



LADIES IN THE HOUSE
PODCAST SERIES

MOAD

Museum of Australian Democracy
at Old Parliament House



LADIES IN THE HOUSE EPISODE 10: MARAGRET GUILFOYLE

Lesson Plan

Learning Intention:

Understand the experiences of the first female Finance Minister.

Success Criteria:

Use ranking and deduction skills to decide on the most important improvements that your school might need, and use numeracy skills to research the costing of a new project at your school.

Before Listening:

Activity

One:

Pre-Listening
Vocabulary

Write up or project the
following words on the board:

- finance
- accountant
- potential
- legacy
- Social Services

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Activity

One:

Pre-Listening Vocabulary

In groups ask the students if they can put the words into one of the 4 categories.

- Don't know it at all
- Have seen or heard, but don't know the meaning
- I think I know the meaning
- I know the meaning and can explain it

If any of the students are in the 3rd or 4th category, see if they can explain it to the people in your group or to the class.

Share the following definitions for the vocabulary.

Definitions:

- **Finance** - The commercial or government activity of managing money, debt, credit, and investment.
- **Accountant** - A person whose job is to keep financial accounts.
- **Potential** - Someone or something is capable of developing into the particular kind of person or thing mentioned.
- **Legacy** - Something that somebody has done successfully and that has positive effects even after they retire or die.
- **Social Services** - The services provided by the local authority or government to help people who have serious family or financial problems.



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Activity Two:

Before listening
discussion
questions

1. The taxes that we pay go toward the government so they can run the country. Who is in charge of deciding where that money goes?
2. What are the different aspects in society that the government pays for?
3. What is a mentor?

After Listening:

Activity Three:

After listening
reflection
questions

1. What are some of the different types of ministers that are mentioned in the episode?
2. Around how many ministers are there in total?
3. Why do you think that male politicians in the 1970s were not asked who was looking after their children, but the female politicians were?



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Activity Three:

After listening
reflection
questions

4. Margaret Guilfoyle's first ministerial position was the Minister for Education. If you were Minister for Education what changes might you make? (Remember that a right to free education is one of the basic human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.)
5. Why did Guilfoyle turn down the position of Minister for Women?
6. What job did she have after she left politics?
7. Why do you think important to have representation of different genders in a government that represents the people of Australia?

Activity Four:

Create a
budget for
your school.

You can do this activity individually, in small groups or as a whole class.

As Finance Minister, Margaret Guilfoyle's job was to decide what to spend the country's money on.

Imagine your school has been allocated a budget of \$800 000 to spend on resources and or experiences for the students.

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Activity

Four:

Create a budget for your school.

You are now on the budget committee. Your job is to decide how you are going to spend the money.

Make a list of all of the things that you think your school needs.

Consider the following;

- Do you need smaller class sizes?
- Do you need more staff?
- Do you need to replace furniture?
- Do any of your classes need renovating?
- Does your school need a Yarning Circle?
- Do you need playground equipment?
- Do you need a performance space?
- Does your school need a pool?
- Do you need more sport equipment?
- Do you need more computers of technology?
- Do you need bigger eating spaces?
- Do you need more outdoor chairs and tables?
- Do you need a garden?
- Do you need another classroom? Do you need more indoor play spaces?
- Do you need shaded/covered walkways?
- Is there a particular excursion or experience you think all students should have?
- Does your school need solar power?

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Activity

Four:

Create a budget for your school.

Once you have the list, you need to rank the needs of the school in order of importance.

- You will probably only be able to choose one or two of the things on your list to improve at your school. Think about whether it is better to have one big improvement, or to have several smaller improvements.
- Once you have chosen your top improvement, use Google to research how much that particular improvement might cost.
- Is there any money left over after the first improvement? Does the improvement cost more than your budget? How can you raise money to cover the cost of the rest of the improvements?
- If you have money left over, what is next on the list of needs for your school? Can you afford it, or do you need to choose a less costly improvement for your school?



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Episode Transcript:

Hi, this is Kelly Chase and you are listening to Season 3 of a Museum of Australian Democracy and History Detective Collaboration: Ladies in the House. In this 4-part series we are going to celebrate the lives of four incredible women and how they contributed to Australian democracy. Today we are going to meet Margaret Guilfoyle who was the first female federal Cabinet minister to hold a portfolio and later became the first female finance minister.

Before I go on, there are a few words in that last sentence that I want to explain. First of all, cabinet and ministers. Currently, when politicians are elected there are 151 in the House of Representatives and 76 in the Senate. Of these 227 members of parliament, the elected government choose around 20 of these politicians to become ministers who look after different government departments. For example, there is the Minister for Education, for Defence, for Social Services, for Finance and so on. If you are the Minister for Education, you are in charge of the Department of Education, the Australian Curriculum, Australian National University and a whole lot of other education related organisations and boards. They call this group of organisations you are in charge of, a portfolio.

The Prime Minister selects about 20 ministers, some from the House of Representatives and some from the Senate and these ministers are called the cabinet, and the cabinet are in charge of making a lot of really important decisions for the country. Well, until Margaret Guilfoyle, there had been a few female politicians, but none of them had ever been a cabinet minister with a portfolio. So, let's find out how Margaret Guilfoyle came to be the first woman in the federal cabinet with a portfolio.

Margaret was born in Ireland in 1926, and when she was two years old, her family moved to Australia and her father sadly passed away when she was 10. She went to a state school and at the age of 15, she left to become a secretary, but she knew of the importance of education and continued to go to night school and went on to study accountancy. She began working in an Australian exports company and when she was only 21 years old, she became the head office accountant- which was an unusual feat for a woman at the time.

It was around this time that she met her husband, who also worked in finance, and the couple went on to have three children together. She and her husband then made a life changing decision, and that was to join the Liberal Party.

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She was recognised as someone with enormous potential in politics and an organisation called the Australian Women's National League mentored her and she eventually became the chair of the women's section of the Liberal Party. So, in 1970, there was a vacancy in the Senate and Margaret Guilfoyle decided to run against a field of 20, mostly male, candidates. During her campaign she was chastised by an MP who asked her, who was going to look after her children, a question that no male candidate with children was asked.

She won her seat in the Senate, and at that time, there was only one other woman in parliament. In 1975, when the government changed hands, and the Liberal Party came to power, she firstly became the Minister for Education, and later held the position of the Minister for Social Security for 5 years, and finally she was appointed the first ever female Minister of Finance- an incredibly important ministerial position. Whilst in parliament, she fought for many important issues that impacted women, including making maternity leave available to everyone, and she also improved benefits for families who were struggling. However, when she was offered the position of Minister for Women, she refused with the reasoning that she thought her skills in finance and accountancy would be more useful elsewhere. Other issues that she cared about were pollution and damage to the environment as well as caring deeply about the arts. In fact, after she left politics, she became the director of the Australian Children's Television Council. This organisation was created to help make more quality Australian television content for children, rather than importing it all from the United States.

Margaret Guilfoyle passed away in 2020 at the age of 96 and her enduring legacy was that it was not only important that we should have more women representing the people in parliament, she thought that there should be more women in the cabinet, where the important decisions were being made. In her words, "It was said that I was the first to hold a cabinet post and administer a department - that might be true - but it had to be very important that I was not the last."

What I would like you to think about today is this. Margaret Guilfoyle believed that we should have more equal gender representation in parliament. Why do you think important to have representation of different genders in a government that represents the people of Australia?

This is Kelly Chase, on the case.

See you next time!