

More in Anger:  
The politics of gender in Australia in 2013

By

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Second Emily's List Oration

Canberra

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Good Evening everyone

It is a very great pleasure for me to be here this evening to deliver the Second Emily's List Oration.

It is an honour to be able to follow in the footsteps of the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, who in 2012 delivered the Inaugural Oration. I am also very pleased to have the opportunity tonight, via this Oration, to share some thoughts with you on the subject of women exercising political power.

Because that is essentially what Emily's List is about: getting women into power. Not just any women, but women who are pro-choice and who support women's equality.

That is the core mission of Emily's List and as I will argue this evening, that core mission is increasingly at odds with the way Australian politics are today.

WHEN I LIVED IN New York, in the 1980s, and was editor-in-chief of the iconic feminist magazine *Ms.* I met the dynamic Ellen Malcolm. Ellen was the woman who founded Emily's List in the US in 1985. She came up with the snappy acronym "Early Money is Like Yeast (It makes the dough rise)" and with the concept of raising money to support the election of pro-choice women to elective office.

Ellen's family had inherited, in her words, "millions and millions and millions" of dollars worth of IBM stock and she herself was left a large portion of that.<sup>1</sup> But rather than fritter away her money on a lavish life-style, Ellen Malcolm used her millions to create a political organisation that today takes credit for electing dozens of women, including Hillary Clinton to the Senate.

Just last month, Ellen Malcolm signed up for Ready for Hillary, the Super Pac (Political Action Committee) that is already working hard and raising money to support Hillary Clinton's campaign for the US Presidency in 2016.

"I've seen — we've all seen — how smart, tough, resilient and caring Hillary is. I've been Ready for Hillary to be president for decades," Malcolm said in a statement. "So Hillary, put on your combat pumps, charge the BlackBerry and pack up your campaign finery. Let's go win this!"<sup>2</sup>

When US women finally scale that summit and can boast a woman in the White House, we will cheer along with them. But we will also be able to tell them, from our own tumultuous experience, that having a woman win the top political job in a country is not the end of the road. It is not even the beginning of a new journey. It is, as we have been shocked to discover, an entirely different political experience and one that, if my own reaction is anything to go by, we were totally unprepared for.

It was, of course, the US group that inspired the Australian Emily's List.

In 1996 a group of Labor women got together and decided it was necessary to form a group that would raise funds to support the electoral campaigns of progressive women. The ALP had just introduced affirmative action targets, agreeing that women should be endorsed for 35 per cent of winnable seats.

That the party even agreed to do this was, of course, the result of a campaign by women within the Labor party, many of whom subsequently became pioneering members of Emily's List.

The next step after winning the affirmative action battle was to develop campaign support for women to be able to win those pre-selections and then to win the seats. Support was also extended to progressive women who were running in seats that were more of a challenge.

Emily's List works closely with the ALP but is not part of the Labor Party. Around 60 per cent of its members are not members of the ALP. I am one of those. I have belonged to Emily's List since its inception but I am not a member of the Labor Party.

As we know, the mission of Emily's List is to secure the election to Parliament of women who are pro-choice, who support diversity, equity, equal pay and child care.

You might think that all women who are elected to parliament would support all these sound principles but you would be wrong. Incredibly, not even all ALP women support them.

So Emily's List works with Labor women who do and since 1996 has assisted more than 150 women in getting elected to state and federal parliaments.

Among the women Emily's List has helped are:

- Anna Bligh, the first woman premier of Queensland
- Lara Giddings, the first woman premier of Tasmania
- Katy Gallagher, Chief Minister of the ACT
- Carol Martin, the first Indigenous woman to be elected to any Australian parliament

But the jewel in the Emily's List crown has of course been Julia Gillard, who is not only Australia's first female prime minister, but is an inaugural Emily's List member who helped draft the organisation's constitution.

As Gillard said last year in the Inaugural Oration: "I was there at the start".<sup>3</sup>

She was, she said, "a candidate who took three attempts, against a wall of ingrained factional hostility, to enter federal politics".

She finally made it into federal parliament in 1998, a year that turned out to be a stellar one for women. Julia Gillard, Nicola Roxon, Tanya Plibersek, Anna Burke, Cheryl Kernot, Michelle O'Byrne, Jill Hall, Kirsten Livermore, Kelly Hoare and Trish Crossin were among the Labor women elected that year, while on the coalition side there was Julie Bishop, Kay Hull and Margaret May.<sup>4</sup>

Several of the Labor '98ers became cabinet ministers and three years ago this coming Monday, on June 24 2010, Julia Gillard became Prime Minister.

I want to devote the rest of my remarks tonight to looking at two questions:

- Why is it so hard to ensure that increased numbers of women are elected to parliament?
- Why are women treated so badly once they are in politics; specifically, why is it, the higher they go, the worse women are treated?

First let me address the difficulties of getting more women into politics.

Currently there are 67 women in Canberra, 37 in the House of Representatives and 30 in the Senate. All up, women make up around 30 per cent of our federal parliament.

What we need to understand about these figures is that they are on a downward trajectory. In the 2010 election, the number of women dropped from 68 to 64 (from 30.1 per cent to 28.3 per cent).

Since then, the numbers have jumped around a bit as people retired and were replaced, usually by a person of the opposite gender.

