



# AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY ROME NEWS

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## Celebrating Women

We hope you enjoy this special mini-edition of the Australian Embassy Newsletter in recognition of [International Women's Day](#).

In this edition, we would like to celebrate the contribution of women in Australia, and in particular of **Australian women of Italian origin**. With so many to mention, this brief newsletter is by no means comprehensive. Nonetheless, we hope you enjoy this snapshot of some of the women who make Australia proud.

## Young Australian of the Year 2011

The prestigious award of **Young Australian of the Year** for 2011 was won by 17-year old sailor [Jessica Watson](#). From the age of 12, Jessica dreamed of sailing solo, unassisted, non-stop around the world, and at the age of 16 she achieved her dream.



Defying criticism from those who said her task was destined to fail, Jessica sailed through

dangerous conditions and some of the world's most challenging seaways, surviving multiple knockdowns in her yacht and enduring 12-metre seas, 75-knot winds, storms and loneliness throughout her seven-month journey.

Jessica's courage and determination have inspired thousands of people of all ages all around the world and shown that you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it.

## Women in Government and Politics

Australia currently has its first female

### [Governor-General](#)

(the Queen's representative in Australia),

### **Her Excellency**

**Ms Quentin Bryce AC** (above).

The position of [Prime Minister of Australia](#) is also held by a woman, **the Honourable Julia Gillard MP** (below), for the first time in Australia's history.



28.3% of politicians in Australia's federal parliament are women, as are three of Australia's six **State Premiers**.

## Italo-Australian stories...

[Concetta Fierravanti-Wells](#) was elected to the Australian Senate for the state of New South Wales at the 2004 federal election, and was re-elected in 2010. Educated at the Australian National University, Canberra, she was a senior government lawyer and ministerial advisor before entering politics.

She has been active in many community organisations, including in the Italian community, and was made

**Knight in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic** in 1998.



The Senator is in good company with other Australian female politicians of Italian origin, such as federal parliamentarian and accomplished local businesswoman [Teresa Gambaro](#), and present and past politicians at State and Territory level, such as [Franca Arena](#). Mrs Arena is a former journalist and politician who was awarded an **Order of Australia** (AO) in 1980 for her services to ethnic groups, a **Commander in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic** in 1990 and an **Illustrious Ligurian Award** from the City of Genoa and the Region of Liguria in 2004.

## Women in the media

[Virginia Trioli](#) has been an important figure in Australian journalism since the mid-1990s. With a reputation as a strong independent voice on politics, social issues and the arts, this prominent Australian woman of Italian origin has twice won Australian journalism's highest honour, the **Walkley Award**, for her reporting.



Virginia is one of many prominent Australian journalists of Italian origin such as [Emma Alberici](#), the ABC's Europe correspondent, who has twice been a finalist at the Walkley Awards for her investigative reporting.

### Did you know?

Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (CEDAW) in 1983.

## Women in business



**Carla Zampatti AC** moved from Italy to Australia in 1950 with her family, and within twenty years she had established her successful fashion label, **Carla Zampatti Limited**.

In August 2008, Carla received the **Australian Fashion Laureate** (the highest award in Australian fashion) for her outstanding achievements. A former Chairman of the SBS Corporation, today Carla is the Executive Chairman of Carla Zampatti Pty Limited, a Trustee of the Sydney Theatre Company Foundation Trust, and a Board Member of the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

In 2004, the Italian government appointed Carla **Commander in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic**.

**Sarina Russo**, who came to Australia from Sicily with her family at age five, has overcome challenges and adversity to achieve outstanding success as an educator, businesswoman and property owner. She is the award-winning founder and managing director of the education, recruitment and investment companies that form the **Sarina Russo Group**, and is a member of numerous boards including the Women's Leadership Board of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at the Harvard Business School.



### Did you know?

More than 30% of Australia's **small business operators** are women. Women make up more than half of **Australia's public service workforce** and hold around 36% of **senior executive positions**.

## Science and Research

**Anna-Maria Arabia** is an Australian scientist of Calabrian origin. She is **Chief Executive Officer** of the **Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS)**, the peak body for science and technology in Australia which represents the interests of more than 68,000 Australian scientists and technologists.

Also of Italian origin is **Deanna D'Alessandro**, an Australian molecular chemist from the **University of Sydney**. Her work on capturing carbon emissions has the potential to significantly impact climate change, and she recently won a prestigious **L'Oréal Australia For Women in Science Fellowship** worth AUS\$20,000 for her work.



