

[Talk presented at the National Library of Australia, 10 March 2004]

Liberal Reformists or Hairy-legged Stalinists? Writing the History of the Women's Electoral Lobby

Marian Sawer

First let me acknowledge the tremendous work done by Gail Radford and statistician Erica Fisher on this history, and the help of many others

Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) is the best-known of the women's organisations created during the heady years after the arrival of women's liberation and the second wave of the women's movement in Australia. It is credited with putting women's demands on the electoral agenda in 1972 and with major achievements in terms of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation, equal pay decisions, the funding of women's and children's services. It was also particularly concerned with women's right to choose—as a founding member wrote in 1972: 'the impetus for WEL's work is in the circumstances under which the vast majority of ordinary Australian (and migrant) women exist—with insufficient sex education, sparse family planning clinics, unnecessarily expensive contraceptives, inadequate child care centres and poor chances, compared with men, for good education, good jobs and good pay'.

WEL also lobbied for and wrote the submissions for women's policy machinery both in the Whitlam government and at the State and Territory level. This led to the development around Australia of the state feminism for which Australia became famous in the 1970s and 1980s. It meant the invention of femocrats, bureaucrats skilled in gender analysis, who monitored policy to identify impact on women and audited outlays to ensure that women were benefiting from government expenditure. It had previously been assumed that women would obtain the same benefit from policy as men ignoring the very different location of women in the social economy. The fact that women perform a disproportionate share of non-market care work renders them vulnerable to poverty in a market economy. One of the important achievements of the femocrats of the 1970s and 1980s was to shift government support for families to the primary carer, which all research showed was more effective than giving tax concessions to the primary earner.

It is hard to remember what life was like for women before WEL, when it was standard for the pages of classified job advertisements that appeared in the broadsheets to be divided between those for men and boys and those for women and girls and needless to say for the pay packets to be very different for male and female jobs.

[Monday job market, *SMH* 28 July 1980]

From the vantage point of today it is hard to remember why you had to be male to do jobs such 'loans officer', 'insurance investigator' or even to be manager of a Uniting Church Conference Centre.

Women were still not allowed to sit for the exams to enter the administrative division of the Victorian public service and this led to one of the very early successful WEL actions. WEL got 70 girls to apply and three with ambiguous names such as Hilary were accepted to sit for the exam in June 1972. WEL then picketed the Exhibition Building in Melbourne, with good media coverage, to make sure they were allowed to go in. They were, but the two who did very well in the examination then failed the medical on the grounds they were female. In a few months the policy of excluding women was abandoned and women were finally allowed to sit the exam in October. [\[1\]](#)

Quite apart from such travesties in terms of employment opportunity, at the time when WEL was created there was still no public policy addressing issues such as sexual harassment and domestic violence, in fact these phenomena had not yet even been named, they were just called 'life'. WEL was to help instigate policy recognition of these issues, legislative reform and best-practice community education programs.

But what were the women like who achieved all of this? Above all they epitomise Margaret Mead's dictum 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'

[photo of WEL-Tasmania, first State-wide meeting in 1974)

[WEL-Darwin, please note, second from the Left Lenore Colheart, now of the National Archives of Australia, whose revised edition of Jessie Street's biography *Truth or Repose* was launched this week.]

WEL-Adelaide, WEL Sydney]

Various mythologies have grown up around WEL and it is these that I will be looking at today. In feminist and socialist literatures WEL members were often depicted as archetypal middle-class reformers, dangerously unaware of the need for revolution and foolishly confident about the possibility of reform in the face of the assembled forces of capitalism and patriarchy. Later, when they had achieved some important reforms they were depicted as focused on creating greater opportunities for women like themselves, and insensitive to the needs of other groups of women, whether working-class women, Aboriginal women, migrant women or lesbian women, in particular.

Old-style Labor men resented interference by middle-class WEL busybodies in matters such as equal pay and the redirection of the dependent spouse rebate to primary carers. They conjured up the golden days when working class husbands handed their pay packets over to wives happily ensconced in the family home.

