

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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AN EDUCATION RESOURCE FOR SECONDARY & SENIOR TEACHERS

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USING THIS RESOURCE

This resource is intended to be used in conjunction with a set of videos produced by the History Trust of South Australia about Social Movements. It can also be used as a stand-alone resource.

Activities have been designed for Senior Secondary students and align with AC History, SACE Modern History, SACE Society & Culture, SACE Women's Studies and English. These curricula ask students to:

- Investigate the struggle for human rights, including how rights have been ignored, demanded or achieved in Australia.
 - Identify and analyse different historical interpretations.
 - Examine the continuing nature of efforts to secure civil rights and freedoms in Australia and throughout the world.
 - Understand the role of ideas, people and events in history.
 - Investigate forces for social change or continuity.
- Explore cultures and subcultures in Australian society.
 - Consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
 - Develop historical skills, including critical analysis of sources and using evidence to develop an argument.
 - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of stereotyping in different social contexts, times, and cultures.
 - Identify and analyse the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.
 - Identify and analyse examples of disempowerment, and strategies for empowerment and alternative futures.
 - Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices.



OUR RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

The rights we have come to expect today - the right to a democratic vote, a fair minimum wage, a 5-day work week, equality between genders, freedom from discrimination, amongst others - were not always in place. In fact, many of these basic human rights have only been enacted and enshrined in law in the last 150 years.

South Australia has long been a progressive example for the other Australian states and territories. It was the first to legalise the formation of Trade Unions in 1876; the first to sanction the right to vote for women, including Aboriginal women in 1894; the first to decriminalise homosexual acts in 1975. In more recent history SA has led the country in environmental policies and innovation.

These achievements can be a great source of pride for South Australians, but there is always more to be done to improve the rights and wellbeing of everyone in our society. To do that we need to actively listen, learn and amplify voices of those that have been ignored or marginalised in the past.

As you learn more about social movements and historical change, here are some overarching things to consider.

PERSPECTIVES

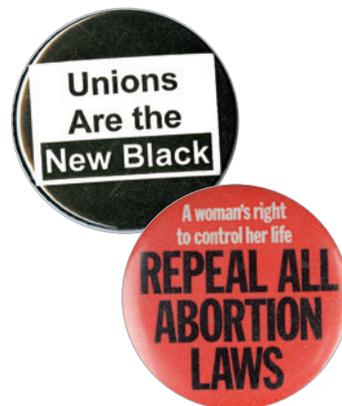
Whose perspectives are being addressed in this telling of history and whose voices are missing? How is your interpretation influenced by your personal background?

CRITICAL THINKING

Develop your critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate information presented not just in school, but through the media, politics, and from other people. Is this source reliable and unbiased? How could you verify this information? What techniques are being used to illicit a response?

REFLECT

What will you take away from this lesson? How can you apply your learning to our world today? What do you feel grateful for and what do you think still needs to change? How can you expand this knowledge?



THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT



Working conditions in the early days of colonisation in Australia were nothing like they are today. Most people worked 12 hours a day and often seven days a week. Manual labour of all kinds was back-breaking and took place in harsh conditions and without any of the health and safety measures that we take for granted. Wages were poor and as a result children of the labouring classes were required to begin working at an extremely young age.

The Masters and Servants Act of 1837 (or as it was officially known, An Act for the summary determination of all disputes between Master and Servant) made it an offence for a worker to break an agreement they had made with an employer, either verbally or in writing.

Workers who were deemed guilty of neglecting or refusing to do the agreed work, or taking leave without permission, could, at the discretion of a Magistrate, be committed to up to six months in prison, and to solitary confinement, and could be made to forfeit all or a part of the wages owed to them.

Clearly there was a lot for workers to be unhappy about. Indeed, records suggest that at least 25 strikes took place in South Australia between 1836 and 1850, the best known of which is the Burra copper miner's strike of 1848. In this period strike action violated the Masters and Servants Act, and the coming together of groups of workers to plan such action was illegal.

