

WEL in the Media: 1972–2002

Report on the WEL history media database by Gail Radford and Marian Sawyer with Sarah Gardiner

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WEL in the media: 1972–2002

1. Introduction

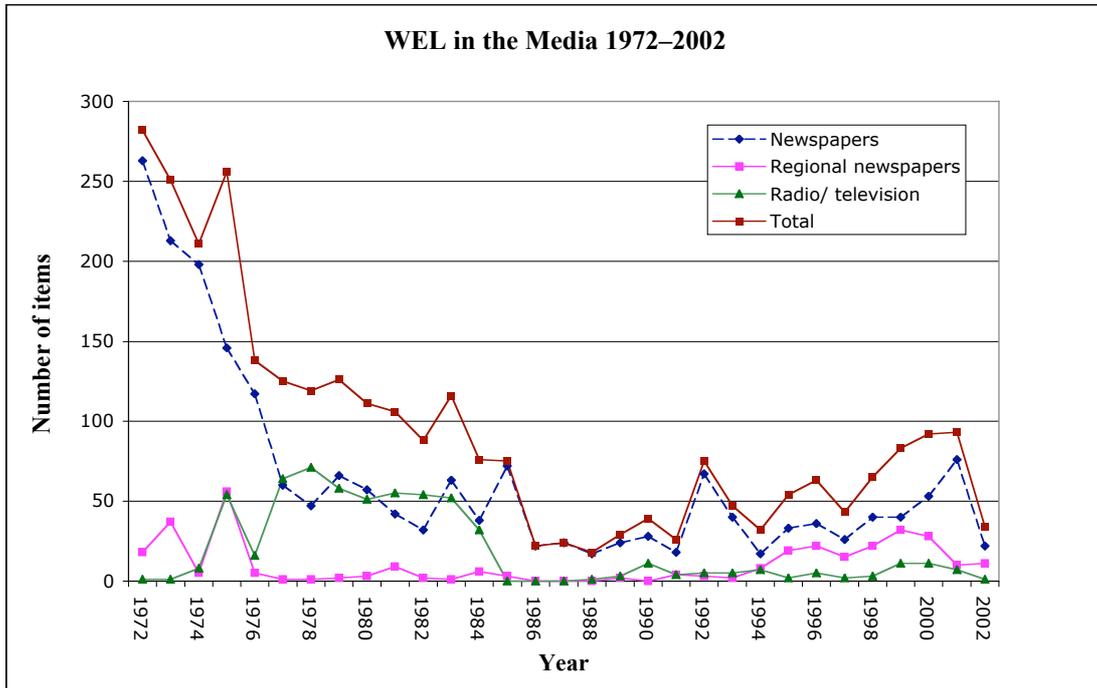
WEL's initial reception by the media was highly favourable. This did not happen by chance. WEL had learned from the trivialising of Women's Liberation by the media. From its inception WEL had members who were journalists, who set about creating a positive media image for WEL and teaching other members media skills. The novelty value of the form guide for federal parliamentary candidates in 1972 attracted media attention and political reporters were particularly impressed with WEL's professional approach. The novelty value wore off but WEL continued to obtain considerable if variable media coverage over the next three decades, as an organisation that could be relied upon to provide a gender perspective on current issues.

The WEL history media database

The WEL history media database covers the period 1972–2002 and has records of some 3100 media items that are about WEL or mention WEL. These have been collected from the Parliamentary Library and the National Library of Australia and by searching through WEL newsletters, publications about WEL and WEL archives. Individual members also sent us press clippings and told us of their experiences with the media.

The majority of the items are from the print media. There is an underestimate of WEL's use of radio and television over the years as it was very difficult to track WEL appearances on the radio and on television. Unless we could find mentions in WEL newsletters or written transcripts or recordings, these appearances were largely lost to us; an exception here was WEL's use of community radio, which is comparatively well documented.

Figure 1. WEL in the media 1972–2002



The large majority of the newspaper articles in the database were obtained from major metropolitan papers. Articles from regional or suburban newspapers were more elusive. They had not been clipped for the collections in libraries that were examined by the project. Those that are in the database are the result of the systematic recording of articles in local papers by individual WEL members or researchers and are mostly from the early days of WEL in Victoria.

Changes over 30 years

What is very obvious from Figure 1 is that WEL’s appearances in the media peaked in the early 1970s, and then declined to a low in the years 1986 to 1991, to be followed by a gradual rise. The decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s would have been more rapid if it had not been for a number of WEL groups seizing opportunities to write their own newspapers columns or do their own radio broadcasts.

Spikes in metropolitan newspaper coverage in the early 1980s coincided with activities associated with the Hawke Labor Government, another in 1992 was the

result of a WEL campaign against the introduction of a GST and the third in 2001 reflected the publicity generated by the IVF High Court case.

The regional newspaper articles in the database from 1972 and 1973 are about the formation of WEL groups in the country and the interviewing of candidates for federal and State elections, the spike in 1975 is the result of a weekly column written by WEL—Townsville for the local paper and the rise seen in regional press from 1994 onwards was the result of the efforts of the extremely active convenor of the WEL group in Cairns, who commented on national and local issues.

The rise in the radio/television line in Figure 1 between 1975 and 1984 is a reflection of a number of WEL groups running their own radio programs in these years.

In the remainder of the Report we analyse the subject matter of these articles and programs. They are discussed under four cohorts, according to the federal government or governments in power at the time.

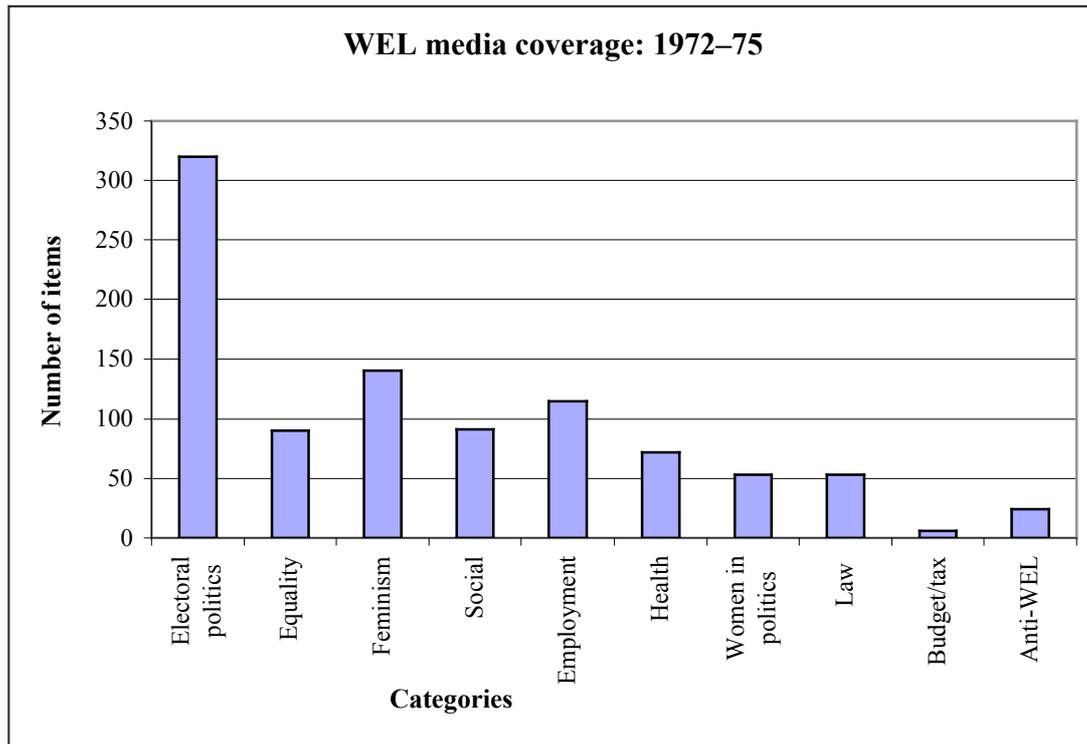
2. The early years

The early years of WEL represented its honeymoon with the media. As noted above, the novelty value of WEL's intervention in the 1972 federal election ensured wide-ranging and favourable coverage. Figure 2 shows the number of articles in the press and radio and TV programs about WEL by the issues covered in the period from the beginning of WEL in 1972 until the end of the Whitlam Government in 1975. It includes the last 10 months of the McMahon Government.

The issues have been divided into 10 categories: electoral politics; equality; feminism; social (including child care); employment (including education); health (including family planning and abortion); women in politics (including women in government positions); law; anti-WEL; and, finally, tax and Budget. The coding frame, used to allocate media items to these categories, is at Appendix 1.

In most cases an item was allocated to one category, but in some cases, where equal weight was given to two issues, it was allocated to two categories. The majority of the items from Figure 1 were allocated to categories, the exception being a number of WEL's radio broadcasts where the topic of the broadcast was not known or not clear.

Figure 2. WEL media coverage: 1972–75



Electoral politics category: 1972–75

What were WEL women doing in this period that generated this publicity? Electoral politics attracted the most articles. They were generated by the 1972 questionnaire and rating of federal election candidates. WEL's 1972 form guide for Victorian candidates was published as a lift-out Green Guide in the *Age*. In other States the form guides were written up in the *Sun-Herald* and *Sunday Telegraph* for NSW, the *Advertiser* for South Australia, the *Courier-Mail* for Queensland, the *Mercury* for Tasmania, the *Canberra Times* for the ACT while the *West Australian* reported on the Sydney form guide and the *National Times* reported nationally.

One thing to be noted about the coverage of the WEL ratings is the way the media mediated WEL's message. As is generally the case, journalists were more interested in the 'horse-race' aspects of the election than in the policies. WEL was trying to put 'women's issues' onto the political agenda and educate politicians about how to maximise the choices available to women. The presentation of its findings in the form of a racing form guide helped WEL fit into existing frames for media coverage, but also diverted attention from the substantive issues such as childcare and equality for women in work and education. The one exception was the abortion questions in the section of the WEL questionnaire on planned parenthood. WEL's publication of the views of individual candidates on abortion became ammunition in partisan controversy; the flagging political fortunes of Prime Minister McMahon persuaded him to try to use abortion as a wedge issue against the ALP in a late stage of the campaign.¹

WEL's federal election activity in 1974 and in 1975 again attracted coverage, as did its interventions in State and local elections. A good example was a highly successful public forum, 'Why Should Women Vote for You?' held on 7 May 1973 in the Dallas Brooks Hall in Melbourne. Leaders of the political parties contesting the Victorian State election attended and answered questions. They were Rupert Hamer, Premier; Clyde Holding, Leader of the Opposition; Peter Ross-Edwards, Leader of the Country Party; Frank Dowling, State Secretary of the DLP and David Smith, Convenor of the Australia Party. Eve Mahlab of WEL Victoria chaired the meeting. The forum received extensive publicity in the newspapers and was broadcast live by Channel 7 television. A similarly successful election forum was held by WEL—WA in 1974 and was broadcast the following evening on the ABC television program *This Day Tonight*.²

Equality category: 1972–75

The equality category contains articles on discrimination against women. WEL was very active in these years drawing attention to discrimination in banking, finance and insurance, discrimination in club membership and sports, sexism in education and, in particular, discrimination in employment and training. The 'liberation' of public bars received special attention. In the media WEL called for laws to ensure equality and

remove discrimination and asked women to forward examples of discrimination to support their case for legislation.

