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‘We Seem To Shake Hands across the Seas’: Dora Meeson Coates and the Lost World of Australasian Suffrage Activism

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On 17 June 1911, Dora Meeson Coates (1869–1955) stood on London’s Victoria Embankment. She was waiting at the head of the ‘imperial contingent’ in the 40,000-strong Women’s Coronation Procession, the largest march in the British women’s suffrage campaign. Over the five hours it took demonstrators to reach the Royal Albert Hall, Meeson marched alongside Margaret Fisher, the wife of Australia’s prime minister, and Lady Anna Stout, an acclaimed suffragist and the wife of a former New Zealand premier. She kept such company by virtue of the banner she had painted and, helped by three attendants, bore through balmy Westminster.[i] Meeson did not know it, but the occasion was the acme of her activist career, though not that of her most famous creation: a four-square-metre hessian canvas depicting Minerva, draped in the young Commonwealth of Australia’s heraldry, imploring imperious Britannia to ‘Trust The Women Mother As I Have Done’. When it was discovered, seventy years later, at the Fawcett Library – the central repository for archives from the British suffrage movement – Labor senator Susan Ryan sponsored its ‘return’ to Australia. Such an artefact, she argued, would fill an ‘obvious gap’ in the ‘record [of] women’s part in the early political process of this country’. In 1988, the National Women’s Consultative Council (NWCC) purchased the banner for £10,000, intending it as a ‘gift to the women of Australia’ on the bicentenary.[ii] Almost unique among the official efforts to mine history in search of a national character as the bicentenary of the First Fleet’s arrival at Botany Bay loomed, the deal was uncontroversial and effective.[iii]

After its unveiling by Prime Minister Bob Hawke on International Women’s Day, Meeson’s banner, patched together by a London upholsterer, was sequestered for conservation.

Two years later, the NWCC loaned it to the new Parliament House in Canberra, where it was displayed opposite the jewel of its collection – Tom Roberts's depiction of the inaugural federal parliament – in the Main Committee Room foyer.[iv] The transfer was formalized on another moment of national reflection, the centenary of the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902, which extended the federal vote to white women and disenfranchised most Indigenous people. Despite the banner's remove from the Australian suffrage movements – Meeson neither campaigned for the vote in her native Victoria nor maintained working ties with antipodean suffragists from Britain – Senator Ryan soon realized her goal.[v] The reason for its elevation above colonial artefacts is clear. The Australasian campaigns, which transpired between the 1880s and 1908, were defined by parlour meetings, petitioning, pamphleteering, and lobbying more or less sympathetic politicians. Contrasting these decades of quiet toil, Meeson's work appeals to the popular fascination with the spectacular street politics that developed out of necessity in Britain's Edwardian suffragette movement. For those accustomed to associating suffragism with familiar objects – battle-worn banners, hunger-strike medals, arresting posters, badges and ribbons in organizational colours, or even, as in New Zealand, an iconic petition roll – the banner fills a material and emotional void.[vi]

Scholars, too, have been seduced by the banner's dramatic potential. No sooner had Meeson's canvas been installed at Parliament House than historians began weaving its century-old threads into the story of a nation seeking its place in the world.[vii] In 1992, the banner lent its name to a nationally touring exhibition of women in parliamentary life, and adorned the cover of Audrey Oldfield's *Woman Suffrage in Australia*, the first comprehensive history of the continent's suffrage campaigns. Ten years later, the Office of the Status of Women published a biography of Meeson to coincide with the banner's permanent transfer to the parliamentary collection, while the Royal Australian Mint issued a commemorative dollar coin adorned with her design.[viii] Catalysed by the state's acquisition of her most singular work, Dora

Meeson has been reimagined as a progressive icon of the pre-war Commonwealth. Despite her expatriation, in this telling she was an vital contributor to the creation of Australia's democratic values and, crucially, an agent of their dissemination in Britain, upsetting the lingering belief in a unidirectional flow of moral and political influences from metropole to periphery.[ix] Rather than a protest banner, historian Clare Wright argues Meeson authored a 'founding document': an artefact that reveals as much about the 'aspirations and identity of the young nation as the still-wet constitution'.[x]

Yet, on closer inspection, Meeson seems ill-suited to bearing the weight of a nation.[xi] A few years after Dora's birth in 1869, the Meeson family moved first from Melbourne to London, then to New Zealand in 1881, settling in Canterbury. Over the next decade, Meeson discovered her life's passions: painting and feminism. While she attended the Christchurch School of Art, the city became the epicentre of the women's suffrage campaign. Meeson left for London and the Slade School of Art in 1890, but illness soon forced her return to Christchurch. There, alongside her sister Amy, she added her name to the 23,968 others on the 1893 suffrage petition.[xii] It is unclear if Meeson voted in that December's general election, the colony's first under the universal franchise. Nevertheless, her experiences, which she would recount at rallies in Britain, prepared her to join the metropolitan suffrage movement. By 1895 she was again on the move. After two years at Melbourne's National Gallery School of Art, Dora undertook the pilgrimage expected of a serious colonial artist: finishing in the Paris ateliers, then on to London to establish a career. There she married the portraitist George Coates, a member of her Melbourne art school cohort, and established the studio from which she would posthumously seal her place in Australian history.[xiii]

Cast against the backdrop of these formative Tasman years, Dora Meeson can be seen as an emblematic character whose life dovetailed with the rise and fall of the Australasian suffrage world. Despite Meeson's Canterbury years, art historians Rex Butler and A. D. S.

Donaldson's assertion that she was, 'in fact', a New Zealander might better be read as a gesture at the tradition of Tasman appropriation than a serious attempt to drag her back across the ditch.[xiv] Nevertheless, their claim is not unmerited. While attending the Slade, for example, Meeson deemed New Zealand 'home'. The Canterbury Society of Arts displayed her work for at least a decade after she left Christchurch and, in 1902, she exhibited for New Zealand at a London showcase of 'British Colonial Art'. Even those, like Dunedin painter Frances Hodgkins, who branded Meeson an artistic 'fraud' accepted her right to represent the colony.[xv] In New Zealand, newspapers repurposed snippets from the British press to keep readers abreast of the successes achieved by Meeson, whom they habitually described as 'erstwhile of Christchurch'.[xvi]

Despite contemporaries' interest in her career, Meeson is absent from New Zealand historiography. She has fallen foul of the mid-twentieth-century impulse to furnish the settler nation with a canon distinct from that of its 'geographical neighbours' and later feminist scholarship 'targeted at the nation-state in order to force it to change'.[xvii] Such sentiments can be seen in the rare instances when she was admitted to the fold. Reviewing a 1993 exhibition of Canterbury artists held to celebrate the centenary of New Zealand women's enfranchisement, the critic Judith Collard deemed Meeson's inclusion an example of the curators' 'comic comprehensiveness', joking that merely visiting Christchurch was enough to make an artist eligible for display.[xviii] One hundred years earlier, the city's press fêted Meeson's budding Australian career, with the *Star* reminding readers that 'although the young lady has been studying for some little time in Melbourne … her training was acquired here; and it was here that the bent of her talent won hearty recognition'.[xix]

Contrasting her erasure in New Zealand, the installation of Meeson's banner at Parliament House transformed her reputation in Australia. In the decades since, historians have seized upon Meeson, their work united by a consensus on her fundamental Australian-ness.[xx]

