EDUCATION RESOURCE



STRONG IS THE NEW PRETTY

A PLAY BY
SUZIE MILLER

DIRECTED BY
SARAH GILES

Australian Government | Creative Australia | BRISBANE FESTIVAL | SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY | TWP TRISH WADLEY PRODUCTIONS

CONTENTS

The Work	**4**
About This Resource	**5**
The Creatives and Cast	**6**
Author's Note	**7**
Director's Note	**9**
Curriculum Links	**10**
Live Performance Guide for Schools	**11**
Pre-Performance Learning Experiences	**14**
Activity 1: Revolution in Five Words	15
Activity 2: Kick It to Me! Who Gets Included?	16
Activity 3: From the Dream to the League	17
Activity 4: What Is Post-Dramatic Theatre?	19
Activity 5: The Architecture of a Story	20
Post-Performance Learning Experiences	**21**
Activity 1: Real Stories, Reimagined Characters	22
Activity 2: One Actor, Many Voices	23
Activity 3: The Power of the Chorus	24
Activity 4: Building Something from Nothing	25
Activity 5: The Sound of Determination	26
Activity 6: A Fair Go - Whose Opportunity?	28
Curriculum Alignment by Learning Experience	**30**
Additional Resources	**31**

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT A SPORT.



IT'S ABOUT A

REVOLUTION.



KICK IT TO ME!

THE WORK

The celebrated Australian playwright, Suzie Miller, turns her extraordinary imagination to the birth of the AFLW in this world premiere to write a love letter to a game and a community.

In 2010, an official report into the state of Australian Rules Football recommended the creation of a national women's league.

Seven years and a whole lot of grit, passion and fancy footwork later, the AFLW was born.

This is inspired by the incredible story of how the league went from a pipe dream to a sensation the sports world could no longer ignore.

Barrack your heart out for this inspiring story of determination, legacy, and pride. Theatre written in mud, sweat, and belief.

Year Levels	9-12
Style/Form	Contemporary Australian Theatre, Personal Narrative
Themes	Gender, Representation, Identity, Resilience, Agency
Please be advised	This production contains strong language, adult themes, theatrical haze, complete theatrical blackout, and flashing light effects.
Duration	80 minutes (no interval)

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This education resource supports teachers and students to explore the themes, creative processes and theatrical techniques of *Strong Is the New Pretty*.

Inspired by the remarkable journey towards establishing the AFLW, this production explores the power of determination, resilience, equality, and collective action. Through its combination of storytelling, physical theatre, multiple characters, ensemble performance, and inventive staging, the work demonstrates how real events and personal experiences can be transformed into compelling contemporary Australian theatre.

The learning experiences invite students to investigate how playwrights, directors, performers, and designers work collaboratively to create meaning, with particular attention to the idea of making something from nothing, a concept reflected in both the establishment of the AFLW and the production's theatrical world.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will:

- Explore how real events, research, and personal stories can be transformed into dramatic narratives through contemporary theatre practices.
- Investigate how dramatic form, structure, characterisation, movement, sound, and design communicate themes and shape the audience's interpretation.
- Analyse the creative choices of the playwright, director, performers and designers in developing a theatrical work.
- Collaborate to devise, perform and evaluate original dramatic works that communicate ideas of equality, resilience, identity and collective change.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can:

- Explain how research, interviews, and historical events can inform the development of dramatic characters and narratives.
- Identify and analyse how post-dramatic conventions, dramatic structure and production elements communicate meaning.
- Experiment with multiple characters, direct address, dialogue, chorus work, physical theatre and stylised movement.
- Collaborate to devise and refine a performance that uses dramatic and production elements to communicate a clear intention to an audience.



THE CREATIVES

Playwright	Suzie Miller
Director	Sarah Giles
Designer	Christina Smith
Lighting Designer	Paul Jackson
Composer	Clemence Williams
Sound Designer	Brady Watkins
Video Designer	Craig Wilkinson
Movement Director	Kelley Abbey
Dramaturg	Jonathan Ware
Assistant Director	Julia Robertson
Voice and Text Director	Charmian Gradwell
Lighting Associate	Matthew Erren
Intimacy Coordinator	Chloë Dallimore
Safety Coordinator	Diego Retamales

THE CAST

Lucy Bell
Edyll
Amy Hack
Amy Ingram
Amber McMahon
Tara Morice
Nyasha Ogden
Contessa Treffone



AUTHOR'S NOTE
SUZIE MILLER

STRONG is first and foremost my theatrical love letter to Australian women. Having spent so many years working abroad, I am struck anew by the grit and determination of women in this country whenever I return to Australia.

Is it having lived in a harsh landscape? Or having survived a macho culture; a patriarchal society? Or are Australian women just distinct in their resilience; their capacity to push through?

Women do so much of the work in communities, in life and in families. And it's not seen. This invisibility means it is not acknowledged and not celebrated. One of my aims in writing this play is to make the background work of women visible, show the energy, the humour and pathos that is part of the crazy juggling act women undertake in their lives.

This play was seeded after I was invited to the Australian Football Women's League inaugural 2017 grand final. Having grown up in AFL-crazy Melbourne, I was always hyper-aware that women were only invited in as spectators of AFL, it was only men playing at the MCG or on television. I was a sporty girl, but this sport did not feel relevant to me. Attending that grand final, I watched, gob-smacked, as something I thought I would never witness was there happening in real time before me. I wanted to know how it came about. I set about interviewing and researching its long gestation.

Through this lens of Australian Football, I have been able to show how women work together to effect real change. How, through the obstacles, the barriers, the silence and the existing social paradigms, they forge together and imagine the seemingly impossible into being. The AFLW is a microcosm of how women come to share a space they were previously excluded from.

But so too have I thought long and hard about the Aussie mantra 'a fair go for all'. In an age where so many countries are shifting away from a just and fair world, this mantra of ours is an extraordinary thing to have as a baseline for our values. What an amazing aim to have, a fair go for all! As Australians, we must reclaim this value, dust off the mantra, and re-interrogate it for

AUTHOR'S NOTE
SUZIE MILLER

a modern, contemporary Australian society. Everyone other than Australian First Nations' peoples are from immigrant backgrounds, can we therefore reignite this mantra as it applies to now? How we as Australians can differentiate from the values of other nations and truly live the 'fair go' by exercising our empathy, stretching our capacity for kindness and truly caring about those about us. Not just saying it but a thoughtful way of life we can live by.

A 'fair go' requires action, policies and commitment. It is the basis for fairness, equality, access, and to imagining a better nation into being. When I watched a recent AFLW game between Ireland and Australia, I felt so deeply moved watching the 5-year-old girls playing on the field at half time. With pigtails flying and jerseys emblazoned, they ran onto that field and kicked, tackled and handpassed that football with glee. And I watched with great pride as their brothers watched cheering them on. What better basis for that generation to grow up with than a deep respect and understanding for the strength and capacity of each other. These girls, unlike me in Melbourne all those years ago, will not be able to remember a time when they didn't have women role models in football. Generational change in action. So many women behind the scenes, so much grit.