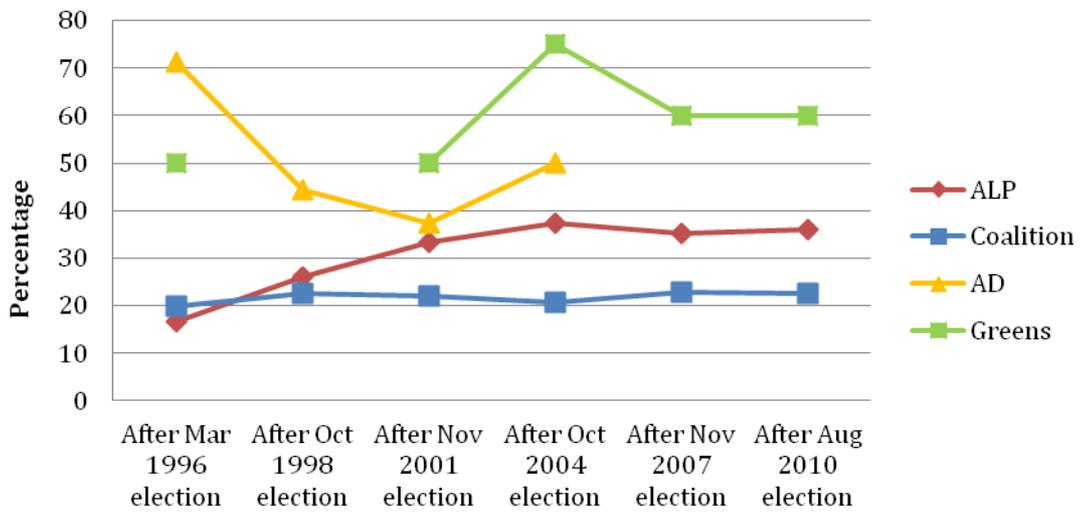
(I am only going to be talking about federal politics this evening but it is worth bearing in mind that there have been some dramatic changes at state level. In 2012 Queensland went, overnight, from having the highest number of women parliamentarians in Australia to having the lowest, from 36 per cent to 20 per cent.)<sup>5</sup>

We cannot predict the outcome of the 2013 election of course but it is highly likely that the numbers of women will decline further.

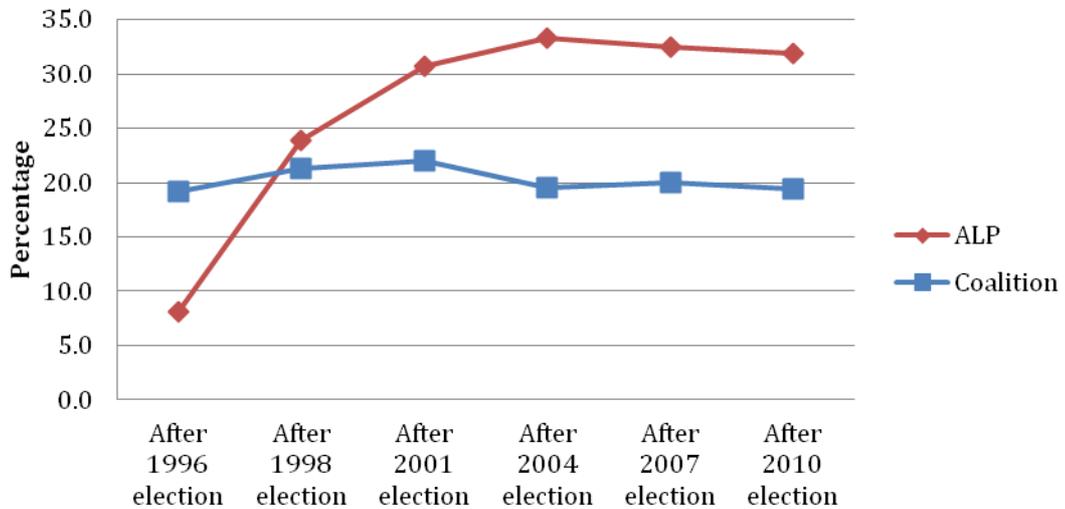
As the following tables show, the numbers of women in federal parliament are either static or falling.

This needs to be addressed.

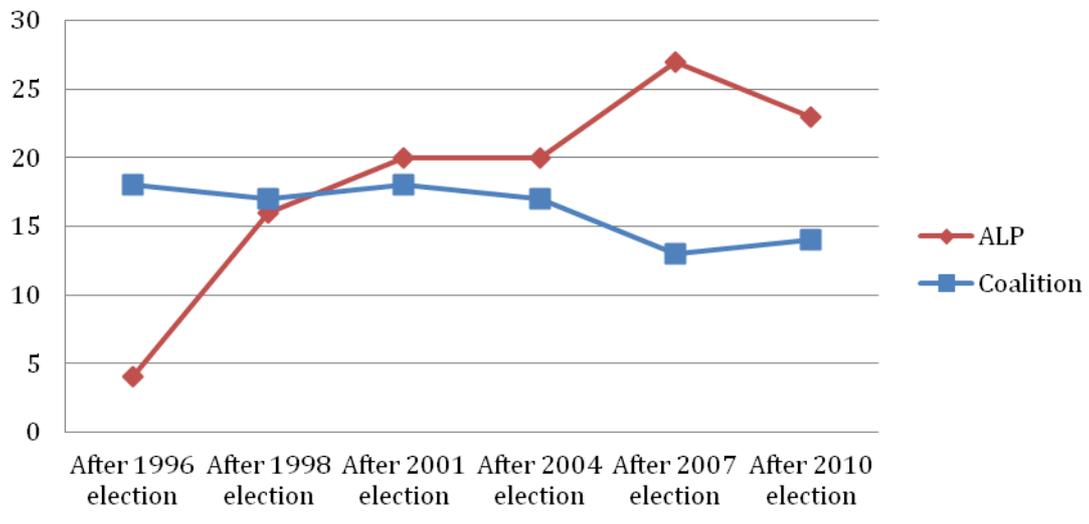
## Commonwealth Parliament: women as proportion of party's representation