Feminism category: 1972–75

The relatively high number of items in the feminism category in 1972–75 is partly a reflection of the media’s ongoing fascination with the differences between WEL and Women’s Liberation. In addition, the press given to WEL conferences, the formation of new WEL groups and interviews with WEL members provided WEL with opportunities to discuss feminist issues in a form that the media found more acceptable than the earlier and more strident demands of Women’s Liberation.

1975 was International Women’s Year and throughout the year WEL—Townsville wrote a weekly column for the local paper and did weekly broadcasts discussing the many activities of interest to women. These had a ‘feminist flavour’ but as no more specific information is available they have not been included in Figure 2.

Social category: 1972–75

Childcare was the major issue in the social category. From 1972 onwards WEL used the media to press for good quality, affordable childcare. WEL attracted good coverage for some well-planned media events staged as part of its campaign to hold the ALP to its 1974 election promises on childcare. An advertisement was taken out in the *Australian Financial Review* on 1 August 1974 to explain the purpose of demonstrations being staged by WEL groups around Australia. The advertisement began:

**MR WHITLAM
AND MEMBERS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT**

**KEEP YOUR PROMISES
LET’S START ON CHILDCARE NOW**

**CAN THE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN NEED NOW
WAIT A YEAR AT THE TREASURY’S PLEASURE**

As usual, WEL was attentive to issues of government machinery and wanted legislation to establish a childcare commission. WEL was also lobbying for priority for single parents and working families and priority for after-school care (which had been excluded from the McMahon Government Child Care Act).

In Canberra the childcare demonstration was held in front of the Parliament House, taking the form of a children's party. A fire engine had been organised to give children rides around Parliament House, as well as a carousel and marquee. Balloons and toffee apples were handed out under placards reading 'Promises, Promises' and a 1974 election poster reading: 'Only Whitlam has a programme for child care.' WEL had printed 'cancelled' across this. The party provided excellent 'visuals' for television and press photographers and WEL spokespersons and lobbyists were well briefed. In Sydney the demonstration in Martin Place included black and white balloons. For every white balloon, symbolising a child with a childcare place, there were 10 black balloons for the 10 children who could not get a childcare places.

The Whitlam Government was persuaded to return some of the funds to the community-based children's services program that had been promised in May 1974 but drastically cut back by the Treasurer after the election. In September the program was allocated \$75 million and an Interim Committee for a Children's Services Commission was set up to deliver it.

Other social issues where WEL received publicity in 1972—1975 concerned women living in poverty and the needs of migrant women, both matters on which WEL had prepared submissions to inquiries. The newspapers also sought WEL's views on the pros and cons of a mother's wage. In this period articles began to appear on consumer issues and local matters of importance to women. For example, WEL—ACT members were pictured outside a supermarket with the unnecessary packaging they had removed from their shopping and Border—WEL was in the local paper commenting on a proposal for a pedestrian mall.

Employment category: 1972–75

The employment category contains articles on WEL's support for equal pay, the minimum wage and retraining schemes for women. Demonstrations in Melbourne, where WEL joined forces with Women's Liberation, highlighted the discrimination against women in employment in the public service and on the trams. Edna Ryan's presentation of the WEL submission to the National Wage Case in 1974, was to be a turning point in the struggle for equal pay, extending the minimum wage to some 300 000 women then earning less than the male minimum. This resulted in excellent publicity for WEL. Also receiving excellent and nation-wide publicity was the WEL—ACT submission to a federal inquiry into labour market training. The *Australian Financial Review* reproduced all key points of the submission including the ways in which existing training options failed women attempting to re-enter the labour market.³

Health category: 1972–75

The health category includes the publicity from WEL's first submission—to a Tariff Board Inquiry in July 1972. It asked that the customs duty on contraceptives be lowered. It was also used as a vehicle by WEL to draw attention to all its demands about contraceptives and family planning. The submission received excellent press including a favourable editorial article in *The Age*, a long article in the *Australian Financial Review*, another in *The Nation Review* and two in *The Canberra Times*. It had a successful outcome as the Whitlam Government met all WEL's demands when it came to office.

Also in this category are articles about WEL's support for the *Medical Practice Clarification Bill 1973*. This was an unsuccessful attempt by two Members of the House of Representatives, David McKenzie and Tony Lamb, to decriminalise abortion in the ACT. WEL's activity around the Bill included helping set up a Women's Embassy outside Parliament House, highlighting the fact there were no women inside the House to speak for it.

Women in politics: 1972–75

The woman in politics category includes publicity about women in government employment. WEL views on the selection and appointment of an adviser on women to the Prime Minister figured prominently in the press in 1973; photos of the candidates included a number of WEL members. Elizabeth Reid was selected for the job and WEL's reaction to her resignation in 1975 attracted wide media coverage. WEL—Brisbane members were filmed holding a 24-hour vigil in the city square demanding an adequately staffed women's affairs section in the Prime Minister's Department, headed by Reid or a woman with equal capabilities with permanency and direct access to the Prime Minister.⁴ In Melbourne WEL, together with Women's Liberation and the Union of Australian Women, held a protest with placards that included 'Permanent Women's Adviser Now'. Some 250 women sang 'I am woman hear me roar'.⁵

WEL had paid attention to structures for women in the public service in its submissions to the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration. This, however, was an example of policy work that was highly influential *without* being mediated by the media. WEL had recommended the setting up of a 'wheel' model of women's policy machinery and a parallel structure for equal employment opportunity in the public sector.

Other media items in women in politics category concerned campaigns by WEL to attract more women to local government and comments by WEL members on the United Nations conference in Mexico and the Women in Politics conference held in 1975. Prior to the federal election in 1975 WEL was expressing its support for Susan Ryan, a founding member of WEL—ACT, who was a candidate for the Senate. Susan was elected and was to go on to become Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs in the Hawke Labor Government.

Law category: 1972–75

WEL received favourable publicity for its support for the Family Law bill but was not above rushing to the papers with criticisms when it disagreed with changes to the bill. Also receiving favourable and wide publicity was a campaign to remove death duties between surviving spouses. The press reported that WEL was lobbying to make changes to legislation to allow women to sit on juries and emphasising the urgent need to reform the law relating to rape.

Budget/taxation category: 1972–75

Only six articles from the WEL history project database in this period were allocated the Budget/taxation category. In 1973 WEL was invited to present a submission to the pre-budget Budget consultations in Canberra. This was to be the beginning of a long line of pre-Budget submissions made by WEL to the federal government over the next 30 or so years. WEL—ACT and WEL—NSW both sent submissions to the Asprey Taxation Review, *The Sydney Morning Herald* discussed the NSW submission under the heading, ‘Waiting for Asprey’. WEL’s submission to the Tariff Board in 1972 has been discussed in the health category. In 1973 the *Ballarat Courier* reported that WEL had carried out a survey on the effects of tariff cuts on women’s employment in the local area. The media also asked WEL to comment on tax cuts for mothers, income splitting and the Dependent Spouse Rebate, all matters which would be very much part of WEL’s agenda in later years.⁶

Anti-WEL category: 1972–75

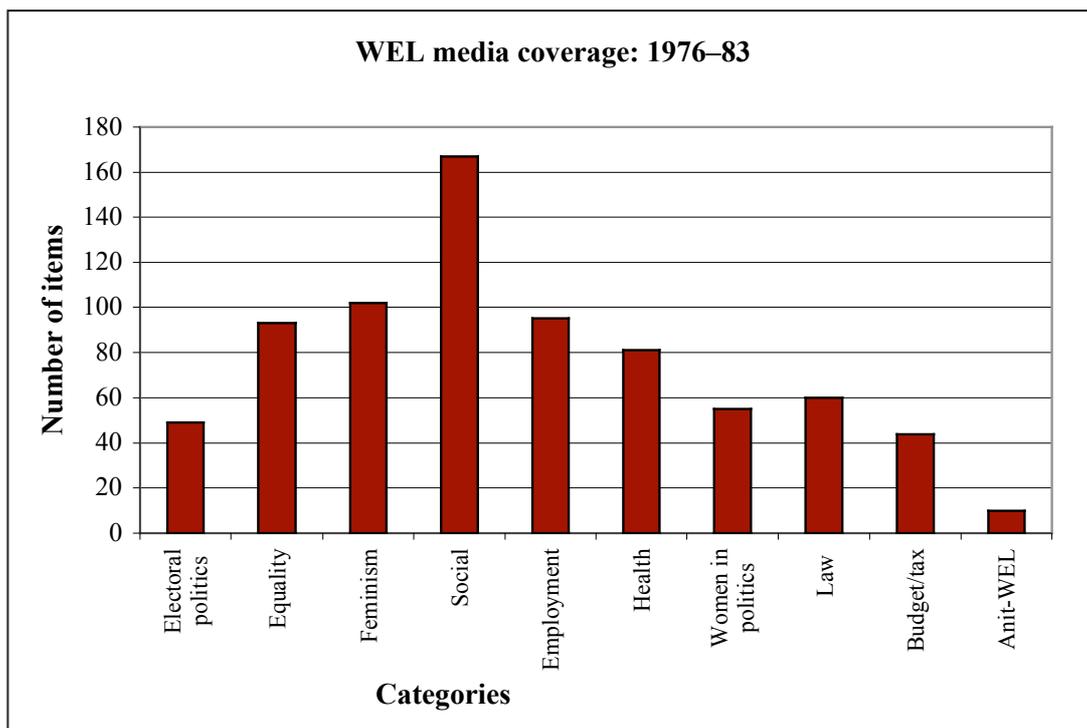
In its early days WEL received surprisingly good press. Much of this was due to women journalists either writing about WEL or helping WEL with its publicity. One report stated that of the 164 press articles published about WEL in Victoria between April and November 1972, only three were antagonistic.⁷ The WEL History media database contained 24 items from 1972–75 that were placed in the anti-WEL category, nine of these were from 1975. The anti-WEL items fall into two groups: one group contains articles about candidates who complained about WEL’s interviewing techniques and said that they had been misquoted or not invited to an interview, the second group of articles state that WEL does not represent ordinary

women, the women at home and that WEL is trying to push these women into the workforce.

2. The Fraser years

Figure 3 shows the distribution of media items by category in the Fraser years. Unlike the earlier years, it is the social category and not the electoral politics category that dominates the graph. Next, reflecting WEL's core activities, are the equality, employment, health and feminism categories. Issues in the articles in all the categories are discussed below.

Figure 3. WEL media coverage 1976–83



Electoral politics category: 1976–83

The electoral category is well down when compared to previous years. WEL continued to interview candidates and hold public meetings, now at the State and local council level. These received publicity but not to the degree seen in 1972

federal elections, the novelty value of women quizzing candidates had worn off. Prior to the 1983 federal elections WEL seized the initiative by taking out paid advertisements with other organizations stating what they would want from the Prime Minister after the elections. The need for equal access for women to job retraining or creation schemes was high on the list. WEL received good unpaid coverage by the media with headings such as, 'Jobless women a big issue'.⁸

Equality category: 1976–83

The equality category is still high. Here we have WEL commenting on anti-discrimination laws that were being introduced by the States and providing strong support for Susan Ryan's Sex Discrimination Bill. Also included in the equality category is WEL's support for the campaign to ratify CEDAW, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A hot issue at the time was the boycott of ANSETT airlines, which was refusing to recruit female pilots. WEL was supporting Deborah Wardley, a qualified pilot, in her attempt to fly ANSETT planes.