The **Eskitis Institute for Cell and Molecular Therapies** at **Cremona Hospital** in Lombardy, **Griffith University** in Queensland and the **Peter MacCallum Institute** in Melbourne are working together on an innovative **breast cancer therapy** that builds on each group's specific strengths. This alliance gives Australian medical researchers greater access to the broader European medical research community.

### Australia's record

The **2007–08 UN Human Development Report** ranked Australia **second in the world** on the gender-related development index and **eighth** in the world on the gender empowerment measure. Australia is an active participant in deliberations of the **UN Commission on the Status of Women**.

A key international priority for the Office for Women is Australia's implementation of the **UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

### Did you know?

Australia's first International Women's Day was held in **Sydney** in **1928**. Women called for equal pay, an eight-hour working day for shop girls and paid leave.

## Sports

**Claire Bevilacqua** is a professional surfer from Perth, Australia. Her mother is Australian, while her father is Italian. She was crowned the **Australian Junior Women's Champion** in 2003, and in 2007 she finished 6th in the **World Championship Tour** of the Association of Surfing Professionals.

Claire has won several competitions including The Outer Banks Pro in North Carolina, The Hello Kitty Boardfest at Huntington Beach, California and the 2009 Pipeline Pro.



In 2004, winemaker **Vicki Vasarelli** became Australian Women's Bocce Champion, and in 2005, aged 17, **Monette Russo** became the first Australian woman to win an individual World Championship medal in gymnastics.

### australiadonna

A useful source of information on **Italo-Australian women** is **australiadonna**, which offers a virtual space to celebrate the contribution of women of Italian origin to Australia. The site's creator and editor is **Daniela Costa**, an Italo-Australian medical practitioner who has worked in migrant women's health for 23 years.

## Stars of stage and screen



**Natalie Imbruglia** (image courtesy of EGG Management), the well-known singer, actress and model, has a Sicilian father

from Lipari and has often expressed her pride in her Italian heritage. She has enjoyed international success since recording her first album, **Left of the Middle**, in 1997. She also has a younger sister, **Laura Imbruglia**, who is a well-known indie rock singer-songwriter.

### Tina Arena

is another of Australia's most internationally successful female vocalists.

The daughter of Sicilian immigrants, she has won countless awards including a **World Music Award** for being the world's best-selling Australian artist.



Other Italo-Australian female pop stars include singer-songwriter **Vanessa Amorosi** and twin sisters Lisa and Jessica Origliasso, known as **The Veronicas**, who also have their own clothing line.

### Did you know?

Today, women make up **just over half** of Australia's total population.

More women than men are now educated at **secondary schools** and universities, and more women than men graduate from **university** with **bachelor degrees**.

**Pia Miranda** is an Australian actress of Italian descent who achieved fame and won an **Australian Film Institute Award** for best actress for her performance in the hugely successful Australian movie **Looking for Alibrandi**.



Based on the book of the same name by prize-winning Italo-Australian author **Melina Marchetta**, **Looking for Alibrandi** tells the story of an Italo-Australian girl in her final year of high school in Sydney. The film also starred **Emmy Award-winning**, Milan-born Italo-Australian actress **Greta Scacchi**.

## Our Kylie

Coinciding with International Women's Day is a concert by one of Australia's best-known female performers, **Kylie Minogue** (photo by William Baker, courtesy of EMI). Kylie will be performing in **Milan** on the only Italian date of her world tour.

Kylie revealed an important Italian element to her performance: "My friends **Dolce & Gabbana** have designed an amazing wardrobe for me. I'm



overwhelmed with the love and talent that is going into this tour."

Apart from her long and successful music career, Kylie Minogue is also well-known for her own personal battle against **breast cancer** and her subsequent involvement in raising awareness of the dangers of breast cancer and the importance of regular screenings.

## Selected key milestones for Women in Australia

- 1895:** Women vote for the first time in an Australian election (South Australia)
- 1921:** Edith Cowan becomes the first woman elected to an Australian parliament (in Western Australia)
- 1943:** Dame Enid Lyons and Senator Dorothy Tangney become the first women elected to Federal Parliament
- 1947:** Jessie Street appointed as the Australian representative to the newly established United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
- 1969:** Equal pay determination by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission introduces the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value'

**1983:** Australia ratifies the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

**1984:** Federal Sex Discrimination Act passed, to implement the UN Convention domestically

**1988:** Prime Minister launches the first National Agenda for Women, based on the UN Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

**1999:** Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act introduced into Parliament on 22 September, replacing the Affirmative Action Act 1986

### Race for the Cure

The XXII edition of the **Komen Race for the Cure**, a leisure run to raise funds for and promote awareness and early detection of **breast cancer**, will be held in **Rome** on **22 May 2011**.



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1911 - 2011

Celebrating 100 years

**International Women's Day**