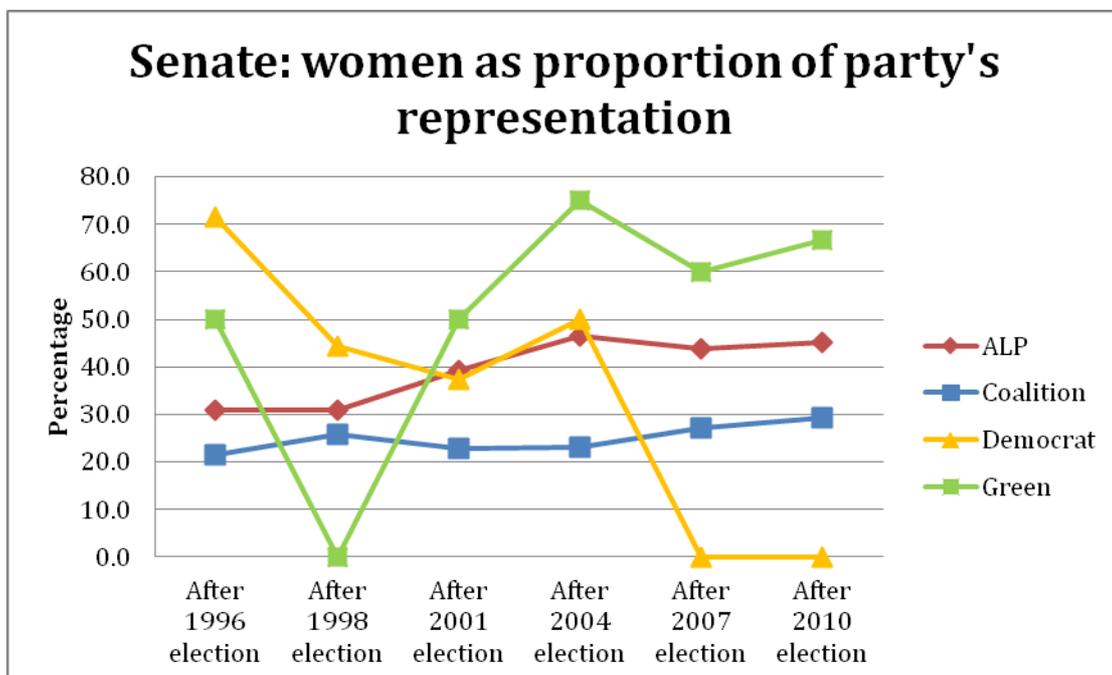
## House of Representatives: women as proportion of party's representation

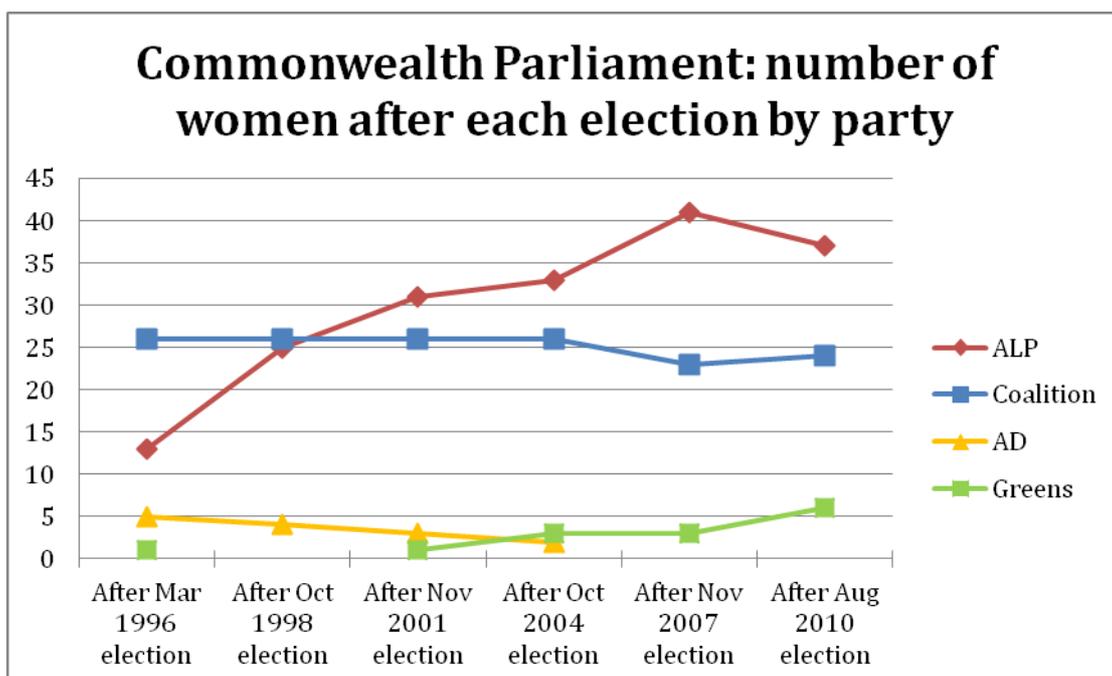
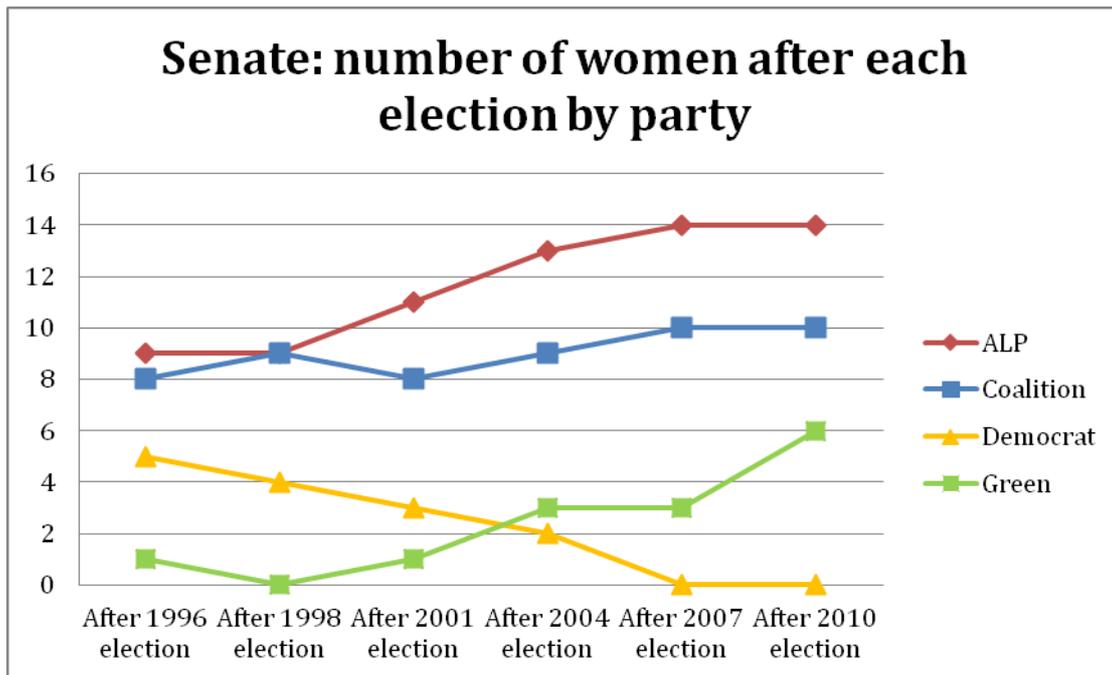