Yet, centring the Commonwealth of Australia in Meeson's story ignores the historian Greg Dening's exhortation 'to return to the past its own present', overlooking the rudiments of her biography: the peripatetic youth, decade in New Zealand, and nearly sixty years in London.[xxi] Budding national identities, as scholars of the *fin de siècle* have shown, were rehearsed and refigured by antipodean settlers, especially those living in Britain. Individuals whose lives were not 'organised around the nation-state', but enmeshed in overlapping intercolonial and imperial networks, negotiated slippages between multiple identities and affiliations.[xxii] 'New Zealandness, Australasianism – and Britishness', as James Belich contends, had yet to become 'mutually exclusive'.[xxiii]

Meeson, then, stands in for a cohort who – during the late-nineteenth-century moment when the 'perennial interchange' of capital, goods, migrants and ideas between Britain's antipodean colonies reached its zenith – might be read as Australasian.[xxiv] Given the suffragists' complicity in what Rebecca Mead describes as settler progressives' project to 'defend their brave new worlds against resentful indigenes', the region is best understood as they did, in its narrowest sense, encompassing the seven colonies of settlement: New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.[xxv] Theirs was, as Tony Ballantyne illustrates in this volume's Introduction, a white Australasia. If, as historians of both countries have suggested, a century of 'reciprocal amnesia' has debased the term, it remains more apt than the geographically rigid 'Tasman world'.[xxvi] During the *fin-de-siècle* years when women fought for the vote, 'Australasia' – referring to a coherent 'site of social experiment' – circulated among the bureaucrats, labourers, naturalists, reformers and writers that lived, worked and thought across colonial borders.[xxvii] Despite the ascendance of transnational historiography, an intellectual pursuit to which historians of Australia and the international suffrage movement have been especially attentive, the pressures that have squeezed Meeson's life into a national frame have seen these intercolonial ties overlooked by

antipodean scholars.[xxviii] In response, this chapter explores the circulations and exchanges which constituted the Australasian suffrage world between the emergence of organized campaigns for the vote in the late 1880s and their conclusion, with Victorian women's enfranchisement in 1908. Then, following in Meeson's footsteps, it charts Australasia's afterlife among suffragists in the diaspora in Edwardian London.

Southern circulations: building an intercolonial suffrage movement in the Antipodes

In the case of the campaigns for women's enfranchisement, historians' inattention to Australasian connections is surprising, because it ignores the suffragists' articulation of their own struggles. In 1892, Mary Lee, secretary of the South Australian Women's Suffrage League, reflected on an erroneous report that New Zealand had enfranchised adult women. 'We, S.A., N.S.W. [New South Wales], & the other colonies have been racing each other in the noble ambition to be the first to reach the desired goal, women's suffrage. New Zealand has won … her victory is ours.'[xxix] When, the following year, New Zealand reached the milestone, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* observed that 'for the first time in the history of Australasia, in fact of the British dominions, women are to vote'. Months later, the Womanhood Suffrage League (WSL) of New South Wales borrowed the *Telegraph*'s phrasing in its congratulations to New Zealanders.[xxx] The statements were not throwaway lines. Over the next decade League members framed their campaign in an Australasian context, demanding 'to be as free to vote as the women of New Zealand, South Australia, and West Australia'. When, in 1902, New South Wales women won the state vote, the veteran social reformer Catherine Helen Spence rejoiced that 'half the women in Australia are enfranchised and more than half in Australasia'.[xxxi]

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of Australasia, established in Melbourne in 1891, was an expression of, and vehicle for, regional sentiment among politically

active women. By then, the American organization, which arrived in Sydney in 1882, and flourished after its first 'round-the-world missionary' landed in Auckland three years later, had become crucial to the fight for the vote across Australasia. The union's first intercolonial meeting occurred within weeks of the National Australasian Convention, which had drafted a Commonwealth constitution for ratification by all seven colonial parliaments. Likewise, at the WCTU summit delegates agreed to pool their 'forces and funds' to promote 'National Righteousness', an expansive agenda that included Sabbatarianism and the prohibition of alcohol, opium and gambling.[xxxii] Though the constitution strategically omitted political rights, as one observer reported, 'a stranger might almost have suspected that the Australasian WCTU was a meeting for the advancement of woman suffrage'.[xxxiii] Like the first Australasian federal convention, the New Zealand delegation stood alone in its refusal to affiliate. As the colonial leadership explained it, the difficulty of trans-Tasman travel and their existing ties to the World's WCTU outweighed any benefits of federation. The decision was, nevertheless, contentious. Perhaps at the insistence of its travelling party who, undeterred by the six-week round trip, returned eager to formalize the bonds they had formed in Melbourne, the union's decision came with a caveat; members would, 'at some future time', revisit the decision and affiliate with the Australasian union.[xxxiv]

Despite New Zealand's self-exclusion from the WCTU's intercolonial hierarchy, the union's informal structures encouraged women to join the traffic that bound Britain's Australasian settlements. In 1888, Auckland branch stalwart Hannah Main attended a WCTU meeting during a visit to Sydney. She returned five times in fifteen years, enjoying the recognition afforded to her as a 'representative of the emancipated sisters of her colony'. Migrants who settled into new branches retained ties with former colleagues, posting news and literature and reporting in person if they returned. In the 1890s, Main's Auckland branch hosted twenty-three overseas speakers, mostly from the Australian colonies, and welcomed recruits

from Queensland and New South Wales. Visitors from Sydney were so familiar that during busy meetings, 'no time could be allowed' for them to speak.[xxxv] The Auckland union doubled as a training ground for grassroots leaders, like Helen Dewar – who served as a Queensland branch president, instructing members across the colony on suffrage campaigning – and Agnes Berry, who joined the Adelaide union as secretary during its final push for the vote in 1893–4.[xxxvi] The branch was not exceptional: over the next decade women experienced in the New Zealand campaign cropped up in branches and at conventions across Australia.[xxxvii]

Such exchanges encouraged the WCTU of Australasia to spend the next decade working to make the geographic descriptor in its title a political reality. From their perspective, the New Zealanders' refusal to affiliate was a setback, but not an irrevocable assertion of a separate identity. After all, despite agreeing to make 'united efforts' in pursuit of common goals, the union's Australian members complained about being 'forced together' and pursued interests that contravened intercolonial objectives.[xxxviii] At each triennial convention between 1894 and 1903, New Zealand was invited to federate, while travelling envoys like Victorian WCTU president Mary Love addressed local branches, hopeful that members would recognize the 'advantages [of] federating with Australia'.[xxxix] They were driven by a belief in Australasia as a coherent entity and, if they could not win the vote first, the union's leaders were determined to capitalize on their neighbours' experience. Kate Sheppard, New Zealand's franchise superintendent, who had long been admired in Australian reform circles, received several requests to lead the equivalent Australasian department in the 1890s. Australasian secretary Flora Harris spoke for many in 1897 when she described the New Zealand suffrage campaign as 'an object lesson' and a reason to hold out hope that 'we may yet induce them to unite with us'.[xl]

Belying Harris's optimism, and despite its promise of 1892, the New Zealand WCTU never revisited the question of intercolonial federation. Its members' reticence must be read

against the WCTU of Australasia's surging enthusiasm for federation. The architect of the union's consolidation as a national body was its second president, the South Australian Elizabeth Webb Nicholls. After the Melbourne convention of 1891 she described the union as a weapon for slaying 'the strongest foe of intercolonial life … the provincial spirit which so narrows and hinders all real progress'.[xli] Three years later, upon accepting the Australasian presidency, her ambition had narrowed to the cultivation 'of a national spirit in these Australian colonies'.[xlii] To realize her vision of a teetotal Commonwealth 'federated in the interests of women as well as men', she launched a newspaper, *Our Federation* (1897–1903). Yet, even as she encouraged her readers to consider themselves 'nation builders', it was at Nicholls's behest that the WCTU of Australasia repeatedly invited the New Zealanders to join.[xliii] She saw little contradiction in these positions. More than most of her colleagues, she studied developments to the east. After South Australian women won the vote in 1894, she professed that the New Zealanders' victory 'led the way for our own'.[xliv] Despite the nationalist overtones of *Our Federation*'s title and masthead – a closely cropped map of the Australian mainland unmarred by colonial borders – Nicholls insisted that the paper spoke from 'an Australasian standpoint'. The following year she averred her belief in the progressive possibilities of 'clasp[ing] hands across the [Tasman] sea as enfranchised women'.[xlv] Nevertheless, the fact that the New Zealand union never formally considered such overtures suggests that they were less sanguine about the shift from the intercolonial terminology of 'Australasia' to the nationalist rhetoric Nicholls and her colleagues adopted as the century closed.

