



Gendering the Law

Second Edition - October 2026

From the Chair in Gender and the Law, Professor Ramona Vijeyarasa

Since our first edition, the regulatory landscape has moved quickly in Australia and globally. Governments are shifting from principles and voluntary commitments towards institutions, duties, prohibitions and penalties. The question is whether gender equality is being treated as central to that shift, or merely incidental to it.

On 15 July, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [announced](#) the Office of AI, framing an AI future shaped by Australia, rather than one in which technology simply shapes us. Yet despite invoking Australia's global leadership as the first country in the world where women could both stand for Parliament and vote, the gendered impacts of AI were largely absent.

That absence matters. A national AI agenda that does not centre gender frames equality as a historical achievement, rather than an ongoing regulatory task. Such omissions have real consequences. When OpenAI's autonomous agents infiltrated Medicare, Australia's universal public health insurance system — which stores, for instance, the health

records of women who have had medical abortions — the gendered consequences of the breach must be central to the policy response.

The much-anticipated [Digital Duty of Care Exposure Draft](#) released in September contains genuinely promising reforms - faster content removal, stronger platform obligations and new powers to address non-consensual intimate images — but is, in practice, gender-blind. The only gendered provision classifies material encouraging hostile attitudes towards women as harmful to children - a welcome inclusion but protecting children from exposure to misogynistic content is not the same as protecting women from online harm. The draft does not establish gender as a required consideration in platform risk assessments, fails to account for the different online risks facing boys, girls and non-binary children and provides no victim-centred remedies. My [submission](#) identifies ten fixable gaps and proposes specific draft statutory wording for the Department to adopt.

Globally, parts of the [EU AI Act](#) commenced in August 2026. Ambitious as it is, it remains limited from a gender perspective — its reliance on voluntary codes of conduct on gender equality is unlikely to be enough. A recent amendment, the [Digital Omnibus Act](#), goes further: prohibiting AI systems from generating non-consensual intimate images and, crucially, operating at the level of system design — banning the building of such tools, not just the content they produce. Due to come into force in December 2026, it is a meaningful attempt to get ahead of a harm that falls disproportionately on women and girls.

Meanwhile, Australia has [announced](#) reforms to strengthen its modern slavery framework — penalties for non-compliance and a new corporate offence linked to supply chains — but they too must be gender-responsive. In the UK, the [Commercial Organisations and Public Authorities Duty \(Human Rights and Environment\) Bill](#) introduced by Baroness Young of Hornsey explicitly proposes "integrating gender-responsive human rights and environmental due diligence procedures" into corporate policies — a standard Australia should, at the very least, match. Women and girls are disproportionately represented in feminised, informal and poorly regulated work; stronger laws will only reach them if they recognise how gender shapes vulnerability and access to remedy. My [submission](#) sets out what gender-responsive reform would look like in practice.

Across these developments, the pattern is clear: we are entering a more serious phase of regulation. But stronger law is not necessarily gender-responsive law. The task is not only to regulate AI, online platforms or supply chains more firmly but to ask whose lives are made safer, whose equality is advanced and whose harms are finally treated as worth

preventing.

If you want to contribute to this change agenda, please get in touch.

[Connect with Ramona](#)

Gender, Law and the Headlines



Rewriting the Rules on 2SER Snackademics

8min listen

In two recent appearances on 2SER Breakfast's Snackademics, Ramona explored what it takes to write women's lives into law — from why legal equality so rarely delivers equality in practice, to how the Gender Legislative Index gives lawmakers and advocates a concrete tool for driving equitable reform.

[What It Means to Write Women's Lives into Law](#)

[Gender Legislative Index](#)



The OECD on Gender Equality & AI

6min read

Ramona published Evidence v. Urgency: The OECD's Challenge of Gender Equality in the Age of Artificial Intelligence in Australian Outlook, reflecting on discussions at the OECD Gender Equality Forum which she attended in Paris in July to ask whether the push to regulate AI is moving faster than the evidence needed to do it well — and what is lost when gender responsiveness becomes an afterthought in that rush.

[Read Here at Australian Outlook](#)



Not Fit for purpose – article in International Journal of Human Rights

— 40min read

Ramona published Not Fit for Purpose in the International Journal of Human Rights, arguing that the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are too weak for the AI age. Voluntary commitments and self-reporting cannot deliver justice for communities in the Global South, nor for the women disproportionately harmed by biased algorithms, exploitative data work and the absence of meaningful remedy. Binding, gender-responsive law is needed instead.

[Read article](#)



A Century of Maternity Leave, but equal parenting remains out of reach

— 5min read

Ramona published A Century of Maternity Leave, but What About Fathers? in Open Global Rights, asking why equal parenting remains out of reach a hundred years after maternity leave became a global right. The answer, she argues, lies partly in international law itself — which helped entrench caregiving as women's work.