While 2017 marked the inaugural league of AFLW, women have been playing and advocating for women to play for years. These initial players, and those who supported them, found ways for women to play.

But the dream of a professional league for women was almost too much to imagine, just as;

the courtrooms,

the boardrooms,

the high-flying jobs,

the parliaments,

the management positions

were also once impossible for women to achieve.

How do women break through, create space, dare to dream something into being?

Using AFLW as an example, *Strong is the New Pretty* shows how women manage change differently to men, how they opt out of a single hero/heroine's journey and opt for a collaborative structure with women bonding and working together, whispering along a great invisible grapevine, and finding the cracks where they can pivot and sow seeds.

Any generational change, in any field, takes MANY women working together, often with completely different skillsets. Running a sort of relay, where the baton is quietly passed between them, where looks are shared quietly, sending messages along the way to each other, and then they pass the baton to the next woman, who will also silently run their leg of the race and pass it on. And on, and on.

The AFLW is just one of the changes, but what a wonderful, visible and vibrant example it is. On that sunny Queensland day nearly a decade ago, when I sat watching those women running proudly onto the ground, kicking and passing the footy; as I sat and watched 5-year-old girls in their favourite AFLW jersey, their brothers next to them also in an AFLW jersey of their own, I saw something with my own eyes. I saw the results of the invisible work of some amazing, everyday women who, coupled with some brilliantly supportive men, created a new way of seeing footy. Through Australian grit, passion and determination, something had been created that didn't exist in that space before.

A 'FAIR GO' IN ACTION.

The play uses fictional characters, each an amalgam of a group of women, all of whom are changemakers. If I counted all the women, and they were allocated an actor each, the cast numbers would be astronomical!

I thank all Australian women still involved in the ongoing relay of women imagining things into existence; I thank the men who 'see' and want the same for their daughters, sisters, partners and friends.

How lucky have I been working with the extraordinary Sarah Giles as a director, a cast of eight brilliant and talented women. A fabulous dramaturg in Jonathan Ware; and a team of producers in the Sydney Theatre Company, Brisbane Festival and Trish Wadley. To the supporters too numerous to mention, especially those companies, corporations, and bodies who through their support have dreamt this play and production into being, you are the quiet voices of this play and production; you are all and every character on stage!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

SARAH GILES

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PAY IT FORWARD.

The phrase "pay it forward" is a bit confusing. In and of itself, it doesn't really make sense.

The best way I know how to describe it came from my mother. My mum worked as a specialist doctor. As my brother and I were growing up, my grandmother, Sheila (a GP herself, Sheila, such a great name!) was a big support to my mum.

My Granny (as we called her) would pick us up from school every Wednesday, sleepovers at her place in Box Hill in Melbourne were actual heaven (crumpets in front of the electric fire while watching our favourite cartoons for breakfast) and regular Sunday dinners at her place. That's the version I remember as a kid. Now that I have children myself, I realise the support my grandmother afforded my mother was far deeper than just crumpets and cartoons.

I'm not sure when my mother explained this all to me. When I had kids, my mum was immediately there and supportive. Schlepping interstate with me while I made shows, helping out while I was in rehearsals, there with my kids if I had to be interstate, cooking, folding a seemingly endless pile of tiny child underpants, and always at the end of the phone and always ready with a hug and a cup of tea and a "you're a great mum Sarah" when I would, as Suzie Miller would say, "wobble".

I remember thanking my mum one day, and she explained the notion of paying it forward. She said that when she was establishing herself at work, her mum helped her. And that she could never pay her back. But what she could do was pay it forward.

Paying it forward is everywhere.

The women who can't personally thank the women who came before them.

The women who fought for equality but never had it themselves.

The women who never got to vote but fought for the right to.

The right to choose.

The women who fought for fair pay.

The women who fought to be directors.

To be writers.

To be leaders.

We can't thank them all.

But we can keep paying it forward.

The learning experiences in this resource support Drama curriculum outcomes across Australian states and territories, with connections to both junior and senior secondary Drama.

The table below identifies relevant curriculum frameworks and learning connections for each jurisdiction. Teachers are encouraged to adapt activities to suit their students' year levels, curriculum requirements, and learning contexts.

STATE / TERRITORY	YEARS 7–10 DRAMA	YEARS 11–12 DRAMA	RELEVANT CONNECTIONS
Queensland	Australian Curriculum v9.0 Drama, Years 7–10	QCAA Drama General Syllabus 2025 (Units 1 Share, 2 Reflect, 3 Challenge); Drama in Practice	languages, devising, social commentary, performance analysis
New South Wales	NESA Drama 7–10 Syllabus (2023), Stages 4–5; teaching from 2026	Stage 6 Drama syllabus; transition to Drama 11–12 Syllabus (2025) from Year 11 in 2027	Making, performing, appreciating, Australian drama, ensemble devising Victoria Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 Drama VCE Drama Study Design 2025 (particularly Units 2 and 3) Australian identity, contemporary practices, devised ensemble performance
South Australia	Australian Curriculum Drama as implemented in SA	SACE Stage 1 and Stage 2 Drama	Performance, responding to drama, creative synthesis
Western Australia	Western Australian Curriculum: The Arts – Drama (check school implementation year)	WACE Drama ATAR and General courses	Improvisation, text interpretation, performance and design
Tasmania	Australian Curriculum Drama as implemented in Tasmania	TASC-accredited senior Drama / Theatre Performance courses (confirm current offering)	Devising, characterisation, interpretation and reflection
Australian Capital Territory	Australian Curriculum Drama as implemented in ACT	ACT BSSS-accredited Drama courses	Creative development, performance, ensemble work and critical response
Northern Territory	Australian Curriculum Drama as implemented in NT	NTCET Stage 1 and Stage 2 Drama (via SACE framework)	Creating, presenting, analysis and evaluation

CURRICULUM AUTHORITY LINKS:

Queensland: https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/syllabuses/the-arts/drama

New South Wales: https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/

Victoria: https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce-curriculum/vce-study-designs/drama/drama

South Australia: https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/drama

Western Australia: https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/arts/drama

Tasmania: https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/

Australian Capital Territory: https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/

Northern Territory: https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/drama

Note: *These are broad curriculum connections, not verified outcome-by-outcome mappings. Check current course versions and jurisdiction-specific implementation before publication.*

LIVE PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

Live theatre is an immediate, shared, and dynamic experience. Unlike watching a film, the story unfolds in real time, with performers and audiences sharing the same space. Every performance is unique, shaped by the energy of the actors, the creative choices of the production team, and the audience's engagement.

As you watch, pay attention to how the performers use their bodies and voices to create characters, how movement and sound build dramatic tension, and how the set transforms throughout the performance. Consider how the creative team uses theatrical storytelling to communicate a story that is about much more than football.