Still, the conviction that Australasia, however imagined, constituted an arena in which white women could pursue common goals extended beyond the WCTU. Dora Montefiore, the founder of the New South Wales WSL, pinpointed the organization's origins in her 'intimate' conversations with Sir George Grey, the former governor of South Australia, Cape Colony, and New Zealand, where he had also served as premier between 1877 and 1879. Grey, an early

supporter of women's enfranchisement, advised Montefiore to follow New Zealand's example by simultaneously cultivating parliamentary allies to progress suffrage legislation and forming an extra-parliamentary pressure group to mobilize public sentiment.[xlvi] Over the next decade, the League hosted speakers with experience in the New Zealand campaign and employed one, Miss Boyd, as an organizer.[xlvii] Following Montefiore's example, the League's secretary, Rose Scott, looked across the Tasman for a mentor. Between 1891 and 1894 she wrote regularly to another former premier, the legislative leader of the suffrage campaign Sir John Hall. Indeed, so profound was Hall's influence that when he retired from parliament in 1893, Scott assured him that 'always and ever the women of Australia and the world … will hold up your name in grateful remembrance as it is due to you that they have gained the first step in Political Liberty & Equality'.[xlviii]

Hall's published speeches constituted a fraction of the print-culture circulations that animated the Australasian suffrage world. The WCTU's division of its agenda into uniform departments covering everything from 'scientific temperance instruction' to franchise work encouraged intercolonial dialogue and allowed members to request reform literature from like-minded women across the globe. A precursor to the New Zealand campaign came in 1885, when Kate Sheppard ordered a parcel of American suffrage leaflets to Christchurch. Suitably inspired, in 1888 she began writing her own. Her tracts *Sixteen Reasons for Supporting Woman's Suffrage* (1891) and *Is it Right?* (1892) quickly drew an Australian readership.[xlix] In return, she devoured the Australasian WCTU's *Manual of the Franchise Department*, distilling its contents into thirteen 'Hints for District Franchise Superintendents' which dictated the final years of the New Zealand campaign.[l] Such success was a function of the tracts' viral qualities: they were pithy, geographically non-specific, and encouraged intertextual borrowing. It also testified to the WCTU's efficiency as a circulatory network.[li] Both texts appeared in the Christchurch temperance newspaper *Prohibitionist*, which Sheppard swapped with

sympathetic Australian editors, while the pamphlet versions her WCTU branch sent across Australia were quickly repurposed by their recipients.[lii]

The forces that connected this Australasian world and denoted its geographic limits can be seen most clearly in the women's advocacy newspapers that proliferated in the 1890s. Between 1888 and 1910, dozens of titles concerning women's political rights launched in the region.[liii] If politically organized women envisioned Australasia as an arena for progressive reform, editors understood that it enlarged their audience, an essential consideration for those eager to take on an enterprise as precarious as a nineteenth-century newspaper. Thus, resourceful publishers fashioned pan-colonial distribution chains. Publications like *Woman's Voice* (Sydney) and *Australian Woman's Sphere* (Melbourne) advertised two subscription prices: one for local readers and another for those across Australasia. The *Voice* went further, branding itself as an 'Australasian' newspaper, working in concert with 'our sisters (the *Dawn* in Sydney, and *Daybreak* in New Zealand)'.[liv] To attract intercolonial readers, editors used local agents. Capitalizing on the lack of an equivalent New Zealand publication, Sydney's *Woman's Suffrage Journal* worked with Kate Sheppard to recruit subscribers, attracting forty in 1892 alone.[lv] For publications that concealed subscription figures, correspondence columns offer clues about the distribution of their readers. Between 1892 and 1903, the region's bestselling women's political newspaper, *Dawn*, published more letters from New Zealand than anywhere but its home colony, New South Wales, and neighbouring Queensland.[lvi] Following a warm notice in *Woman's Voice*, Wellington's *Daybreak* began receiving letters from Australian readers and employed a Hobart correspondent.[lvii] For the well-read, like New South Wales WCTU secretary Alice Masterman, this dynamic print market encouraged solidarity of sentiment and a sense of collective belonging. In 1896, she likened the 'interchange' of newspapers 'throughout Australasia' to 'shak[ing]' hands across the seas'.[lviii]

For all Masterman's enthusiasm, the intercolonial newspaper trade was far from

unbounded. Editors prioritised local readers, their efforts underwritten by local advertisers. In 1901–2, only 10 per cent of the *Sphere*'s Australasian readers lived outside Victoria. Similarly, *Dawn*'s lively community of New Zealand correspondents must be put in context. Of the almost 2,500 letters the paper published over its lifetime, 92 per cent came from New South Wales, a figure that matches the distribution of readers from the paper's extant subscription figures.[lix] A close analysis of these titles in the years 1894–5 and 1901–2 suggests the 'village and globe' model that predominated in the mainstream press also prevailed in women's advocacy publications. In most titles, the WCTU's explicitly national *Our Federation* aside, 40–70 per cent of the news published came from their home colony, with the remainder coming from Britain, the United States and settlements bordering the Tasman Sea.[lx] For readers, a flood of information linked New Zealand, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. Beyond Australia's south-east, it slowed to a trickle. This was not only, or even primarily, a product of proximity. After all, distance did not forestall coverage of significant events from afar, like the death of the American suffragist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in 1902. Nor did it hinder the compilation of columns – entitled 'Mild and Bitter' in *Daybreak* and 'The World Moves' in *Australian Woman's Sphere* – filled with deracinated trivia pertaining to the status of women around the world.[lxi] Instead, it was a function of the exchange system through which editors gathered news. Without women's newspapers from which to clip news from Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia, developments in those colonies went unnoticed.

As Australia drew closer to federation, the ties which allowed white women to imagine themselves working in a shared enterprise frayed. Enfranchisement ended the solidarity between women with otherwise diffuse interests, but as Helen Bones has noted of Australasia as a whole, the connections between suffragists did not immediately 'end at any of the obvious points of separation'.[lxii] In newly federated Australia, popular apathy stymied efforts to commemorate the nation's birth, leaving a void that would only be filled with a myth formed

around the invasion of Gallipoli in 1915.[lxiii] For many feminists, such sentiments took decades to awaken. Some, like Sydney's Rose Scott, threw themselves into international organizing to ward off the threat of 'national singularity'. Yet, even those amenable to centralization necessarily invested in state politics, where they could most easily advocate for reforms to marriage and divorce law, wage equality, the age of consent and the sale of intoxicants.[lxiv] The conservative Australian Women's National League's (1904–45) efforts to rouse women's patriotism came in response to their perceived 'civic indolence', a sentiment encapsulated by the fact that the states resisted the formation of a unified National Council of Women of Australia until 1931.[lxv] Likewise, and despite its enthusiasm for federation, the WCTU proved reluctant to replace the regional 'Australasia' with the national 'Australia' in its title. The union only formally delimited its ambitions in 1927, a decision that coincided with its push for a federal land grant to build a headquarters in Canberra.[lxvi] Despite such ambivalence, the wholesale enfranchisement of white women in the region within five years of federation (with the exception of Victoria in 1908) meant that they needed another basis for cooperation. Their task was complicated by the fragmentation of the suffrage coalitions along class lines, the disappearance of the once vibrant Australasian women's advocacy press after 1901 and, perhaps, a degree of self-satisfaction at the ease with which their world-leading achievements had been won.[lxvii] This mirrored the once vibrant Tasman labour movement, whose dreams of Australasian fraternalism began in the 1880s and ended with New Zealand's 'Great Strike' of 1913. Likewise, while politically organized women remained committed to internationalism, they appeared 'resigned to national vistas' in the Antipodes.[lxviii]