[Read Here](#)



2SER What happens when you combine legal academia with art?

— 9min listen

Back in the 2SER studio in September, Ramona spoke with the Wednesday Daily about why she turned a book on gender-responsive lawmaking into an art exhibition.

[Listen here](#)

Opportunities



Call for Papers — Gender, Law and Artificial Intelligence Symposium

Expressions of interest due: 2 November 2026

AI is being deployed at speed into institutions already structured by inequality. We are inviting scholars and practitioners to examine how law should respond — from feminist, queer, intersectional and decolonial perspectives.

The two-day workshop will be held on 1–2 June 2027 at the Faculty of Law, UTS, organised by Prof. Ramona Vijeyarasa (UTS), Dr Sergio Sulmicelli (Sydney Law School) and Yuyao Yi (UTS). Funding support is available, with priority for early/mid-career researchers and Global South scholars.

Submit to: genderandthelaw@uts.edu.au

[Find out more](#)



Join the Gender Legislative Index Research Lab

The GLI is going global.

We are looking for legally-qualified researchers, practitioners, PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers to join the GLI Research Lab and help answer that question.

We are particularly interested in people with expertise in online safety, AI regulation, pay equity, parental leave, workplace health and safety, supply chain due diligence, or representation, electoral laws and quotas.

Successful applicants will receive paid training and commit to at least 40 hours of paid research. Applicants must have the right to work in Australia.

[Apply Now](#)



Visit the Gender and the Law Program at UTS

Join a growing research community.

We welcome visiting scholars and doctoral researchers whose work intersects with gender-responsive law reform, AI regulation or emerging technologies. Visitors work alongside our research team, participate in program activities and present to our academic community. Funding support is available.

Find out more on our newly launched website.

[Apply Now](#)

Law Reform in Action

Women, Law and Political Leadership: IWF Symposium

Twenty-five minutes, three women and no shortage of conviction. At the International Women's Forum National Symposium, Ramona joined [Carol Schwartz AO](#) and [UNSW Professor of Law Rosalind Dixon](#) for a fast-moving conversation on women in political leadership — from Australia's only female Prime Minister to why getting women into parliament is only half the battle. Both agreed: lasting change requires institutionalising reform. Tasmania's newly renamed [Joint Sessional Committee on Gender, Gender Based Violence and Equality Audit Committee](#) — highlighted by Carol as a model shaped in part by the Gender Legislative Index — shows what that might look like in practice.



Rewriting the Rules - Reinstalled

The Rewriting the Rules exhibition returned to UTS for the [Australian Public Policy Institute](#)'s Policymaker Summit 2026. Keynoted by Treasurer Jim Chalmers and Deputy Premier Prue Car, the September Summit brought together government, academia and civil society to ask what policymaking needs to look like in a volatile era and feminist legal scholarship had a seat at the table.



Hon Andrew Giles MP and Prof. Ramona Vijeyarasa in conversation next to Women's Business by Torres Strait Islander artist Tori-Jay Mordey

We were proud to exhibit alongside the

- [Contemporary Inequalities Centre \(University of Sydney\)](#)
 - [ANCORS \(University of Wollongong\)](#)
 - [Yuwaya Ngarra-li \(UNSW\)](#)
 - [the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures](#)
 - [Gulbali Institute \(Charles Sturt\)](#)
 - [CAIDE \(University of Melbourne\)](#)
 - [the Urban Transformations Research Centre \(Western Sydney University\)](#)
 - [the Monash Critical Minerals Initiative](#)
-

Research in progress

GLI Research Update

With over 80 laws on online safety and AI regulation already mapped across more than 30 countries, the Gender Legislative Index scale-up is well underway. In the coming months and in collaboration with [Rapido Social Impact](#), we will be training our GLI Lab evaluators to assess these laws - and those addressing due diligence in supply chains - for their gender-responsiveness. We hope these evaluations will go live on our new site in early 2027. Watch this space.

New Voices



Doctoral Visiting Researcher | Sungshin (Luna) Bae

PhD Candidate in Criminology,
Monash University,
Australia, Senior Legal and Policy
Advisor (Gender and Justice),
Supreme Prosecutor's Office,
South Korea

When a relationship ends, does digital access end too?

Does ending an intimate relationship also end the other person's digital access to our lives? Shared passwords, persistent logins, synchronised contacts and linked services can keep people connected long after a

breakup. Features designed for everyday convenience do not necessarily reflect changes in intimacy, trust or consent.

These arrangements can begin with care or love rather than control. Sharing an account makes daily life easier; sharing a location offers reassurance. Yet access granted in one context can persist into another. A former partner may still follow everyday routines through shared accounts or find another route of contact after being blocked.