Even though it was illegal, about 400 unions were formed in Australian colonies between 1850 and 1869. These early unions represented craft-based workers such as stonemasons, carpenters, and shoemakers, as well as other workers such as shop assistants, labourers and miners.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines a trade union as:

“An organisation consisting predominantly of employees or workers, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members.”

South Australia became the first territory in the British Empire, excluding Britain, to legalise trade unions, with the introduction of the Trade Union Act 1876. Now that these collectives were legal, it made sense that the various union groups should come together, and in 1884 the United Trades and Labor Council was established. In 1889, Mary Lee, an active campaigner for women's rights who had played a central role in women's suffrage, asked the United Trades and Labor Council to support a female trades union and the following year the Working Women's Trades Union of South Australia was formed, with Mary Lee serving as secretary and Augusta Zadow as treasurer.

So many of the things we take for granted and that are now enshrined in law were fought hard for and secured by trade unions.



THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT *Continued*

THE EIGHT-HOUR WORK DAY

In 1856 stonemasons in Melbourne demanded (and won) a reduction in hours – from 10 hours a day to 8 hours a day – with no loss of pay. This was the beginning of a widespread movement to regulate the length of the working day. During protests that took place across Australia, union members carried banners featuring three intertwined 8s that represented the ideal they were fighting for: eight hours work, eight hours rest, and eight hours for recreation and education. The eight hour day was not achieved nationally until the 1920s. In South Australia building workers led the campaign from as early as 1854 but the change didn't take hold in workplaces until the 1870s.

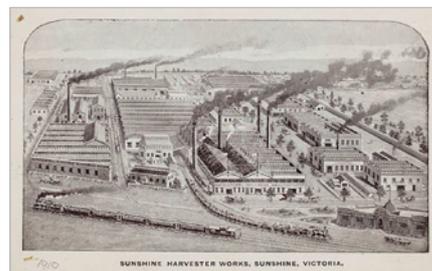


AWARDS

Today we have legally binding documents that set out minimal entitlements for workers in every industry – what we call awards. But this was not always the case. In 1907, in response to union demands, the Harvester Judgement set a minimum wage for unskilled labourers of 2 pounds, 2 shillings per week. This was deemed to be the amount an average worker required to provide food, shelter and clothing for himself and his family: as such it was referred to as a 'family wage'.

While this was an important step towards regulating wages and tackling worker exploitation, it did not apply to women workers or even all male labourers. Up until the late 1960s (and in some cases, beyond) Aboriginal pastoral workers, earned considerably less than white stockmen, and sometimes nothing at all. This was justified on the grounds that station owners provided food and accommodation for Aboriginal communities, including those unable to work.

Awards also set out other entitlements which have been won by unions, including sick leave, paid annual leave, and meal and rest breaks.



In 1907 Justice Henry Bourne Higgins, President of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Court, set the first federally arbitrated wages standard in Australia. Using the Sunshine Harvester Factory as a test case, Justice Higgins listened to evidence from male employees and their wives before determining what was considered a fair and reasonable wage to support a family of five.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT *Continued*



13.9%

AUSTRALIA'S FULL-TIME GENDER PAY GAP

Women earn on average \$242.90 per week less than men

Full-time average weekly earnings

\$1,508.50 Women
\$1,751.40 Men

Gender pay gap by state & territory

8.9% Lowest - ACT
22.1% Highest - WA

Gender pay gap by industry

5.7% Lowest - Public administration & safety
22.3% Highest - Health care & social services



EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN

From 1950 to 1969 women workers in Australia were, by law, paid 75% of the male wage for performing the exact same job as their male colleagues. This was because men were assumed to be supporting a family on their wage. It was not until 1972 that an equal minimum wage was granted to all Australians, regardless of their sex. The long-fought battle by unions and women's groups for equal pay is ongoing and the 'gender gap' is yet to be closed.

UNIONS

Unions continue to play an important role in maintaining the gains that have been made for Australian workers over the last couple of centuries.

However, it has been estimated that in 2018 only 17% of Australian workers belonged to unions, a drop of 10% since 2005. Whether this will change, and how it will impact working life in the future, is yet to be seen.

FOLLOW UP ...