As an audience member, you play an important role. Respectful, attentive viewing allows you to fully experience the work and recognise the creativity, skill and collaboration involved in bringing a live production to the stage.



BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

- Familiarise yourself with the story of the AFLW, including the challenges faced in establishing a national women's football league.
- Consider the title *Strong Is the New Pretty*. What might it suggest about strength, identity, expectations and equality?
- Discuss how live theatre differs from film or television, particularly the shared energy between performers and audience members.
- Familiarise yourself with appropriate theatre etiquette, including;
  - switching off phones,
  - avoiding conversations and
  - respecting moments of silence. moments of silence.
- Explore how theatre can use real events and personal experiences as inspiration while incorporating fictional characters and dramatic interpretation.
- Think about how sound, lighting, movement and set design might communicate the intensity of a sporting event without recreating an actual football match.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How can theatre tell a story about real events while still allowing for creative interpretation?
- What makes the story of the AFLW significant beyond the sporting field?
- How might physical theatre, ensemble movement and sound be used to communicate competition, determination and collective strength?
- What does it mean to give someone a fair go, and how might this idea be explored through theatre?

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

- Switch off your phone and avoid talking, whispering, or using devices during the performance.
- Watch with an open mind. The production may use non-traditional storytelling techniques, including direct address, narration, stylised movement, and rapid character changes.
- Observe characterisation: Notice how performers transition between multiple characters using physicality, vocal expression and gesture.
- Consider dramatic structure: Look for how the story develops throughout.
- Notice physical storytelling: Observe how AFL-inspired movement and physical theatre communicate action, relationships, conflict and emotion.
- Listen to the sound design: Pay attention to how rhythmic clapping, breath, vocal sounds and silence create atmosphere, anticipation and dramatic tension.
- Observe directorial choices: Notice how chorus work, repetition, ensemble positioning and direct address influence the way the story is communicated.
- Consider the set design: Watch how the stage transforms from a relatively empty space into a more developed theatrical environment, reflecting the idea of making something from nothing.
- Think about the themes: Consider how the production explores equality, opportunity, resilience and the power of collective action.

OBSERVING WITH PURPOSE

- As you watch, consider how the playwright, director, performers and designers work together to communicate meaning. Notice moments when movement, sound, or visual imagery tell the story without the need for dialogue.
- Be curious about creative choices that surprise or challenge you. You do not need to understand every moment immediately; sometimes the meaning of a theatrical experience becomes clearer through reflection afterwards.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

- Show your appreciation by applauding the performers at the conclusion of the production.
- Record your immediate impressions, including memorable moments, characters, images, sounds, or emotions.
- Reflect on how the production combines real events, historical research and theatrical storytelling.
- Consider how the performers used multiple characters, physical theatre, and ensemble work to communicate different perspectives.
- Identify a moment when sound, lighting, movement, or set design significantly influenced your understanding of the story.
- Reflect on how the changing set contributed to the theme of making something from nothing.
- Consider how the production challenged or reinforced your understanding of fairness, equality and opportunity in Australian sport and society.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did *Strong Is the New Pretty* use theatrical techniques to transform the history of the AFLW into a compelling story?
- Which moment had the greatest impact on you, and what creative choices contributed to that impact?
- How did the movement, sound and set design communicate the idea of building something from nothing?
- What did the production make you think, feel or question about determination, equality and the importance of collective action?

FINAL REFLECTION

Strong Is the New Pretty reminds us that theatre can do more than entertain; it can bring overlooked stories to life, challenge perspectives and inspire conversations about change.

Live theatre invites us to see the world through different perspectives. Take time to reflect on what you experienced, what you discovered, and what you might carry with you beyond the theatre.

PRE-PERFORMANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

These activities establish the historical, social, and artistic context of *Strong Is the New Pretty*, introducing students to the creative team and the theatrical conventions they will encounter.



ACTIVITY 1:
REVOLUTION IN FIVE WORDS

FOCUS:

Exploring themes, interpretation and audience perspectives through concise written reflection and critical analysis.

PURPOSE:

To reflect on how theatrical storytelling, creative choices, and dramatic meaning can challenge, deepen, or transform their initial expectations.

INSTRUCTIONS:

First Impressions - Before the Performance

- Students read the synopsis of *Strong Is the New Pretty*.
- Invite students to consider the central ideas, themes, and messages they expect the production to explore.
- Using only five words, students complete the statement: *"I think this play is really about…"*
- Encourage students to move beyond the literal story of football and consider broader ideas such as equality, determination, resilience, opportunity, and collective change.
- Collect or record the responses to revisit after the performance.

A New Perspective - After the Performance

- Following the performance, return students' original five-word statements.
- Ask students to reflect on their experience of the production, considering the characters, themes, dramatic structure, and theatrical techniques.
- Students complete the statement again: *"I think this play is really about…"* using five words.
- Encourage students to consider how their interpretation has developed or changed after experiencing the work.

Comparing Interpretations

- Students compare their two responses, identifying similarities, differences, and shifts in understanding.
- In pairs or small groups, students share their five-word statements and explain the reasons behind any changes.
- Invite students to identify a specific moment or creative choice from the production that influenced their interpretation.
- As a class, compile the post-performance statements to create a collective reflection on the production's central themes and messages.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What ideas or themes stand out to you in the synopsis?
- How can you communicate the central meaning of a production in only five words?
- What does the title *Strong Is the New Pretty* suggest about the story and its broader themes?
- How did the performances, dialogue, movement, sound or design influence your understanding?
- Which theatrical moment challenged or reinforced your initial interpretation?
- How can different audience members experience the same performance but interpret its meaning differently?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How did your understanding of *Strong Is the New Pretty* change after experiencing the live performance?
- What surprised you about the story, characters, or theatrical presentation?
- Which ideas introduced in the synopsis became more complex or meaningful after seeing the production?
- How did the creative choices of the playwright, director, performers, and designers influence your interpretation?
- What does the comparison between your two statements reveal about the power of live theatre to challenge assumptions and communicate meaning?

ACTIVITY 2:
KICK IT TO ME! WHO GETS INCLUDED?

FOCUS:

Exploring inclusion, equality, power and agency through physical storytelling, improvisation and frozen images.