Another mythology of WEL derives from neo-conservative family rhetoric, which depicts WEL as anti-family, hostile to women's roles as wives and mothers and wanting to make women more like men. Often this mythology has combined with neo-conservative ideas about a new class, the latte set or chardonnay drinkers, which has a vested interest in expanding the public sector while mouthing slogans about equal opportunity. New class discourse is, in turn, often found in conjunction with neo-liberal discourse about special interests, which again have a rent-seeking attitude towards the state, seeking it as a source of higher returns than can be achieved through marriage or the market. Needless to say WEL members are archetypical members both of the new class and comprise part of that special interest otherwise known as women.

I shall now look at each of these mythologies in greater detail, comparing them as I go with some of the findings of our WEL history.

Exemplar of middle-class liberal reformism

To what extent were WEL members typical middle-class liberal reformers? WEL grew out of Women's Liberation and shared many members. In 1972, before WEL Perth had come into being, it was women from women's liberation and from the Harvest Guild (a 1971 off-shoot of the Women's Service Guilds) who carried out the WEL candidate survey in Western Australia. There were also many joint actions such as the tent embassy, the 'Women's Embassy' erected outside parliament house in Canberra in May 1973 which was organised by members of the Abortion Law Reform Association together with WEL and Women's Liberation members. The tent embassy was in support of the Medical Practitioners' Clarification Bill being debated in the all-male House of Representatives. Other joint actions in the ACT included the establishment of the Abortion Counselling Service in 1975 and the Women's Information Service in 1976. And WEL and women's liberation played cricket against each other on International Women's Day. In Victoria WEL and women's liberation combined in the action to get women into administrative division of the public service in 1972. And everywhere WEL and Women's Liberation members marched together in International Women's Day marches, or, at least, in close proximity.

[Sydney march, w boiler suit, Lusher demonstration, WEL and Women's Liberation]

At the same time, these were competing organisations that for organisational reasons often had to exaggerate their differences. Women's Liberation members might exaggerate the reformist limitations of WEL, while WEL members might exaggerate the talk-bound character of Women's Liberation. WEL groups also tended to be conscious of the barriers posed by the media images of women's liberation to the recruitment of a broader range of women and indeed to policy influence. WEL set out to allay the fears aroused by confrontational styles of dress and address. While WEL was seeking to shift policy frames, it was doing so through an equal opportunity discourse rather than a discourse of revolution. This made it easier for its demands to be picked up by policymakers.

During the 1972 federal election campaign WEL Tasmania was accused of denying all connections with women's liberation, from which it had recently emerged. On the other hand, WEL was sometimes seen as a

half-way house through which women gained confidence to participate in women's liberation and other forms of local politics. [2] A Western Australian WEL member has written about how for her WEL was a mothership which provided the safety from which she could branch out to explore the ideas and campaigns of the women's liberation movement and also of the Labor Women's Organisation. [3]

Apart from the organisational imperatives to differentiate WEL as the reformist wing of the women's movement, there was also disillusionment with 'reform' on the part of some members. This was well expressed in Jan Mercer's reflections from the vantage point of 1975, in *The Other Half: Women in Australian Society*, itself a wonderful evocation of the women's movement ethos of the time. Many future professors and even a future vice-chancellor were represented in this collection, but their names did not grace the anonymous table of contents. As Editor, Mercer explained it was the ideas themselves rather than who presented them that was important. It was also irrelevant to 'indicate the academic status of individual writers because these have been allocated in terms of a male dominated and defined system of rewards'. [4]

Mercer wrote of her experience in WEL: 'Had I allowed myself to be manipulated into thinking that submissions to the Government on child care would radically change the oppressive nature of the family?' [5] She came to the conclusion that the year she had spent in researching and writing submissions and dealing with reporters had been mis-spent and part of the illusion promoted by WEL that women could change society through the ballot box and political reform: 'WEL was asked to make formal submissions on child care, women in the workforce, equal pay, the budget and a minimum wage, and so, eased quietly into the bureaucracy of government, it was no longer a threat'. [6] Interestingly, of those women from the women's movement who went into government many were in fact founding members of Women's Liberation, like Elizabeth Reid, Sara Dowse, Lyndall Ryan and Anne Summers at the federal level. So if the Australian women's movement took too readily to government, it was not only WEL that was guilty.