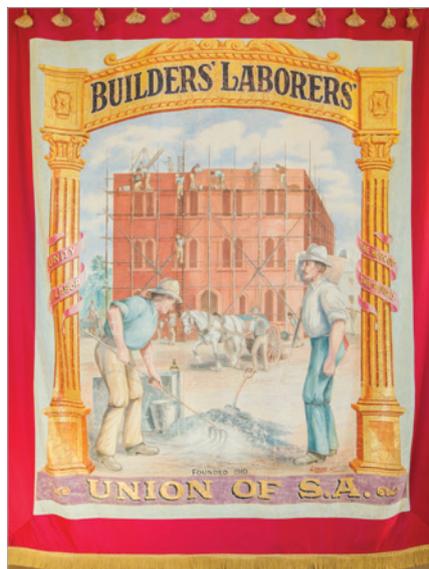
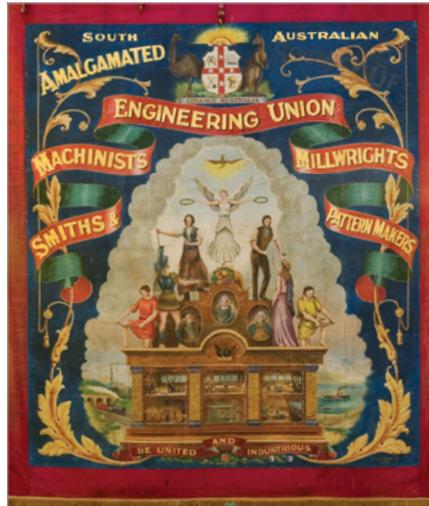
- 1 Take two minutes to discuss in a small group what you think is the most important achievement of the Trade Union Movement to date. Share your choices with the class and explain your reasoning.
- 2 Why do you think union membership has fallen so much in recent years? Do trade unions still serve a purpose in modern society?
- 3 First Nations people did not receive a guaranteed minimum wage at the same time as white men in Australia, nor did women. Consider what voices were present in the early Trade Union Movement, and what perspectives were missing. Why were some workers excluded from a worker's union?

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT ACTIVITY: SYMBOLS OF SOLIDARITY

Have a look at these banners and badges that represented particular trade unions. These objects are from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.

- 1 What do you think these objects would have been used for?
- 2 Why do you think people would have wanted a badge to identify themselves as a union member?
- 3 The designs on the fabric banners are often grand and detailed. Why do you think they were so ornately decorated?
- 4 Do you recognise any of the symbols depicted on these objects?
- 5 Have you seen signs or logos for any modern trade unions? If not, take a moment to research some. How does the modern signage compare?

Bonus: Create your own symbol, crest or decorated banner representing your current occupation OR one you would like to have in the future.



THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT ACTIVITY: SOURCE ANALYSIS

The following questions are designed to help develop historical inquiry skills, by critically analysing a source. The source is a banner for the 'Builders' Laborers' Union of South Australia' from 1910, as shown on the right.

UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What is the significance of the number '8' motif?
- 2 Try to interpret the identifying clues to guess who the woman is (you could discuss this with a partner). Why do you think this figure would be chosen as the dominant image on this union banner?
- 3 The image at the bottom shows the first Commonwealth Coat of Arms from 1908. How is this different to the current design and why?
- 4 Pay close attention to the imagery and symbolism on the banner; the colours used, the ornate gold framing, the style of illustration. Comment on the symbols used and why the union would use them.