## House of Representatives: number of women after each election by party



## Senate: women as proportion of party's representation





What should be done to remedy this?

Not only should the ALP's current 40:40:20 rule be strictly enforced but the Liberal and National parties need to consider some kind of affirmative action to improve their numbers.

At present the Liberals have only 13 women in the Reps (22 per cent of the total) and the Nationals have none. In the Senate, the coalition has a total of 8 women (to Labor's 15 and the Greens' 6).

We know the Liberals insist their candidates are chosen on "merit" – which is an insulting judgment on the women of the Liberal Party given so few are chosen – and so are unlikely to opt for quotas. Nor are the Nats. Labor is having trouble meeting its quota.

Maybe it is time to adopt another approach.

Rather than relying on the parties to preselect equitable numbers of women, maybe the electoral system should make it happen. Maybe it is time for us to look at having 50 per cent of our electorates reserved for women.

*That* would guarantee equality.

*That* would force *all* the parties to select more women.

It is not likely to happen anytime soon, I agree, but I believe it is worth pushing as a medium term goal. And as a consciousness-raiser because, as I will argue in a moment, this country sure needs to have its consciousness raised on the subject of women in power.

In the meantime, we should be pushing for a lot more campaigning to be targeted to women. We know that this delivers votes for progressive parties.

The success of Emily's List, in the US and in Australia, tells us that it is smart politics to engage the energies of women in the service of increasing the numbers of women in our parliaments.

What is even smarter is that these energies are ultimately channelled into increasing the progressive vote. Women's energies, and women's votes, can determine whether political parties win or lose.

There is such ample evidence to support this assertion that you have to wonder why political parties are so often so reluctant to take the necessary steps to engage women and to secure their votes.

In the 2012 US Presidential election, Barack Obama won the two-party vote over contender Mitt Romney among women by a 12 point margin and lost the male vote to Romney by an 8 point margin. This meant there was a 20 point gender gap (+ 12 and - 8) which, according to the Gallup organization was the largest since it began measuring this gap in presidential elections in 1952.<sup>6</sup>

Emily's List gender gap research has shown that when Labor wins the women's vote, it wins government.<sup>7</sup>

So why doesn't the Labor Party do more to target women in its campaigning?

I cannot answer that question.

All I can do is speculate about why it is that we so often act against what would appear to be our interests?

For instance, we as a society have failed – refused, might be a better word – to deliver equality for women despite all the evidence that this would be good for the nation as well as being good for women themselves.

There is ample evidence that increasing women's workforce participation by even as little as 6 per cent would add \$25 billion to the Australian economy.<sup>8</sup>

So why don't we do it?

As I have argued in my recent book *The Misogyny Factor*<sup>9</sup> there is active resistance to the idea, as well as the reality, of women's equality. As a society we are unwilling to do what is necessary to facilitate women's increased entry into employment.

We won't give women equal pay, we won't address the extremely high effective marginal tax rates women face as they withdraw from family benefits and transfer to employment, and we won't address the deficiencies in the cost, availability and flexibility of child care.

These are all well-documented impediments to women returning to work at all, and certainly to engaging in fulltime work.

