

The History Council of NSW
is pleased to award the



• MAX KELLY MEDAL •

for
2013
to

Ms Harriet Mercer

FOR HER ESSAY

*'The Responsibility that rests on our shoulders': Ideas of Race,
Gender and Citizenship in Interwar Australian Feminist Activism*

This is a very mature and intelligent article. Through a close and balanced analysis of feminist activism during the interwar years, focusing particularly on the efforts of non-Indigenous women to highlight and correct racial discrimination and Aboriginal disadvantage, it links the historiographies of Australian feminist history and Aboriginal history. Both involve vast and complex bodies of literature, which are here managed with considerable authority and success. Through a number of case studies and a reasonable range of primary source materials, the article demonstrates the multifarious nature and interconnectedness of feminist ideas of race and gender, showing in particular how a progressive and empathetic agenda was nonetheless shaped by approaches and assumptions that reflected the whiteness and privileged status of the activists. The article is well structured, its central arguments neatly articulated, and the style is lucid and unpretentious. Overall, the article offers a valuable contribution to our understanding of an important and largely understudied aspect of mid-twentieth century Australian history. We are pleased to recommend this manuscript as the outstanding entry in this year's Max Kelly Award.

Awarded 10 September 2013

Judges' Report prepared by
Dr David Roberts and
Emeritus Professor Richard Waterhouse



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