And were WEL members so docile and easily tamed? WEL members were certainly more representative of Australian women as a whole than were members of women's liberation. By 1974 there were 47 WEL groups all over rural and regional Australia, something that is often overlooked today. The indefatigable Gail Radford has so far identified 53 WEL groups in all outside the metropolitan areas.

At the WEL national conference of January 1973 the WEL members from the metropolitan capitals, who were more influenced by women's liberation organisational philosophy, beat off pressure from rural and regional groups for the establishment of a more traditional and hierarchical organisational structure.

Here is an image of a typical rural meet the candidates meeting, this one in Cooma in 1974.

[Cooma, Meet the Candidates]

And here is an early draft of the distribution of WEL groups outside the better-known metropolitan and suburban groups in 1974.

[Map of WEL groups]

Women with no prior contact with the women's movement or with politics had been drafted into WEL to help administer the 1972 WEL candidate survey in federal electorates across the country. This was in itself a dramatic consciousness-raising exercise as women found out how little the male candidates, of whom they had been inclined to be in awe, knew about the issues of concern to women. A not untypical reaction was: 'What does this peanut think he's doing standing for parliament?'^[7]

Many of these women, for example those in Wagga captured in the 1972 Four Corners Program on WEL, did not look like metropolitan members of Women's Liberation. They conformed to the standards of feminine presentation of the time, with their bouffant hair-dos and lots of lipstick and mascara. However they were quite determined that women should at last have a political say.

In general WEL women were much more concerned than women's liberation members to present a non-threatening appearance for the benefit of politicians, public servants and the media. Women's liberation had in general had a bad press. In its anxiety to be seen as representing 'ordinary women'. WEL has sometimes been accused of not making visible the lesbian women among its leadership, or at least, as they are often very visible, of not making an issue of their sexuality. This caution is not confined to WEL, but shared with other feminist organisations seeking credibility with the media and with government, including Business and Professional Women and the YWCA.

And what of WEL women in the big cities, the neurotic suburban mums or, alternatively, the formidable group of university educated women who donated their professional talents and skills to this new enterprise? It is true that of the first cohort of WEL members 53 per cent had at least a bachelor degree – a figure that rose in later cohorts to around three quarters as the abolition of tertiary fees made higher education more accessible to women. The majority in the first cohort were married and had children – something that again changed rapidly with later cohorts.

WEL members were not disproportionately convent-educated, as has been suggested. Bruce Goodluck claimed in the House of Representatives during the debate on the Sex Discrimination Bill that he had undertaken research on 'this Women's Electoral Lobby'. Most of the members of it were given-up Catholics. They are all women who had had problems, et cetera. They were women who had something against men. I thought to myself, 'Boy, what a nucleus from which to form a Bill, what a nucleus for us to follow.'^[8] I need hardly remind some of you that Goodluck's most memorable contribution to parliament was to be his appearance in the House of Representatives in a chicken suit. The religious affiliations that were over-represented among WEL members were 'other Christian' and 'no religious belief.' Some 58 per cent of WEL members had been to state schools, 11 per cent to Catholic and about 26 per cent to other fee-paying schools.^[9]

In fact, despite all the hullabaloo over it, the Sex Discrimination Act passed through the House of Representatives the following week, on International Women's Day 1984 and WEL threw a party with flowers, champagne and a huge purple white and green cake on the lawn outside Parliament House to celebrate and thank some of the major players including Susan Ryan, as the Minister responsible and Ian Macphee as the Opposition Spokesman.