The introduction of community radio provided WEL with the opportunity to broadcast regular programs. These included 'Alive and WEL' a 30-minute program at lunchtime every Wednesday on 3CR in Melbourne. The program ran from 1976 to 1984, largely presented by Alma Morton but with many other WEL members appearing as presenters or guests. The tapes from this were made available to regional WEL groups who ran their own programs. In Perth WEL joined the Women's Broadcasting Co-operative that ran a weekly 30-minute program on 6NR between 1976 and 1981. WEL—WA produced many of their programs. WEL—WA also wrote a weekly column in 1976 and 1977 for a local paper. (In Sydney in the early 1990s Pat Richardson gave weekly broadcasts on 2SER-FM about the personal and political journey of a WEL member who had spent much of her life in the country),

WEL groups used community radio and their own newspaper columns to spread the message about lack of equality for women. The negative portrayal of women in the

media was a favourite topic. WEL's complaints to inquiries, tribunals and the press council received good publicity in the mainstream press, particularly when they were complaining about the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Three members of the WEL Media Action Group appeared before the Committee of Inquiry into the ABC in July 1980 and created a stir in the press with newspaper headings such as 'Feminist group slams ABC attitude on women.' They were quoted as saying that 'The ABC would rather show a second-rate rugby match than a high-class program of women's sport...women were being ignored by the ABC in both employment and program content...sexist language could be heard daily on ABC broadcasts.' WEL-NSW member Jocelyne Scutt said that 'the prevailing 1950s attitude that the women's place was in the home still existed in 1980, although 44% of women were now in the workforce. The role of women was changing but the ABC was not adjusting to this change. There was still a dearth of women in "up-front" presentational positions on television and radio and in executive positions in the ABC.' As a harbinger of things to come in the federal sphere, the WEL women told the Committee that 'WEL had decided to lobby not only for anti-discrimination legislation but also for sanctions against those who practised discrimination.'⁹

Feminism category: 1976-83

In the feminism category we continue to find articles about WEL and Women's Liberation, but far fewer than in previous years. WEL was also called upon to comment on the policies of a new women's group, Women Who Want to be Women (WWWW), who were opposed to childcare and sex discrimination legislation.

Although the media's interest in feminism and the women's movement began to wane, the WEL radio programs and WEL columns in the press continued to spread the message. They described what was happening in Australia, in other countries and on the international stage – 1980 was the year of the United Nations mid-Decade for Women Conference in Copenhagen.

While overall membership started to decline in these years it did fluctuate according to issues being addressed. WEL groups continued to lobby, to meet and hold conferences nationally, at the State and Territory level and in the country. WEL members continued to speak about feminist issues to the media. By early 1982, however, WEL's coverage in the mainstream press had been reduced to its lowest level so far and, prompted by a colleague looking for a feminist to comment on an article, one journalist wrote 'Whatever happened to WEL?'¹⁰

Social category: 1976–83

In Figure 3 the social category stands out, containing more items than any of the other categories. This category, in the years 1976–83, includes publicity from two national campaigns, one on childcare and the other on income splitting, as well as items on social issues from WEL community radio programs and WEL columns in the press.

Childcare was still an important issue in the Fraser years. WEL was opposing cuts to the childcare budget and fighting for funding for more childcare places. In late 1979 WEL mounted a national campaign to have childcare accepted as a tax deduction. WEL argued that childcare was a cost associated with earning a living and as such should be tax deductible. This point of view attracted much sympathy and publicity, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Later WEL policy was to emphasise the importance of increased funding for the establishment and operational costs of childcare centres, rather than tax deductions for those who already had access to childcare.

After the 1980 federal election conservative politicians were engaged in a push for income splitting or family-unit taxation. WEL opposed income splitting, as did the National Women's Advisory Council. WEL was explaining to the media that a family unit tax would benefit the high-income earner in the family (almost invariably the husband) by reducing his tax. It would increase disincentives for second earners who would be taxed at the higher marginal rates and would not have access to the tax-free threshold, which acknowledges the cost of earning an income. Instead, WEL and other women's groups wanted an increase in family allowances as a means of getting income to mothers. Given the somewhat dry nature of the topic, WEL received a

surprising amount of publicity. Much credit for this publicity must go to WEL—ACT member and economist Meredith Edwards who worked tirelessly explaining these issues to journalists.

While WEL's national campaigns on child care and income splitting were in progress WEL community radio broadcast programs about the social issues, for example programs on women on welfare, single parents living in high rise flats, migrant women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities. WEL radio and press in WA and Victoria also addressed issues such as town planning, transport, opposition to uranium mining, consumerism, peace and the environment. There was debate amongst the WEL membership about whether or not WEL should spread its resources thinly and cover such issues or whether it should stick to 'hard core feminist issues' such as childcare. While WEL had passed motions opposing uranium mining at its national conferences and eco-feminists spoke on the need for feminist involvement in the environmental cause, it was only WEL groups in Victoria, WA and SA that pursued these issues with any degree of vigour.

Employment category: 1976–83

In the employment category WEL was commenting on various public service reforms and criticising the Fraser Government for cutting back entitlements to paid maternity and paternity leave in the Australian Public Service. In 1978 WEL was again before the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, this time supporting the ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions) test case for unpaid maternity leave. By 1980 WEL was commenting on an old problem with a new name, sexual harassment in the workplace.

WEL was also writing articles and broadcasting on all aspects of women at work including the need for part-time work, superannuation and unions. WEL's views on education, ranging from sex education in schools to university education for mature students, were also covered, but received comparatively little coverage in the mainstream press. As mentioned under the electoral category, what did impress the mainstream media was WEL's campaign, prior to the 1983 federal elections, on

female unemployment and the need for equal access for women to job creation or retraining schemes.

Health category: 1976–83

In the health category, that includes family planning, abortion, women's health, rape and violence against women, we find reports of WEL joining with other women's groups in hard fought but successful campaigns to defend women's access to abortion. WEL was opposing an anti-abortion bill in Queensland and the Lusher Bill in the federal parliament—an attempt to deny Medicare funding for abortions.

WEL drew the media's attention to the possible consequences of the Fraser Government's decision to untie grants to the States, where these funds had previously been ear-marked for women's services, such as rape crisis centres, women's refuges and women's health centres. The Queensland Government refused to pass the funds to the refuges in that State but after some lobbying the federal government agreed to fund them directly. WEL was also receiving publicity for its attempts to reform the laws relating to rape.

Meanwhile the WEL radio programs in WA and Victoria concentrated on giving women information about their health on topics ranging from menstruation to menopause and subjects such as 'Your body, your rights', 'Medical records and you' and 'Coping with stress'.

Women in politics category: 1976–83

Machinery of government issues were to the fore in articles in the women and politics category in the Fraser years. WEL was supportive of the federal National Women's Advisory Council but highly critical of the transfer of the Office of Women's Affairs from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to the new Department of Home Affairs. WEL was very vocal in its support for Sara Dowse, the Director of the Office, who had resigned in protest at this demotion. In 1982 Marie Coleman, the Director of the Office of Child Care, was transferred to the Social Welfare Policy

Secretariat. WEL told the papers that she had been ‘sacked’ and that this action raised doubts about the future of the childcare program.

In 1979 WEL in Darwin commenced a campaign aimed at convincing the Chief Minister to appoint a Women’s Adviser. Despite knock backs they continued the campaign until a Women’s Adviser was appointed in 1982. Similarly WEL—WA used the media in 1982 to draw attention to their request to the Premier for the appointment of a Women’s Adviser. Undeterred by a refusal, they lobbied the Opposition and the newly elected Burke Labor Government set up machinery for women and a permanent Women’s Adviser was appointed in 1984.

WEL started to take more notice of women parliamentarians in this period. Women candidates and parliamentarians were regular visitors on WEL—Victoria’s radio program. In the press WEL was very critical when the ALP dropped Senator Jean Melzer to third position on its Senate ticket and WEL—ACT complained of the sexist treatment of Ros Kelly, the local Member of the House of Representatives, by male parliamentarians. WEL members spoke at seminars and gave interviews on women in politics, stressing the need for political parties to have more positive policies to address the under-representation of women in parliaments.

Law category: 1976–83

WEL’s campaign to remove death duties on estates passing to the surviving spouse continued to receive good publicity until it came to a successful conclusion in 1978.

Throughout the Fraser years WEL was in the media urging and commenting on changes to the law relating to rape and sexual offences. In 1976 WEL—Victoria welcomed, as a good first step, numbers of the recommendations from the Law Reform Commissioner on procedural changes in the conduct of rape cases. A WEL Press release in 1977 announced ‘WEL adopts draft sexual assault bill’.¹¹ This bill had been drafted by Jocelyne Scutt from WEL—NSW and was the basis for amendments to the NSW Crimes Act. However, WEL—NSW members were not entirely happy with the results and were in the papers again in 1981 under the heading

‘Rape reform falls short’. The WEL bill also influenced changes to the sexual assault laws in other states. In 1981 the Convenor of WEL—Darwin told *The Northern Territory News* that while WEL welcomed the proposed changes to the rape laws of the NT, WEL hoped that they would contain laws relating to rape in marriage and that the NT Government would make special facilities available at the hospital for victims of sexual assault.¹²

Throughout this period the media called upon WEL groups to comment on the new divorce laws. The Family Law Action Group in WEL—NSW was particularly active, monitoring the performance of the *Family Law Act 1975* and the new Family Courts. They were critical of the operation of the Family Courts and their submission to the federal Attorney General on this topic received good media coverage as did their later papers on division of property in divorce.

WEL’s campaigns opposing the Queensland abortion bill in 1981 and the Lusher bill in 1979 are discussed under the health category.

Budget/taxation category: 1976–83

The WEL National Conference in January 1976 received nation-wide publicity when it accused the Fraser Government of discrimination against women, for failing to approve the final grants for International Women’s Year projects. Under headlines such as ‘W.E.L. set for big protest on Govt cuts’ articles explained that the WEL conference had called for a nation-wide demonstration in support of the maintenance of essential federal government programs for women and children.¹³ Programs that were ‘rumoured’ to be in ‘jeopardy’ included the Children’s Commission, legal aid, the NEAT Scheme, the supporting mother’s benefits, the Royal Commission on Human Relationships and the final grants for IWY. By March the headlines were ‘WEL questions the cuts’ as WEL embarked on another nation-wide campaign, that included a WEL delegation to lobby in Canberra and submissions sent to Ministers, to discuss the changes made to a number of these programs.¹⁴

Each year WEL sent pre-budget submissions to the Fraser Government and attended pre-budget discussions. WEL was successful at using the press interest in pre-budget discussion to get media coverage for its own agenda. For example, under the headline '9pc female jobless rate WEL says' *The Canberra Times* wrote a full summary of a 1976 WEL submission covering unemployment, expenditure restraint, childcare, retraining, part-time work and the indexation of family allowances.¹⁵ In the media coverage of its pre-budget discussions in 1977 WEL was still presenting strategies to overcome the high level of female unemployment and recommending that family allowances be indexed. In 1978 WEL told the papers that at the pre-budget discussions it gained the impression that the federal government was actively considering means testing Family Allowances, WEL opposed this, rather supporting the indexation of family allowances. 'The fight will continue even though some Budget battles have been lost' was the headline on a report of a press conference called by WEL to discuss gains and defeats in the 1978 federal Budget.¹⁶

In January 1980 a WEL spokeswoman explained to *The Canberra Times* that the government's failure to index family allowances had meant that their value had been eroded by 40% since they were introduced in 1976. The same article announced the WEL campaign opposing income-splitting family tax schemes.¹⁷ Both these campaigns, which have been discussed in the social category above, attracted good media coverage. Articles about WEL's pre-budget discussions and views on the Budget continued to appear but not with the frequency of those in the earlier Fraser years. In 1981 the Convenor of WEL's Economic Committee, Meredith Edwards, told *The Canberra Times* that she saw much of the Budget as continuing a redistribution of wealth away from women and children.¹⁸ In 1982 *The Australian* was most interested in the differing views of the women's groups attending the pre-budget discussions, these included WWW and the Women's Action Alliance. In its article headed, 'Squabbles mar push for better deal. Divided women's groups fight for a slice of the Budget.' the author acknowledged that 'WEL was the only group that had thoroughly costed its proposals claiming that they would mean additional government grants this year of \$108 million'.¹⁹

Anti-WEL category: 1976–83

The articles in the Anti-WEL category include attacks on WEL by the Women's Action Alliance and WWWW for failing to respect the role of full-time housewife and mother and another by the Country Women's Association for failing to appreciate the problems of women in the bush. In other articles WEL was regarded as an ALP front or taken to task for its views on abortion law reform.