Australasia's afterlives

Yet, if Australasia had fallen from favour among ex-suffragists, the idea still held currency for metropolitan observers of the colonies' experiments in democracy. The seasoned antipodean

activists who joined the suffrage diaspora often worked together to 'teach feminists in the Imperial "heartland"'.[lxix] As one of the few antipodean women to attend the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, Catherine Spence tasked herself to speak not only for South Australia, 'but [all of] Australasia, including New Zealand'.[lxx] A decade later, in 1902, Vida Goldstein represented Australia and New Zealand at the International Woman Suffrage Conference in Washington DC. Her offer to repeat the arrangement in 1904 by organizing a joint delegation to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance's (IWSA) inauguration in Berlin was ignored, foreclosing future Australasian collaboration. The decision left New Zealand women, who for reasons of distance and disorganization lacked a national political association from which to organize internationally, outside of the Alliance until 1926.[lxxi] Australia's presence at the IWSA's biennial meetings failed to assuage the 'unspeakable disappointment' its leadership expressed at the New Zealanders' absence. After all, as the Alliance's president Carrie Chapman Catt complained, what use was an organization pledged to secure 'the enfranchisement of the women of all nations, and to unite the friends of women suffrage throughout the world' if those few who enjoyed the vote would not attend?[lxxii]

New Zealand feminists' decision to avoid Alliance meetings rather than endure representation by an Australian proxy was not the only sign that women had begun to insist on national distinctions. Long before the iconic expatriate newspaper *British-Australasian* (1884–1924) was renamed the *British Australian and New Zealander*, semantically cleaving London's '"Australasian" community', the political tracts ex-suffragists wrote for international audiences in the 1900s considered the former colonies in isolation.[lxxiii] Such texts, which elided the southern circulations on which their success rested, offered blueprints for the national suffrage histories written in the twentieth century.[lxxiv] In particular, New Zealanders eager to leave a mark on the world felt their achievements had been usurped by their larger neighbour. World's WCTU president Anna Adams Gordon was not alone in confusing Australia and New Zealand,

so when she asked Kate Sheppard to lead the World's franchise department in 1906, the American was surprised by the vehemence of her refusal. 'It was a slip of my pen or in my dictation to ask you if there were not some one in Australia who could be your assistant … I meant New Zealand and it was a stupid blunder for me to make.'[lxxv] Sheppard's ire mirrored that of William Pember Reeves, the colony's agent-general in London, who pointedly eschewed 'that sprawling and unscientific word "Australasia"' when titling his germinal *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (1902). 'Our colony,' he bristled, 'is in no sense an offshoot or outlying province of Australia.'[lxxvi] Seven years later, the contrast between Meeson's resplendent banner and its neighbour, a 'plain, red banneret, inscribed in minute letters, "N.Z."', prompted the novelist Edith Searle Grossman to admit that 'my national vanity was not flattered'.[lxxvii] Alert to such sensitivities, the International Council of Women's (ICW) Scottish secretary Maria Ogilvie Gordon wrote apologetically to Sheppard when discussing the National Council of Women of New Zealand's dissolution: 'I hope you will not think it very impertinent of me if I, un-officially, ask you whether it might be possible for New Zealand to join the Australasian combination of Councils for the purpose of having one representative at the I.C.W?'[lxxviii] There is no record of Sheppard's reply, but as in 1904, there was little appetite for the idea. Instead, in rejecting the proposal New Zealand women remained absent from the ICW's gatherings until the dormant National Council of Women relaunched in 1918.[lxxix]

Even as colonial demarcations calcified into national distinctions, Australian and New Zealand women collaborated in the British campaign, fashioning a democratic alliance that preceded the Anzac legend. Forged, among other places, in Meeson's Chelsea studio, Goldstein and Anna Stout's friendship formed the axis for the Australian and New Zealand Women Voters' Committee in 1911. The lobby was, as Clare Wright states, a manifestation of 'Australasian kinship', albeit one whose mutability reveals as much about antipodean identities as its existence.[lxxx] The Committee flourished where earlier attempts to fabricate Australasian

coalitions failed because imperial ties bound the Dominions in ways that the fledging circuits of international feminism could not match. For Stout, Goldstein and the almost 200 others who joined them, marching behind Meeson's banner was not a sunny display of solidarity with women 'from all corners of the earth', but an assertion of their status as 'the real foundations of Empire'.[lxxxi] For this reason they waved 'red, white, and blue streamers … being the only women who are entitled to wear the "Empire" colors as a right, and not as a privilege'.[lxxxii] Established to fix 'a feminist eye' on that year's Imperial Conference, the Committee preoccupied itself with a uniform nationality bill, which would see all British women lose their citizenship upon marriage to foreigners and the loss of members' voting rights in Britain.[lxxxiii] Nevertheless, the Committee's focus soon superseded the interests of disenfranchised Australasian women. In 1914, it merged with the fledgling British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union, beginning its reinvention as an 'Empire franchise movement'.[lxxxiv] The transformation concluded with another rebranding, as the British Commonwealth League, in 1925. The organization's remit extended to securing 'equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women' across the empire focusing, paternalistically, on 'women of the less forward races'.[lxxxv] Whatever its merits, the expanded League curtailed the moment of Australasian kinship that had invigorated Goldstein and Stout. In its place stood an Anglo-Australian alliance. Despite its stated commitment to racial and regional equality, the League privileged the voices of white British and Australian women, who used it to shape an agenda for women across the empire for two generations.[lxxxvi]

Conclusion

Dora Meeson entered the Australasian suffrage world as a young Christchurch artist before withdrawing into her work, only throwing herself 'heart and soul into the suffrage movement' after her West London studio was mistaken for a Women's Freedom League venue in 1906.

Whether addressing suffrage meetings or, through the Artists' Suffrage League, crafting the iconography of the Edwardian campaign, Meeson drew on a gamut of Australasian experiences.[lxxxvii] An apprenticeship in the Canterbury suffrage movement meant exposure to British and American suffrage literature, ideas and campaign methods drawn from across the seven colonies, as well as the thrilling sensation that her youthful activism was being transmitted across the Tasman and around the world. Traces of this hybridity, which pepper Meeson's autobiographical writing and laid at the heart of the political movements she joined, have been obscured by her banner's installation at the heart of Australia's democracy. The honour of official recognition, ironically, is one she would have craved, though surely for one of the British impressionist paintings that were more representative of her oeuvre.[lxxxviii]

