic.gov.au

Place an article 260 words in The Age of Suff-Rage - email: fern@fernartz.com



Artists Ursula Dutkiewicz in her studio

Here we are!

'Suffragists' Ursula and Fern will be on the City Circle line *Votes for Women* tram (the purple white and green one) morning of International Women's Day March 8th 2008.

Pick up a copy of the Second Edition of *The Age of Suff-Rage* newspaper, a collector's item for the Centenary Celebrations. They will be alighting here and there including at the Immigration Museum 400 Flinders Street at 10am for the launch of Trailblazers: Migrant Women Activists.

Later that evening you'll find them pre-show at Trades Hall from 7pm for *Wild women 1920 - 1970* featuring Kelly Auty.

Sponsors



Knowing our past, transforming our future



Special thanks to Jane Chisholm

The Age of Suff-Rage would like to thank Gasworks Arts Park, Crusader Hillis, Ian Roberts (Harold Mitchell Foundation), Joan Kirner, Terry Bracks, Kris Coad, Cathy Johnston, Women's Circus and the Office of Women's Policy Victoria.