They are all fixable. Other countries, such as Canada, have addressed them – with dramatic results. Why can't we?

Similarly, why don't political parties do what has been proven to help them win office: mobilise the votes of women?

If I could answer that question, I probably would not be standing here in front of you tonight. Emily's List's work would be done.

LET ME NOW LOOK at the second question I raised earlier: why do we treat women in politics so badly? In particular, why do we treat Julia Gillard, the Prime Minister, so shockingly?

I have recently explored the question of women's political leadership in a lengthy essay, which was published last week in the *Meanjin Papers*, and tonight I want to share with you some of the facts I gathered, and the conclusions that I drew:

"It is not exactly rare for a nation to elect a woman as its leader; 63 countries have done it since the first, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, became prime minister of Sri Lanka in 1960. But it is far from the norm. Today only fifteen of the world's nations have a woman at the helm<sup>10</sup> and many of those who were once led by a woman have not repeated the experience. Think Israel, France, Canada, Norway and the United Kingdom. In fact, in April 2013 just three countries that today have women leaders have had one (and only one) previously: Argentina, Bangladesh and Lithuania. For the other twelve nations, this is the first time they have been governed by a woman. Australia, of course, is one of these countries and you can't help wondering whether Germany, Brazil, Denmark, Jamaica and Thailand – to name several of them – are handling the situation as badly as we are."<sup>11</sup>

And there is absolutely no doubt we are handling it very badly indeed. And it is getting worse.

The events of last week make this so clear as to be a national scandal.

Those of you who have read my speech *Her Rights at Work*, delivered in August 2012<sup>12</sup> - now known as the “Newcastle speech” - will know that I documented very extensively the sexual and other forms of vilification to which Julia Gillard has been subject since she became Prime Minister.

What is different about what I documented in that speech and what happened last week was that the attacks on the Prime Minister were out in the public domain, they were in the mainstream media.

One of the complaints I made in the “Newcastle speech” was that the mainstream media had failed to report on the fact that Gillard was the subject of repeated and highly offensive cartoons by Larry Pickering. I argued that since these cartoons were emailed to all members of parliament on a regular basis that the press gallery should have known about them and should have denounced them by telling their readers/listeners/viewers about them.

I also argued in my speech, against advice, that it was important to bring these images and hate-filled diatribes out into the open. I thought that if we could shine a light on them, decent Australians would be so disgusted that they would refuse to countenance such disrespectful treatment of our Prime Minister.

To a large extent, that happened. Many, many people contacted me and said “It stops with me” – which was the call I had made to people to push back against this denigration and vilification.

But we have not succeeded in banishing this conduct.

Let’s look at what happened last week.

It began on Sunday morning (June 9, 2013), on the *Insiders* program on ABCTV with host Barrie Cassidy stating with some confidence that he did not expect Gillard to lead Labor to the next election. Suddenly, the stalking of Gillard by Kevin Rudd was back on.

Despite Rudd’s stated guarantees, despite his losing comprehensively to Gillard in 2012 and his failure to even stand when she was forced to call a

spill in March 2013, Rudd and his henchmen were back. With less than three months to go until the September 14 federal election.

This news set the context for the rest of the week.

On Tuesday (11 June, 2013) the Prime Minister addressed a private gathering of supporters who had formed the Women for Gillard campaigning and fundraising group. She gave a rousing speech about gender equality, including the need to protect our abortion rights. The speech was released to the media, which, almost without exception, denounced Gillard for “playing the gender card”.

Maybe that was not surprising. What was astonishing, however, was the way in which several women who call themselves feminists immediately denounced the speech and branded it and the Prime Minister as “desperate”.<sup>13</sup> One criticized her for raising the subject of abortion.

I will return to this speech in a moment but let me just remind us of what else happened last week.

On Wednesday (12 June, 2013) it was revealed that at a Liberal party fundraiser the menu had included an item described as “Julia Gillard Kentucky Fried Quail – Small Breasts, Huge Thighs & a Big Red Box”.

Initially there was a *frisson* of outrage about this. A number of journalists noted that it vindicated the Prime Minister’s speech of the day before and confessed they had moderated their initial opinions of that speech as a result.

The outrage did not last long. As soon as the restaurant owner came forward and claimed that the menu was just something he and his son had fabricated for their private amusement, the fuss died down.

Anyone who believed that someone would go to the trouble of faking such an elaborate document just for their personal edification is either naïve or a fool. But the story died – at least in the public domain.

There was little – certainly not enough – questioning of how it was OK for people, privately or publicly, to describe the PM in this fashion, referring to her

genitalia. That it was sexist was left in no doubt when you looked at the descriptions of Kevin Rudd, Simon Crean and Wayne Swan on the same menu. They were not sexual.

On Thursday (13 June, 2013) Julia Gillard was in Perth where she was interviewed by radio shock jock, Howard Sattler, who thought it was OK to ask the Prime Minister, to her face, whether her partner was gay. Again, there was outrage – most of it genuine this time – and Mr. Sattler lost his job.

But in all the commentary about this episode, including that which followed the *Daily Telegraph's* Piers Ackermann repeating the comment on *Insiders* this past Sunday (16 June, 2013), there was scarcely any analysis as to what Sattler was really doing.

He was not so much insulting Gillard's partner as he was slamming her. The question was code; it was not about whether Tim Mathieson was gay, it was about whether she was. Sattler was repeating yet another of the sordid rumours that swirl around about Gillard in the right-wing sewers. (She is denounced for being both a "lesbian" and a "home-wrecker" – it seems her detractors want to cover all bases).

