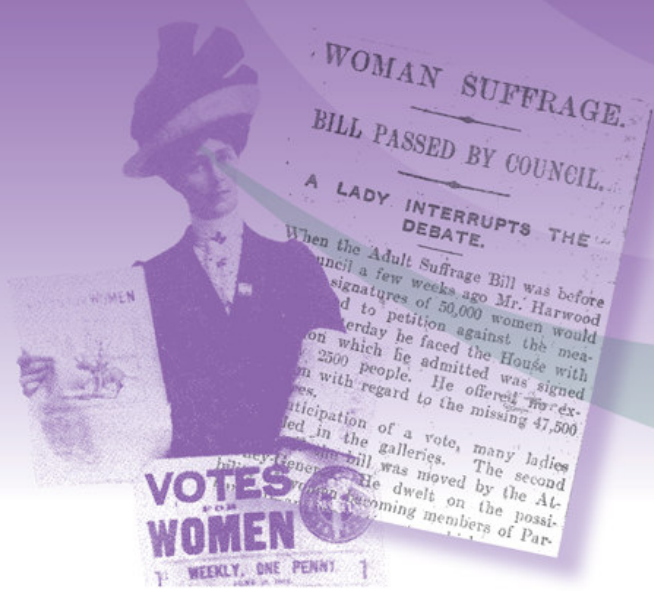


Victorian Women Vote 1908–2008



The title of suffragette was given to members of the women's suffrage movement, originally in the United Kingdom. The term comes from the word suffrage, which means the right to vote.

The word was originally coined to describe a more radical faction of the suffrage movement in the UK, mainly members of the Women's Social and Political Union, headed by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst.

Suffragist is a more general term for members of the movement, whether radical or conservative, male or female.

Colours of Suffrage

Have you ever wondered why feminists tend to turn out to special women's functions and marches wearing various shades of violet?

This is one of the traditional suffrage colours.

Where the colours originated

The militant British suffrage group, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded by Emmeline Pankhurst, adopted **white** for purity in public as well as private life, **purple** for dignity, self-reverence and self-respect, and **green** for hope and new life.

And today?

Nowadays the colours are explained as an acronym for Give (green) Women (white) the Vote (violet).

The Australian connection?

These colours came to Australia through Victorian suffragist Vida Goldstein.

She adopted the colours of lavender, green and purple for the Women's Political Association (WPA) in 1909, in time for her Senate campaign of 1910. She described their meaning as being lavender for the fragrance of all that is good in the past, green for growth, unfolding and development, and purple for the royalty of justice and the equal sovereignty of men and women.

In 1910, while in London, she persuaded Margaret Fisher, wife of the Australian Prime Minister, and Emily McGowen, wife of the Premier of New South Wales, to pin on the colours when they joined the Australian and New Zealand contingent in the women's coronation procession.

After her return from the UK, Goldstein continued to use the suffrage colours, for example in her campaign for the House of Representatives seat of Kooyong in 1913.

References:

<http://www.foskc.org/goldstein.htm> - Friends of St Kilda Cemetery.

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/pubs/pops/pop46/red white and blue.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/pubs/pops/pop46/red%20white%20and%20blue.pdf) - Red, White and Blue, What Do They Mean to You? The Significance of Political Colours* - Marian Sawer.

*Image Vida Goldstein courtesy Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.
Image The Age courtesy Newspaper Collection, State Library of Victoria*



Knowing our past, transforming our future