3. The Hawke/Keating years

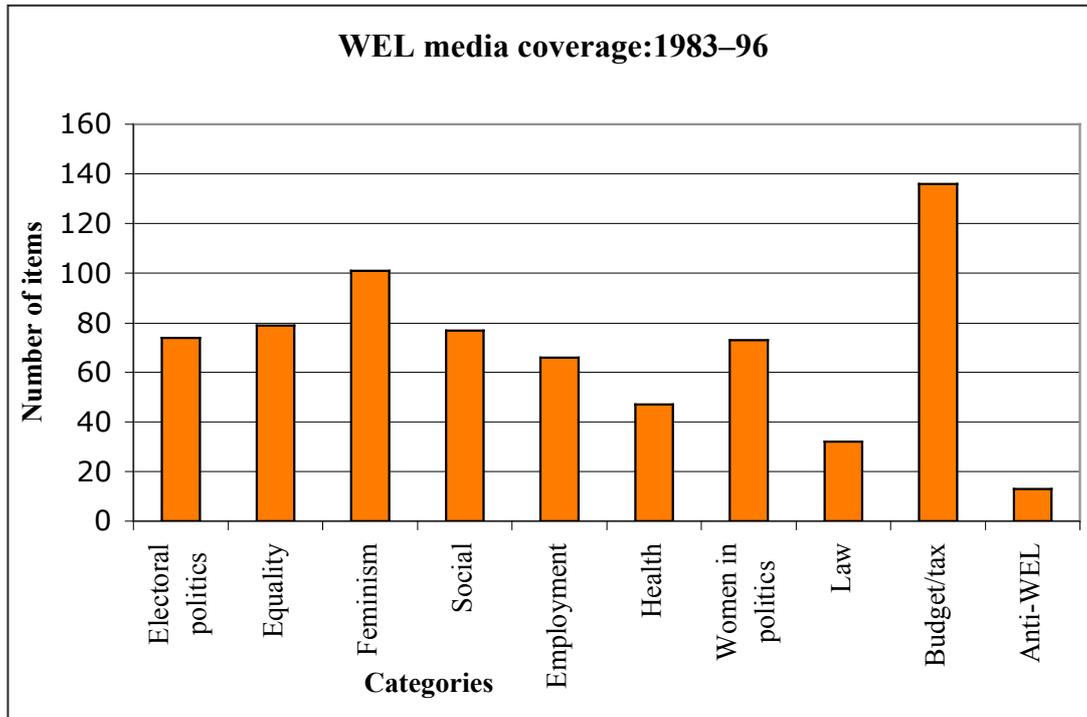
Figure 4 shows the distribution of the items in the WEL History media database by category. What is striking about WEL's media coverage in the Hawke/Keating era is that for the first time there is a high number of media reports in the Budget/taxation category; articles in this and other categories are discussed below.

Electoral politics category: 1983–96

Prior to each federal election in the Hawke/Keating years, WEL provided the press with an analysis of the parties' policies for women voters. While WEL's views received coverage in the media, this never reached the heights of that prior to the 1972 elections. In the lead-up to the December 1984 elections WEL was critical of both the ALP and the Coalition parties. WEL condemned the ALP for a lack of a clear policy on childcare and said that the 'ALP must face up to the demands of women voters', while the Liberal party's policies of income splitting and tax rebates for childcare were both unacceptable.²⁰ In July 1987 WEL received reasonable coverage for rather complicated advice to women voters, which involved different voting strategies for the Senate and House of Representatives and safe and marginal seats. In 1990 the ALP, Coalition and Democrats were all vying for the women's vote. This gave WEL plenty of scope for media coverage. WEL preferred the policies of the Democrats, considering that neither the ALP nor the Coalition was promising enough on childcare to meet the sharply increasing demands for places. But of the two main parties, WEL decided 'that Labor's childcare policy, with its

large increases in community-based long day care places, would help more people than the Coalition’s policy.’²¹

Figure 4. WEL media coverage: 1983-1996



WEL’s pre-election coverage in the Hawke/Keating years reached its zenith prior to the March 1993 federal election. Off to an early start, a group of WEL—Brisbane members in 1992 set about determining the possible impact on the household budget of the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the federal Opposition’s *Fightback* package. Their findings received more publicity than any other WEL initiative in the Hawke/Keating years and are described in the Budget/taxation category.

Childcare was also an important issue in the 1993 federal election. Prime Minister Keating had employed Anne Summers to improve his image with women voters by preparing policies on issues of importance to women. The one receiving most publicity was the ALP promise of a 30% cash rebate for the childcare of working parents; the Coalition then promised rebates but only for parents who earned less than a total of \$60,000. The ensuing debate provided WEL with many opportunities to

comment in the media. On 8 March 1993 *The Age* told readers that ‘WEL goes for the ALP’ and *The Sydney Morning Herald* said ‘Women fear setbacks under Coalition’; WEL had sent a questionnaire to relevant members of the ALP, Coalition and Democrats and concluded that Labor’s policies were better for women than those of the Coalition. In addition to the non-means tested rebate for childcare, Labor was promising to create 50,000 more full-time childcare places than the Coalition.²² The Coalition’s proposed reductions in bulk billing under Medicare and \$9.4 billion cuts to services would disadvantage women.²³

In the 1996 federal elections women’s issues were not a priority for either of the main parties. While WEL received some media coverage for its ‘report card’ on the parties, in the lead-up to the election WEL appeared to receive more mentions in articles that discussed whether or not Labor’s concentration on women’s issues at the 1993 election had succeeded in attracting women’s votes.

Equality category: 1983–96

The equality category has a lot of good news for WEL, containing articles with the Lobby’s views on the ratification of CEDAW, the passage of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, the introduction of legislation to support Equal Employment Opportunity Programs in Australian government employment and Affirmative Action programs in the private sector. While strongly supporting the introduction of these Acts, WEL’s criticism of the absence of sanctions from the Affirmative Action Act (a ‘toothless tiger’) also received considerable coverage. Under the Keating Government the Sex Discrimination and Affirmative Action Acts were strengthened, as the result of recommendations of the House of Representatives’ *Inquiry Into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women* (known as the Lavarch Inquiry). WEL groups made 13 submissions to the Inquiry. Sanctions were finally introduced for non-compliance with the Affirmative Action Act, meaning that companies named in parliament for non-compliance would be ineligible for government contracts or industry assistance.

WEL's campaign to improve the portrayal of women and girls in the media continued on community radio and in the mainstream media. The WEL—Victoria Media Action Group prepared *Guidelines on Non-sexist Advertising* for the Advertising Standards Council and the WEL—Victoria Sports Action Group surveyed the newspapers and announced that there was not enough coverage of women's sport, and that this was a form of discrimination as lack of coverage could deny sportswomen sponsors and hence careers in sport.²⁴ WEL—Cairns carried out a survey of the ABC's *Kindergarten*. The group described the children's program as 'blatantly sexist' after finding that in a sample of 30 stories, a boy was featured as the main character on eight occasions and a girl only once and most characters and animals were male. After a concerted lobbying by WEL—Cairns the program was axed. It was replaced with a new non-sexist program for young children.^{25 26} In response to the many criticisms of the media, the federal government set up a National Working Party on the Portrayal of Women in the Media that produced a *Media Complaints* brochure. The brochure was launched at the WEL National Conference in 1992, an acknowledgment of the work done by WEL groups in this area for the last 20 years.

Feminism category: 1983–96

The feminism category was comparatively high in this period. A number of factors seem to have contributed to this. The many initiatives for women in these years, as described in the two categories above, appeared to have rekindled the media's interest in the women's movement. Both WEL and Women's Liberation celebrated their 20th anniversaries, which provided opportunities for articles on what feminists have achieved in the last 20 years and what the future might hold. Similarly, *The National Agenda for Women Conference*, organised by WEL in 1986 with the theme 'Women's priorities to the year 2000', provided opportunities for articles on the future of feminism. Finally, many of the early WEL members had become well known through parliamentary or other careers and articles about these feminists' accomplishments appeared on a regular basis. The press was particularly intrigued to discover that feminists had formed 'networks' and met regularly for meals and discussion, just like men in pubs and clubs.²⁷

Social category: 1983–96

The majority of articles allocated to this category are about one of WEL's major concerns, federal government funding for the care of children, either in childcare centres or in the home.

Throughout this period WEL monitored the Children's Services Program and lobbied for more childcare places and financial assistance for parents using these centres. WEL protested vigorously when the federal government's mini-budget in 1985 announced cuts to the Children's Services Program. Later in the year WEL was calling for the release of a report that examined new fee and subsidy arrangements for childcare centres that could be introduced to achieve the savings. Jane Elix, a WEL spokeswoman, told *The Age* that, 'Childcare is an essential part of any affirmative action program. How can the Government consider increasing the costs incurred by working women with children?'²⁸ As described under the equality category, WEL provided a critique of the parties' childcare policies prior to each federal election but it was not until the election of 1993 that it was satisfied that a party, the ALP, had a satisfactory policy.

WEL worked for abolition of the Dependent Spouse Rebate and its replacement by a combination of direct cash payments for children and low-income families, as well as an expansion of the Children's Services Program. The replacement of the Dependent Spouse Rebate (paid to the father) by the Home Childcare Allowance (paid to the mother) was finally announced in Labor's 1993 election campaign. This policy gain owed as much to the new Prime Minister Paul Keating's need to increase his electoral support among women, and the strategic presence of Anne Summers in his office to advise him on how to do this, as on WEL's sustained campaign on the issue. WEL had, however, prepared the groundwork.