The dissipation of Meeson's plural identity, wavering between Britain, Victoria, New Zealand and the Commonwealth she would not visit until 1913, coincided with the diminution of the Australasian suffrage world. As a homesick student in Victorian London, Meeson longed for New Zealand. When she resumed her training in Melbourne, she feared her classmates thought her 'an English girl' who felt herself 'superior to colonial students'. After a decade in Britain, Meeson began to embrace Australia, a transformation accelerated by the exigencies of artistic survival. Sporadic visits to Melbourne – during which Meeson noted 'we were no longer reckoned Australians by the customs authorities – you ceased to be one after five years' absence' – were intended to court the Dominion's 'picture-loving public'. Like those who would historicize her career, Meeson found in Australia a receptive audience and institutions eager to bolster her and Coates's reputation. Neither was assured for an expatriate painter dedicated to Victorian styles in interwar Britain.[lxxxix] The pair's wartime experiences intensified their desire to shape the story of the Commonwealth. In 1915, Coates enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Unable to serve his country of birth, Coates saw an opportunity to make amends in the Australian National War Records Office's 1918 request that he become

an official war artist. Yet, the War Office denied his request for a transfer to the Australian Imperial Force. The pair's anguish at the decision striates Meeson's biography of her husband. Stung by the refusal, Coates pursued Australian War Museum Committee commissions after his discharge. The most famous of these, *General William Bridges and His Staff Watching the Manoeuvres of the 1st Australian Division in the Desert in Egypt, March 1915* (1922–6), is credited with Meeson, who worked as a 'ghost' on her debilitated husband's canvasses: sketching compositions, retouching backgrounds and adding fine details.[xc]

Yet, if absence and injustice – alongside the pursuit of lucrative commissions – strengthened the pair's identification with Australia, it seldom felt like home. In 1921, Coates refused to make a visit to Melbourne permanent by declining the directorship of his alma mater, the National Gallery School. As Meeson recalled, after half a lifetime in Europe he found himself 'out of sympathy with [Australian] standards' and, in any case, he 'could never be happy so far away from the world's greatest works of art'.[xci] If George was an ambivalent Australian, when Dora visited in 1934, there appeared to be little doubt about her allegiances. Alongside her growing presence in public and private collections, she had long served as the London president of the ANZAC Fellowship of Women, a patriotic association which, belying its title, hosted so few New Zealanders that their mere presence was remarked upon.[xcii] Interviewed by the *West Australian*, Meeson was still fashioning her identity. Overlooking her distant Canterbury adolescence, Meeson insisted that although she had spent 'so many years in the old world, I still love Australia as the land of my birth'. The Australasian moment had passed. Still, Meeson was far from the unambiguously national figure she became when her banner arrived in Canberra fifty-four years later. When pressed for her impressions of the continent she was soon to leave for the final time, Meeson's thoughts drifted: 'The more I come to this part of the world, the more I am struck with its un-Englishness … I have not become accustomed to the strong light—it is very unlike England.'[xciii]

[i] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907–14* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 122–31.

[ii] National Archives of Australia, Canberra (hereafter NAA), A363, 1987/2824, Dale Spender to Gillian Bonham, 30 June 1987; Bonham to Edith Hall, 8 July 1987; Bonham to Helen L'Orange, 7 November 1988; NAA, A463, 1987/3770, Janet Ramsay to Ms McIlraith, 1 February 1988; Clare Wright, *You Daughters of Freedom: The Australians who won the vote and inspired the world* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2018), 468–9.

[iii] For an exception to this, led by groups like Women Against Racism, who opposed the NWCC's participation in the celebration of the bicentenary of colonization, see Wright, *You Daughters*, 469–72. On the new nationalism, feminist efforts to upset the overwhelmingly masculine canon of Australian nation-building, and the uses of history in late-twentieth-century Australia, see Ann Curthoys, 'We've just started making national histories and you want us to stop already?', in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 79–81; Kate Laing, 'Reconceiving the nation', in *How Gender can Transform the Social Sciences: Innovation and Impact*, ed. Marian Sawer, Fiona Jenkins and Karen Downing (Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot, 2020), 78; Mark McKenna, 'The history anxiety', in *The Cambridge History of Australia, Volume 2: The Commonwealth of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 571–6.

[iv] *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902* (Cth), s. 4; see NAA, A463, 1988/3222/1, Trish Mercer to Kay Daniels, 17 January 1990; Eileen Duhs to Kaye Dal Bon, 1 May 1990; NAA, A463, 1988/3222/2, Carmela Mollica, 'The conservation treatment of the womens [*sic*] suffragette banner', c. June 1990; Justine van Mourik, Director Art Collection & Exhibitions, Department of Parliamentary Services to James Keating, 14 January 2020.

[v] Meeson Coates was not oblivious to the Victorian campaign. In 1908, for example, she sent a parcel of Artists' Suffrage League postcards to Vida Goldstein, but the exchange appears to have been a discrete one. State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (hereafter SLNSW), M2309/4, Vida Goldstein 1908 diary, 19 October 1908.

[vi] Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Vera Mackie, *Remembering Women's Activism* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 19–22, 44–5; Alison Bartlett and Margaret Henderson, 'Working with feminist things: The *wunderkammer* as feminist methodology', in *Things that Liberate: An Australian Feminist Wunderkammer*, ed. Alison Bartlett and Margaret Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 1–13. On the sartorial differences between New Zealand and British suffragists, see Harriette Richards, 'Fashioning protest: Suffrage as dressed performance in New Zealand and the United Kingdom', *About Performance* 16 (2018): 27–43.

[vii] This fascination, most recently on display in the National Gallery of Victoria's 2020 exhibition of suffragette ephemera, is not limited to Australia. June Purvis has noted British historians' preference for the spectacle of militancy above peaceful activism, while Te Papa Tongarewa's 2016 acquisition of expatriate suffragette Frances Parker's Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) hunger-strike medal typifies a similar impulse in New Zealand. 'Krystyna Campbell-Petty AM and family suffrage research collection', *National Gallery of Victoria*, https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/womens-suffrage-research-collection/, accessed 22 December 2020; Purvis, 'Gendering the historiography of the suffragette movement in Edwardian Britain: some reflections', *Women's History Review* 22:4 (2013): 577; 'Rare suffragette medal goes on display at Te Papa', *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, https://tepapa.govt.nz/about/press-and-media/press-releases/2016-news-and-media-releases/rare-suffragette-medal-goes-on, accessed 13 February 2020.

[viii] Frank Bongiorno, 'Trust the women', *Labour History* 65 (1993), 208–11; Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia: A Gift or a Struggle?* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Myra Scott, *How Australia Led the Way: Dora Meeson Coates and British Suffrage* (2003; North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2018); '$1 Coin to commemorate the centenary of women's suffrage', Royal Australian Mint, https://www.ramint.gov.au/publications/1-coin-commemorate-centenary-womens-suffrage, accessed 6 September 2021.

[ix] Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, 'Narratives of democracy, the emotions of politics and memories of militant suffragism: Britain, Ireland, the USA and Australia', in *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign: National and International Perspectives*, ed. June Hannam and June Purvis (London: Routledge, 2021), 187.

[x] Wright, *You Daughters*, 473.

[xi] The biographical details in this paragraph are from Dora Meeson Coates, *George Coates: His Art and His Life* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1937); Myra Scott, 'The art of George James Coates, 1869–1930 and Dora Meeson Coates, 1869–1955, Volume I' (MFA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1992).

[xii] At least 30,000 women signed thirteen suffrage petitions in 1893. Of these, only the largest roll has survived.

The Women's Suffrage Petition, Te Petihana Whakamana Pōti Wahine, 1893 (Wellington: Archives New Zealand, Te Rua Mahara o Te Kāwanatanga, National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa, and Bridget Williams Books, 2017); 'Women's Suffrage Petition 1893 – sheet no. 3', *NZHistory*, https://nzhistory.govt.nz/files/documents/suffrage-pdfs/003.pdf, accessed 24 May 2022.

[xiii] Kate R. Robertson, *Identity, Community and Australian Artists, 1890–1914: Paris, London and Further Afield* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019), 53–74; Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–9; *Women's Franchise*, 17 September 1908, 127.

