**australian women’s history forum**

**incorporating WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH**

March 21, 2014

**Debate to focus on women’s history**

What promises to be a lively debate next week in Canberra will turn the spotlight on women’s history in Australia – by asking does it matter.

In a unique event, prominent thinkers will debate the proposition that: **Australia doesn’t need Women’s History Month.**

**Angela Woollacott, Marilyn Lake** and **Dawn Casey** will argue that a special Women’s History Month is unnecessary for Australians.

It will be up to **Anne Summers, Alix Biggs,** and **Marnie Hughes-Warrington** to defend the focus on the place of women in Australian history provided by Women’s History Month.

There will be a secret vote from the audience before adjudicators **Kim Rubenstein, Daryl Karp** and **Tony Taylor** deliver their verdict.

The event will be chaired by popular Canberra journalist and radio personality **Genevieve Jacobs.**

**The debate will take place at 6 for 6.30pm on March 26, 2014 in Canberra’s historic Albert Hall.**

“This debate will mark the end of Australia-wide events, coordinated online since 2003 by the Australian Women’s History Forum,” says Pamela Harris, convenor of AWHF.

**The background:**

Women’s History Month in Australia, launched in 2000 at Parliament House in Canberra by Senators Margaret Reid and Amanda Vanstone and MP Carmen Lawrence, has been celebrated here for a decade.

The success of Women’s History Month in the US, a national event since a 1987 resolution of Congress, and in Canada where it was proclaimed in 1992, had inspired this initiative in Australia.

Women’s History Month is also celebrated each March in the UK, where it is run by a small group of volunteers.

In Australia, the celebration of Women’s History Month has remained a series of voluntary endeavours, for the past decade encouraged and overseen by a small Canberra-based team, the Australian Women’s History Forum (AWHF).

**The participants:**

**Debaters:**

**Dr Anne Summers AO**, journalist, author, editor, publisher, head of Australia’s first Office of the Status of Women and author of landmark books from *Damned Whores and God’s Police* (1975) to *The Misogyny Factor* (2013)

**Ms Alix Biggs**, ANU student, national and international debater and a former Australian Young Historian of the Year

**Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the Australian National University, historiographer and author of several books including *Revisionist Histories* (2013) and a winner of the Prime Minister's Award for University Teacher of the Year

**Professor Marilyn Lake**, University of Melbourne historian and current president of the Australian Historical Association, whose publications reflecting her special interest in the political history of Australian women include *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (1999)

**Professor Angela Woollacott**, Manning Clark Professor of History at the Australian National University, editor of the Cambridge University Press *History for the Australian Curriculum* series and author of many works on women and history

**Dr Dawn Casey,** chair of the Indigenous Land Corporation and the founding director of the National Museum of Australia

**Adjudicators**:

**Ms Daryl Karp,** director of the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Canberra

**Professor Kim Rubenstein,** Director of the  Centre for International and Public Law, ANU College of Law, Public Policy Fellow, ANU and inaugural convenor of the ANU Gender Institute

**Associate Professor Tony Taylor**, Faculty of Arts and Education, Federation University Australia, director of the Commonwealth’s National Centre for History Education 2001-2007, national curriculum consultant to the Commonwealth government 2008-2012 and frequent columnist on history education matters

**The entry cost of $15 ($12 concession) includes a reception following the debate.**

**Advance bookings may be made through:** [www.trybooking.com/DVGO](http://www.trybooking.com/DVGO)

***For more information, please see the website*** [***http://womenshistory.net.au***](http://womenshistory.net.au)

***or contact Sandy Forbes on 0402 064 653 or at*** [***redoak@netspeed.com.au***](mailto:redoak@netspeed.com.au)