



# ACTU Working Women's Centre

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12th January, 1983

Dear Barbara,

Would you believe I just received your letter five minutes ago. Mary handed it to me saying "Its obviously from someone you know quite well, I don't know how it came to be on my desk."

W E L L my dear neither do I - BUT I do know that I have been away from here for about six weeks. I finally took myself to a doctor with physical, emotional and mental exhaustion and she gave me a month off work which more or less took me up to Xmas. Would you believe I spent one whole month doing absolutely nothing except reading trash and sleeping ( and of course the odd booze-up).

Anyway back at the desk - as you will notice we've finally moved, we are now safely and permanently installed at the seat of power, or should I say safely hidden away from the seat of power. In any case its too early to tell exactly how much difference being here will actually make. I imagine it'll be both good and bad you'll know what I mean.

ACTU Women's Committee - progress report -

Well they prepared their submission for the last ACTU Exec. but they only presented it for typing five days before the Exec and it was forty pages long. So the Exec had no time to peruse it before they started meeting. Also as you will know that particular Exec was very tied up with internal overexpenditure which led to the resignation of Peter Nolan, and the wage freeze. With such monumental agenda items you can imagine they weren't really desperate to include a forty page submission and a delegation from a bunch of nuisance women. So the Exec submission never got to be heard. It has been promised that it will come up next time though, we shall see.

The numbers on the committee are dangerously changing very slowly the one piece of good news seems to be the defeat of Ms Riordan from the Qld FCU.. Eh ..?  
One of the S.A. delegates has just lost her position on the SA Trades Hall, I don't know what that means about her position on the National Committee but its looking ominous.

I think thats about all I can tell you. Our experiences at the last meeting sound yuk, those people are so difficult to deal with cause neither rational arguments nor commitment now truth have anything whatsoever to do with what they'r saying, they get so they just don't wantt win.

Note the lovely brown ribbon I just got put on .. Such office sophistications drive me crazy with excitement.

*Sorry about all the funny typing but I'm typing this myself it seems more efficient than handwritin you wouldn't be able to understand or getting it typed when I can type direct in this case as I know you won't mind the E R R O R S. At the same time I'm playing with the technology, I guess you have now noticed the new typeface. Pretty isn't it.*



### NON-TRADITIONAL JOB REGISTER

It is funded in Victoria by the State Government, so I imagine that might be your first hurdle. But it might be worth a try it was a Liberal Government here that first funded it, although I know that that is not necessarily any indication of what your glorious benefactor might accept, but the one thing about the non-trad job stuff is that it can be put forward in fairly conservative jargon.

The register is basically a list of women with non-trad jobs who speak in schools and who are paid a speakers fee to cover for their loss of work hours, a necessary but expensive pre-requisite. The co-ordination is done from here, the women for the register are found from here and training sessions to prepare for school speaking are organized from here. We also provide them with notes etc. as aids for their visits and there are a couple of videos etc. about which some of them like to use. The co-ordination has become a full time job and it has become important to know the women and where they would best fit in and to know what works and what doesn't work cause often teachers don't. E.G. sometimes they want a speaker for assembly up to 500 kids, its just impossible to get that sort of information through to such a big group and so its really a waste of everybodys time.

The Co-ordinator for the register here is just changing and a new one is due to start next Monday, if you want more information she will probably be able to let you have it in a few weeks, just write back and let me know specifically what you need to know I guess the first thing to do would be to get a group of women together and discuss the possibilities.

The one other area that the whole project has just moved into has been to try and initiate a support group for the women on the jobs as many of them feel lots of isolation etc. etc. and come up against some fairly heavy opposition from some of the men work with. The support group has had limited success so far it remains to be seen what will come of it this year.

Its difficult to know exactly what would be useful to you so as I said let us have more specific details if you want to know more.

### SEAMAN'S UNION - Girls's Apprenticeships.

The Union approached us early last year to discuss the possibilities of women going sea, or at least being accepted for training. The books have been opened and there are training intakes quite regularly going on over the next couple of years. To be accepted it is just a matter of waiting your turn on a waiting list and then being approved. The training is a new sort and more comprehensive and general than training before was. We discussed the possibilities at length of placing some girls on the waiting list and then challenging their refusal (if it eventuated) through equal Opportunity Board. The problems however were that it would be quite difficult to get a number of girls on the same ship and in the same training course. One girl would very likely find it a bit harrowing to go to sea for possibly up to three months alone with a bunch of men. And we felt that we would want some guarantees that they would be protected from you know what. We therefore instituted a pre-waiting list waiting list which so far has two names on it. Partly because we have not worked out a satisfactory way to create publicity about it. Anyway the idea is that we will wait till we have maybe half a dozen keen applicants, organize some meetings between them and the union and try to get them on the list together so that they will all come up for training at the same time. I suggest that you contact the Seamen in Qld

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and see what they're attitude is. I'm sure that it can't go very far without strong union support and to be quite frank the support here is strong in some offices but not solid in all.

I look forward to receiving the story about the Engine Driver, we have a couple here in Victoria and they have a pretty hard time of it, but are sticking it out. If you can contact the woman up there it may be good to put them all in contact with each other.

As far as I know we have received nothing from you at all, but that may be a unreliable information cause I've been away and we've moved, however I have checked about and haven't seen anything, if you think we should have received something it may be a good idea to check gently with the clerical staff to see if it was sent.

Yes, I think that some sort of Anti-Discrim legislation is vital for Queensland and well worth working on, it would be a shame to leave the running up to a bunch of middle-class ambitious women. Although the legislation will do most for them anyway just having it somehow changes the environment in which you work for other issues. Despite its actual weaknesses its very existence is a great victory and provides strength to womens struggles.

Hope this is all useful, do write again soon and let me know how stuff is going up there, I've seen a video of the games stuff it looked good.

Keep in touch and look after yourself,

Love  
Lyn