PURPOSE:

To investigate how rules, power dynamics and unequal opportunities influence participation, and how these experiences can be communicated through movement, gesture, and theatrical expression.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Students stand in a circle and imagine they are passing an AFL football.
- One student calls out “Kick it to me!” before receiving the imaginary ball and passing it to another student.
- Encourage students to establish eye contact, use clear gestures and respond physically as though receiving and passing a real football.
- Continue until everyone has had an opportunity to participate.
- Gradually introduce new rules that change who can participate and how:
  - Only certain students can receive the ball.
  - Some students must call for the ball twice before receiving it.
  - Selected students can intercept passes.
  - A small number of students are given the power to decide who receives the ball.
- Pause briefly between changes and ask students to notice how the new rules influence their behaviour, movement and relationships.
- Stop the activity and invite students to reflect on the differences in participation. Discuss:
  - Who had power?
  - Who had agency?
  - How did exclusion feel or appear physically?
  - Is being allowed onto the field the same as having equal opportunity once you are there?
- Challenge the group to redesign the rules so that everyone has a genuine opportunity to contribute.
- Repeat the passing activity using the revised rules.
- Encourage students to consider the difference between simply being included and having equal access, influence and opportunity.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- How does your body language change when you are included or excluded?
- How can positioning, gesture and eye contact communicate power or inequality?
- What changes when everyone has an opportunity to contribute?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Who held the power during the activity, and how did this influence the participation of others?
- What is the difference between having access to an opportunity and having genuine agency within it?
- How did exclusion and inclusion affect the physical relationships and dynamics within the group?
- Is being allowed onto the field the same as having an equal opportunity to participate?
- How can theatre use movement and physical relationships to communicate ideas about fairness, equality, and social change?

ACTIVITY 3:
FROM THE DREAM TO THE LEAGUE

FOCUS:

Historical context and dramatic storytelling.

PURPOSE:

To explore how historical research, real events and personal experiences can be transformed into a collage drama. Students experiment with a non-linear combination of dialogue, narration, direct address, ensemble movement, frozen images, and sound to explore themes of determination, equality, resilience, and collective change.

INSTRUCTIONS:

In small groups, using the suggested student research sources below, ask students to:

- research significant moments in the development of women's Australian Rules Football, including:
  - The history of women playing Australian Rules Football before the AFLW.
  - The 2010 report recommends the creation of a national women's league.
  - The challenges and barriers faced by female footballers.
  - The establishment of the AFLW and its inaugural season in 2017.
  - The ongoing development and impact of women's football.

After their investigations, ask students to consider the individuals, challenges and collective actions that contributed to the establishment of the AFLW.

Identify:

- Three significant milestones in the development of women's football.
- Two challenges or barriers faced by women pursuing opportunities to play.
- One individual or group whose contribution helped advance women's football.
- One personal story or experience that could inspire a dramatic character or scene.

- Explain that collage drama brings together a collection of short, contrasting theatrical moments rather than relying on one continuous scene or storyline.
- Students select four or five theatrical moments from their research and experiment with different ways to communicate each one.

For example:

MOMENT	SUGGESTED THEATRICAL APPROACH
The Dream	A single performer delivers a monologue expressing a desire to play football, while the ensemble creates a frozen image of possibility.
The Barriers	Overlapping voices repeat statements of opposition or exclusion, while performers use stylised movement to communicate resistance.
The Turning Point	A narrator announces a significant historical milestone, supported by ensemble movement and rhythmic clapping.
The Team	Individual voices emerge from the ensemble, gradually building into a unified chorus communicating determination and collective strength.
The League	A sequence of connected frozen images transforms into a final collective statement celebrating the establishment of the AFLW.

- Students can rearrange these moments, repeat particular words or actions, or juxtapose contrasting perspectives to create dramatic meaning.
- Students devise a 2–3-minute collage drama using their selected moments.

Their performance should incorporate at least four of the following theatrical conventions:

- Direct address or narration to communicate historical information.
- Short dialogue or monologues inspired by real experiences.
- Chorus work, repetition, or overlapping voices.
- Stylised movement or physical theatre.
- Frozen images to represent significant moments.
- Rhythmic clapping, breath, or vocal sound to create tension.
- Juxtaposition of contrasting perspectives or moments in time.

- Encourage students to experiment with transitions that connect the moments without relying on traditional scene changes.
- Groups present their collage dramas to the class.
- Following each performance, invite the audience to identify the historical events represented and the theatrical choices used to communicate the story.

ACTIVITY 3

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What challenges needed to be overcome for the AFLW to become a reality?
- Whose voices and experiences might be missing from the official historical record?
- How can a single moment represent a much larger historical event?
- What makes a real event dramatically compelling?
- How can you communicate a significant historical event without simply acting out what happened?
- What happens when you place contrasting voices or perspectives alongside one another?
- How can narration and direct address help the audience understand the historical context?
- How might repetition, chorus work or sound communicate collective determination?
- How can you move between different moments in time without using conventional scene transitions?
- How can you transform a historical fact into a theatrical moment that creates an emotional response?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How can theatre communicate the emotional experience of historical change rather than simply recounting facts?
- How did your group transform historical research into theatrical storytelling?
- What was the impact of presenting individual experiences alongside collective voices?
- Why is it important to recognise the individuals and communities whose contributions made the AFLW possible?

SUGGESTED STUDENT RESEARCH SOURCES

1. First AFL Women's Game - National Museum of Australia

An accessible overview of the history of women's Australian Rules Football, the 2010 review, the establishment of the AFLW and its first season in 2017.

Research focus: How did the AFLW move from an idea to a national competition?

2. Still Kicking: A Century of Women in Football - State Library Victoria

Explores the history of women playing Australian Rules Football long before the establishment of the AFLW, including the 1918 Ballarat match and the women who helped shape the sport.

Research focus: Who were the women who played and championed football before a professional league existed?

3. The Journey So Far: Evolution of the AFLW - AFL

A useful chronological account of the 2010 review, exhibition matches, growing participation and the decisions that brought the league's commencement forward to 2017.

Research focus: What were the key turning points that made the AFLW possible?

4. The First Friday in February - AFLW Audio Documentary

An oral-history collection by Kirby Fenwick exploring the inaugural AFLW match through the memories and experiences of women involved.

Research focus: How do personal stories help us understand the emotional significance of a historical event?

Note: This resource is particularly valuable for exploring interview-based playwriting and composite characters.

5. 100 Years of Women's Football - AFL

Examines the long history of women playing Australian Rules Football, including early matches, the establishment of the Victorian Women's Football League in 1981 and the limited media recognition historically given to women's football.

Research focus: What barriers did female footballers face, and why is recognising their history important?

6. AFL Chronology - Australian Football League

A timeline documenting the expansion of the AFLW from eight inaugural teams in 2017 to a competition involving all 18 AFL clubs.

Research focus: How has the AFLW continued

ACTIVITY 4:
WHAT IS POST-DRAMATIC THEATRE?

FOCUS:
Dramatic form, structure and conventions.

PURPOSE:
To introduce students to post-dramatic theatre and investigate how contemporary performance can challenge traditional storytelling structures.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce a simple, dramatic scenario.
- Students first create a short scene using traditional dialogue and character interaction.

  Example 1: The Phone Call
  Characters: An aspiring AFLW player and her mother.
  Setting: The family kitchen.
  Dramatic action: The player receives a phone call confirming her selection for the inaugural AFLW season.

  Example dialogue:
  Player: (Looking at her phone) Mum, it's the coach. I think this might be it.
  Mother: Well, answer it! (The player answers, listens silently, then slowly smiles.)
  Player: I got in. I'm actually going to play in the AFLW.
  Mother: You did it! After everything you've worked for.
  Player: I just wish everyone who fought for this could be here.