[photos of Sex Discrimination Act demonstration and celebration]

The impulse behind WEL is sometimes seen as the under-employment of tertiary-educated women, *The Australian*, for example, claimed that 'the newly formed Women's Electoral Lobby in Canberra has tapped a wealth of unemployed talent'.^[10] WEL Convenor, Gail Wilenski, a vet with research ambitions, was seen as exemplifying the problem of women whose career prospects had been blighted by marrying into Canberra, a city that specialised in male employment. She suggested there were thousands more. *The Australian* commented that WEL-Act conjured up an image of 'neuroses breeding faster than mosquitoes in stagnant water'. Marriage bars, lack of childcare and plain discrimination were certainly preventing many women from using their qualifications in paid employment, right around Australia.

The first cohort of WEL members certainly tended to have children and a keen interest in childcare. In 1973 Anne Summers told a journalist interviewing her about her Literature Board grant that she was not a member of WEL although she believed a political pressure group was necessary to the feminist movement. She found WEL too much occupied with childcare in which she was not greatly interested.^[11] Ironically one of Summers' great coups when she first went into government as head of the Office of Status of Women was to get the Hawke government to commit to 20 000 new childcare places for the 1984 election policy.

In fact, even in the first cohort the majority (64 per cent) of WEL members were in paid employment, although only a minority were in full-time employment. Interestingly, today, after the dismantling of discrimination against women in public sector employment, much of it due to Gail Wilenski /Radford's 15 years heading equal employment opportunity in the Australian Public Service, the ACT has the highest participation of married women in the paid workforce of any jurisdiction.

And did WEL members, as Liberal reformers, conform to our retrospective image of how such reformers behave? The past is another country and they do things differently there. Witness the letter sent by the Secretary of WEL Tasmania to the Tasmanian Teachers' Federation in May 1974:

Dear Miss Backhouse,

I have been instructed by the Women's Electoral lobby to write to you on the matter raised in your letter of May 8th. We are sorry that your cleaners have been put to such an effort cleaning after our public meeting and regret that those attending should have ground out their cigarette butts into the cork floor. Unfortunately there were not enough ashtrays to give each of our 300 participants one each; perhaps the problem will be

solved in future by the provision of No Smoking signs in the hall'. [\[12\]](#)

WEL as a Labor Front

From the very beginning some commentators have suggested that WEL was a front for the ALP. The Democratic Labor Party did this in the 1972 election campaign, presumably on the basis of poor ratings in the WEL candidate survey. WEL responded by pointing out that it did not see tagging on behind one of the existing political parties as an effective method of political pressure. [\[13\]](#) Certainly WEL found the ALP more responsive than the Coalition on women's issues in 1972, and within the first week of the Whitlam government some of its demands were being attended to, with the re-opening of the Equal Pay Case and the lifting of the sales tax on oral contraceptives. Still in December 1972 came another decision close to WEL's heart, the repeal of the ordinance prohibiting the advertising of contraceptives and family planning in the ACT. However WEL remained highly critical of the Whitlam government, for example the treatment of the McKenzie-Lamb attempt at abortion law reform and the stumbles over childcare.

Senator Jocelyn Newman, who became Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women with the election of the Howard Government in 1996, was someone else who had long decided WEL was a Labor front. Newman describes herself as a founding member of WEL in Launceston but as someone who became disillusioned with WEL in 1975 when her local branch passed a motion condemning the dismissal of Whitlam by the Governor General. [\[14\]](#) She was able to take revenge in 1999 when she defunded WEL. In between she had been highly critical of WEL's role in the NGO report to CEDAW in 1997 that she claimed was motivated by partisan bias and based on misinformation.

The head of the Office of the Status of Women, Pru Goward, who had backed up Newman who was her Minister, later sent a private letter to WEL apologising for her 'mistake' in claiming that there was no legislation before parliament that would remove the complaint-handling powers of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner. Far from this being misinformation, the legislation concerned had been before parliament for more than six months and had already been the subject of a Senate committee report. [\[15\]](#) Nonetheless the NGOs involved were punished for their part in what Newman described as 'bagging their country from overseas' and the co-ordinating body, CAPOW!, which WEL had helped create, was defunded straight away.