And of course, as if to underscore what a disgustingly sexist country this is, during the week, the Chief of Army revealed a new and grotesque sexual scandal, reaching into the officer ranks, in the Australian Defence Force.<sup>14</sup> Is this who we are? Apparently so.

The new national sport is attacking Julia Gillard.

The Opposition does it.

It's their job to oppose her but they go way beyond the bounds of normal political rivalry in the lack of respect they have shown her.

For instance, the Leader of the Opposition standing in front of signs that said "Ditch the Witch" and "Bob Brown's Bitch".

But it is not just the Opposition that is attacking Gillard.

It's also the media, which has largely abandoned its role of reporter and dispassionate commentator and is now a player.

Worse, is the treatment of Gillard by her colleagues, by people on her own side.

Not defending her.

Stalking her.

Openly mocking her. For instance, Ed Husic waving his blue tie on television last week after Gillard used "blue ties" as a comic reference to the men of the Opposition front bench.

Or openly denigrating her, in sexual or violent language.

Kevin Rudd is reported to routinely refer to Gillard as "a bitch".<sup>15</sup>

There is in fact a remarkable similarity in the implied violence of both Opposition and Rudd camp attacks.

"Gillard won't lie down and die," Tony Abbott said last March.<sup>16</sup>

"We need her to bleed out," said a Rudd supporter last year.<sup>17</sup>

BUT MOST WORRYING about last week as far as I am concerned was the dismissal of Julia Gillard's speech about women as an ill-advised attempt to play "the gender card". This perception that talking about women's equality and women's needs is politically dangerous goes to the heart of what Emily's List is all about.

If the women we send to Canberra can't defend us and our rights, where does that leave Emily's List and the women we want to champion? After all, it is a requirement of membership that women politicians agree to fight for women's equality. It is their responsibility to take on these issues once they are in Canberra.

Julia Gillard acknowledged this last year when she said, during her Inaugural Oration.

Speaking of the women who fought for our rights in the early days of the struggle for suffrage and the basic rights we take for granted today, she said: “We owe them a debt of gratitude and we owe them a responsibility: a responsibility to build on their foundations; to do more, to be more, and to make life better for the women who will come after us; to say and do in our own time the things that were once held to be unthinkable and unachievable.”

In her speech to Women for Gillard, the Prime Minister made two important points for which she was roundly criticized.

First, she stated that under an Abbott government women would “once again [be] banished from the centre of Australia’s political life”. This is factually correct. The federal Opposition has just two women on its front bench while the Labor Government has four women in Cabinet. If Abbott wins in September there will be a 50 per cent reduction in the number of women at “the entre of Australia’s political life”.

Nor will there be a woman in the Abbott government’s leadership team.

Julie Bishop, the deputy leader of the Liberal Party, will not be deputy Prime Minister. That position will go to the leader of the coalition partner, Warren Truss, leader of the Nationals.

The second line of attack by Gillard in her speech was to remind us that “we don’t want to live in an Australia where abortion again becomes the political plaything of men who think they know better”.

For saying this she was roundly and universally condemned.

She was accused of inflammatory politics, of bringing to the public gaze an issue that did not exist, or wasn’t important or was not the subject of Opposition plans.

The hysteria of the condemnation was quite remarkable.

It underscored just how much is at stake.

It also demonstrated the degree of extraordinary ignorance about the subject on the part of the media and several of the so-called feminist commentators.

“It’s not a federal issue,” they said.

They are wrong. There are at least four areas of policy involving abortion that are indisputably federal: (1) the Medicare rebate; (2) the regulation of the “abortion drug” RU486; (3) foreign aid to organisations in other countries that provide advice on abortion; and (4) the language of international treaties and other agreements that refer to women’s reproductive health.

Let’s look at the first one. Any fool ought to be able to understand that the funding of abortion is absolutely a federal issue, and that the Medicare rebate for abortion has, in the past, been the target of right-to-life attention and is so again at present with a private Senator’s bill currently being examined by a Senate Committee.

The sponsor of that bill, the DLP Senator John Madigan, is on record as saying he would use the balance of power in the Senate, were he to hold it, to obtain concessions that would limit abortion as Senator Brian Harradine did during the Howard government.<sup>18</sup>

Senator Madigan was more than ready to be Tony Abbott’s Brian Harradine.

Second, the provision of the non-surgical alternative to abortion, the drug RU486, is controlled by federal authorities and in the past has been subject to political interference.

Third, the provision of overseas aid, which includes aid to organisations that provide advice on contraception and abortion in developing countries, is very much a federal issue. In the past, Senator Harradine used his power to restrict these funds being used to give advice on abortions to women, despite the statistics that show a woman dies on average every eight minutes from an unsafe abortion in a developing country.<sup>19</sup>

And, of course, the fourth area where federal policy is made on abortion is in the language Australia adopts in international forums in documents that refer

to reproductive rights (and which are the subject of relentless attack and attempted wind back by the Vatican and other member states).

You would have to be ignorant, or very politically inept, or perhaps diabolically opposed to women's right to choose, to make the claim that abortion is not a federal issue.

Abortion law is certainly a state matter, but access to safe abortion for Australian women is not only a matter of its legality. If a woman cannot afford the cost she is denied her right to choose just as surely as if abortion was illegal. The Medicare rebate (of \$415 currently) is barely adequate but without it, many women would be as badly off as under the bad old days of backyard abortions.

Julia Gillard recognizes this.

