Edith Cowan was the first woman elected to an Australian parliament. She was also a social worker and women's rights campaigner.

At an early age Cowan became committed to social reform. She took leading roles in many organisations which helped women and children, and was honoured for her voluntary work during World War 1.

In 1921 Cowan was elected to the Western Australian Parliament. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly she promoted migrant welfare, infant health centres and women's rights. She introduced legislation which enabled women to become lawyers.

Cowan lost her seat in parliament in 1924, but continued her social work. With other Western Australian women, including Bessie Rischbieth, she provided a model for future Australian women reformers.