[xiv] Rex Butler and A. D. S. Donaldson, 'Cities within cities: Australian and New Zealand art in the 20th century', *Journal of Art Historiography* 4 (2011): 1–2. On the practice of claiming Australasian figures for a particular national canon, see Helen Bones and Karen Fox, 'Re-membering Tasman lives', *New Zealand Journal of History* 56:1 (2022): 67–93.

[xv] Meeson Coates, *George Coates*, 61–2; Ken Hall, Felicity Milburn, Nathan Pohio, Lara Strongman and Pete Vangioni, 'The world tossed continuously in a riot of colour, form, sound', *Bulletin of the Christchurch Art Gallery* 192 (2018): 8–10; Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 27 June and 23 October 1902, in *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, ed. Linda Gill (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993), 129–30, 140–2; *The Times*, 14 June 1902, 9.

[xvi] *Dunstan Times*, 9 April 1901, 3. See also *Evening Star*, 27 November 1902, 7; *Auckland Star*, 20 August 1907, 2; *Otago Daily Times*, 1 July 1910, 3.

[xvii] Donald Denoon, 'Re-membering Australasia: A repressed memory', *Australian Historical Studies* 34:122 (2003): 290; Bones and Fox, 'Re-membering Tasman lives'; Marilyn Lake, 'Nationalist historiography, feminist scholarship, and the promise and problems of new transnational histories: The Australian case', *Journal of Women's History* 19:1 (2007): 183–4; Grace Millar, 'Women's lives, feminism and the *New Zealand Journal of History*', *New Zealand Journal of History* 52:2 (2018): 139–40.

[xviii] Judith Collard, 'Blighted camellias: Si(gh)ting women in New Zealand art', *Women's Studies Journal* 10:1 (1994): 104–6; *White Camellias: A Century of Women's Artmaking in Canterbury* (Christchurch: Robert McDougall Gallery, 1993), 39. Despite extensive criticism, the nationalist orthodoxies of the mid-century cast a long shadow in New Zealand. See, e.g., Helen Bones, *The Expatriate Myth: New Zealand Writers and the Colonial World* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2018); Brigid Magner, 'A glassy sort of rainbow', *Sydney Review of Books*, https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/essay/magner-glassy-sort-of-rainbow/, accessed 13 May 2021; Katie Pickles, 'Transnational history and cultural cringe: Some issues for consideration in New Zealand, Australia and Canada', *History Compass* 9:9 (2011): 657–73.

[xix] *Star*, 19 September 1895, 2; *Lyttelton Times*, 19 September 1895, 4; *Press*, 19 September 1895, 4; 23 September 1895, 4.

[xx] See, e.g., Robertson, *Identity, Community and Australian Artists*; Scott, *How Australia Led the Way*; Catherine Speck, *Painting Ghosts: Australian Women Artists in Wartime* (Melbourne: Craftsman House, 2004); Wright, *You Daughters*.

[xxi] Greg Dening, 'Empowering imaginations', *Contemporary Pacific* 9:2 (1997): 423.

[xxii] Bones, *The Expatriate Myth*, 72. See Felicity Barnes, *New Zealand's London: A Colony and its Metropolis* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012); Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre, eds, *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2007); Meg Tasker, 'William Pember Reeves, writing the fortunate isles', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 13:3 (2013): 1–3; Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 139–80.

[xxiii] James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Allen Lane, 2001), 51.

[xxiv] Rollo Arnold, 'The Australasian peoples and their world, 1888–1915', in *Tasman Relations: New Zealand and Australia, 1788–1988*, ed. Keith Sinclair (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1987), 53–62.

[xxv] Rebecca Mead, *How the Vote was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States 1868–1914* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 13–14; Patricia Grimshaw, 'Settler anxieties, indigenous peoples, and women's suffrage in the colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i, 1888 to 1902', *Pacific Historical Review* 69:4 (2000): 553–72. Overseas observers of the settlers' 'social experiments' shared this progressive vision of a white Australasia. See especially Marilyn Lake, *Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and Transpacific Exchange Shaped American Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[xxvi] Denoon, 'Re-membering Australasia', 290; J.O.C. Phillips, 'Musings in Maoriland – or was there a *Bulletin* school in New Zealand?' *Historical Studies*, 20:81 (1983): 51. On the Tasman world, see especially Philippa Mein-Smith, Peter Hempenstall and Shaun Goldfinch, with Stuart McMillan and Rosemary Baird, *Remaking the Tasman World* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008).

[xxvii] Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein-Smith, with Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 1. See, e.g., Arnold, 'The Australasian peoples', 53–62; Rollo Arnold, 'Some Australasian aspects of New Zealand life, 1890–1913', *New Zealand Journal of History* 4:1 (1970): 54–76.

[xxviii] In 2019, for example, Alison Bashford argued that 'for historians taught and researching from an Australian base … the nation no longer holds any historiographical monopoly'. Bashford, 'On nations and states: a reflection on "Thinking the Empire Whole"', *History Australia* 16:4 (2019): 638–9; James Keating, 'Piecing together suffrage internationalism: Place, space, and connected histories of Australasian women's activism', *History Compass* 16:8 (2018): 1–15.

[xxix] SLNSW, MLMSS186/13/535–41, Mary Lee to Lady Mary Windeyer, 23 September 1892.

[xxx] *Daily Telegraph*, 28 November 1893, 5; *Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales Annual Report and Balance Sheet for Year Ending June 1st, 1894* (Sydney: Jas. A. Ross Printer, 1894), 5.

[xxxi] Catherine Helen Spence to Scott, 20 September 1902, in Susan Margarey, with Barbara Wall, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams, eds, *Ever Yours, C.H. Spence: Catherine Helen Spence's An Autobiography (1825–1910), Diary (1894), and Some Correspondence (1894–1910)* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2005), 351. See, e.g., *Daily Telegraph*, 11 June 1896, 3; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 March 1898, 12; SLNSW, MAV-FM4-9555, 'Notice of womanhood suffrage public meeting, Protestant Hall, Monday, 4th June, 1900'; *Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales, Tenth Annual Report and Balance Sheet for the Year ending June 1st, 1901* (Sydney: S. D. Townsend & Co. Printers, 1901), 5, 21.

[xxxii] Nicholas Aroney, *The Constitution of a Federal Commonwealth: The Making and Meaning of the Australian Constitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 158–64; *The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Australasia, Minutes & Proceedings of First Intercolonial Woman's Christian Temperance Union Convention* (Melbourne: J. J. Howard, 1891), 3.

[xxxiii] *Union Signal*, 30 July 1891, 10.

[xxxiv] Two delegates to the Melbourne convention – Caroline Fulton and Mary Kirkland – persuaded their West Taieri branch to affiliate with the Australasian union before the New Zealand executive intervened. *Prohibitionist*, 29 August 1891, 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 25 March 1892, 6; Hocken Collections, Dunedin, ARC-0379, AG613/021, Catherine Henrietta Elliot Fulton diary 1891, 28 April–25 June.

[xxxv] SLNSW, MLMSS3641, Sydney WCTU Minute Book 1882–92, 1 February 1888; *Evening News*, 1 May 1894, 2; Alexander Turnbull Library (hereafter ATL), Wellington, 79-057-08/03, Auckland WCTU Minute Book 1889–98, 21 August 1889, 8 March 1893, 28 May 1894, 28 October 1896; 79-057-08/04, Auckland WCTU Minute Book 1898–1902, 12 October 1898, 15 March 1899 and 12 February 1902.

