

8 March 2012

## The Dawn rises again

Australia's first feminist journal, *The Dawn*, (1888-1905) is available for everyone to read online from today - International Women's Day (**March 8**) thanks to a one-woman campaign – and the National Library of Australia's award-winning discovery service Trove.

*The Dawn* gave Australian women a voice for the first time. The proprietress, printer and publisher was Louisa Lawson, the mother of writer Henry. She exclusively employed women, from the typesetters to printers, and ran stories ranging from the evils of corsetry to the campaign for women's suffrage.

The publication, whose banner proclaimed that, 'A day, an hour of virtuous liberty is worth a whole eternity in bondage', closed in 1905 when Lawson became ill. Australian women won the right to vote three years earlier.

Melbourne businesswoman Donna Benjamin launched her campaign to digitise *The Dawn* last year while researching early examples of women working in information and communication technologies.

'I was aware of *The Dawn* and turned to Trove's online collection of digitised newspapers only to discover that it was not on the immediate schedule for digitisation,' Ms Benjamin said. 'That prompted me to ask the National Library how much it would cost – and that's how it all began. I asked friends and colleagues what they thought of the idea and, without exception, everyone agreed to help raise funds.'

Ms Benjamin's campaign quickly raised the approximately \$7500 needed to digitise *The Dawn*.

Director of Digitisation and Photography at the National Library, Cathy Pilgrim, said thanks to Ms Benjamin and the State Library of NSW which made its hard copies of *The Dawn* available for digitisation, it was now available on Trove.

'Ms Benjamin's campaign shows how people can work with us to ensure that such important records of our social history can be made available online,' she said. 'We encourage more people to do so.' (For more details on the Library's digitisation project, email [andp@nla.gov.au](mailto:andp@nla.gov.au))

To see *The Dawn* online go to Trove at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>

High-res images are available

Donna Benjamin is available for interview

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