

Your committee: clockwise from Fr Christmas: Gary Lockwood, Ralph Clarke, Kevin Kaeding, Marlene Fenwick, David Faber, Greg Stevens, Marie Lockwood, Barbara Blenkinsop.



PRESIDENT GARY LOCKWOOD AND
MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OF
ASSLH (ADELAIDE BRANCH) INC.

WISH ALL MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES
AND FRIENDS A VERY HAPPY CHRIST-
MAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



SA LABOUR HISTORY NEWS

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

(Adelaide Branch)



Spring/Summer
2013

Edition 7



This edition is dedicated to the role of women in the history
of the Labour Movement—pages 5—16 and we honour our
own Allison Murchie on this cover—see story on page 17



Message from the President

'LABOR CREATES JUST TOO MUCH LABOUR HISTORY'

As I write this message, Saturday 2nd November 2013 it is the 46th day of a Tony Abbot Liberal Government and I drift back into thinking 'just how did the members of the Parliamentary Labor Government (all factions included) do this to us – the Australian People and working people in particular?

Surely, the leadership battles during the Rudd/Gillard years and the Gillard/Rudd return bout gave to future Labour Historians more than enough material – but those of us left 'in the Labor mess' are already concerned about the direction of this Liberal Government. Yes we have seen the leadership void after the election filled by 'some historical' firsts' ie leadership choice by the membership, but even here there is something not quite right – when the new leader of the Party, Bill Shorten finds he only has the support of around 40% of Labor membership.

I for one will rejoice when I am not required to hand my vote over to some factional delegate or have my views represented by a factional numbers man and I could just go to a large convention hall and vote myself – have my direct vote – it might not make a difference – but I would feel good about it. So bring on the reforms – bring on new issues for the future historian.



Gary Lockwood, Rick Sarre, Greg Stevens
at the Annual General Meeting in October

In the meanwhile we have to live with a new secretive government...over refugees and boat policies; the petty removal of Barrie Cassidy from a Canberra advisory board; insensitivity to adequate compensation to NSW Bushfire victims; increased attack on Trade Unions and politically orientated 'star chamber' investigations of the Pink batts issue. Reading both between the lines and some articles written by both David Penberthy and Andrew Bolt, one can see the development of a campaign to destroy the ABC.

I have a feeling the Federal Liberal Party trashing of Gawler rail electrification, destroying the urgently needed South Road Torrens to Torrens Road plan will join in with the almost certain closure of Australia's car manufacturing Industry & that of Electrolux, to end manufacturing in Australia under this Abbott Government. So we move into the removal of the 'low income super bonus, School kids bonus and the removal of the intended ALP small business assistance package **let alone any real action on climate change.**

Of course, in situations like we have had in the Labor Party in recent years there are and will be great differences of opinion. For me I was disappointed and upset with those Ruddites in the Labor Party who made sure the good work of Australia's first female Prime Minister Julia Gillard is all undone ...but I could be wrong – historians of the future will define that ...but there is no doubt the Labor Political Party has given just too much historical material to the Labour Historian who is yet to come.

These views are my personal views and not necessarily the views of the Adelaide Branch of the ASSLH

Gary Lockwood , President

Adelaide branch news

Welcome onboard
New members of the Executive
BARBARA BLENKINSOP
&
Dr DAVID FABER

Many thanks to JOHN THOMAS &
PETER ADAMSON, both having served as
Treasurer or Executive member of the Adelaide
Branch with distinction— your efforts have been
greatly appreciated.

Frances Bedford MP—

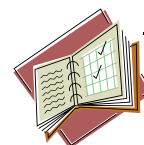
A remarkable woman

Several members of Labour History had the opportunity recently to celebrate the 60th Birthday of one of South Australia's amazing women. Not only an outstanding Member of Parliament as local member for the seat of FLOREY, Frances is a trailblazer in bringing to South Australia, Australia and indeed the world - the remarkable achievement of another outstanding South Australian Woman – MURIEL MATTERS with the recent showing of the World Premiere of "Muriel Matters!"