As a founder of Emily's List, as a feminist and as woman, she understands that the ability to control our fertility is one of the fundamental freedoms women need if they are to control their lives.

We should all be grateful to Gillard that as a result of her intervention on abortion last week, Tony Abbott was flushed out and ruled out doing a deal on abortion with Senator Madigan or any other Senator holding the balance of power.<sup>20</sup>

She has been given no political credit for this. Most of the media commentators who slammed her political judgment for raising the subject of abortion have not even bothered to acknowledge this victory. But we at Emily's List should be under no illusion that this was a crucial victory.

Julia Gillard has ensured that should Tony Abbott be elected, he will not be able to trade away our abortion rights in order to get passage of his major bills through the Senate.

As she said in her Inaugural Oration last year: "We should never allow the gains of the gender revolution to be reversed, whether in health, education, employment, law reform or politics".

Julia Gillard has made sure that our abortion rights will not be reversed. She has paid a very high political price for doing so. I hope that we will make sure she knows how much we appreciate what she has done for us. And how grateful we are.

But we cannot escape the bigger question: Why are we like this?

Why is our politics so unable to accept the fact of a female Prime Minister, and one who stands up for her sex? Why is standing up for women's rights either ignored or denounced as bad politics?

Let me try to answer this by sharing a few reflections from my *Meanjin* essay:

“Voters have no idea what to expect from women leaders. We don't know what they should look like or how they should behave. There are no benchmarks, no accepted conventions and precious few precedents. Every prime minister learns on the job; however assiduously she or he may have observed others doing it, there is absolutely no preparation for what it is like to actually be the one who is in charge.

“In Gillard's case, where she had acted as prime minister for around one-third of the time Kevin Rudd was in the position, she undoubtedly had greater insights than some of her predecessors but she was almost certainly unprepared for the avalanche of hostility and abuse that soon followed her into the job. Given that she had enjoyed such popularity as deputy prime minister, she must have been taken aback at this sudden reversal of opinion.

“She was the same person, acting in pretty much the same way, wearing the same clothes she'd always worn yet opinion had shifted sharply. Why? Was it simply because of the way she came to power, deposing a first-term prime minister (something that was rare then but since has occurred twice at state level, both time on the conservative side of politics)? Or was it something else? It must have been sobering, and perhaps prompted her to ask the question: is it being a woman in the top job that makes this kind of difference?

“Should a woman be just the same as a male leader, only in brighter coloured clothes? Or do we expect – and want – them to be different? Do we project

onto women in power our stereotyped notions of what women are, or should be, and then judge them accordingly?

“We don’t know – yet – where the boundaries of sexual politics lie. You could argue that the job of prime minister has no gender attached to it, that the decisions and choices required of a nation’s leader are gender-neutral, and I would agree with this proposition. The problem is that most of the population does not see it this way.

“Many voters view a female political leader through the prism of sexual stereotypes. Perhaps this is not surprising given the lack of history and the absence of other criteria but it does affect the female leader adversely. The qualities that are inarguably essential to doing the job – a toughness that at times might border on brutality – are at odds with the traditional female stereotype.

“If we think a woman showing aggression is at odds with the way women ought to behave, it will be virtually impossible for us to approve of a woman leader when she is assertive (as she will most certainly need to be), since too often the double standard depicts assertiveness in women as “aggression”. At the same time, if a woman cries – which is in conformity with the stereotype that women are more emotional – she is judged to be insincere. When Julia Gillard teared up during a condolence motion in parliament in early 2011 for flood victims in Queensland, she was accused of fakery.<sup>21</sup> No such accusations were made when prime minister Bob Hawke cried when talking about the Chinese students killed in Tiananmen Square.

“Often, for a woman leader, there is simply no winning, Just for doing the job the way it should be done, a woman political leader will be harshly judged and, often, condemned. It is no coincidence that female leaders of all political persuasions are routinely referred to as “bitches”. This is the only language we have, it seems, to express our disapproval of a woman who is not conforming to our expectations of traditional femininity. It means there is an intrinsic and, for the moment, ineradicable contradiction in the eyes of many voters (including the parliamentary colleagues of the woman leader) between how women are supposed to behave and how leaders need to.

This has several consequences.

A woman leader may find it difficult to have her authority recognized and respected, and this will impinge on her ability to lead and hence to govern. This again goes to the absence of examples of other women having done it and therefore having helped shape voter receptivity to the sight of a woman exercising authority.

“Let’s face it, we are just not used to it.

“In the past the only female authority figures most of us have been exposed to have been mothers or they have been teachers. These are the archetypes of female leadership in this country and, it goes without saying, they don’t quite embody the qualities required by a political leader.

A mother might at times be called on to be a disciplinarian, although for my generation at least, that task more often was delegated to her husband (“Just wait till your father gets home!”), but the essential qualities that defined her were those associated with nurturing. She fed and bathed and clothed us, she played with us when we were little, comforted us when we fell over in the playground or when other kids were mean to us. She was a carer and a peacemaker, the essential hub of most homes.

“Most of us have complicated feelings about mothers and motherhood, and there is still a strong conservative strain in this country that believes that mothers should remain within the domestic sphere, at least while their children are young. This view is at odds with the notion of women being active and assertive in the public domain.

“It’s why female parliamentarians with young children are constantly asked how they manage whereas male parliamentarians with young children never are. You’d think that a woman who does not have children would be seen as uniquely qualified to be our leader, given she does not have to “manage” offspring, but perversely Australians tend to be censorious towards women without children.