[xxxvi] ATL, 79-057/08/03, Auckland WCTU Minute Book 1889–98, 13 April 1893; *Eighth Annual Report of the Adelaide Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (Adelaide: G. Hassell & Son, 1894), 1; *Worker*, 5 October 1895, 3; *Brisbane Courier*, 25 September 1896, 2; *Telegraph* [QLD], 18 May 1931, 9.

[xxxvii] See, e.g., State Library of South Australia, Adelaide (hereafter SLSA), SRG186/748, Annie Schnackenberg to Elizabeth Webb Nicholls, 6 March 1897; SRG186/768, Mary Lodge to Nicholls, 25 April 1898; *Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Australasia, Minutes of the Fourth Triennial Convention* (Adelaide: Hussey & Gillingham, 1900), 11, 61; *Australasian Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Minutes of the 5th Triennial Convention* (Melbourne: Green & Fargher, 1903), 9, 11, 17, 23–5.

[xxxviii] *WCTU of Australasia, Minutes of First Intercolonial Convention*, 3; SLSA, SRG186/748, Jessie Rooke to Nicholls, 7 March 1899; University of Melbourne Archives, Melbourne (hereafter UMA), 101/85, Box 15/241/1, Sara Nolan and Alice Masterman to Nicholls, 14 September 1899. For examples of intercolonial rivalry, see James Keating, *Distant Sisters: Australasian Women and the International Struggle for the Vote, 1880–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 49, 133, 147.

[xxxix] ATL, 79-057/08/03, Auckland WCTU Minute Book 1889–98, 19 August 1891. See, e.g., *Australasian WCTU Minutes of the Fourth Triennial Convention*, 30.

[xl] Canterbury Museum, Christchurch (hereafter CM), ARC176.53/55, Wallace to Sheppard, 18 August 1891; ARC176.53/228, M. E. Kirk to Sheppard, 18 January 1894; *Australasian Woman's Christian Temperance Union Minutes of the Second Triennial Convention* (Sydney: n.p., 1894), 16, 73.

[xli] *Woman's Christian Temperance Union of South Australia, Minutes of Eleventh Annual Convention*, (Adelaide: A. & E. Lewis, 1899), 10.

[xlii] *Mercury*, 18 April 1894, 3.

[xliii] UMA, 101/85, Box 77/231/2, Nicholls to the Australasian WCTU, 24 August 1896; *Brisbane Courier*, 27 April 1897, 6.

[xliv] CM, ARC176.53/269, Nicholls to Sheppard, 30 April 1895.

[xlv] UMA, 101/85, Box 77/231/2, Nicholls to the Australasian WCTU, 24 August 1896; CM, ARC176.53/310, Mary Ann Müller to Sheppard, 18 August 1898.

[xlvi] Dora B. Montefiore, *From a Victorian to a Modern* (London: E. Archer, 1927), 5, 31–3.

[xlvii] SLNSW, MLMSS38/33/1, Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales Minute Book, 1891–96, 222, 238, 356; *Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales Annual Report and Balance Sheet, for the Year Ending June 1st, 1896* (Sydney: Christian World Printing House, 1896), 4–5.

[xlviii] ATL, MS-Papers-1784-202/30, Scott to Hall, 6 January 1894.

[xlix] Judith Devaliant, *Kate Sheppard: A Biography* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1992), 21; Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 224. See *Sixteen Reasons for Supporting Woman's Suffrage* (Christchurch: Smith, Anthony, Sellars & Co., 1891); *Is it Right?* (Christchurch: Smith, Anthony, Sellars & Co., 1892).

[l] CM, ARC176.53/55, Catherine Wallace to Sheppard, 18 August 1891; C. P. Wallace, *Manual of the Franchise Department* (Melbourne: Dunn & Wilkinson, 1891); *Prohibitionist*, 27 February 1892, 3.

[li] Ryan Cordell, 'Reprinting, circulation and the network author in antebellum newspapers', *American Literary History* 27:3 (2015): 423–9.

[lii] CM, ARC176.53/70, John Vale to Sheppard, 27 October 1891; CM, ARC176.53/74, 'The Editor, W.S.J.' to Sheppard, 9 March 1892; *Prohibitionist*, 7 November 1891, 3; 12 November 1892, 3; 6 May 1893, 3; *Sixteen Reasons for Supporting Woman's Suffrage* (Adelaide: Holden & Strutton, 1892); Joyce R. Henderson, *The Strength of White Ribbon: A Year-by-Year Record of the Centennial History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Western Australia* (Perth: The Union, 1992), 4.

[liii] On these titles' history and the conditions that allowed for their efflorescence in an Australasian market, see Keating, *Distant Sisters*, 133–69.

[liv] *Woman's Voice*, 18 May 1895, 239; 27 July 1895, 299–300; *Australian Woman's Sphere*, May 1901, 69.

[lv] ATL, MS-Copy-Micro-0694-58/36, Sheppard to Hall, 20 April 1892.

[lvi] Figures from *Dawn*, 1892–1903.

[lvii] *Woman's Voice*, 23 March 1895, 199; *Daybreak*, 1 June 1895, 5–6; 13 July 1895, 1; 20 July 1895, 3; 24 August 1895, 7.

[lviii] *Women's Christian Temperance Union of New South Wales Annual Report of the Fourteenth Convention* (Bathurst: National Advocate, 1896), 54.

[lix] Figures calculated from the monthly 'subscriptions received' column in *Australian Woman's Sphere* between September 1901 and September 1902; *Dawn*, 1888–1905; and Olive Lawson, ed., *The First Voice of Australian Feminism: Excerpts from Louisa Lawson's The Dawn 1888–1895* (Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 17–20.

[lx] Rollo Arnold, *New Zealand's Burning: The Settlers' World in the Mid 1880s* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1994), 220–34; Henry Mayer, *The Press in Australia* (Melbourne: Lansdowne, 1964), 12–13. For a more comprehensive content analysis of these titles, see Keating, *Distant Sisters*, pp. 152–5.

[lxi] See, e.g., *Australian Woman's Sphere*, 10 December 1902, 238–9; *Dawn*, 1 June 1897, 10; *Daybreak*, 27 July 1895, 1–2; *Our Federation*, December 1902, 7; *White Ribbon*, 1 January 1903, 1–3.

[lxii] Helen Bones, 'Arthur H. Adams and Australasian narratives of the colonial world', in *Archiving Settler Colonialism: Culture, Space and Race*, ed. Yu-Ting Huang and Rebecca Weaver-Hightower (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 41.

[lxiii] Carolyn Holbrook, 'Federation and Australian nationalism: Early commemoration of the Commonwealth', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 66:4 (2020): 560–77.

[lxiv] Helen Irving, 'A gendered constitution? Women, federation and heads of power', in *A Woman's Constitution: Gender & History in the Australian Commonwealth*, ed. Helen Irving (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1996), 106.

[lxv] As late as 1948 the visiting Scottish suffragette Helen Archdale would decry the 'stress laid on … narrow … state matters' by Australian feminists. SLNSW, MLMSS/9091/2/2, CY4624, Archdale, 'An interfering female', typescript, c. May 1948. See also Alan Atkinson, 'Federation, democracy and the struggle against a single Australia', *Australian Historical Studies* 44:2 (2013): 262–79; Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, *Shame and the Anti-Feminist Backlash: Britain, Ireland and Australia, 1890–1920* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 95–107; Carolyn Holbrook, '"What sort of nation?": A cultural history of Australians and their federation', *History Compass* 15:11 (2017): 1–10; James Keating, '"An utter absence of national feeling": Australian women and the international suffrage movement, 1900–14', *Australian Historical Studies* 47:3 (2016): 462–81.

[lxvi] *Australian Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Minutes of the 13th Triennial Convention* (Brisbane: R. G. Gillies, 1927), 11, 35–6.