  Theatrical focus: Students use realistic dialogue, character relationships, facial expression and emotional reactions to communicate the significance of the moment.

  Example 2: Sharing the News
  Characters: Two football teammates.
  Setting: A local football oval after training.
  Dramatic action: One player has been selected for the inaugural AFLW season, while her teammate has not.

  Example dialogue:
  Player A: I got the call this morning. I've been selected.
  Player B: (Pauses) That's incredible. You deserve it.
  Player A: What about you? Have you heard anything?
  Player B: Yeah. I didn't make it.
  Player A: I'm sorry. I thought we'd be doing this together.
  Player B: So did I. But you have to go. This is what we've been fighting for.

  Theatrical focus: Students explore contrasting emotions, character objectives, and dramatic tension through realistic dialogue and interaction.

- Both examples use conventions of traditional dramatic storytelling, including identifiable characters, a recognisable setting, chronological action, realistic dialogue and cause-and-effect relationships.
- Introduce Post-dramatic Theatre:
  Post-dramatic Theatre challenges the dominance of a conventional linear plot and character-driven dialogue. Rather than relying solely on a traditional beginning, middle and end, a production may use movement, sound, imagery, repetition, narration, juxtaposition and ensemble performance as equally important storytelling devices.
- Students recreate the same moment using at least three of the following post-dramatic conventions:
  - Direct address to the audience
  - Fragmented dialogue
  - Narration
  - Repetition
  - Chorus or ensemble speaking
  - Stylised movement
  - Non-linear storytelling
  - Rhythmic sound

  For example: Instead of showing a realistic phone conversation, the ensemble might repeatedly whisper "Did I make it?", while individual performers step forward to announce "Selected" or "Not selected", creating a theatrical representation of both the excitement and disappointment experienced by players.
- Groups share both versions and evaluate how the audience's experience changes.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- Does a story need to unfold chronologically to be understood?
- How can movement or sound communicate something that dialogue cannot?
- What happens when performers speak directly to the audience?
- How can multiple voices communicate different perspectives on the same event?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does post-dramatic theatre challenge traditional storytelling?
- Why might this style be effective for communicating a collective historical experience?
- How can different theatrical elements work together without relying on a single central character?

ACTIVITY 5:
THE ARCHITECTURE OF A STORY

FOCUS:

Dramatic structure, thematic storytelling and ensemble devising.

PURPOSE:

To explore how the five-part structure communicates the central themes of each chapter to represent the emotional and social significance of each stage of the story.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Divide students into five groups and allocate one chapter of *Strong Is the New Pretty* to each group.
- Introduce the themes associated with each chapter:

PART/CHAPTER	THEMES
The Dream	An idea emerges. Possibility, ambition, and hope.
The Reality	Obstacles, resistance, and the challenges of achieving change.
The Team	Collaboration, belonging, identity, and shared determination.
The League	The dream becomes a reality through collective action.
The Grand Final	Achievement, celebration, legacy and the ongoing journey

Ask each group to discuss:

- What is the central message or theme of our chapter?
- What might the characters want, and what challenges might they face?
- What emotions might be experienced during this part of the journey?
- How could we communicate these ideas theatrically rather than simply explaining what happens?

- Each group develops a 30-45-second theatrical moment that communicates the central themes of its allocated chapter.
- Once groups have devised their moments, arrange the five performances in sequence to create a collective theatrical narrative.
- Challenge students to develop transitions that connect each chapter without stopping the performance.

Consider:

- Shared movement - A gesture introduced in The Dream is repeated or transformed in later chapters.
- Sound - A single clap, breath, or vocal phrase develops into a collective rhythm.
- Frozen images - The final image of one chapter becomes the starting point for the next.
- Narration - A recurring voice connects the moments and signals changes in time or perspective.
- Ensemble transformation - Performers radually join the action, reflecting the growing movement towards establishing the AFLW.

- Encourage students to consider how the overall performance builds in energy, complexity and emotional intensity as the story progresses.
- Present the five chapters as one continuous performance.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What is the central idea or conflict in your chapter?
- How does your chapter contribute to the overall journey?
- What does the audience need to understand about each chapter for the overall story to be meaningful?
- How can you represent your chapter's central theme through action, movement, or imagery rather than dialogue alone?
- How can the ensemble represent a collective experience rather than individual characters?
- How can a transition communicate a shift in time, perspective or emotional energy?
- How can repetition or transformation of a movement communicate progress or change?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why might Suzie Miller choose to structure *Strong Is the New Pretty* around five interconnected chapters rather than follow one character's journey?
- How does dividing a production into chapters influence the audience's understanding?
- How does the structure reflect the journey from an idea to a significant social achievement?
- How did the theatrical choices in each chapter communicate its central themes?
- How did the five chapters work together to tell a larger story?
- How does the structure reflect the idea of making something from nothing, both in the establishment of the AFLW and in the creation of theatre?

POST-PERFORMANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

These activities encourage students to analyse the production's theatrical language and creative decisions before applying their understanding through practical experimentation, devising, and reflection.



ACTIVITY 1:
REAL STORIES, REIMAGINED CHARACTERS

FOCUS:

Verbatim research, characterisation and playwriting.

PURPOSE:

To investigate how playwrights can draw on interviews, personal testimony and historical research to create fictionalised characters that reflect real experiences, while considering the ethical responsibilities of representing real people's stories.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Discuss how Suzie Miller's writing can be explored through the relationship between real events, research, and dramatic invention.
- Students identify the difference between:
  - A verbatim character using a person's actual recorded words.
  - A fictional character inspired by a real experience.
  - A composite character combining characteristics, perspectives, or experiences from several individuals.
- Students work in pairs to conduct a short interview about an experience of overcoming an obstacle, working towards a goal or challenging an expectation.

Suggested interview questions:

  - Tell me about a time when someone doubted what you could achieve.
  - What motivated you to keep going?
  - Who helped you overcome the challenge?
  - What changed as a result?

- Students may instead use published interviews or fictional responses where personal interviewing is not appropriate.

Teacher Note: Obtain informed consent for interviews, explain how responses will be used, and avoid presenting invented dialogue as authentic testimony. Students should not be required to disclose sensitive personal experiences.

- In groups, students combine ideas from two or three interviews to develop one fictional character.
- They establish the characters:
  - background,
  - objective,
  - obstacle,
  - defining experience and perspective.
- Students write a 60-second monologue or short scene that captures the character's experience, using a combination of original dialogue and research-informed ideas.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What makes a character feel authentic?
- How can you combine different experiences while maintaining a believable character?
- What is the difference between representing someone's experience and reproducing their exact words?
- How can dialogue reveal what a character wants, fears, or believes?
- When does dramatic invention risk misrepresenting someone's story?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why might a playwright choose to create composite characters rather than portray specific individuals?
- How can research provide authenticity while still allowing creative freedom?
- What responsibilities do playwrights have when adapting real people's experiences?

