

# OVERVIEW AND LESSON PLAN

## HER PLACE: WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

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**Class grouping:**

Whole class and small group.

**Time:**

120 minutes (2 x 60-minute sessions)

**Purpose:**

The purpose of these activities is to allow students to investigate the achievements of the ten women featured in the *Her Place: Women of Influence* exhibition. The activities provide students with an overview of the women, their achievements and their backgrounds prior to visiting the exhibition.

Students will have a 'turn and talk' discussion activity, where they will be asked to 'agree' or 'disagree' with a series of statements relating to some of the featured women. They will participate in a jigsaw activity in small groups, where they will learn about the achievements and contexts of each woman. At the conclusion of the session students will participate in a group discussion about the women and their achievements, and why these achievements are important.

The activity can be split into two 60-minute sessions or be run as a double session.

**Important: Please note that all worksheets referred to in the activities below are available on the Her Place Women's Museum Australia website.**

[www.herplacemuseum.com/education](http://www.herplacemuseum.com/education)

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## Teacher preparation and materials

### Warm-up activity resources:

Signs—Agree, Disagree, Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree

### Activity resources/worksheets (one per activity table):

- Val Lang interview prompt
- Joan Kirner article: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/victorias-first-female-premier-joankirner-dies-aged-76-20150601-ghefxh.html>
- Computer/tablet for 'Reflections of Joan Kirner' video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DO6NNgSJw\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DO6NNgSJw_M)
- Gweneth Wisewould photo
- Auntie Fay Carter article <http://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/community-engagement/leadership-programs/aboriginal-honour-roll/2013-victorian-aboriginal-honour-roll/fay-carter.html>
- Values for Australian Schooling

### Student resources (one per student):

- Brigitte Muir 'firsts' worksheet
- Halima Mohamed worksheet
- Peta Searle 'See, Think, Wonder' sheet (pairs)
- Student workbooks
- Pens/pencils
- Scissors
- Gluesticks

## Procedure

### Warm-up activity

Whole class activity

10 minutes

Step 1. Place four signs around the room:

- One sign saying 'Agree'
- One sign saying 'Strongly Agree'
- One sign saying 'Disagree'
- One sign saying 'Strongly Disagree'

Step 2. Explain to the students that you will be reading them a set of statements relating to the women featured in the exhibition (see below). In response to the statements, students are to move to the sign that most closely reflects their point of view.

Step 3. After each statement, students do a 'turn and talk', where they discuss their response to the statement with a partner, and why they agreed/disagreed with it.

Note: The information in italics indicates which woman in the exhibition the statement relates to. This information can be read to students after they have chosen to 'agree', 'disagree', etc.

### Statements:

1. Men are better at 'heroic' jobs such as firefighting and police work.  
*Pat Bigham was a long-term member of the CFA when she started the Peer Support Program after the Ash Wednesday fires.*
2. 'There should be 10 women's football teams, not eight ... by making it work, they will accelerate the development of women's footy.' – *Peta Searle, first female coach in the AFL*
3. Refugees and migrants who can't read or write are denied access to things that 'having a voice' accords a person in society.  
*Halima Mohamed has worked extensively with refugees from various parts of Africa, primarily Somalia.*
4. On average, there is a 10-year gap between the life expectancy of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women.  
*Aunty Fay Carter is a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung Senior Elder, who has been working with government and community groups for years to improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians of all ages.*

## Activity 1

### *Small group rotations*

80 minutes total; 10 minutes each

Step 1. Explain to students that in this session they will be learning about a number of Australian women and their achievements in a variety of different fields.

Step 2. Assign students one of the activities below, on rotation, in groups of 3–5. They will have 10 minutes for each activity.

### *Activities:*

#### **Brigitte Muir:**

1. Students play 'mix and match'—matching Australian women to the 'firsts' they have achieved (first Australian female prime minister, first Australian woman to scale Mt Everest, etc.).
2. There are four blank squares on the worksheet, indicating areas in which women have yet to be represented. Students are to draw their own images of women achieving 'firsts' in Australia. What areas do they want to see women achieve in?

**Pat Bigham:**

Note: This activity features a teacher-led discussion.

1. Students are to draw a picture of a firefighter in their workbooks (make sure to use the word 'firefighter' in your instructions).
2. Once they've finished, ask the following questions and lead a small discussion. How many students drew a male? Why do they think they did this? What are the students' preconceptions about firefighters? Can firefighters be female? What are some other male-dominated industries?

**Joan Kirner:**

1. Students watch 'Reflections of Joan Kirner' (link provided above) and read *The Age* article 'Victoria's first female premier Joan Kirner dies aged 76', available on the Her Place website.
2. In their workbooks, students each provide five facts about Joan Kirner.
3. In their group, they should then name any other female politicians they know of and then discuss these women. What do they know about them? Has politics changed for women since Kirner was elected? Based on what students know about current female MPs (for example, Pauline Hanson, Julie Bishop or Tanya Plibersek)—would these women agree or disagree with Joan Kirner's statements or policies?

**Halima Mohamed:**

1. Students fill out the worksheet provided on Somalia, which will give them a background to Halima's work and her community.

**Val Lang:**

1. Students read Val Lang's interview response then participate in a discussion (prompt provided on worksheet).

**Peta Searle:**

1. Provide the students with 'Image One' from the 'See, Think, Wonder' sheet and ask them to look closely at the image before responding.
2. Students respond to the 'See, Think, Wonder' questions, working in pairs to fill in the speech bubbles.
3. Follow the same procedure for Image Two.
4. Once students have completed both images, invite students to share their responses with their group.

### **Gweneth Wisewould:**

1. Students look at the photo of Gweneth Wisewould, and discuss it in their group. What are the first things they think about her? Students write down their perceptions based only on the photograph.
2. Flipping the photograph over, students are introduced to Gweneth Wisewould and her achievements.
3. Consider the riddle underneath Gweneth's information. What are our perceptions of doctors? Have these changed since Gweneth Wisewould's time?

### **Aunty Fay Carter:**

1. Students read article on Aunty Fay Carter.
2. Looking at the 'Values for Australian Schooling' list, students are to pair Aunty Fay Carter's actions with the values on the list. Students should consider their own actions and values. Do they share any with Aunty Fay Carter?

## Activity 2

### *Whole group*

10 minutes

1. Students come back together to discuss what they have learnt in their rotations. Ask them to consider the following: What kinds of things have these women achieved? Why are these women relevant to Victorian history? Why do we have an exhibition dedicated to women? Do we need a permanent museum for women?
2. Focus on Val Lang's activity and the question asked during that rotation: What have you been told that you could not do because of your gender? Draw attention to the differences in responses from your male and female students.



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