In this edition of 'SA Labour News' we feature many important Australian 'Labour' women – we have many more not covered in this edition like **Steph Key MP, Irene Gale, Leonie Ebert, Carol Johnson, Judy Davis, Deidre Tedmanson, Fliss Lord, Jenny Russell, Jude Elton, Ruth Russell, our own life member Louise Miller, Sue Marks** and so many more – perhaps previously covered—or in future editions...but thank you all for your great contribution over the years.

Election 2014: We wish our two Labour History members, Frances Bedford and Steph Key—best wishes and success in the forthcoming election. They are both great Labor Members of Parliament.



Meeting dates for 2014

23rd February

13th April

15th June

10th August (one-day Seminar)

26th October (AGM)

Venue: Box Factory, Regent Street
South. Adelaide

Editor's note: Allison Murchie researched so many interesting articles about the role of Labour women in the political arena from early last century to the present, that we had difficulty deciding what we should publish. We hope to print these in later editions.



Aims and Objectives

The Australian Society for the Study of Labour History was founded in 1961 to study “the working class situation ... and social history in the fullest sense”. The Society aims not only to encourage teaching and research in labour history but also the preservation of the records of working people and the labour movement. It desires to make history a vital part of popular consciousness, a matter for reflection and debate, at a time when it is under attack from prominent conservative intellectuals.

Executive Committee 2013-2014

President Gary Lockwood

Vice President Greg Stevens

Secretary Marlene Fenwick

Treasurer Kevin Kaeding

Committee:

Barbara Blenkinsop

Ralph Clarke

David Faber

Marie Lockwood

Except where explicitly stated, news, commentary and discussion are provided for educational and information purposes and **do not** represent the official position of the Society.

Meetings are usually held at the Box Factory in Regent Street South, Adelaide and are advertised through the newsletter, by email and by post to members and friends. Admission is free and all are welcome.

This newsletter is a publication of the Adelaide Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History Inc. It is not affiliated to the Australian Labor Party or any other political party. Members are encouraged to make contributions to this newsletter—please contact the editor.

Authorised by Gary Lockwood, 5 Walton Avenue, Clearview 5085—Acting Editor

General enquiries can be made to the Secretary, Marlene Fenwick on
0041 880 4124 or nonning@bigpond.net.au

Guest Speaker—Rick Sarre

Rick was guest speaker at the AGM of the Society this year and what an outstanding and interesting talk he gave to members. He first shared with us some of his personal history: he was born in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide into a Liberal Party-voting family with his father becoming involved in the Liberal Movement led by Steele Hall.

Rick attended Kings College. While a student he met Greg Crafter who was working for Don Dunstan and was quite impressed with Dunstan – this all happened around 1974 or 1975. Later Rick met Peter Duncan, who was speaking at a meeting and really liked what he was hearing – these were enlightened times and Peter Duncan seemed part of the great reforms and new thinking that was knocking at the door of conservative Australia – the Whitlam era. Dunstan led the way and Peter Duncan was part of this reform period having been elected to state parliament in 1973 for the seat of Elizabeth and becoming Australia's youngest Attorney General.

For Rick, Peter Duncan's decision to allow his office to be used to establish a free legal advice service at his electoral office at Elizabeth was an amazing experience. Access to the office was quite literally finding the key under the brick near the front door. This was the sort of place that Rick wanted to be and is very grateful to Peter for this experience.

Rick did further study in England and Canada. While he was overseas, he visited the Soviet Union and while there, was challenged by a Russian because he was not a member of a political party. This obviously got Rick thinking and on his return to Australia, he joined the ALP and has been a member for 28 years. Rick expressed the feeling that it is important for a political party to be more principled than just being pragmatic. As an example, he mentioned the “Tampa election” of 2001. Rick mentioned that he felt Lesley Simmons, the ALP candidate for Sturt was looking forward to making the issue of asylum seekers a major one as she had been very active in this area. She was devastated when Kym Beasley gave a direction that this issue was not to be discussed by candidates.