“Again, we project a stereotype but it is one that Julia Gillard cannot conform to. She can never be the “mother of the nation”. Even if she wanted to, which is unlikely.

“Perhaps she could be our teacher, that other traditionally female source of authority?

“In some ways this is ideal because Gillard has made education her signature issue and she can literally “teach” the nation how the Gonski reforms will lift standards and assist disadvantaged students.

“Given that there must be few of us who have not spent at least part of our school years being taught by women, we should have no difficulty accepting her exercising authority in such a role.

“The trouble is, important as teachers are, their qualities are not those needed to run a country. Whereas a teacher needs to be patient and solicitous, often a specialist, able to pace herself according to the needs of individuals, a political leader is by definition a generalist, across all portfolios, decisive and at times ruthless, managing her party, her nation and its international relations.

When it comes to models for female authority, Julia Gillard might have male mentors and there are women and men she says she admires but there are very few women she can point to in a comparable political system who have exercised the kind of political authority she has and who can guide her.”<sup>22</sup>

This is the hard lesson for Gillard, for Emily’s List and for all of us who want women to be an integral part of running our country.

I will finish up by quoting an article that was published this morning in *The Guardian*.

Written by Van Badham, it sums up – succinctly and effectively – what the vilification of Australia’s first female Prime Minister is really all about:

“What is most enraging about the developing discourse around the Gillard’s treatment is the accusation that its discussion is some kind of distraction or

sideshow to an unspecified main political event we should be paying more attention towards.

"I say it's the biggest goddamn show in town.

"I pose this question to the female 52% of the population, and those who care about them: if Abbott and his comrades are prepared to reduce the prime minister of Australia's female body – with all the status of her office, her privileges and protections – to just a "bitch" with a "big red box", how do you really, truly think they are going to treat the rest of us."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Laurie Kretchmar, "IBM Heir: Cash for Democratic Women" *CNN Money* 6 April 1992

[http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune\\_archive/1992/04/06/76246/](http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/1992/04/06/76246/) Accessed 13 June 2013

<sup>2</sup> <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/299385-emilys-list-founder-joins-effort-to-draft-hillary-for-2016-> Accessed 18 June 2013

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/inaugural-emilys-list-oration-canberra> Accessed 18 June 2013

<http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/transcript-remarks-launch-women-gillard>

<sup>4</sup> Dr Joy McCann and Jane t Wilson *Representation of women in Australian parliaments* Parliamentary Library Background Note 7 March 2012 p. 40

<sup>5</sup> Anne Summers *The Misogyny Factor* NewSouth 2013 p. 73

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, "Gender Gap in 2012 Vote is largest in Gallup's History" Gallup.com 9 November 2012

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/158588/gender-gap-2012-vote-largest-gallup-history.aspx> Accessed 18 June, 2013

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.emilyslist.org.au/programs/gender-gap-research>

<sup>8</sup> Grattan Institute. *Game-changers. Economic Reform Priorities for Australia 2012* [http://grattan.edu.au/static/files/assets/ab2f7201/Game\\_Changers\\_Web.pdf](http://grattan.edu.au/static/files/assets/ab2f7201/Game_Changers_Web.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> NewSouth, 2013

<sup>10</sup> I have included in my calculations only countries that are members of the UN. Thus the following places that currently have women leaders are not counted: The Aland Islands (Finnish external territories); the Cayman Islands; Kosovo; Sint Maarten and Republic Srpska.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Summers "The Sexual Politics of Power" *Meanjin Papers* June 2013

<sup>12</sup> Anne Summers *Her Rights at Work. The political persecution of Australia's first female prime minister* The 2012 Human Rights and Social Justice Lecture, University of Newcastle, 31 August 2012

<http://annesummers.com.au/speeches/her-rights-at-work-r-rated/>

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<sup>13</sup> For instance, Eva Cox said the speech was “a rather desperate attempt to exploit the gender tensions that exist in our society”. See Anne Summers, “It’s Gillard’s right to fight back” *Sydney Morning Herald* June 15, 2013  
<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/its-gillards-right-to-fight-back-20130614-2o96z.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaqpoeVgr8U>

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Probyn “Resurrection of Saint Kevin” *The West Australian* 23 February 2012  
<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/news/13045668/resurrection-of-saint-kevin/>

<sup>16</sup> Jessica Wright, Judith Ireland, “Gillard won’t lie down and die,” says Abbott” *Sydney Morning Herald* 29 May, 2012  
<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/gillard-wont-lie-down-and-die-says-abbott-20120529-1zfxj.html>

<sup>17</sup> Peter van Onselen, “Backbench push for survival fuels leadership noise” *Weekend Australian* 21-22 July 2012 p. 13

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/sundayextra/john-madigan/4549890>

<sup>19</sup> <http://annesummers.com.au/2013/06/abortion-and-federal-policy-here-are-the-facts/>

<sup>20</sup> Stephanie Peatling, Grace Dobell, “Abbott promises no deals with senators on abortion” *The Age* 14 June 2013  
<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/abbott-promises-no-deals-with-senators-on-abortion-20130613-2o73q.html>

<sup>21</sup> Julia Gillard sheds crocodile tears for flood victims  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqgcmG0BAjI>

<sup>22</sup> Summers, *Meanjin Papers*

<sup>23</sup> Van Badham, “If Julia Gillard isn’t safe from the Liberals’ sexism, who will be?” *The Guardian* 19 June, 2013  
[http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jun/19/sexism-australia-julia-gillard-witch?CMP=ema\\_632](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jun/19/sexism-australia-julia-gillard-witch?CMP=ema_632)