WEL has certainly been very critical of policy directions of the Howard government, particularly its tax and industrial relations policies, but it had been just as critical of the preceding Labor government over its proposal to introduce a broad-based consumption tax in 1985 and the introduction of the enterprise bargaining principle in 1991. And if we look back over the 32 years of WEL history, we find that WEL has been just as critical of Labor governments as of Coalition ones. And contrariwise, just as WEL provided visible support for the Hawke government's Sex Discrimination Act, so it provided visible support to Howard over gun control.

Even when the ALP was most responsive to the WEL agenda, as at the time of the Whitlam government, there were no illusions: 'The ALP made a much better showing in the form guide than the LCP, but it is riddled with male chauvinists who believe that women's place is in the home'. If we fail to keep up the pressure they will let women's issues gather dust on obscure shelves'.^[16] Both then and now, as we shall see below, some of the harshest critics of WEL came from within the Labor Party.

But what of WEL members themselves, perhaps the non-party character of the organisation was subverted by the partisan loyalties (or disloyalties?) of its members? And here we do find an ALP bias among our survey respondents. At the time of joining WEL about 25 per cent of survey respondents were active in a political party—18 per cent in the ALP, two per cent in the Democrats and two per cent in the Greens. This can be compared with the findings of a survey of WEL membership in Western Australia in 1974 that found that of those who identified with a political party 41 per cent identified with the ALPP, 24 per cent with the Liberal Party, 26 per cent with the Australia Party – and there were two Communist identifiers.^[17]

While there have been some high-profile Liberal Party WEL members including business woman Eve Mahlab in Victoria and front-bencher Virginia Chadwick in NSW, they tended to be 'small l' Liberals of the type the Party has moved away from. In any case they are definitely under-represented in this survey. Some of the original WEL members such as Carmen Lawrence, who helped design the 1972 survey, have had important, but never untroubled careers in the Labor Party. Lawrence became Labor Premier of Western Australia and is now Federal President of the party.

If we look at the two most recent cohorts of WEL members, however, we can see there is a changing pattern of partisan loyalties. The proportion active in the Greens at the time of joining WEL has risen to eight per cent, with a corresponding decline in the proportion of ALP activists. If WEL members are liberal reformers, then it is the Greens who are increasingly attracting Liberal reformers.

WEL has treasured its non-party status, making sure that convenors are not party members and always seeking representatives of all parties to speak at Meet the Candidates forums or other events and conferences.

Public choice: Women as a 'special interest'

The 1990s saw the rise of a new public discourse in Australia, competing with the equal opportunity (fair go) discourse which had had given so much discursive leverage to WEL in the 1970s. We might label this discourse 'market populism', while acknowledging that it contained elements derived both from public choice theory (the unmasking of all public interest groups as essentially rent-seeking 'special interests') and from the neo-conservative adaptation of new class theory. This version of new class theory, developed in the USA, suggested that a tertiary educated elite mobilised by the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s had a vested interest in the expansion of the public sector that provides them with well-paid jobs. They were the

people who would do well out equality, by implementing equality legislation. WEL members were depicted as archetypal members of this new class. But it was not enough to suggest these equality seekers were self-interested, to mobilise political emotion against equality seekers they were also credited with having contempt for the values of ordinary people. The attribution of contempt is discussed further below.

John Howard was freely deploying these discourses of special interests and the new class when he promised to govern for the mainstream in the lead up to the 1996 election. He was going to bring an end to the era of political correctness which had been imposed by these self-appointed elites and which marked them off from ordinary Australians.

Some within the ALP who had been unhappy with the attempt by the party to reach out to new constituencies, also found the discourse provided by the Right quite appealing. They agreed that the villain was the 'new class elite' or 'special interests'. Working-class taxpayers were paying for the free university education and subsidised childcare of this elite who, in turn, despised working-class values. The abolition of tertiary fees, for example, had given a second chance to many highly intelligent mature-age women originally trained to be secretaries or nurses and who now wanted more choices in life.

