

# Australian broadcasting's female 'pilgrims': Women and work in the post-war ABC.

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## Certificate of original authorship

I, Kylie Andrews declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Communications at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

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\* \* \*

This thesis is dedicated to the determined women of the ABC who battled to forge careers in broadcasting.

\* \* \*

This thesis has not been copyedited but has been checked by a proof reader:  
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\* \* \*

This thesis follows a conventional format.

\* \* \*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the  
following research contains names and images of people who have died.

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# Abstract

This thesis examines the careers of women who attained positions of authority in the privileged environment of Australian public broadcasting between the 1940s and 1970s, and reimagines the nature of women's work at the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). It counteracts the widespread assumption that women were largely absent in post-war broadcasting, and reveals how and why a group of women, each with their own issues and ideologies to contribute to national debates, used the ABC as a vehicle for their activism.

Framed primarily through group biography, this history details how certain ABC women manifested their own agency within the limitations of the time and place, in both the messages they produced as radio and television producers, and through their positions within the gendered post-war workplace. It details the industrial strategies that female broadcasters activated in order to succeed – their transmedial methods, transformative departures, transnational exchanges and technical training – and the key industrial alliances they utilised to traverse previously inaccessible avenues of opportunity.

Taking an intersectional approach, this thesis also juxtaposes the careers of elite female producers against the majority of women workers at the ABC, contextualising the barriers, both official and unofficial, that prevented most women from sharing the same authority, opportunity and privilege that their male counterparts experienced. Challenging the male-centric narratives that dominate broadcasting historiography, this thesis examines the systems of exclusion and discrimination in the ABC workplace and highlights the nature of women's work in public broadcasting; it enriches the historical landscape of women's experiences and contributions within Australian broadcasting.