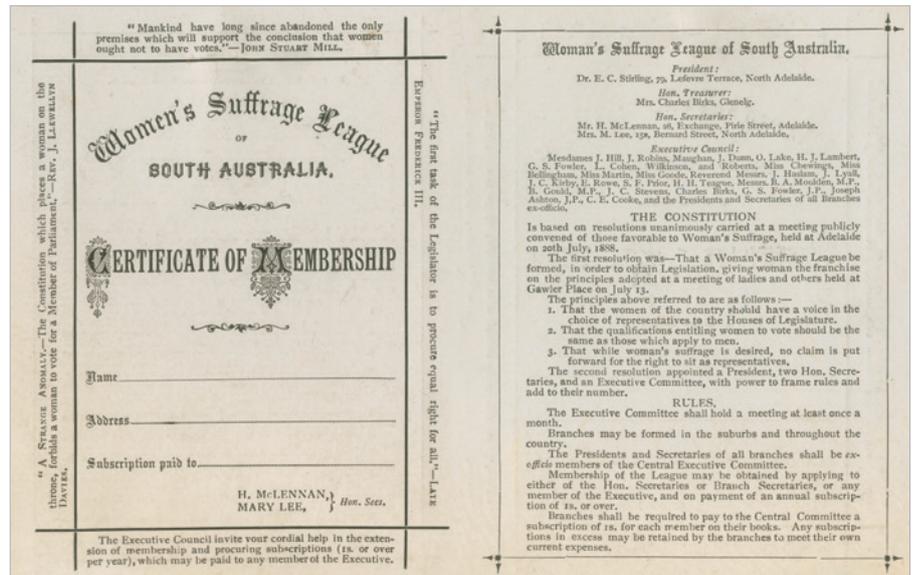
QUESTIONING

- 5 Is this item a primary or secondary source?
- 6 Are there any issues with reliability or bias related to this source?
- 7 Describe this item's use as a source of information about early Australian trade unions - what can we learn from it and what are the limitations?



THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The Women's Movement in South Australia began with the struggle for female suffrage – that is, the right of women to vote. Campaigners such as Mary Lee and Elizabeth Webb Nichols, and groups such as the Women's Suffrage League, did not see gaining the right to vote as an end in itself, but rather, as a necessary step in tackling the prevailing double standards that worked against the wellbeing of women and children, and indeed, of society more generally. So what exactly were these double standards?



In nineteenth-century South Australia white women were legally bound to their fathers until they married, and then to their husbands. Women had no rights over their own bodies: prevailing ideas about marital rights meant that men had sexual access to their wives' bodies regardless of whether women consented. In fact, it was possible for a man to divorce a woman because she denied him his conjugal rights, but it was not possible for a woman to divorce her husband because he forced her to have 'marital relations'. At the same time, until 1885 the age of consent for girls was twelve years of age, making them extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Corporal punishment of a woman by her husband (what today we call domestic violence) was legal and was widely regarded as a necessary evil.

Prior to the passing of the Married Women's Property Act 1883 everything a white woman owned became her husband's upon marriage. If she was in paid employment, even her wages belonged to him. Women also had no rights over their children who were the legal property of their fathers. It was not until the introduction of the Guardianship of Infants Act 1940 that both parents had equal custody rights.

You may wonder why, given these double standards, more women in this period did not choose to remain single. One reason – and perhaps the main reason – is that this was a luxury most women literally could not afford. In South Australia in the late nineteenth-century, significant numbers of women were in paid employment, but they were denied access to many professions, and were largely unable to earn a living wage.

THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT *Continued*



RECLAIM THE NIGHT

In that same year, 1973, Australia's first Reclaim the Night marches took place. Hundreds of women marched to protest against male violence. More recently the #MeToo movement has campaigned against the sexual assault of women and has used social media to graphically demonstrate just how ubiquitous this crime continues to be. Contemporary activism has also challenged the assumption of two separate and distinct genders and called for the recognition of transgender and non-binary people and their rights.

The women's movement has never been a singular, unified entity. Instead the term loosely brings together groups and individuals whose ideals, affiliations, and activism, have varied considerably. Women from different geographic locations, historic moments, races, religions, and so on, have held very different, and sometimes conflicting views, but what unites them - at least at a fundamental level - is their focus on women.

So many of the rights and freedoms we take for granted today were achieved by those involved in the women's movement. There is still much to be achieved and the role of activists and of women's, and feminist organisations is no less important today than it was in the early days of the colony.

FOLLOW UP ...

- 1 List the evidence of gender stereotyping described in this article. Do any of these persist in society today?
- 2 The release of the contraceptive pill was ground-breaking and divisive in the 1960s, and women worldwide had to fight for unrestricted access to it. Why do you think the democratisation of the pill had such a massive, long-term impact on society? What does this mean for women around the world who still cannot access the contraceptive pill, whether due to religion, restrictive laws or economic access?
- 3 There is still a significant gender gap amongst political representatives: after the 2019 Federal election women held only 23% of Liberal party seats (lower house and Senators), and 47% of Labor party seats. Discuss why you think this discrepancy persists, and why it is important to correct. Brainstorm strategies for empowering women in government.

THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT ACTIVITY: SPEECH ANALYSIS

Australia's first Prime Minister was Julia Gillard, a South Australian and Labor party politician. She made history representing women's rights and frustrations in 2012 when she delivered an impassioned and powerful speech directed at then opposition party leader Tony Abbott, in response to his ongoing sexist and derisive comments about Prime Minister Gillard, including an accusation in the media that she was a misogynist.

Use the extract, as shown on the right, from what has simply come to be known as the 'Misogyny Speech' to complete the following critical thinking tasks:

- 1 Comment on the speaker's reliability as a source and provide evidence from the text to support your answer.
- 2 Who is the intended audience for this speech? Justify your answer.
- 3 The speaker alludes to public comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. Do these comments rely on the audience understanding the context in full? To what extent is the message effected if the audience is not familiar with these previous events?
- 4 Does the speech appeal to our sense of ethos, pathos or logos (or a combination)? Identify and list the persuasive techniques used in the speech, and provide a critical evaluation of its overall effectiveness.



"... And then a discussion ensues, and another person says "I want my daughter to have as much opportunity as my son." To which the Leader of the Opposition says "Yeah, I completely agree, but what if men are by physiology or temperament, more adapted to exercise authority or to issue command?"

Then ensues another discussion about women's role in modern society, and the other person participating in the discussion says "I think it's very hard to deny that there is an underrepresentation of women," to which the Leader of the Opposition says, "But now, there's an assumption that this is a bad thing."

This is the man from whom we're supposed to take lectures about sexism. And then of course it goes on. I was very offended personally when the Leader of the Opposition, as Minister of Health, said, and I quote, "Abortion is the easy way out." I was very personally offended by those comments. You said that in March 2004, I suggest you check the records.

I was also very offended on behalf of the women of Australia when in the course of this carbon pricing campaign, the Leader of the Opposition said "What the housewives of Australia need to understand as they do the ironing ..."
Thank you for that painting of women's roles in modern Australia.

And then of course, I was offended too by the sexism, by the misogyny of the Leader of the Opposition catcalling across this table at me as I sit here as Prime Minister, "If the Prime Minister wants to, politically speaking, make an honest woman of herself ...", something that would never have been said to any man sitting in this chair. I was offended when the Leader of the Opposition went outside in the front of Parliament and stood next to a sign that said "Ditch the witch."

I was offended when the Leader of the Opposition stood next to a sign that described me as a man's bitch. I was offended by those things. Misogyny, sexism, every day from this Leader of the Opposition. Every day in every way, across the time the Leader of the Opposition has sat in that chair and I've sat in this chair, that is all we have heard from him ..."

You can watch the full speech on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCNuPcf8L00>

THE LGBTQ+ RIGHTS MOVEMENT

All British colonies, including South Australia, inherited British laws, and some of these related to sexual behaviour. As a result, in the early years of the colony, sexual activity between men was a capital crime that could result in execution - although homosexuality itself was not illegal. Thankfully, no one in South Australia was ever executed under this law, and SA was one of the first states to revise these penalties. The punishment for same-sex activity was reduced from execution to imprisonment here in 1877, and other states followed at different times.

The criminalisation of same-sex sexual acts is just one of the many ways in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, and gender diverse people have been discriminated against in Australia since colonial times. It is also one of many reasons that LGBTQ+ people and their allies came together to campaign for legal and social change. Laws prohibiting same-sex relations were based on the idea that heterosexuality - and only heterosexuality - is natural and normal, and that other kinds of sexual acts and relationships are unnatural and wrong. The law, then, both reflected and shaped broader attitudes about sexuality, and this continues to be the case.