Antagonists within the Labor Party blamed such feminists for alienating blue-collar voters through their insistence on elite concerns such as equal opportunity and childcare. A Labor finance minister, Peter Walsh, suggested that campaigns for affirmative action and equal opportunity were achieving little other than giving 'jobs to hairy-legged Stalinists from Women's Electoral Lobby'.^[18] The term 'hairy-legs' as a term of abuse for feminists appears to be unique to Australia. Apart from their hairy legs, which presumably did not distinguish them from men, feminists were like other members of the new class in that they worked in the non-market sector, earned above-median incomes and preferred to give the poor publicly provided services (such as childcare) rather than money, because only the former provided sinecures for the new class.^[19]

While President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Martin Ferguson was highly critical of feminists for raising issues such as paid maternity leave or the inequitable effects of decentralised wage bargaining. WEL and other feminist groups such as the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women opposed introduction of the enterprise bargaining principle, accurately predicting that it would increase the gender gap in wages. Ferguson saw this concern as 'denying, or trying to deny, other workers in a position to gain wage increases, the capacity to gain those increases'.^[20] In other words, feminists were supporting centralised wage-fixing because it made possible greater equity in wages, while the president of the ACTU was supporting a system that rewarded industrial muscle.

Frontbencher Mark Latham has suggested that Women's Electoral Lobby is part of a 'symbolic class' supporting expansion of the public sector at the expense of working class taxpayers, ignoring the problems of welfare dependency and being responsible for creating downwards envy.^[21] Apparently WEL has been responsible for sole parent poverty rather than being an organization trying to raise the issue. For Latham

'outfits' such as Women's Electoral Lobby promote abstract rights through constructing women as victims. He has taken as a case in point, WEL's reaction to a remark made by Magistrate Pat O'Shane on ABC television that 'on the basis of my experience, a lot of women manufacture a lot of stories against men.'^[22] WEL had pointed out that the assumption that women made up stories about sexual assault had been the basis of much gender bias in the law. For what seems to be an unexceptional position, WEL was depicted as shackling O'Shane with political correctness.

[Mark Latham and WEL]

Having contempt for ordinary women

From the beginning, the conservative opposition to WEL suggested that its demands for equal pay, equal opportunity and childcare showed contempt for ordinary women who were happy in their role of homemaker. WEL was constantly having to reiterate that it was a lobby for women in the home as well as women in the workforce or women reliant on social services. The very success of WEL in promoting feminist policy demands to government called forth the counter attempt to undermine the representative claims of WEL and to create divisions between women at home and women in the paid workforce. It was not only WEL but the women's movement more generally that felt compelled to respond to this discursive strategy, as in the following example:

We don't say things like sewing and cooking are trivial and inferior. Society says they are. We believe they have been downgraded because they have traditionally been associated with women—while things that men do are considered more important (a woman is a cook while a man is a Chef).^[23]

When conservative women created their own organisations they used names that suggested that organisations pursuing equal opportunity were not representative of real women. Babette Francis, called her organisation set up in 1979 Women Who Want to be Women. Its aim was to contest the influence of feminism on government. In Canada a similar organisation was called REAL Women. Such organizations opposed affirmative action on the grounds that it discriminated against women who chose to be dependent on a male breadwinner, by increasing competition in the job market. Such groups are welcome in free market circles because they are assumed to make few demands on the state, to be content to be economically dependent on husbands and to provide community services on an unpaid basis rather than demanding equal pay.

Concerns about affirmative action (which, by the way, means the obligation of employer to identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity, not so-called positive discrimination) were also taken up by the men's rights movement that appeared in the 1990s and believed that feminists had entrenched themselves in positions of power and influence in government and were victimising men. In 1998 a Western Australian group called the Men's Confraternity sent a submission to the review of the Affirmative Action Act. They wrote: 'The main architect of this feminist-inspired legislation has been the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL)

whose members have infiltrated the decision-making processes of federal and State governments, assisted by the numerous women's departments and offices, using the millions of taxpayers' dollars available. [\[24\]](#)

I don't have time to explore further mythologies of WEL today, but I would like to leave you with some more positive images.

Here is WEL in the 1980s proclaiming that it stands for all women and that 'Prostitutes are People Too'.