In the 2007 federal election, Mia Handshin cut back Pyne's margin in Sturt to 1% and Rick believes that if Kevin Rudd had not muddled the mining tax issue, she could have won the seat. Then in the most recent election, Julia Gillard refused to support gay marriage - this may have made a difference.

Rick believes that if someone is charismatic enough and has an issue (eg asylum seekers or gay marriage) that s/he is passionate about and is articulate, there is a strong possibility that such a person can win. One example he gave to illustrate this was Obama winning his second presidential term - he strongly advocated Obama Care but has not been successful in getting this through Congress because the Republicans have a majority. Rick then turned to the subject he teaches at the University of SA, criminology, a topic his students love. He expressed concern about the ALP fixation on Law and Order and in particular, the attitude towards bikies. The way some target people by association makes him squeamish. His attitude is that we should be concentrating on social justice.

Rick referred to the work of Tom Tyler, a psychology lecturer at the University of New York. Tyler says that the reason why most people don't break the law is because they consider that the justice system is fair and equal. However, because law makers in the US concentrate on deterrence, it has led to a situation where the US has the highest prison population in the world. Rick then returned to the tendency of right wing Labor politics to concentrate on law and order issues and he believes that the ALP in SA is targeting those people who associate with bikies when these are the people most likely to report bkie crimes. He doesn't think this is a particularly sensible approach. Rick's talk was followed by a lively session of questions and discussion - a great day and a most interesting speaker.

From notes taken by Andy Alcock

Don Hopgood



On 30th June, the Hon. Dr. Don Hopgood AO spoke to an appreciative audience of members and friends on the topic of his twenty three years in Parliament. He entered Parliament as the Labor Member for Mawson in 1970 at the age of 31.

In this election, 19 of the 47 members in Parliament were new members. He had become involved in politics when he attended a sub-branch meeting and quickly found himself President; he went on to become campaign manager for Hugh Hudson, a man

he came to greatly admire. He entertained us with stories about his colleagues including Hugh Hudson, Des Corcoran, Al Grassby, Gough Whitlam and Tom Uren.

Although many speeches were prepared for him for public functions, he sometimes had to change them at the last moment and had the ability to speak on just about any subject with little preparation, quite an asset for any politician. This is in contrast to Prime Minister Billy McMahon who relied on prepared speeches – having upset his speech writer he took out what he thought was his speech to find a blank piece of paper. To Don, Al Grassby was larger than life - at their first meeting he turned up in a purple suit and at the end of his first day in Adelaide he had made himself an expert on the marvellous ceilings in Adelaide and gave an impromptu speech that night.

It had always been Don's dream to be Minister of Environment and Planning and he achieved this in the Bannon government in 1982, a position he held until 1989; this was his best time in politics. Of the 23 years he spent in parliament, only 3 of those were spent in opposition and he served under both Don Dunstan and John Bannon, a time of great reform and important decisions for South Australia. One of his proudest achievements was the development and renewal of the inner western suburbs.

In her vote of thanks Frances Bedford M.P. described Don as "ALP Royalty." I couldn't agree more.

Allison Murchie

Our next 13 pages are devoted to the stories of Australian women and their remarkable achievements

Newsletter Editor Moves On

In this edition of Labour History we feature on our front cover Allison Murchie who, with this issue of the Newsletter, steps back a little from her enormous contribution to the work of our Society. Allison came onto the Executive when I was elected President some 5 years ago and has played a major role in boosting the standing of the organisation in this State. We were indeed proud to bestow on her the honour of being one of our Labour History Ambassadors.

Apart from representing the Adelaide Branch of the ASSLH at the National Conference in Canberra a few years ago, Allison has been instrumental in establishing the newsletter, and has been editor, excluding this edition. Dipping in Labour History the Society has been fortunate to have someone with Allison's enormous connections and who radiates as a genuine part of the Labour movement – strongly connected to Women's issues, important political and social issues of our day – sensitive and caring she has been and is held in great esteem...especially so with her work related to Oral History.