Teacher Note: Extend this activity by reading the *Strong is the New Pretty* script and watching the *Meet the Makers: In Conversation with...Suzie Miller* and *Young Voices, Big Questions: In Conversation with Suzie Miller* interviews on QPAC's Digital Stage https://digitalstage.qpac.com.au/

ACTIVITY 2:
REAL STORIES, REIMAGINED CHARACTERS

FOCUS:
Multiple characters, dialogue and direct address.

PURPOSE:
To explore how performers can create and transition between multiple characters using vocal expression, physical characterisation, gesture, and spatial positioning.

INSTRUCTIONS:
- Students select a significant moment from the history of the AFLW, such as the announcement of a national women's league.
- Using their knowledge of this event so far, create three contrasting characters who might experience the event differently.
- Examples include:
  - a young aspiring player,
  - an experienced footballer, and
  - a skeptical sporting official.
- Students establish a distinct vocal quality, posture, gestures, rhythm, and physical position for each character.
- They practice moving between characters without changing costumes or using props.
- Students create a short performance combining:
  - Direct address: One character speaks directly to the audience.
  - Narration: A performer provides context or describes the unfolding event.
  - Dialogue: Two or more characters interact within the dramatic situation.
- Students experiment with rapid character changes, using a physical gesture, a shift in focus, or a change in vocal quality to signal each transition.

TEACHER PROMPTS:
- How can you establish a new character with one physical or vocal choice?
- What distinguishes direct address from dialogue?
- How can narration provide context without interrupting dramatic tension?
- How does switching between characters influence the audience's understanding?
- How can one performer represent several conflicting perspectives?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
- How did the actors in *Strong Is the New Pretty* establish and differentiate multiple characters?
- What impact does direct address have on the relationship between performer and audience?
- How can multiple perspectives reveal the complexity of a historical event?

Teacher Note: Extend this activity by using a scene from the *Strong is the New Pretty* script.

ACTIVITY 3:
THE POWER OF THE CHORUS

FOCUS:

Directorial choices, ensemble and collective storytelling.

PURPOSE:

To investigate how chorus work can communicate collective identity, shared perspectives and dramatic tension.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Provide students with an original line inspired by the production's themes:
  We deserve a place on the field.
- Students deliver the line individually, experimenting with different emotional intentions.
- In groups of six to eight, students explore delivering the same line using:
  - Unison speaking
  - Echo and repetition
  - Overlapping dialogue
  - Whispering and crescendo
  - Individual voices emerging from the ensemble
  - Contrasting spatial arrangements
- Students create a short sequence beginning with a single voice and gradually introducing others until the whole ensemble speaks together.
- Groups repeat their sequence, changing the arrangement of performers, rhythm, or vocal delivery to create a different dramatic effect.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What changes when one voice becomes many?
- How can the chorus represent a community rather than individual characters?
- What is the impact of speaking in unison?
- How can repetition strengthen or challenge a message?
- How does the placement of performers influence the audience's focus?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How did director Sarah Giles use chorus or ensemble work to communicate collective experience?
- How can a chorus represent social change or a shared struggle?
- What happens when an individual voice emerges from a collective voice?

Teacher Note: Extend this activity by using a scene from the *Strong is the New Pretty* script and watching the *Meet the Makers: In Conversation with...with Sarah Giles* interview on QPAC's Digital Stage https://digitalstage.qpac.com.au/

ACTIVITY 4:
BUILDING SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

FOCUS:

Set design, theatrical symbolism and transformation.

PURPOSE:

To investigate how set design and the gradual transformation of a performance space can communicate the themes and dramatic structure of a production.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Students recall the set design in *Strong Is the New Pretty*, considering how the performance environment changed throughout the work.
- As a class or in pairs, create a storyboard of how the set design developed and represented the theme of 'building something from nothing'.
- Focus on how the design developed alongside the story of the AFLW and the five chapters of the production.
- In small groups, students begin with an empty performance space and a limited selection of simple objects, such as chairs, boxes, or fabric.
- Using the five chapters:
  - The Dream,
  - The Reality
  - The Team
  - The League
  - The Grand Final
- Students develop a design concept that gradually transforms the space.
- At each stage, they introduce one new object, arrangement, or visual element.
- Groups create a sequence of five design sketches or stage images and explain how each change contributes to the developing story.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What does an empty stage communicate to an audience?
- How can a single object represent multiple locations or ideas?
- How does the gradual introduction of set elements communicate progress?
- What might happen if the set becomes more complex as the story develops?
- How can set design communicate a theme without dialogue?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How did the set design reflect the production's central theme of making something from nothing?
- How can the physical transformation of a stage symbolise social or historical change?
- How do design choices influence the way an audience understands a story?

Teacher Note: Extend this activity by analysing images from the production and watching the *Meet the Makers: In Conversation with...Christina Smith* on QPAC's Digital Stage https://digitalstage.qpac.com.au/

ACTIVITY 5:
THE SOUND OF DETERMINATION

FOCUS:

Sound design, rhythm and vocal expression.

PURPOSE:

To investigate how sound can function as an integral part of dramatic storytelling rather than simply accompanying the action.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Invite students to imagine the moments leading up to a significant sporting event, such as the first AFLW match or a grand final.
- As a class, brainstorm the sounds that might be heard both on and off the field.
- Encourage students to consider:
  - Rhythmic clapping from spectators or teammates.
  - Audible breathing that communicates nerves, physical effort, or anticipation.
  - Footsteps, running or controlled foot percussion.
  - Vocal sounds such as calls, chants, encouragement, or gasps.
  - Moments of silence before a significant action.
  - Repetition and changes in tempo, volume, and intensity.
- Listen to a match while eyes are closed and see what they may have missed.
- Ask students to consider how these sounds might communicate emotion or dramatic meaning beyond simply recreating the atmosphere of a football match.
- In groups of 4-6, students create a 30-60-second soundscape representing the moments leading up to a significant sporting event.
- Begin with a single sound, such as a slow breath or clap, and gradually introduce additional layers to build anticipation and dramatic tension.
- Encourage students to experiment with:
  - Layering: Introducing sounds one at a time to create increasing complexity.
  - Tempo: Gradually accelerating or slowing the rhythm to influence the sense of urgency.
  - Dynamics: Shifting between soft and loud sounds to communicate emotional intensity.
  - Repetition: Repeating particular sounds or rhythms to establish a motif.
  - Contrast: Using sudden changes in volume, rhythm or texture to surprise the audience.
  - Silence: Creating a moment of stillness or suspended anticipation before a significant event.
- Students should establish a clear beginning, development, and climax.