In 1995 WEL was in the papers again criticising the federal government for the introduction of a means tested 'baby bonus', when what was needed was 12 weeks paid maternity leave not a 'welfare payment', and the suggestion that the 30%

childcare rebate should be means tested, thus breaking an election promise, 'It's a sell-out of the sheilas' said WEL.²⁹

Employment category: 1983–96

WEL welcomed the Hawke Government's emphasis on job creation schemes with half the jobs going to women. WEL was not pleased, however, about the requirement, announced in the mini-budget in 1983, that new schemes covered only those registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). Eva Cox pointed out to *The Age* that, 'Many women do not register at the CES because they are not eligible for the dole. These include women on lone parent pensions and benefits, spouses of registered unemployed and employed persons and many others.'³⁰ WEL told the press that it had declared Tuesday 16 August 1983 to be national women's CES registration day, to encourage women to register so they would qualify for jobs under the Community Employment Program (CEP). WEL wanted women's employment officers appointed in each of the 30 regions, at least three women on every committee set up to oversee the CEP and for the States to lose funds if they did not achieve their targets for women.³¹

In 1984 the federal government released a Green Paper on Affirmative Action; this was greeted by WEL as a 'sop to business and unions' that did little to address the recognised inequalities in the workforce. Attacking the government's decision to postpone legislation until experimental pilot programs had been finalised, WEL said what was needed was legislation now.³² In October 1985 WEL was critical of the government's plans to phase in affirmative action legislation for women, giving small companies more than five years before they must produce equal job opportunities for women. A WEL spokeswoman said that it amounted to 'hitting the business lobby over the head with a feather'.³³ Neither was WEL happy about the lack of effective sanctions in the legislation. In 1991 WEL representatives, when appearing before the Lavarch Committee, called for companies that were named in Parliament for failing to implement affirmative action programs to be denied government or business support.

In 1984 the federal government introduced legislation for Equal Employment Opportunity Programs for women and members of minority groups in the Australian Public Service. Similar legislation for the remainder of Commonwealth Government Employment was passed in 1987, ironically shortly after the abolition of the Public Service Board. The Public Service Board had been the monitoring body for EEO programs and responsible for the recruitment of people with disabilities and Aboriginals. Departments were now to be responsible for their own recruitment and the monitoring of their EEO programs. WEL announced that it was planning a campaign to lobby against the changes.^{34 35} After a concerted lobbying campaign, by WEL and others, a unit to monitor EEO programs was established in the newly created Public Service Commission and the Department of Employment took over the special recruitment programs. However, in 1991 WEL—ACT representatives told the Lavarch Committee that EEO in the Australian Public Service had become a ‘sad farce’ and that performance had been slipping ever since the abolition of the Public Service Board.³⁶ WEL was in the papers again in 1995 opposing a recommendation of a review of the Public Service Act that, if accepted, would have meant that the Public Service Commissioner would no longer be required to approve the EEO programs of departments and agencies. WEL also objected to the recommended definition of merit and said that on ‘International Women’s Day, 1995, the Government should be strengthening rather than weakening its position on EEO.’³⁷ WEL—NSW was also in the papers in 1995 calling for strengthening of EEO programs in NSW Government, WEL wanted the NSW Labor Government to meet its election commitment to set targets, with figures and dates, to boost female participation in public sector employment.³⁸

The battle for equal pay, or pay equity as it became known, moved to a new front in the early 1990s, that of enterprise bargaining. The Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) had adopted the enterprise bargaining principle in 1991, but not without concerns about the possible disadvantages female workers might experience, especially in relation to over award payments. WEL explained to the media that ‘Traditionally women are not good at arguing their case.’ Edna Ryan came out of retirement to lead WEL’s campaign against enterprise bargaining. WEL hired an industrial advocate who prepared a ‘statement of concerns’ for government and employers on the likely impact of enterprise bargaining on women’s wages and

conditions. *The Courier-Mail* reported that there was to be a ‘top-level meeting with the powerful Women’s Electoral Lobby’ and that the Minister of Industrial Relations was attempting to accommodate WEL concerns. The eventual accommodation was to be in the form of safeguards (minimum entitlement provisions) in the *Industrial Relations Reform Act 1993*. As recommended by WEL at their meeting with the Minister, the Act gave legislative effect to ILO (International Labour Organisation) Conventions relating to equal pay and workers with family responsibilities, as well as non-discrimination in employment. These safeguards were meant to ensure that women’s workplace gains could not be bargained away at the enterprise level.^{39 40}

Health category: 1983–96

No longer dominated by articles on contraception and abortion, the majority of the articles in the health category in this period were about violence against women. WEL—Tasmania was speaking of the urgent need to reform the rape laws in that State; later they were suggesting ‘the Golda Meir solution’, a night curfew for men in Hobart. WEL—Brisbane drew attention to the need to alter the definition of rape in the Queensland Criminal Code so that rape within marriage would be an offence. WEL—ACT was complaining that the courts were ‘soft on rapists’ and WEL—SA was criticising the judgement in a rape in marriage trial; later a Full Bench decided that the Judge had made two errors of law.⁴¹

In late 1992 Deborah McCulloch from WEL—SA wrote to *The Advertiser* that ‘Women and children are still ignored by government and opposition parties, despite rhetoric to the contrary. As victims of domestic violence, rape and child sexual abuse, women and children are most at risk in the home.’ She complained that case numbers at a local women’s health centre were rising dramatically but the State government had cut funding to women’s health centres and reduced the counselling available to women who were victims of domestic violence. What was needed was a women’s health centre in every suburb. She was not alone in her concerns. In the lead-up to the 1993 election ALP research showed that after unemployment and childcare, women were most concerned about violence and health. In its pre-election analysis WEL noted that both main parties had promised to fund the National Women’s Health

Strategy and the Government, if re-elected, would continue to fund Women's Health Centres until an agreement about this could be reached with the States.^{42 43} The Coalition's policy to make cuts to bulk billing under Medicare was roundly condemned by WEL, who said that for most Australians this 'would re-create a Dickensian era where poor people called on doctors' charity and wives had to ask husbands for money to visit the doctor.'⁴⁴

Women in politics category: 1983–96

This category contains numbers of articles about policy-making positions for women and the WEL femocrats who worked in these jobs. These jobs, which were essentially political in nature, were often very vulnerable following a change in government. For example, WEL in Hobart was in the papers in 1983 attacking the Liberal Premier Gray's decision to abolish the positions of Women's Adviser in the Premier's office and Equal Employment Officer in the Public Service. WEL and the Support Women's Adviser Team (SWAT) said that the plan to replace the Women's Adviser with three regional committees would cause divisions in the women's movement.^{45 46} The women's policy jobs and femocrats tended to fare better under Labor Governments. For example, in Canberra, with arrival of the Hawke Labor Government, the Office for the Status of Women was returned to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and up-graded to a division. In 1984 WEL—SA was pleased to see Carol Treloar, a former member of their State executive, become the third Women's Adviser for SA but deplored the failure of the Bannon Government to appoint a woman in its Ministry.^{47 48} However, with the arrival of the Greiner Government in NSW in 1988 the Women's Advisory Council and Women's Co-ordination Unit were moved out of the Premier's Department, WEL calling it a 'down grading of the two groups'. The occupants of the three top femocrat jobs, Carmel Niland, Helen L'Orange and Alison Ziller, resigned; Helen L'Orange then moved to Canberra to head the Office of the Status of Women.⁴⁹

Other articles in this category are about WEL members who were parliamentarians, comments by WEL on why there are so few women in parliament and conferences that had women and politics as themes.

Law category: 1983–96

The federal government was not the only government passing equal opportunity legislation in 1984. WEL—WA congratulated the State Opposition for supporting the *WA Equal Opportunity Bill 1984*. WEL told *The West-Australian* that, ‘This Bill is of great importance for the well-being of all women voters in WA’. It was to become the first Equal Opportunity Act in that State.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the passage of new equal opportunity legislation, greeted with ‘jubilation’ by WEL—SA after the resolution of a deadlock over the definition of sexual harassment, was a complete re-write of existing South Australian anti-discrimination laws.⁵¹

Most of the other articles in the law category have already been discussed under previous categories, with the exception of the call by Sue Walpole, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, at the WEL National Conference in January 1996 for further strengthening of the federal *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* by removing many of its exemptions.⁵²

Budget/taxation category: 1983–96

What is striking about WEL’s media coverage in the Hawke/Keating era is that for the first time there is a large number of media reports in the Budget/taxation category. The Hawke/Keating years were the time that WEL settled down to serious work on taxation, starting with the *National Economic Summit* held in the first year of the Hawke Government and following up with two major conferences on women and taxation in 1985 and 1989. WEL economists worked on the important submission to the *National Economic Summit* that was presented by Frances Davies. The submission highlighted what had become major themes for WEL. Emphasis should be placed on provision of services in the community, rather than individual tax cuts; the individual should remain the unit of account in the tax system and the Dependant Spouse Rebate should be abolished and the \$1 billion savings used to increase family

allowances. In relation to community services, WEL tried to counter the view that these were not ‘real’ jobs by pointing to the multiplier effect they had in the local economy, quite apart from improving the quality of life for women.

The WEL contribution to the Summit received very favourable attention, but much broader coverage was received by the *National Women’s Tax Summit*, which was strategically held a week before the government’s Tax Summit, in June 1985. WEL pulled together 23 organisations to sponsor the Summit and provide position papers. There was loud opposition from organisations ‘representing 5 million Australian women’ to the broad-based consumption tax favoured by the Treasurer. The conference communiq  stated it would mean a transfer from purse to wallet—the costs being paid by women who did most of the household shopping and the benefits in income-tax cuts going to those who earned above average wages, mostly men.

WEL organised the subsequent *Women’s Tax Convention* in partnership with the Hawke government’s National Women’s Consultative Council. The Convention was held in March 1989 in the new Parliament House, Canberra. The women at this Convention resolved that the tax cuts promised by government should be targeted to low-income earners and those with children. As so often the case, tax cuts had been mooted only for those earning above the female average wage.

The *Women’s Tax Convention* also called again for abolition of the Dependent Spouse Rebate and its replacement by a combination of direct cash payments for children and low-income families and an expansion of the Children’s Services Program. As discussed under the social category, this was finally announced in Labor’s 1993 election campaign.

WEL continued its fight against a broad-based consumption tax in 1992, this time opposing the Coalition’s plans for a Goods and Services Tax (GST). A group of WEL—Brisbane members set about determining the possible impact on the household budget of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the federal Opposition’s *Fightback* package. They received excellent coverage for their survey of what a number of household items would cost under the proposed GST. They had found that the price of 454 household items out of 499 surveyed would cost more under a GST.⁵³

There were some very hostile reactions from Liberal politicians and local Liberals called the police when WEL launched the report outside a Brisbane supermarket.

Queensland Liberal Leader Joan Sheldon, described the WEL women as ‘airheads’ with an ‘intellectual shortfall’ who had compiled a ‘rather silly shopping survey.’⁵⁴ On the other hand, Wendy Fatin, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, issued a press release on 5 May 1992 headed ‘GST Study Essential Reading for Women – Fatin’. Peter Reith, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Treasurer, countered with a press release headed simply ‘WEL Survey wrong.’