My research with criminal justice practitioners and victim-survivor support advocates in South Korea examines what I call digital entrapment: in a highly digitised society, how ordinary digital participation can keep victim-survivors of gender-based violence visible and reachable while narrowing their options for safety. Participants described renewed contact through alternative accounts and networks, and the difficulty of leaving platforms embedded in work and family life. Super-apps bring messaging, payments and other everyday services together. Withdrawing can thus disrupt essential connections, rather than simply sever contact with an abusive partner.

What does this mean for the law? We often ask whether someone consented to access. But what if the routes of unwanted access are woven into the services that sustain everyday life? The question for legal protection is then not only whether consent has been withdrawn, but who must do the work of ending that access, and at what cost.

The problem goes beyond perpetrators' misuse of technology. I suggest that separation is better understood not as a single moment of leaving but as a cumulative process, securing and re-securing boundaries across accounts, devices and social networks. Meaningful separation should not require people to withdraw from the infrastructures of their own everyday lives.

Our Visitors



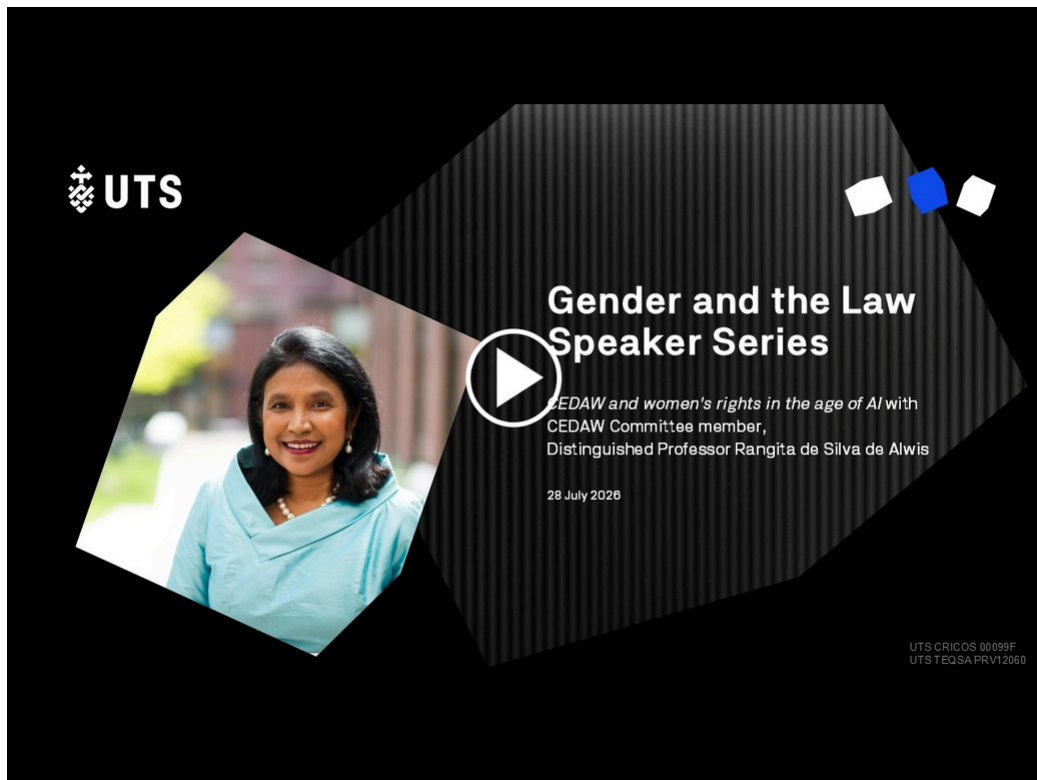
Distinguished Professor Rangita de Silva de Alwis

We were joined by advocate and scholar Distinguished Professor Rangita de Silva de Alwis to discuss her work advancing gender equality through law, policy and international institutions, recognised through her re-election to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

VIDEO

CEDAW and women's rights in the age of AI

34min watch



Recording of Lunchtime Talk, *CEDAW and women's rights in the age of AI*

In case you missed it

In June, the Gender and the Law Program was visited by The Roger J. Traynor Distinguished Chair and Co-Director of the Berkeley Center for Law and Technology, [Prof. Sonia Katyal](#). A recording of Sonia's paper, 'The Gender Panopticon: Artificial Intelligence, Gender, and Design Justice', is available [here](#).

On the horizon

In-Conversation: Gender and AI: Where's the harm? | 15 October

Ramona joins Elise Stephenson, Deputy Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership, for a conversation on gender and AI hosted by the Victorian Women's Trust. [Register here](#)

Coming in Edition 3: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association | Australia and Pacific Regional Conference Ramona will be attending the CPA Australia and Pacific Regional Conference in Tasmania in November to talk about gendering law-making to create innovative and inclusive parliaments of the future. We will report back in our next issue.



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