  For example: A soundscape might begin with one performer breathing slowly. A second introduces a steady clap, followed by others creating a rhythm through footsteps and repeated vocal sounds. The tempo gradually increases until the entire ensemble is contributing to a unified rhythm. At its peak, all sound stops suddenly, creating a moment of suspense.
- Ask students to imagine that their soundscape has reached the decisive moment of the sporting event.
- On the teacher's cue, the ensemble moves from its climax into complete silence.
- Students then create two contrasting endings to the same soundscape:

  Outcome 1 Victory: The team achieves its goal. Students use sound to communicate excitement, relief, celebration, or collective achievement.

  Outcome 2 Defeat: The team experiences disappointment or loss. Students use sound to communicate frustration, disbelief, exhaustion, or quiet determination.
- Encourage students to experiment with how subtle changes in breath, rhythm, vocal expression and silence can dramatically alter the emotional meaning of the same moment.
- Challenge students to communicate each outcome without using dialogue or explicitly announcing what has happened.
- Students refine their soundscape by introducing a simple physical or visual element.

  For example:
  - A single performer stands centre stage while the ensemble creates the sounds of anticipation around them.
  - The ensemble gradually moves closer together as the rhythm builds, representing collective strength.
  - A performer repeats a simple gesture in time with the soundscape.
  - The ensemble creates a frozen image at the moment the sound stops.

ACTIVITY 5

- Encourage students to consider how sound and movement can work together to communicate a character's internal emotional experience.
- Groups present their soundscapes to the class, performing both contrasting endings.
- Invite the audience to identify the emotions, dramatic tension, and possible narrative communicated through sound.
- Discuss which sound design choices were most effective and how the addition of movement or visual imagery influenced the audience's interpretation.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- How can breath communicate anticipation, fear, exhaustion or relief?
- What happens to the audience's emotional response when the rhythm gradually increases in speed or intensity?
- How can repetition create a sense of determination or collective purpose?
- How might silence be more powerful than sound at a significant dramatic moment?
- •How can the same sound communicate different emotions depending on its tempo, volume or context?
- How can sound and movement work together to communicate a character's experience without dialogue?
- How can the ensemble create the impression of a large crowd or significant sporting event using only their bodies and voices?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How did the production use rhythmic clapping and breath to contribute to its theatrical language?
- How does sound design influence dramatic tension and audience engagement?
- How did changing the emotional outcome influence the way you manipulated sound?
- How can sound design communicate the emotional significance of a sporting moment rather than simply recreate the sounds of the event?

Teacher Note: Extend this activity by watching the *Meet the Makers: In Conversation with...Clemence Williams and Brady* interview on QPAC's Digital Stage https://digitalstage.qpac.com.au/

ACTIVITY 6:
A FAIR GO — WHOSE OPPORTUNITY?

FOCUS:

Scriptwriting, character development, dramatic conflict, and social perspectives.

PURPOSE:

To explore the theme of a fair go by developing an original dramatic script. Inspired by *Strong Is the New Pretty*, students investigate how playwrights can use contrasting perspectives, character objectives and dramatic tension to challenge established expectations and explore issues of fairness, equality and opportunity.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The Provocation - What Is a Fair Go?

- Present students with the statement:

  Everyone deserves a fair go, but not everyone begins with the same opportunities.

- Discuss how this statement connects to *Strong Is the New Pretty* and the challenges faced by women seeking opportunities to play Australian Rules Football at a national level.
- Invite students to consider other situations in which individuals or communities have had to challenge expectations, overcome barriers, or advocate for equal opportunities.
- Students select a social issue or situation that explores the idea of fairness.

  For example:
  - Equal opportunities in sport, education, or employment.
  - Challenging gender stereotypes or social expectations.
  - Access to resources, facilities, or opportunities.
  - Inclusion and representation within a community.
  - The struggle to have an individual's voice or experience recognised.

The Writing Challenge

- Write an original short, dramatic script that explores what it means to have **a fair go**, and whether everyone genuinely has the same opportunity to succeed.
- Students develop a fictional situation in which an individual or group is seeking an opportunity that is being restricted, challenged, or denied.
- Encourage students to identify:
  - The situation: What is happening, and why is it significant?
  - The central conflict: What is preventing someone from achieving their goal?
  - The characters: Who is involved, and what different perspectives do they represent?
  - The stakes: What might be gained or lost?
  - The message: What should the audience consider or question?

  Examples:

  A group of students wants to establish a student-led arts festival that celebrates diverse cultures, identities and creative voices, but faces opposition due to limited funding, established school traditions and differing opinions about whose stories and perspectives should be represented.

  A highly qualified woman applies for a leadership position within an organisation but faces resistance from senior management, who question her ability to balance professional responsibilities with family commitments. Despite her experience and achievements, she must challenge deeply embedded gender stereotypes and workplace expectations to be given the same opportunities as her male colleagues.
- Students should move beyond presenting a simple argument between right and wrong. Encourage them to create a situation where characters have believable motivations, even when their perspectives conflict.
- Students create at least three characters who represent different perspectives on the central issue.
- For each character, students establish:
  - Objective: What does the character want?
  - Motivation: Why is achieving this important to them?
  - Obstacle: What is preventing them from getting what they want?
  - Perspective: What does a fair go mean to this character?
  - Relationship: How does the character's position affect others?
- Students are to consider how their characters might be inspired by real experiences or social issues while remaining fictional.
- Students may also experiment with creating a composite character who reflects the experiences or perspectives of several people, drawing on the playwriting approaches explored through *Strong Is the New Pretty*.

  Write a 2–3-page script featuring at least three characters and a clear dramatic conflict.

ACTIVITY 6

- Their script should include:
  - An opening that establishes the situation and central issue.
  - Dialogue that reveals contrasting perspectives and character objectives.
  - A moment of heightened dramatic tension or confrontation.
  - A turning point that challenges a character's assumptions or shifts the power dynamic.
  - An ending that communicates a message or leaves the audience with a question to consider.
- Challenge students to incorporate at least two theatrical conventions inspired by *Strong Is the New Pretty*:
  - Direct address: A character speaks directly to the audience, revealing a personal perspective or challenging an assumption.
  - Narration: A character provides context or offers a different perspective on the action.
  - Chorus work: Multiple characters speak together to communicate a collective viewpoint.
  - Repetition: A word, phrase, or statement is repeated to emphasise a central idea.
  - Silence: A pause or moment of stillness communicates tension, uncertainty or an emotional response.
  - Multiple characters: A performer transitions between different roles to communicate contrasting perspectives.
- Encourage students to use stage directions to indicate significant actions, physical relationships, pauses, and changes in dramatic tension.
- In pairs or small groups, students share their scripts through a rehearsed or unrehearsed reading.
- Invite students to provide feedback on:
  - The clarity of the central conflict and themes.
  - The authenticity and complexity of the characters.
  - How effectively the dialogue reveals different perspectives.
  - The use of theatrical conventions to create dramatic meaning.
  - The impact of the ending on the audience.
- Students refine their scripts, considering how their writing choices could strengthen the dramatic tension and communicate their intended message.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

- What does **a fair go** mean to each of your characters, and why might their perspectives differ?
- How can you create a believable conflict in which characters have competing objectives?
- Who holds power in your dramatic situation, and how might that power shift?
- How can dialogue reveal character and conflict rather than simply explain the issue?
- How might direct address, repetition or silence influence the audience's interpretation?
- How can your ending challenge the audience to reconsider what fairness and equality really mean?
- What can you leave unsaid so the audience must interpret the meaning for themselves?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How did you use character objectives and contrasting perspectives to create dramatic tension?
- How did your script explore the difference between being given an opportunity and having genuine equality?
- Which theatrical conventions were most effective in communicating your central message?
- How did writing about a social issue influence the way you developed your characters and dialogue?
- How can playwrights use fictional stories inspired by real experiences to challenge established beliefs and encourage social change?