Allison Worked in Tax Office for 30 years then 2 years at Public Service Association, was active in her own union - FCU/PSU/CPSU - delegate and Executive, women's committee. Allison had a long involvement in Anna Stewart Memorial Project (see article in newsletter) and has been a member of or involved with the ALP since 1972. But it is in the role of being an active member of many women's organisations, especially UAW (see article) and EMILY's List (see article), WEL (see article) that Allison indeed stands very tall.

For a time, Allison served on the tenant committees for Housing Trust and has represented the ASSLH on the May Day Collective. She has marched/protested on the streets for Vietnam moratoriums, anti-Apartheid, WorkCover, pay and conditions, equal pay, women's rights, refugees, wars, anti-uranium mining, teachers, MUA dispute and many more.

Allison's work in Oral History - began in 1992 with a focus on women activists - trade union and politics, social justice but she has included several men in our outstanding quality interviews – priceless for later historians. Allison has done many hundreds of hours, all deposited in the Mortlock Library.

It is with regret that we now find that Allison's long involvement and commitment to the Adelaide Zoo will deprive us of her membership of our ASSLH Executive but she will stay on as an advisor and resource person for the Editorial board.

Allison is now involved with a major zoo project and we wish her well in this next venture but be assured members...this is a very inadequate thankyou to a truly amazing woman – a 'Labour History star' if ever there were one – a very big THANKYOU Allison Murchie!



Gary Lockwood
President - on behalf of
the Committee 2013.

Freda Brown, 1919-2009 - Rebel with Plenty of Causes

Freda Brown was one of those Australians who joined the Communist Party after the war and the great depression, looking for a new way towards peace and prosperity. Brown became a leader of the women's movement, fighting for such causes as Aboriginal rights and the education of women in Afghanistan, and against apartheid and the Vietnam War. She talked in Cuba with Fidel Castro and shared a stage with the Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who raised her right arm in triumph.



Freda Brown, who died just short of her 90th birthday, was born Freda Yetta Lewis, the eldest of three children of Benjamin Lewis and Florence Munroe. She went to Newtown Public and Sydney Girls' High schools, wanting to study science at university, but the family needed her to work during the Depression. She peeled peaches in a jam factory before joining her father's sign-writing business. Ben Lewis had been jailed during World War I over his objections to conscription.

Much political creativity centred on the New Theatre where, at 17, Freda saw the Clifford Odets play, *Till The Day I Die*. The play, about the fight against fascism, inspired Freda to join the theatre, where she acted, directed, became secretary and met Bill Brown. She joined the Communist Party in 1936 and was soon campaigning against fascism. With the Spanish Civil War and the likelihood of another world war, she urged people to buy war bonds. Bill Brown served in South-East Asia.

From the 1950s, as secretary, then president of the Union of Australian Women, her issues included equal pay, the ban-the-bomb campaign and more jobs for women. She was elected president of the 1975 Women's International Democratic Federation congress in Berlin. Brown had visited Afghanistan as early as 1965, encouraging women to learn to read and write. She urged that the United Nations initiate International Women's Year in 1975. Members dug wells for women in many low-income countries and campaigned for breastfeeding of babies.

She joined Save Our Sons in the campaign against the Vietnam war, visiting the country while the war raged. Coming home with US cluster bombs, she was attacked for working with the enemy. In Cuba, she ran workshops for women from across Latin America. In Moscow in 1977, she was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize. Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956 shattered Australian communists, as did the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary that year and the crushing of the "Prague Spring" in 1968. Brown finally left the party in 1972.

She was one of the first westerners to enter the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps after the slaughter of 1982. She visited Cambodia shortly after Vietnam overthrew the Pol Pot regime, travelled through the Western Sahara with the Polisario Front, and worked with the African National Congress Women's League. The South African government honoured her in 2004. A truly remarkable woman.

