

Kathy Lette Discusses Struggle Women in Politics Face at MoAD Exhibition Launch

Bestselling author Kathy Lette launched *Breaking Through: 75 Years of Women in Parliament* at MoAD (Museum of Australian Democracy) in Canberra on Saturday, 25 August 2018.

During the launch, Ms Lette, a feminist icon and passionate commentator on women's equality, made a heartfelt speech about the media's treatment of the women featured in the exhibition, especially Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. She noted *"As a woman in politics, you're belittled and maligned. The truth is, as a powerful woman in the public eye, you just can't get it right."*

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first women elected to Australian Federal Parliament, the *Breaking Through* exhibition at MoAD explores the journeys of 11 trailblazers, who were each the first to hold particular parliamentary positions.

The exhibition recognises the significant contribution these women made in Australia's democracy. However, *Breaking Through* also uncovers the darker sides of being a woman in parliament.

As Ms Lette pointed out *"there's the everyday sexism women face in the workforce. It's prevalent in all walks of life, but especially in politics."*

The treatment of Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, from *"other politicians and male journalists was barbaric"* said Ms Lette. She was often described by the media as a poor homemaker because she was childless, and she was constantly name called by both the media and fellow politicians.

Ms Lette, who shot to fame with her first novel, *Puberty Blues*, at age 17, was joined at the launch by the Director of MoAD, Daryl Karp.

"These powerful stories of change makers will inspire visitors to think about the role of women in parliament, what it took to get there and whether we've come far enough – and we haven't" said Ms Karp.

At a time when we should be celebrating the great achievements of these pioneering women in politics, women are once again *"getting concussion hitting our heads on the glass ceiling"* as Ms Lette delicately put it.

The stories told in the exhibition are stories of resilience, perseverance and ground-breaking achievements. Women featured in the exhibition include:

- Dorothy Tangney and Enid Lyons, the first women elected into Parliament in 1943;
- Julia Gillard, the first female Prime Minister elected in 2010; and
- Janine Haines, the first women to lead an Australian political party.

About MoAD

MEDIA RELEASE

28 August 2018



The Museum of Australian Democracy celebrates Australia's proud history as a democratic nation and actively promotes the participation of its citizens in determining its future.

MoAD is a museum not just of objects but of ideas. In our iconic heritage building, we tell the story of Australia's journey to becoming one of the world's most vibrant and multicultural democratic nations.

MoAD is a place where stories, conversations and narratives from myriad perspectives can be heard and discussed.

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For further information, please contact Annika Scott, annika.scott@moadoph.gov.au, (02) 6270 8120 or 0400 946 608

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Daryl Karp, Director, MoAD
- Sharon Bulkeley, Exhibition Curator

IMAGES:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kjs2yxf1tvg8auq/AABrMjm82Cq9RfY9V0FrOsQya?dl=0>