The 1960s saw the widespread emergence of a range of protest movements calling for radical change: the civil rights movement, the women's liberation movement, the anti-war movement, and the gay rights movement are perhaps the best known. One of Australia's earliest gay rights organisations was the Campaign Against Moral Persecution, or CAMP as it was more commonly known, which began in Sydney in 1970. A year later an Adelaide branch was established and focused on education and law reform. 1972 saw the birth of the Adelaide Gay and Lesbian Liberation Front (AGLLF), a group of more radical young lesbians and gay men who were less interested in being accepted into mainstream culture than they were in revolutionising it.



L-R GAY LIBERATION PROTEST - LSE LIBRARY
CAMP BADGE - COURTESY OF WILL SERGEANT

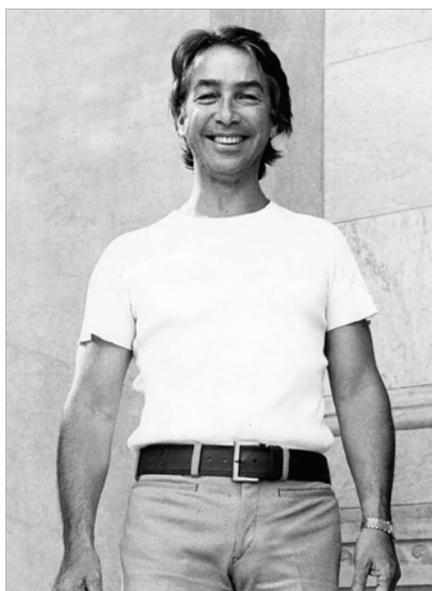
THE LGBTQ+ RIGHTS MOVEMENT *Continued*



Also in 1972, on the evening of 10 May, a tragedy occurred that was to have massive ramifications. Dr George Duncan, a law lecturer who had recently arrived from the UK to take up a position at the University of Adelaide, was walking near the River Torrens in an area where gay men were known to meet up. That night the police raided the area and a number of men were arrested and more than one was thrown into the river. Duncan was one of these, and being unable to swim, he drowned. It is unknown whether Duncan was in the park to meet other men, or even whether he was gay, but his death was a clear illustration of the fact that gay men were the target of homophobic violence, and that even members of the police force were guilty of such acts. Even though at the time homosexuality was widely regarded as unacceptable, the Duncan case received significant media attention locally, nationally and internationally and further strengthened demands for law reform.

Don Dunstan was Premier of South Australia from 1967 to 1968, and again from 1970 to 1979. His governments were committed to social reform and public policy leadership. As well as decriminalising homosexual acts, his government introduced a range of progressive legislation including that which outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex in 1975, and rape in marriage in 1976.

Between 1975 and 1997 the other Australian states and territories followed South Australia's lead in the decriminalisation of homosexual acts. Tasmania was the last state, and it did so only after Tasmanian resident, Rodney Croome, applied to the High Court of Australia to strike down Tasmanian anti-gay law on the ground that it was inconsistent with federal law (Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994). The Tasmanian Government was finally forced to decriminalise homosexuality on 1 May 1997.



Less than three months after Duncan's death the first bill in Australia to decriminalise homosexuality was introduced into the South Australian parliament. Three years later, South Australia became the first state or territory in Australia to decriminalise homosexual acts, with the introduction of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 1975 by the Dunstan government.



Don Dunstan was (in)famous for wearing shorts - and pink ones at that! - in Parliament.

THE LGBTQ+ RIGHTS MOVEMENT *Continued*



Over the last 60 years, LGBTQ+ campaigners have played an integral role in changing laws and attitudes affecting almost every aspect of daily life. These include:

- Anti-discrimination legislation
- Entitlements and rights for people in same-sex families (pertaining to things like superannuation, adoption, access to assisted reproductive technologies, inheritance)
- Support services
- Access to positions in the military
- Anti-bullying programs in schools
- The legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2017
- Transgender rights such as the right to change one's gender on a birth certificate without having to undergo reassignment surgery or, if married, divorce.

The LGBTQ+ community celebrates the gains it has made and LGBTQ+ lives at events such as Sydney Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras and Adelaide's Feast Festival.

FOLLOW UP ...