Anti-WEL category: 1983–96

The numbers of articles in the anti-WEL category in the Hawke/Keating years were still low when compared to the numbers in other categories. WEL, however, continued to be attacked in the media, for example, it was attacked by the right for supporting sex discrimination and being too radical, by the ‘pro-life’ lobby for supporting the abortion pill, RU 486, it was attacked by a Labor Minister for occupying femocrat jobs, while WEL—Bowral members were accused of being ‘publicity hounds’ when trying to get a baby feeding room in a new shopping arcade.^{55 56} In 1984 Bruce Goodluck, a Liberal Party Member of the House of Representatives from Tasmania, said that, ‘The Government’s sex discrimination legislation was the work of radical feminists within the Women’s Electoral Lobby...He described the lobby as a group of ‘given-up Catholics who have something against men’.⁵⁷ Not impressed with the Hawke Government’s work for women, Senator Peter Walsh told *The Australian* that affirmative action and equal opportunity bodies only ‘give work to hairy-legged Stalinists from the Women’s Electoral Lobby’.⁵⁸

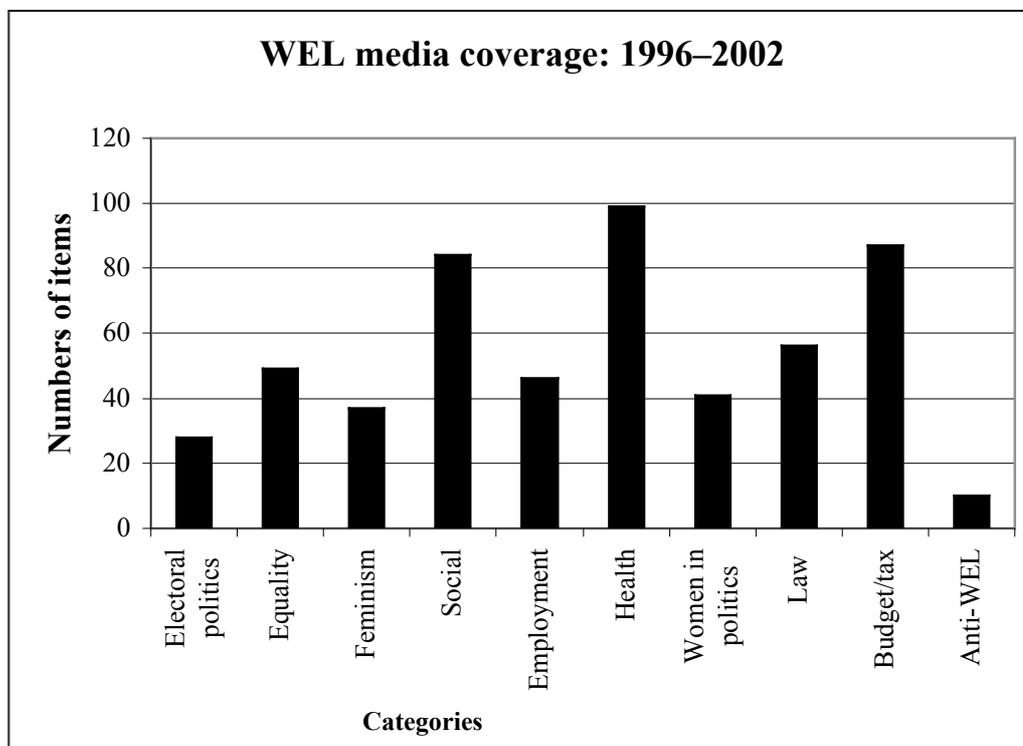
5. The Howard years

The WEL History media database contains items from the first seven years of the Howard Coalition Government. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the media items by

category. WEL activities that generated the most press in this period were a successful High Court case, where WEL supported the right of single women to obtain IVF treatment, and an unsuccessful campaign to have sanitary products and lactation aids exempt from the Goods and Services Tax (GST). These are reflected in the high levels of media items seen in the health and budget/tax categories in Figure 5.

In general WEL's media coverage in this period was dominated by its criticism of Government initiatives that encouraged women to leave the workforce and stay at home to care for young children, the weakening of Commonwealth anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation, the removal of over-award payments from the jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission and cutbacks to machinery of government arrangements for women in Canberra, including the de-funding of WEL. These articles are described in more detail under the category headings below.

Figure 5: WEL media coverage: 1996–2002



Electoral politics category: 1996–2002

Despite receiving mixed to poor coverage in the media on electoral matters, WEL continued to provide women voters with information about candidates and parties for local, State and federal elections. For example, *The Age* reported in December 1997 that, ‘In a repeat of the election surveys that put WEL on the map 25 years ago the women’s group had questioned the four main candidates for the Mitcham by-election in Victoria. WEL found that only the Greens candidate could be highly recommended.’⁵⁹ In February 1998 WEL—ACT took out a paid advertisement in *The Canberra Times* to report scores on women’s policies for candidates in the ACT elections. Once again the Greens received the highest score.⁶⁰

Prior to the federal election in October 1998, WEL released its scorecard for the two main parties based on past performances and future promises. While the ALP received the highest score WEL said that ‘neither party scores particularly well’ and ‘both parties have a lot of improving to do.’⁶¹ The nuances were lost on the *Australian Financial Review* that announced, ‘WEL guide comes out strongly for Labor.’⁶² It was left to WEL members to provide more thoughtful pieces, Marian Sawyer writing a detailed account of the parties ‘women policies’ in *The Canberra Times* and Eva Cox writing in *The Australian* that, ‘The Women’s Electoral Lobby stock take before the elections noted that neither party really scored well in areas of policy which made a fairer society, not just an economy. Labor was improving somewhat, but the Coalition was quite unrepentant about making Australia more unequal through its tax policies’.⁶³

In the lead-up to the 1998 federal elections the Prime Minister, John Howard, campaigned on the basis that, if elected, his government would introduce a GST. WEL was opposed to a GST and continued its opposition until the GST was introduced in mid 2000. Articles with WEL’s views on the GST have been allocated to the Budget/taxation category.

Following the Tampa crisis and 9/11, when planes destroyed the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001, WEL had to work hard to get media coverage for the

federal election in November 2001. WEL produced a 'how to vote card', ranking party policies in five areas of importance to women and also distributed free postcards. The National Chairperson reported that they had 'received a steady flow of coverage on both commercial, ABC and community radio stations. Newspaper coverage was more spasmodic' although WEL was quoted on issues such as the Liberal's promised baby bonus, Sarah Maddison telling the press that 'it was an ideological move to keep women at home.' Sarah also wrote an opinion piece in *The Australian*.^{64 65}

Equality category: 1996–2002

In the Howard years there were a number of changes or attempted changes to Commonwealth equal opportunity legislation and anti-discrimination legislation. In 1997 there was an exchange of letters to the editor in the *Australian Financial Review* between WEL and Pru Goward, who was then the executive director of the Office of the Status of Women. She said that WEL had been 'wrong' to say that 'Legislation is currently before Parliament that will remove the role of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's complaint handling.'^{66 67} As Pru Goward later admitted to WEL, she was the one that was wrong. Legislation was passed which removed the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's powers to hold public hearings and the complaint handling powers were taken away from the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, the Race Discrimination Commissioner and the Disability Discrimination Commissioner. Instead public hearings were to be held in the more formal and expensive Federal Court.

Changes to the affirmative action legislation are discussed under the employment category and attempts to change the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* to prohibit single women having access to reproductive technology are discussed under the health category. The majority of the other articles in this category report on complaints about portrayal of women in the media and the poor media coverage of women's sport.

Feminism category: 1996–2002

There are fewer articles in this category than in previous years; feminism was not a popular topic with the media in this period. WEL celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1997 resulting in a number of articles about WEL's past achievements and possible future.⁶⁸ Sadly, 1997 was also the year of Edna Ryan's death. Edna, who was called in tributes in the media, 'the grand old lady of Australian feminism' and a tireless campaigner for equal pay', had been a founding member of WEL and was responsible for many of its successful industrial campaigns.⁶⁹ As WEL aged so did its early members, some announced their retirement from activism and others lamented the drop in membership and lack of interest by the young.⁷⁰

Sarah Maddison wrote numbers of articles on feminist topics for *The Australian*. As convenor of Young Women's Electoral Lobby (YWEL) she was quoted in articles with headings such as 'Why feminist is a dirty word' and 'Women grapple with the F-word'.⁷¹ Sarah said that WEL itself had an image problem with young women. Young women will tell you that they believe in equality for women. However, if asked what a feminist looks like, young women will say such things as 'ugly, hairy legs, separatists, man-hating, fat'; 'this range of angry, negative stereotypes have been sold to them by the media'.⁷² On a more positive note, in 1999 *The Canberra Times* announced 'Feminist movement alive and well as young lead the way' reporting that at the age of 25, Erica Lewis was the youngest convenor of WEL—ACT, Rachel Wynd, 30, was the ACT representative on the national board and the group's newsletter editor, Roslyn Dundas was just 21. Erica rejected the notion that the old guard was being replaced, saying that 'It's not a youth versus age and experience thing, the same group of women have been carrying the workload since, well, virtually the 70s and they're tired and they want a break'.⁷³ In 2001 Erica Lewis, then Acting National Coordinator, told *The Canberra Times* that 'there is a resurgence in interest in WEL, particularly among the young, with ACT membership increasing by 50 per cent in recent years'.⁷⁴

Social category: 1996–2002

This category contains numbers of articles in which WEL comments on Government initiatives that they saw as attempts to return women to the home as stay-at-home

mums. For example, in April 1998 *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that seasonally adjusted figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that the proportion of women with children participating in the workforce had fallen since the federal government came into office. This reversed two years of steady gains. WEL's spokeswoman on family affairs, Kathleen Swinbourne, told the paper that, 'It seems to be part of the Government's plans to get women, particularly married women, back in the home.'.. 'a combination of cuts to child-care subsidies, prompting a rapid rise in child-care fees, and generous family tax allowances and rebates for all families with children earning less than \$70,000 a year meant that women with children were actively discouraged from joining the labour force.' The Minister for the Status of Women rejected the idea that the government wanted women to stay at home, saying that the government wanted to give women 'choice'. But WEL was not convinced.⁷⁵ In May the same paper reported that the amount of money a sole parent could earn before their ex-partner's child support payments are reduced was to be cut to \$29,000 leaving thousands of women worse off. Women's groups said that this was the result of a well-organised campaign by men's groups. Kathleen Swinbourne said that, 'There is no reason for you to go out and work with all the difficulties inherent in child care and not have anything extra for it.'⁷⁶

As mentioned under the electoral politics category, WEL was not impressed by the baby bonus, promised by the Coalition prior to the 2001 election, for women who stayed at home to look after their babies. WEL saw this as more evidence that the Government was determined to see women back in the home. Neither did WEL necessarily see it as a good thing for mothers at home, the WEL National spokesperson on employment, Alison Preston, wrote that 'to reward stay-at-home mothers with between \$1.37 and \$6.8 a day for the job of full-time parenting is so short-sighted and insulting that it almost defies belief.' She went on to say that, 'If Howard genuinely wants to address declining fertility rates (now at dangerously low levels) and, simultaneously, attract and retain women in employment, a national paid maternity scheme is essential.'⁷⁷

Other social issues that have been included in this category are gambling, prostitution, the constitutional conventions and the republic. In 1998 Sally Cowling from WEL—

Victoria wrote a submission on women and gambling for the Productivity Commission and her views received wide coverage in the national press. In January 1998 a women's constitutional convention was organised by six women's groups including WEL, ahead of the official Government convention where only one third of the delegates would be women. Christina Ryan from WEL said that 'while the women's conference would consider the question of WEL becoming a republic and the form of selection of a head of state, there were more important matters to be dealt with.' 'Women had not really had an opportunity to discuss our angle on the constitution since it was framed 100 years ago.'⁷⁸

Meanwhile regional WEL groups were receiving coverage in local papers and radio for their views on social issues. For example, Jan Roberts from WEL—Wagga was commenting on the sale of the property which housed the Wagga Wagga women's health service and Joan Trewern from WEL—Cairns was commenting on matters as diverse as prostitution, refugees, migrants, indigenous issues, peace and the republic.