[1983 IWD march]

Here is Bea Faust on the Left, 20 years after she founded WEL in Melbourne and still full of mischief. Standing on the Right is Senator Pat Giles, first Convenor of WEL-Western Australia and now President of the International Alliance of Women, of which WEL is the Australian Affiliate. IAW is celebrating its centenary this year. Australian suffragist Vida Goldstein was Secretary of its planning meeting in Washington in 1902. Behind Faust and Giles is a beautiful banner made by my middle daughter Harriet.

Another image, with a somewhat defensive slogan, of WEL in Sydney in 1996]

[Feminism is Alive and WEL]

And finally, an image from WEL's campaign in 2000 against the GST on tampons and lactation aids, part of the campaign against indirect tax it had been engaged in since 1985. . Erica Lewis is wearing a T-shirt saying 'I bleed and I vote'. We did have some rather tasteless photos of the giant tampons that were part of this campaign, but I shall refrain from showing them.

[Erica Lewis at mike]

I hope that I have provided enough material today to suggest that the history of WEL is a rich and complex example of the mobilising of political identity and of women's collective agency. It won't fit neatly into any of the pigeon-holes in which it has been placed—the liberal reformers look too radical and the hairy-legged Stalinists look too much like all those of generations of feminists who have been pursuing equal opportunity for women, regardless of whether they are engaged in market or non-market work, and most often it is both.

-
- [1] Joyce Nicholson, 'the Women's Electoral lobby and Women's Employment: Strategies and Outcomes', MA Women's Studies, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1991, pp. 47–8.
- [2] Juliet Richter, 'Reflections on WEL's Third National Conference', *Refractory Girl*, Winter 1975, p. 35.
- [3] Janet Grace Pine, 'WEL (Perth) As Mothership', *Broadsheet* April 2003, pp. 8–9.
- [4] Mercer, *The Other Half*, Editor's Note.
- [5] Mercer, 'The History of WEL', pp. 395.
- [6] Mercer and Miller, 'Liberation—Reform or Revolution', p. 457.
- [7] Jan Aitkin et al, 'The World of WEL (NSW) in Henry Mayer, *Labor to Power: Australia's 1972 Election*, Angus & Robertson 1973, p. 186.
- [8] Bruce Goodluck, Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, 2 March 1984.
- [9] All of these figures are taken from the WEL History membership survey of 2002-03. Some 550 useable responses were received/
- [10] 'Canberra: City of Unemployable Wives', *The Australian*, 30 June 1972.
- [11] Margaret Jones, 'Rebel of God's Police', [bibliographical details to follow]
- [12] Letter from Patricia Jones, Secretary WEL Tasmania to Miss E.M.Backhouse, Acting General Secretary, Tasmanian teachers' Federation, 29 May 1974.
- [13] Katy Richmond, Letter to *The Age*, 4 November 1972.
- [14] Margot Kingston, 'Just Call Me Chairman', *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 May 1996, p. 9.
- [15] 'Don't Shoot the Messenger: WEL', *Australian Financial Review*, 30 July 1997: Marian Sawer, 'Shooting the Messenger: Australia and CEDAW', *Proceedings of the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference*, Department of Politics, Flinders University, 1997, pp. 897–906.
- [16] WEL-SA, 'The Future of Women's Electoral Lobby as seen by the South Australian Group', paper for WEL National Conference, January 1973, p. 1.
- [17] Survey of WEL Membership, *Broadsheet* 2 (3) 1974.
- [18] Peter Walsh, quoted in Bob Browning, *The Network: A Guide to Anti-Business Pressure Groups*, Kew: Canonbury Press 1990, p. 46.
- [19] Walsh, 'New Class is Just More of the Same', p. 13.
- [20] Ferguson, quoted in Burgmann, 'Women and Enterprise Bargaining in Australia', p. 23.
- [21] Latham, 'ABC's exercise in symbolism'.
- [22] Latham, 'The truth is out there, somewhere'. *Daily Telegraph*,
- [23] 'Some misconceptions about the women's movement', *Mabel* 1, December 1975, p. 22.
- [24] M Ward, Men's Confraternity Incorporated Submission to Affirmative Action Review, Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business, 10 April 1998.