- 1 **Use evidence (from this article or other sources) to provide context and describe some of the LGBTQ+ Movement's driving forces for change. (I.E. What has happened in the past to make people demand change?)**
- 2 **Don Dunstan was a great advocate for positive change as Premier of South Australia. Use the CoD online resource, Picturing Democracy to learn about Don Dunstan. Use the search tools to discover other people that were and are important in the ongoing LGBTQ+ movement. Work in pairs to choose one person and develop an in-depth profile that can be shared with the class.**
- 3 **Over time, through this movement and others we often see corresponding changes between laws and attitudes in society. Do public laws set the tone for what is acceptable, or do societal values dictate laws and policy? Discuss this question in a small group and try to use evidence to support your point of view. (This topic could be expanded into a classroom debate).**

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACTIVITY: ORGANISE & REVOLUTIONISE

All social movements start small, so why not start one at your school? Use the social movements you have studied as examples to guide your strategy.

You would have noticed by now that the key feature to achieving monumental political and social change is ... organising!

In every instance people with the same views came together, shared ideas, established communities of support, created petitions and shared them widely, planned public rallies, group strikes and events, designed symbols and slogans, made badges and signs - all the time, talking with the public and politicians about why change is needed. Revolution requires both passion and planning.



STEP 1: CONCEPTUALISE

Use butchers paper, sticky notes and lots of rowdy group discussion to brainstorm any issues you have identified in your school or local community. It could be anything from providing more equal access for all year levels to the school canteen, to advocating for gender equality on your local library bookshelves.

Narrow down your lists by choosing your top 3 or 4 favourites and having a brief discussion about how you could go about achieving change, with realistic expectations. Decide on your key issue with a vote, to democratise the process.

STEP 2: STRATEGISE

Work together to make a very specific demand or list of demands that you are working towards. Make your goal and your message clear.

Make a list of strategies you will use to achieve the change you want (e.g. developing imagery, posters and badges, writing a petition and planning how you will share it to maximise reach, sharing information with fellow students and the community to explain the importance of your cause, contacting relevant people of influence, planning an event or rally). Break off into groups that will utilise the strengths of your class, to develop your outreach strategies.

STEP 3: ORGANISE

Work in smaller groups to bring your ideas to fruition. Have regular meetings with the rest of the class to share your progress, discuss issues and gather feedback. Decide together how and when you will share the different stages of your movement.

STEP 4: REVOLUTIONISE

Take action, share information, arrange meetings, listen to feedback and concerns, use evidence and persuasive techniques in your communications, ask peacefully but convincingly - persist!



DELVING DEEPER

Check out the History Trust collections online, and come and visit one of our museums.



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Acronyms

HTSA - History Trust of South Australia

SLSA - State Library of South Australia

UCL - University College London

LSE - London School of Economics

Here are some handy resources to help expand your studies about rights and freedoms in Australia.

- Inclusive language guide: Respecting people of intersex, trans and gender diverse experience. National LGBTI Health Alliance.
<https://lgbtihealth.org.au/resources/inclusive-language-guide/>
- Intersex Human Rights Australia: an independent support, education and policy development organisation, by and for people with intersex variations or traits.
<https://ihra.org.au/>
- Minus18: a national youth-led organisation for LGBTIQ+ young people.
<https://www.minus18.org.au/>
- Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives collects and preserves material associated with LGBTIQ+ histories in Australia.
<https://alga.org.au/>
- Timeline of LGBTIQ+ rights in Australia to 2017.
<https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/pride/agenda/article/2016/08/12/definitive-timeline-lgbt-rights-australia>
- The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is a government agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australia. It is a good source of up-to-date data and statistics.
<https://www.wgea.gov.au/>
- The Victorian Women's Trust has created a timeline of gender equality milestones in Australia.
<https://www.vwt.org.au/gender-equality-timeline-australia/>
- The Australian Trade Union Institute has some information about the history of Trade Unions in Australia.
<https://www.atui.org.au/union-history-blog>
- The Australian Council of Trade Unions has produced a booklet about its history. The booklet provides information about key dates and achievements.
<https://www.actu.org.au/about-the-actu/history-of-australian-unions>
- Centre of Democracy: Picturing Democracy
<https://explore.centreofdemocracy.sa.gov.au>



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