Employment category: 1996–2002

During the 1996 federal election campaign WEL said that 'The Coalition fail to convince us that their industrial relations system will protect groups of vulnerable workers.'⁷⁹ Reports in the papers after the elections show that their fears were realised. In May 1996 WEL met with the Minister for Industrial Relations to discuss the negative impact of his proposal to remove the equal remuneration provisions of the Industrial Relations Act, which allowed the Commission to regulate equal pay in over-award payments. But the Minister was unmoved. Founding WEL member Beatrice Faust, in her regular column in *The Weekend Australian*, explained that WEL had joined with others before the Industrial Relations Commission to argue for equal pay for work of equal value. The Minister's Workplace Relations Bill, she said, 'removes over-award payments from the jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission and abandons them to negotiations between employers and employees. The industrial relations legislation will negate any benefits women gain from the equal pay case.'⁸⁰

In 1998 WEL made a submission to the review of the *Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986*. WEL told *The Sydney Morning Herald* that publicly naming companies for non-compliance was not enough, the Affirmative Action Agency should be given powers to investigate and audit companies and impose fines and non-complying companies should be referred to the Sex Discrimination Commissioner. When the results of the review were known WEL told *The Canberra Times* that it was ‘disappointing’ that the agency was not to be given these increased powers and that the mandatory reporting requirements were not to be extended to companies employing fewer than 100 people. Affirmative Action was to be removed from the name of the Agency, but Hazel Moir, a co-author of WEL’s submission, said that she ‘was unfazed by the name change, saying the term was often associated with quotas.’⁸¹

In July 2002 a campaign was launched to try and persuade the federal government to introduce a federally funded maternity leave scheme, in line with international standards. *The Canberra Times* reported that WEL and other groups had worked out the details of the proposed scheme with the Democrats who launched a national petition and were to introduce a Private Members Bill, which the WEL National Coordinator, Sandy Killick, said was a ‘constructive step forward in a debate that mattered for women.’ Pru Goward, who by then was the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, also campaigned to have maternity leave recognised in law and Sarah Maddison from WEL told *The Australian* that ‘Australia was lagging behind internationally by not legislating for maternity leave.’ As yet, the campaign has not been successful.⁸²

Health category: 1996–2002

The majority of articles in this category concern WEL’s interventions in High Court cases to protect women’s reproductive rights. WEL first applied to the High Court for amicus curiae status (friend of the court) in 1996 in the case of CES vs. the Superclinics. The NSW Court of Appeal had upheld the right of CES to sue for

damages from a clinic that failed to diagnose her pregnancy in time to have it terminated. The case was then taken to the High Court where the Australian Catholics Bishops Conference was given leave to intervene as *amicus curiae*. It appeared that the intervention by the Catholic Church might threaten existing case law on abortion in NSW and Victoria and result in abortion becoming unlawful. It was for this reason that WEL decided to intervene, despite the expense of participating in a High Court case, even with pro bono legal assistance. The WEL intervention highlighted to the media the potential implications of the case for women.⁸³⁸⁴ Ultimately *CES vs. Superclinics* was settled out of court and WEL did not have to proceed with its application.

Attracting a great deal of publicity for WEL was its defence of the Commonwealth *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the latter's prohibition of marital status discrimination. Led by Lisa Solomon, WEL—Victoria had briefed legal counsel for a case in the High Court, in support of the right of single women to obtain IVF treatment. The Federal Court had already ruled that a Victorian law restricting such access was inconsistent with the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and hence invalid. However the Commonwealth Attorney General had issued a fiat allowing the Australian Conference of Catholic Bishops to appeal to the High Court to overturn the Federal Court decision.⁸⁵ The challenge not only threatened access of single women to IVF, but also the marital status provisions of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* more generally.

Both WEL-Victoria and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission intervened in the proceedings to support the Federal Court decision. Many media commentators, such as those on ABC television's 7.30 Report,⁸⁶ saw WEL rather than the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission as the main player defending women's right to make choices regarding children, regardless of marital status.

In 2001 there was again a highly charged atmosphere. WEL women with placards demonstrated outside the Court while inside WEL counsel had been briefed to oppose the bishops. According to *The Australian*, 'WEL has seen the battle flag and marshalled its forces accordingly. The call has gone out via email and telephone: 'WEL and all other supporting organisations are calling on women to attend the High

Court, to fill the public gallery, to mass on the steps—to show the Catholic church and the Australian Government, as well as the rest of the world, that Australian women will not stand for this kind of attack and that we take our human rights seriously'.⁸⁷

WEL's case was three-pronged: first to oppose the standing of the bishops; second if the bishops were granted standing, to be the other major party; and third, if that failed to be granted amicus curiae status to put arguments on behalf of women. 'How bishops' IVF bid galvanised feminism' and 'Women's lobby challenges church' were some of the headlines.⁸⁸ In the end the High Court ruled that those such as the Catholic Bishops Conference who had not been parties to a case did not have standing to appeal the decision. Hence the Federal Court decision stood. It was not the end of the story, as the government persisted with its attempts to amend the Sex Discrimination Act to allow marital status discrimination in access to infertility treatment and WEL continued to take a lead in community resistance to this.⁸⁹

While the defence of the Sex Discrimination Act did not have the immediate visual appeal of some of WEL's other campaigns, the 'WEL Stands for Women' placards outside the High Court were photogenic and other tactics included Young WEL-ACT's participation in the delivery of a turkey baster to the Prime Minister. An enclosed letter pointed out that this would be the safest way that infertile single and lesbian women would be able to become pregnant under proposed changes to the Act.⁹⁰

Women in politics category: 1996–2002

Some articles in this category are about women standing as candidates in State, territory and local elections, but those receiving the most press are about machinery of government changes in Canberra,

In October 1997 the Prime Minister demoted two female ministers from their positions in Cabinet. Senator Amanda Vanstone was removed from the position of Minister for Employment and Education and given Justice and Judi Moylan lost

Family Services and was given the Status of Women Portfolio. However, Judi Moylan, as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women, was not included in Cabinet. WEL attacked the demotion of the two ministers and the removal of Status of Women from Cabinet. Marian Sawyer, speaking at WEL—ACT's 25th anniversary said that now the Office of the Status of Women 'cannot really brief the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on most Cabinet submissions because she is not a Cabinet minister. This means that there isn't someone in Cabinet to advocate on the issue of impact on women of tax proposals, industry policy proposals, tariff proposals or whatever.' The Prime Minister said that she would be called in when there were matters affecting women but WEL 'does not believe this means that she'll be in Cabinet for all this vital economic decision-making; otherwise she would be a Cabinet Minister'.^{91 92}

Complaints were not confined to Canberra, papers around Australia carried the news. *The Courier-Mail* wrote a story featuring founding members of WEL—Brisbane, Beryl Homes, Win Metcalf-Kendall and Delma Brunello, who had also been celebrating the 25th anniversary of their group. They told the paper that they were 'dismayed that many rights WEL had fought for were being wound back by the Howard government'. The removal of the women's adviser to the prime minister from Cabinet was one of these; the paper reproduced the photo from 1975 of WEL—Brisbane members holding a vigil in King George Square in Brisbane to protest at the resignation of Elizabeth Reid and demanding an adequately staffed women's affairs section with direct access to the Prime Minister. Delma Brunello was one of those in the 1975 photo.⁹³

In the following years articles continued to appear in which WEL criticised the effect of the Howard government's policies on women, the abolition of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, the abolition of the Women's Statistical Unit in the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the apparent lack of action by the Office of the Status of Women. In 1999 the Federal Government announced changes in arrangements for funding of women's organizations. Up to four national organizations would be funded at \$100,000 a year; Meredith Doig from WEL told the *Australian Financial Review* that requirements in the tendering documents would have 'the potential to interfere with the group

weighing into public debate on highly contentious issues such as abortion and welfare crackdowns' .. 'Basically gagging comment about any politician or action of the Government.'⁹⁴ WEL did not win any of the four grants; instead, together with a number of other organizations, it had its usual annual allocation of \$50,000 cut. There was uproar in the press and parliament about these cuts.

A second round of grants was announced a couple of weeks later. WEL and three other organizations were told that 'The Government will provide \$35,000 this financial year to offer capacity-building partnerships in order to strengthen and assist four women's NGOs that were not successful this year,'⁹⁵ 'In other words WEL will be told by government-appointed consultants how to write their applications properly next time'. WEL was understandably bemused by this as it had been writing successful submissions to government for 27 years.⁹⁶

Law category: 1996–2002

The majority of articles in this category are ones that deal with the legal aspects of the IVF campaign that has been discussed under the health category. Others are good news for WEL and are about the splitting of superannuation on divorce and abortion law reform.

The federal government announced in May 1998 that couples would be allowed to split their superannuation nest eggs when arranging their property settlements on divorce. The new rules would come into effect when legislation was passed in 2002. WEL had been lobbying for this since the 1970s and welcomed the news. Kathleen Swinbourne from WEL said that, 'Just the acknowledgement that super is communal property is a huge step forward.'⁹⁷

During the Howard era WEL participated in successful campaigns for abortion law reform in Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT. In May 1998 *The West Australian* carried a very happy photo of two WEL—WA members, Ruth Grebble and Barbara Buick, and Cath Calcutt from ALRA, celebrating the passage of the bill which removed abortion from various sections of the WA Criminal Code.⁹⁸ Cheryl

Davenport MLC, a WEL Member, introduced the private member's bill into the Legislative Council and Diana Warnock, another WEL member, had carriage of the Bill in the Legislative Assembly. Complete with a lobby kit, WEL and ALRA members worked tirelessly lobbying members of Parliament. Davenport, however, was forced to make a number of compromises to her bill; for example the legislation, as passed, failed to remove sanctions against doctors from the Criminal Code.⁹⁹

In 2001 a medical student complained to police about the 'unlawfulness' of abortions being performed in Tasmanian hospitals. The complaint arose because of the lack of a clear definition of 'unlawful abortion' in the Tasmania Criminal Code. The complaint hit the front pages of the papers. WEL—Tasmania, as part of a group called People for Choice, was heavily involved in lobbying for a bill to clarify the criteria under which an abortion may be performed. The bill was passed in late 2001.
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In 2002 WEL—ACT founded the coalition of pro-choice groups, Options for Women, to lobby for the passage of two bills in the ACT Legislative Assembly. WEL members were very active in a very demanding and controversial campaign. Both bills were passed in 2002. Passage of the first bill made the ACT the first jurisdiction in Australia to remove all references to abortion from its criminal code. The second bill repealed the 'Osborne legislation' of 1998 that sought to force women considering an abortion to view photographs of foetuses.¹⁰¹

Budget/Taxation category: 1996–2002

Numbers of articles in this category are about WEL's opposition to changes to the tax system that would put pressure on women with young children to withdraw from the workforce. As discussed under the social category the Government described these measures as providing women with the 'choice' to stay at home rather than staying in or entering the workforce.