Teacher Note: Extend this activity by watching the *Young Voices, Big Questions: In Conversation with Suzie Miller* interview on QPAC's Digital Stage https://digitalstage.qpac.com.au/

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT BY LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The following mapping identifies the most relevant curriculum connections. It is intended as a planning guide rather than a claim that each activity addresses every aspect of the nominated outcomes.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE	PRINCIPAL DRAMA CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS
Pre-performance learning Experiences	
Revolution in Five Words	Responding to and interpreting drama; evaluating dramatic meaning
Kick It to Me! Who Gets Included?	Improvisation; elements of drama; movement and dramatic relationships
From the Dream to the League	Research-informed devising; dramatic form and structure; ensemble storytelling
What Is Post-Dramatic Theatre?	Dramatic forms and conventions; experimentation; manipulation of dramatic languages
The Architecture of a Story	Dramatic structure; sequencing; devising and refining performance
Post-Performance Learning Experiences	
Real Stories, Reimagined Characters	Character development; dramatic writing; ethical representation
One Actor, Many Voices	Characterisation; expressive skills; acting techniques
The Power of the Chorus	Ensemble performance; directorial choices; vocal expression
Building Something from Nothing	Production design; symbolism; interpretation of theatrical choices
The Sound of Determination	Sound design; dramatic tension; manipulation of production elements
A Fair Go - Whose Opportunity?	Scriptwriting; dramatic conflict; character objectives; social commentary

This activity-level table can be used across all jurisdictions, with the relevant local syllabus outcomes added by teachers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Extend your students' exploration of *Strong Is the New Pretty* through a collection of interviews, videos, digital learning resources and further reading. These resources provide opportunities to investigate the creative processes behind the production, gain insights from the artists, and explore the real events and experiences that inspired Suzie Miller's play.

1) STRONG IS THE NEW PRETTY COLLECTION ON QPAC DIGITAL STAGE

Explore QPAC's Digital Stage for interviews and learning resources featuring the creative team behind *Strong Is the New Pretty*.

Through conversations with playwright Suzie Miller, director Sarah Giles and members of the creative team, students can discover how historical research, personal stories, dramatic writing, movement, sound and design contributed to bringing the production to life.

Teachers can use these resources to support classroom discussions, practical workshops, creative investigations, and performance analysis.

- **Young Voices, Big Questions: In Conversation with Suzie Miller**

  Hear directly from acclaimed playwright Suzie Miller as she responds to thought-provoking questions from the *Strong Is the New Pretty* Youth Ambassadors in this engaging conversation about storytelling, creativity and the power of theatre. This resource offers students valuable insights into the playwright's perspectives and creative practice, providing a springboard for classroom discussion and reflection.

- **The Body as Story**

  Explore how physicality and movement can become a powerful storytelling tool in The Body as Story, a workshop developed by movement specialist Nigel Poulton. Through AFL-inspired movement, theatrical biomechanics and ensemble exercises, discover how performers use their bodies to communicate character, emotion, dramatic tension and meaning.

- **Meet the Makers: In Conversation with...**

  Go behind the scenes and hear from the creative team as they share insights into their artistic roles, creative processes and contributions to bringing the production to life. This series offers students a valuable opportunity to explore how playwrights, directors, designers, and creative teams collaborate to transform a story into a powerful theatrical experience.

  Hear from:

  - Suzie Miller - Playwright
  - Sarah Giles - Director
  - Christina Smith - Designer
  - Clemence Williams - Composer
  - Brady Watkins - Sound Designer
  - Craig Wilkinson - Video Designer
  - Kelley Abbey - Movement Director

To find this collection of digital resources, explore: https://digitalstage.qpac.com.au/

2) PURCHASE THE SCRIPT - STRONG IS THE NEW PRETTY BY SUZIE MILLER

Published by Currency Press, the script provides opportunities for students to investigate Suzie Miller's dramatic writing, character development, dialogue, and theatrical structure.

Teachers can use selected scenes to explore how real events inspire fictionalised characters, analyse the playwright's dramatic choices, and develop practical script-interpretation and performance activities.

Purchase the script: https://www.currency.com.au/books/strong-is-the-new-pretty

3) PUBLISHED INTERVIEWS WITH THE CREATIVES

Suzie Miller - ABC Radio National

Suzie Miller on Telling Stories of Australian Women's Strength - From the Courtroom to the Footy Field

In this audio interview, Suzie Miller discusses the inspiration behind *Strong Is the New Pretty*, the establishment of the AFLW and the determination required to challenge entrenched systems and create opportunities for women.

Particularly relevant to activities exploring playwriting, social commentary, gender equality, and the relationship between real events and theatrical storytelling.

Also check out - New Suzie Miller play tells AFLW origin story

Sarah Giles - ArtsHub

Strong Is the New Pretty Is About More Than Women Kicking Goals: 'It Speaks to a Bigger Movement'

This article features insights from director Sarah Giles about the production's broader social and political significance, Suzie Miller's approach to storytelling and the power of theatre to challenge audience perspectives.

Particularly relevant to activities exploring directorial interpretation, contemporary Australian theatre, social commentary and the communication of dramatic meaning.

4) PRODUCTION INFORMATION AND FURTHER READING

***Strong Is the New Pretty* - Brisbane Festival**

Discover further information about the production, its creative team and the themes that inspired this contemporary Australian work.

Youth and Education Program - Brisbane Festival

5) EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF THE AFLW

Teachers and students can extend their investigations through historical accounts, interviews and archival materials documenting the development of women's Australian Rules Football.

Useful starting points include the National Museum of Australia, State Library Victoria and the Australian Football League (AFL).

These resources provide historical context for the production and opportunities to investigate the individuals, communities and collective actions that contributed to the establishment of the AFLW in 2017.

EDUCATION RESOURCE



STRONG IS THE NEW PRETTY

A PLAY BY
SUZIE MILLER

DIRECTED BY
SARAH GILES

Presented by Strong is the New Pretty is a Brisbane Festival, Sydney Theatre Company and Trish Wadley Productions Co-Production, originally commissioned by Trish Wadley Productions.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advocacy body.

Australian Government | Creative Australia | BRISBANE FESTIVAL | SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY | TWP TRISH WADLEY PRODUCTIONS