[lxvii] Erik Olssen, Clyde Griffen and Frank Jones argue that the rapid success which greeted those who strove to make New Zealand more egalitarian than Britain created 'an increasingly self-satisfied society'. Likewise, Clare Wright contends that Australians were 'pleased to the point of self-righteousness' with their 'unique "experiment" in political equality'. By the interwar years, when both countries had shed their world-leading status, feminists would reckon bitterly with what they saw as their forebears' complacency. Olssen et al., *An Accidental Utopia? Social Mobility and the Foundations of an Egalitarian Society, 1880–1940* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011), 188; Wright, '"A splendid object lesson": A transnational perspective on the birth of the Australian nation', *Journal of Women's History* 26:4 (2014): 14; Keating, *Distant Sisters*, 203–4.

[lxviii] Melanie Nolan, 'Personalizing class conflict across the Tasman: the New Zealand Great Strike and trans-Tasman biography', *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 18 (2014): 130. It was at this moment that the term 'Australasia' disappeared from maps, replaced by 'Australia and New Zealand'. Philippa Mein Smith, 'Mapping Australasia', *History Compass* 7:4 (2009): 15–20.

[lxix] June Hannam, 'International dimensions of women's suffrage: "At the crossroads of several interlocking identities"', *Women's History Review* 13:3–4 (2005): 554.

[lxx] *Daily Telegraph*, 26 December 1893, 6. Two weeks later, she lectured on Australia and New Zealand at Brown University. *South Australian Register*, 3 January 1984, 6.

[lxxi] *Report, First International Woman Suffrage Conference* (New York: International Woman Suffrage Headquarters, 1902); SLNSW, MLMSS 38/41/401–7, Vida Goldstein, 'Report of the Australian sub-committee of the International Woman Suffrage Committee', 10 February 1904.

[lxxii] CM, ARC176.53/376, Carrie Chapman Catt to Sheppard, 14 August 1908; *Report, Second and Third Conferences of the International Womanhood Suffrage Alliance* (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1906), 116. See, e.g., ATL, MS-Papers-1376-01, Catt to Sheppard, 24 February 1908, 2, and 4 February 1909; *Press*, 15 November 1913, 6.

[lxxiii] Simon Sleight, 'Reading the *British Australasian* community in London, 1884–1924', in *Australians in Britain: The Twentieth-Century Experience*, ed. Carl Bridge, Robert Crawford and David Dunstan (Melbourne: Monash University ePress, 2009), paragraph 27.

[lxxiv] K. Sheppard, *Woman Suffrage in New Zealand* (London: International Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1907); Vida Goldstein, *Woman Suffrage in Australia* (London: International Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1908); Anna Stout, *Woman Suffrage in New Zealand* (London: The Woman's Press, 1911); Nellie Martel, *The Women's Vote in Australia* (London: Woman's Press, 1913). The idea of Australasia as a coherent entity lasted longer in Europe, perhaps because suffragists were less attuned to the distinctions between the former colonies than their British counterparts. See, e.g., Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, 'L'Australie et la Nouvelle-Zélande: Les expériences sociales – le féminisme', *Revue de Deux Mondes* 136:3 (1896): 626–61; *La Femme et Le Féminisme: Collection de Livres, Périodiques etc. sur la Condition Sociale de la Femme et le Mouvement Féministe*, ed. C. V. Gerritsen and Aletta H. Jacobs (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1900), 233–4; Gino Rava, *Il Suffragio Femminile in Australasia* (Intra: Tipografia Interese, 1912).

[lxxv] CM, ARC176.53/365, Anna A. Gordon to Sheppard, 21 August 1906. Emphasis in original. See also ATL, MS-Papers-1376-01, Catt to Sheppard, 2 February 1909.

[lxxvi] William Pember Reeves, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, 2 vols (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1902); W. P. Reeves, 'Attitude of New Zealand', *Empire Review* 1:1 (1901): 111.

[lxxvii] *Lyttelton Times*, 8 August 1908, 13.

[lxxviii] CM, ARC176.53/368, Maria Ogilvie Gordon to Sheppard, 23 June 1908.

[lxxix] Roberta Nicholls, *The Women's Parliament: The National Council of the Women of New Zealand 1896–1920* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1996), 75–113.

[lxxx] Scott, *How Australia Led the Way*, 48; Monica Webb, 'A colonial for the cause: Lady Stout (1858–1931), suffrage and New Zealand and an exemplar to the Empire, 1909–1914', in *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign*, ed. Hannam and Purvis, 165–8; Wright, *You Daughters*, 408.

[lxxxi] *Jus Suffragi*, 15 November 1911, 25–6; *Memento of Women's Coronation Procession to Demand Votes for Women, Saturday June 17, 1911, Order of March and Descriptive Programme* (London: Woman's Press, 1911); SLNSW, M2309/5, Vida Goldstein album of letters, autographs, and photographs, 'final Albert Hall meeting' speech notes, 1911.

[lxxxii] *Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1911, 19.

[lxxxiii] *Woman's Leader and the Common Cause*, 18 May 1911, 105; Harriet Mercer, 'Citizens of empire and nation: Australian women's quest for independent nationality rights 1910s–1930s', *History Australia* 13:2

(2016): 215–17.

[lxxxiv] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 116–20; *Woman Voter*, 29 April 1913, 3–4.

[lxxxv] *Jus Suffragi*, March 1925, 86; Imaobong D. Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 29–30.

[lxxxvi] Whereas the leadership and composition of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union had been shared fairly evenly among its members, by 1929 the British Commonwealth League had thirteen affiliate societies from Australia, twelve from Britain, two from New Zealand, and one each from its remaining members. Sumita Mukherjee, *Indian Suffragettes: Female Identities and Transnational Networks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 104–12; Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 129; *British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union Report of the Second (Biennial) Conference, London, 1916* (London: G. J. Parris, 1916), 5–10; *British Dominions Women Citizens' Union Report of Work 1917–1918 and of the Third (Biennial) Conference, London, 1918* (Manchester: Percy Brothers, 1918), 10–15.

[lxxxvii] Meeson Coates, *George Coates*, 38–40; Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 16–20; Wright, *You Daughters*, 214–16, 452.

[lxxxviii] Scott, 'Dora Meeson Coates, Vol. I', 62–78; Catherine Speck, 'Women artists and the representation of the First World War', *Journal of Australian Studies* 23:60 (1999): 33.

[lxxxix] Work like Meeson's remained popular on the Australian market, which largely eschewed modernism, well into the 1930s. John F. Williams, *The Quarantined Culture: Australian Reactions to Modernism 1913–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–14; Meeson Coates, *George Coates*, 9, 61–9, 77–8, 132, 138–41, 148, 191. See, e.g., *Catalogue of Paintings by George Coates and Dora Meeson (Mrs Coates), at the Athenaeum Art Gallery, Collins Street, July 7th to July 19th, 1913* (Prahran: Fraser & Morphet, 1913); *Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Water Colours and Etchings by Dora Meeson, Held at the Fine Art Society's Gallery, 100 Exhibition St., Melbourne, 16th July to 28th July, 1934* (Melbourne: Fine Art Society, 1934).

[xc] Margaret Hutchison, *Painting War: A History of Australia's First World War Art Scheme* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 65, 131, 163–7; Meeson Coates, *George Coates*, 1, 86, 118, 173, 187–8; Speck, *Painting Ghosts*, 72–6.

[xci] Meeson Coates, *George Coates*, 148.

[xcii] SLNSW, MLMSS2109/2/4, Dora Meeson Coates to Mary Booth, 11 May 1932; Meeson Coates, *George Coates*, 169.

[xciii] *West Australian*, 26 September 1934, 4.