

Strictly embargoed to 12.01am on Thursday, 20 January 2011

Eminent women named as the 2011 Australian Legends

Four eminent women – Eva Cox AO, Elizabeth Evatt AC, Germaine Greer and Anne Summers AO – will join the exclusive ranks of great Australians to be immortalised on a stamp.

The women, who are renowned for their role in advancing gender equality, will today be presented with the prestigious Australia Post Australian Legends Award for 2011 and feature on this year's Australia Day stamp series, to be released today. The announcement of the four women as this year's Legends coincides with the centenary of International Women's Day, which will be celebrated on Tuesday 8 March.

Australia Post Managing Director and CEO, Ahmed Fahour, said this year's award celebrates the remarkable contributions these women have made towards achieving women's equality in Australia.

"These passionate individuals have worked tirelessly to champion the rights of women and they continue to campaign against obstacles that women still face today," Mr Fahour said. "The stamps will be a permanent reminder of the indelible mark these four outstanding women have made on Australian society through the advancement of gender equality."

Each of the Legends rose to prominence during the 1970s and addressed various issues of women's inequality in Australia, and internationally, through their writing, activism, judicial work, advocacy or a combination of these activities. In subsequent decades, each has continued to advocate for women's equality and to campaign against barriers to change.

The Australia Post Australian Legends Award began 14 years ago when Sir Donald Bradman was the first living person, other than a ruling monarch, to be featured on an Australian stamp. Since then, recipients of the Legends Award have included, among others, Arthur Boyd, Slim Dusty, Rod Laver, Dame Joan Sutherland, Barry Humphries, Nicole Kidman and the 2010 Legends, Peter Carey, Bryce Courtenay, Thomas Keneally, David Malouf, Colleen McCullough and Tim Winton.

The 2011 Legends will be honoured at Australia Day events held in Melbourne today, Sydney tomorrow, and in Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane and Hobart over the coming week. Each of the Legends will be presented with a 24-carat gold replica of the stamp on which she features.

Change advocate Eva Cox AO, said as someone who arrived in Australia as "a refugee kid", she was delighted with the recognition. "I think it's terrific and I'm going to encourage the women around Australia to do a lot of posting over the next six months," Ms Cox said.

"All the ones that have been picked in this case have made a difference in a not so conventional way, and I think that's a really good lesson for people to understand – that there's lots of ways of making a difference."

Former judge Elizabeth Evatt AC said she was "proud to be in such eminent company".

MEDIA RELEASE

"I hope that it will increase people's knowledge and understanding of women's fight for equality over the years. I think those of us involved in it would like to feel that we represent a whole larger group of women who have been in the same battle."

Academic and author Professor Germaine Greer said, "I think it's very funny. I wish my poor old Dad was alive to see it. It might have made up for some of the embarrassment I might have caused him, poor old darling. My mother would have said, 'what is she doing on a stamp?' I'm delighted to be with three distinguished Australian women and not to be singled out as some sort of *rara avis*," Professor Greer said.

Journalist and author Anne Summers AO said she was honoured to feature on a stamp. "It's a very strange feeling to know that your image will be on letters that will be going all around the country, or possibly all around the world," she said.

"I hope the fact there are four women on Australian stamps at the time of International Women's Day and the centenary of International Women's Day will contribute to continuing to raise awareness about women's issues and the continuing need to fight for equality for women in Australia. I hope it will encourage people to realise that the fight for women's equality is not yet over," Dr Summers said.

The Legends will feature on 4 x 60c stamps, a stamp pack, first day cover and set of maxicards. A commemorative biography, *Trailblazers: The Road to Equality*, written by Kay O'Sullivan, accompanies the stamp issue.

The stamps and book can be purchased at participating Australia Post outlets or online at www.auspost.com.au/legends

For further information, please contact: Julia Balderstone or Jenny Littlewood on 03 9696 5899 or 0413 852 796 – or by email at: julia@curriecom.com.au