

So condescending

REX Jory's call for an end to International Women's Day (*The Advertiser*, 14/3/11) is wrong on so many levels.

It is true that the number of women we have in prominent government positions is proof women in Australia are in a good position. And it is also true women have made enormous gains in terms of gender equality in the last 100 years.

But to say women are making their way nicely in the world is both ignorant and condescending.

Travel beyond Adelaide and you will realise how far women are from true equality. In Latin America, the average number of women in high-level government representation is only eight per cent. Many of these women experience political harassment and violence.

In war-torn areas of the globe, women and girls become strategic targets and rape is used as a weapon of war. And it is not just in so-called Third World countries where women are seen as inferior to men.

As a young woman, I was shocked when I travelled to Europe and found how indecently women are treated in the media.

Readers debate Rex Jory's call for Australians to abandon International Women's Day.

Italy is renowned for its parading of female flesh on its television screens but even I was not prepared for the level of humiliation women endure daily, branded as nothing more than pieces of meat on display for the pleasure of men. That's only if you're good-looking, of course.

I have never considered myself a feminist, as I have always believed my mother's generation had already paved the way for the rights of women today.

But, as a volunteer who took part in the International Women's Day breakfast this year, I was a witness to something extraordinary. The gathering of 2000 women to celebrate the achievements of both our forebears and of women today, who are setting the standards for future generations, was an incredibly uplifting experience.

We do not abandon Anzac Day when we are no longer at war. Thus we cannot abandon IWD because the fight for equality is more or less over (in some people's opinion). The point of IWD is to remember the struggles of those who came before us, to celebrate the achievements of women past and present, and to raise awareness of the plight of women all over the world who do not share our advantages.

STEFANIA CHIRO, Hectorville.

Long journey ahead

I WRITE in response to Rex Jory's article "International Women's Day has morphed from a battle for fairness into a display of inferiority complex".

We live in a world where it is becoming increasingly easy for anyone to have a comment or opinion on anything that is happening. And everyone should have the right to say what or how they feel.

But there are still places in the world which do not allow this, and as a general rule it is women who are unable to speak out. Yes, women in Australia are luckier than most, but it was *International Women's Day* that was being celebrated.

The women and men who attended were there to celebrate the milestones and the journeys taken to get us to where we are today, and to recognise those who still have a long and possibly painful journey to make.

LORI BRITTLE, Largs Bay.