The majority of articles in this category, however, concern WEL's opposition to the Goods and Services Tax (GST). In the lead up to the 1998 federal election WEL

said, as they had said before the 1993 election, that a GST would have the effect of ‘transferring money from the purse to the wallet.’ Jan Harper from WEL—Victoria told *The Age* that a GST is a regressive tax and ‘will hit women disproportionately’. Women are over-represented in low-income brackets, ‘taxes added to food, clothing, garbage collection, library services, telephone services, and car maintenance cut more into the budget of a low-income person than a person on a high income. Women are usually responsible for feeding and clothing children; the GST will apply taxes to these basic necessities.’¹⁰²

Receiving the best media coverage was the national campaign in 2000 calling for the exemption of sanitary products and lactation aids from the GST that was to be introduced later in the year. The campaign was organised by WEL and the National Union of Students. Over 5,500 women sent email petitions to politicians. The Minister for Health, Dr Michael Wooldridge, entered the debate by saying that ‘he believed shaving cream had as much right to be exempt from the new tax as tampons.’¹⁰³ The acting WEL National Co-ordinator was photographed addressing a rally in a T-shirt reading *I bleed and I vote* and presenting a declaration attached to sanitary pads to the Minister for Health in Parliament House! The Canberra rally was part of a national day of action, held on 25 February 2000, when women demonstrated around Australia; some wore red capes, other women dressed as tampons, thus creating ideal ‘visuals’ for the media. While the campaign was a media success, it did not have a successful outcome.¹⁰⁴

Anti-WEL category: 1996–2000

Given WEL’s numerous criticisms of the Howard Government’s policies, it is not surprising that the Anti-WEL category contains a number of criticisms of WEL by Howard Ministers. The article in the *Australian Financial Review* in September 1998 headed ‘WEL guide comes out strongly for Labor’ incensed Senator Jocelyn Newman, the Minister for Social Security. (This article was discussed in the employment category.) Senator Newman said that, ‘As a founding member of WEL in 1972, I query whether it ever had any positive views on anything the Coalition has said or done since 1975 when it decided to fight to reinstate Whitlam instead of

pursuing its agenda for women.’¹⁰⁵ In October 1999 Senator Newman accused WEL of being ‘the organization that fronts for the ALP’ during a debate on cuts to the funding of women’s organizations.¹⁰⁶ Marian Sawyer replied that Senator Newman’s views were ‘very odd’ as WEL had spent ‘more time criticising Labor policies than Coalition policies’. For example, ‘WEL was the leading critic of the impact on women of Labor proposals such as the broad based consumption tax in 1985’ and ‘the introduction of enterprise bargaining in 1991.’¹⁰⁷

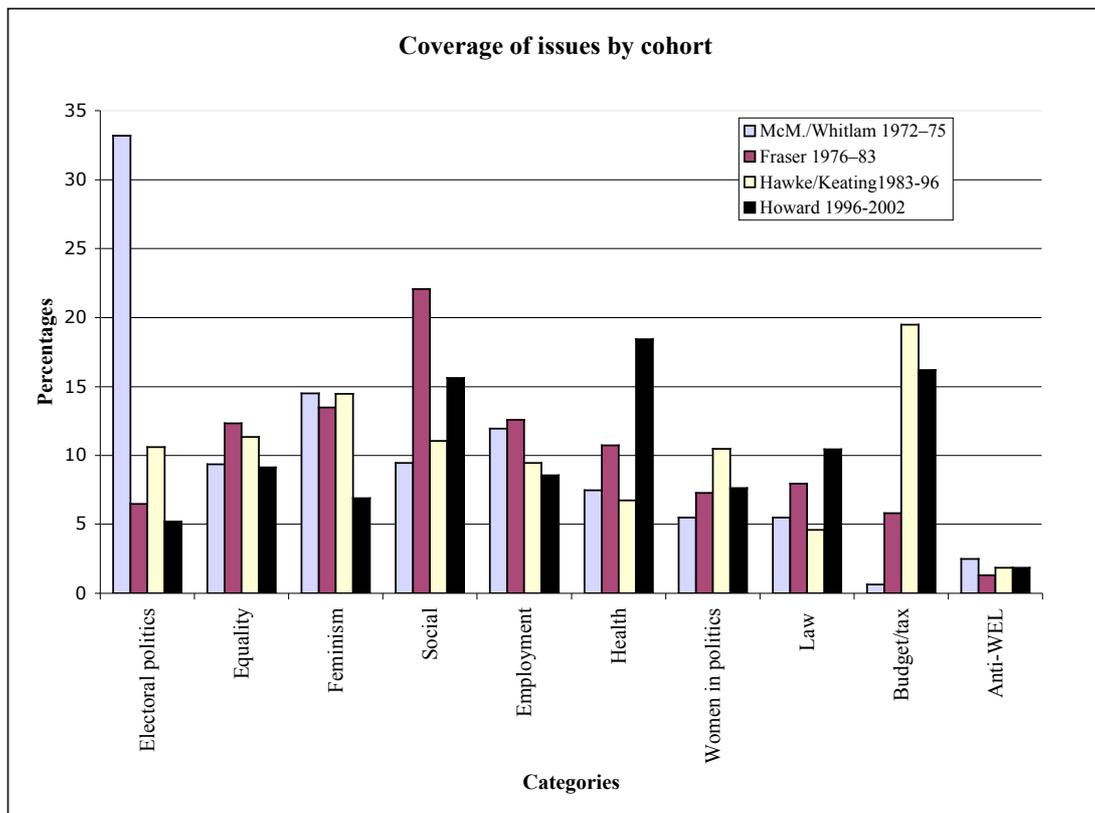
In 2000 it was the federal Minister for Health, Dr Michael Wooldridge, who was criticising WEL for its colourful campaign against the goods and services tax (GST) on sanitary products. ‘He told ABC radio that the supposedly independent women’s group that’s been pushing this is funded by the tampon industry..’. Eva Cox, a WEL board member, denied that tampon manufacturers had paid any money to WEL and said that this claim was ‘deeply insulting not only to Women’s Electoral Lobby but also to women in general’.¹⁰⁸

Other articles that have been allocated to this category include one by Paddy McGuinness claiming that the WEL generation would take advantage of the ALP’s new rule of women in 40 per cent of winnable seats by 2012 and block their daughters from any hope of a parliamentary career. Numbers of women replied to this preposterous claim.¹⁰⁹ WEL had actually criticised the ALP’s new target saying that increasing the target from 35 to 40 per cent over ten years was ‘not exactly rushing it.’¹¹⁰ In turn WEL was criticised in a letter to *The Canberra Times* for supporting quotas for women at the ‘expense of men who had worked hard and done their utmost for their party over many years.’¹¹¹ There were also a number of critics of WEL’s IVF campaign and Joan Trewern’s free wheeling approach to women’s issues in *The Cairns Post*. A former sports editor wrote in *The Age* that WEL couldn’t expect more coverage for women’s sport when not enough women watch women’s sport. A former coach of the Australian netball team pointed out that Shield cricket attracts a disproportionate coverage for its attendance, attracting more media coverage than the National Netball League that brings several thousands out to watch it.¹¹²

6. Changing issues 1972–2002

In Figure 6 the categories are expressed as percentages rather than numbers of items. As the cohorts are of different lengths, for example the Hawke/Keating era was 13 years but only 7 years of the Howard government has been analysed, using numbers of items would not result in a very realistic comparison between cohorts. Expressing the categories as percentages results in a more meaningful comparison

Figure 6. Proportion of issues in media by cohort



The changing nature of the issues is reflected in Figure 6. It shows that electoral interventions never again assumed the significance in WEL’s media coverage that they did in 1972–75. One third of the items in these early years concerned electoral politics, the highest proportion of any category in any of the four cohorts. Next was the social category in the Fraser years. Over 20% of the items in 1976–83 concerned social issues, these included publicity from two national campaigns, one on childcare

and the other on income splitting, as well as items on social issues from WEL community radio programs and WEL columns in the press.

Coming a close third, with just under 20% of the items in the cohort, was the Budget/taxation category in the Hawke/Keating years. 1983–96 were the years that WEL settled down to serious work on taxation, with the *National Economic Summit*, the *National Women's Tax Summit* and the *Women's Tax Convention* as well as WEL—Brisbane's highly publicised opposition to the GST. Also with just under 20% of items in the cohort was the health category in the Howard years. This was a reflection of the wide-ranging publicity generated by WEL's first appearance before the High Court in 2000, in support of the right of single women to obtain IVF treatment.

Conclusion

One thing that is clear from the study of media coverage is that it does not always correspond to either the issue priorities of members or the focus of WEL policy submissions over the various cohorts. Whereas policy submissions sometimes had fairly direct policy impacts, as in the case of the amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act following the Lavarch inquiry or the ILO inclusions in the *Industrial Relations Reform Act*, this policy impact was not necessarily mediated by the media. Nonetheless, the initial build-up of favourable media coverage over WEL's electoral interventions in the 1970s, was undoubtedly important in preparing the way for acceptance of WEL's proposals on matters such as anti-discrimination legislation and women's policy machinery within government. The latter, in particular, was typical of an issue where WEL had a high degree of influence but there was little media interest—except in the case of flashpoints involving resignations or relocations.

There was also a changing media environment over the 30 years, including an increase in women political reporters but a decrease in pages or programs dedicated to gender issues such as the long-lived 'Accent Page' in the *Age* newspaper or the *Coming Out Show* on ABC radio. Nonetheless, WEL's media impact was remarkably resilient in the 1990s—no doubt contributing to the decision of the Howard government to defund WEL in 1999. WEL had for too long been a source of informed

comment on the gender implications of government policy decisions and such critical commentary was no longer permitted to non-government organisations in receipt of funds to represent their constituent.

¹ See Sandra Lilburn, 'A WEL Made Public Debate? The Women's Electoral Lobby, the Media and the 1972 Federal Election', paper published in the refereed conference proceedings of the Australasian Political Studies Association, Canberra: Australian National University <<http://apsa2000.anu.edu.au/confpapers/lilburn.rtf>>.

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APPENDIX 1	CODING FOR ANALYSIS OF ISSUES*
CATEGORIES	ISSUES
1 Electoral Politics	Election: campaigns, forums, candidates
2 Equality	Discrimination: chauvinism, sexism Equality: equal rights, EEO, dependence on males, affirmative action, and jury duty Gender: sexuality, homosexuality Harassment: Media: portrayal of women in media Sports: Discrimination in sports girls not allowed to do boys' sports, lack of funding for women's sport
3 Feminism	Conferences: WEL conferences, other conferences where WEL member comments or is quoted etc Delegate: WEL member attends a conference, committee or delegation as a member of WEL Feminism: Relationship between Women's Liberation and WEL or WEL and other women's groups, feminist issues Women's issues general: omnibus article covering many issues, a 'what do women want?' article WEL member: article about the personal life of a WEL member, mentions she is a member of WEL, may explain what WEL stands for
4 Social	Childcare Consumer (unless tax related) Environment: , Family: divorce, defacto, family, single parents. violence Indigenous: racial issues, aboriginal issues Migrant: migrants, refugees Nuclear: uranium Peace Prostitution Pornography: children Welfare: social services, family allowance, mother's wage poverty, legal aid, social issues, refuges, carers, aged services
5 Employment	Education: sex education, general education issues, gender issues in education Employment: retraining, unemployment, apprenticeships, women's jobs, public service jobs, Equal pay: work issues Industrial Relations Maternity leave Superannuation Unions
6 FPA/Health	Abortion: right to life, abortion Crime: women in crime Domestic Violence Fertility: abortion, family planning, contraception, consent Health: drugs, alcohol, general, pregnancy, childbirth, cancer, violence (assault, rape, safety, domestic violence, crime) Rape
7 Women in Politics	Politics: women in politics Women in government employment: general bureaucracy
8 Law	Death duties Divorce Law reform: probate (death duties), information bill, abortion law reform, rape law reform, family law reform
9 Anti-WEL	
10 Budget/Tax	Budget Consumer issues if associated with GST etc Tax: Dependent spouse rebate, tax reform, GST

* In most cases an article was only allocated to one category, but in some cases, where equal weight was given to two issues, it was allocated to two categories.