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, Tony Stephens

Beryl Miller



Beryl Miller was a stalwart of the Union of Australian Women, particularly in South Australia, where she was its leader and driving force for many years.

Both her parents were members of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) during World War 2. She joined the Eureka Youth League in 1942 and became Secretary of the Moonee Ponds Branch. She attended the Youth Carnival for Peace and Friendship in Sydney in March 1952, and joined the CPA that year. In SA in 1957 she was the first woman elected to the State Committee of the CPA in the post-war period. In 1964 she was the first woman elected from SA to attend the CPA Congress in the post-war period and was part of the first all women's delegation to visit the USSR, including Siberia. She was a member of the State Executive of the CPA from 1967-8. In 1998 she went to the WIDF Congress in Paris.

Beryl became the SA State Secretary of Union of Australian Women (UAW) in 1955 and continued this role until 1978. She attended the first National UAW Conference in Sydney in 1956, and was elected to the National Committee, a position she held to 1981, the longest serving member in history. She was involved in national campaigns on child endowment, maternity bonuses, peace and nuclear disarmament, prices and jobs. The first street demonstration took place in the late 1950s where three UAW members - Beryl Miller, Irene Bell and Doreen Marshall - wore aprons with slogans calling for an end to nuclear testing.

In the international arena she was a Councillor of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) from 1975-1980. In this role she worked in the German Democratic Republic in 1975 to prepare for the World Conference of Women as part of the UN International Women's Year. In SA she organised Child Art Exhibitions in 1958 and 1959, and an International Children's Film Festival in 1960. In the 1950s she visited workplaces on equal pay and held public meetings. In the 1960s she was very active in opposing Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, particularly through the Save Our Sons movement.

She has marched in every International Women's Day march in SA. The UAW formed the IWD Committee in order to coordinate the invitation to international women to take part in the celebrations for the day. She was a member of Association of Australian Dancers (The Wattle Dance Group) from 1952 to 1956 and an active member of SA New Theatre, being the Treasurer from 1952-53. She was a foundation member of the Socialist Party of Australia which was formed in December 1971 as a result of events in Czechoslovakia. She attended the 1971 conference which set up the SPA. In 1975 she studied in the Soviet Union. In both the SPA and CPA Beryl was always on the State Women's Committee. In 1978 she moved to Sydney to work for the Central Committee; in 1982 the South Sydney branch of the SPA was formed, and she became Secretary. She worked with 4 factories and produced monthly

Beryl Miller (cont)

bulletins and met with the workers regularly. She moved to Melbourne in 1985 and worked in the Party's State Committee Office and became Secretary of Central Branch, working on the waterfront with maritime workers. She returned to Adelaide in 1991 and worked in the local CPA branch, producing regular bulletins and distributing the Guardian. She continued to be the Secretary of the UAW until it folded due to diminishing membership.

She has played a continuing role in the United Nations Decade for Women since inception in 1975. Beryl has become an icon of the women's movement with a lifelong commitment to the CPA and the UAW.

Source: Interview conducted by Allison Murchie

Emily's List

A history of her story

EMILY's List Australia is a financial, political and personal support network for the election of progressive Labor women candidates. It is the only network of its kind in Australian politics. EMILY's List Australia was established in 1996 by a passionate and committed group of women, many of whom are current and past leaders in Australia.

The EMILY's List journey began in 1994, when the ALP National Conference passed an Affirmative Action Rule requiring women be pre-selected in 35 per cent of winnable seats at all elections by 2002. Among the progressive women who drove this change were Julia Gillard, former Prime Minister, former Premiers Joan Kirner and Carmen Lawrence along with Helen Creed, Candy Broad MP, Kay Setches, Leonie Morgan, Judy Spence, Meredith Burgmann, Jan Burnswoods, Carolyn Pickles, Sue Mackay and Fran Bladel. Despite this landmark achievement, in 1995 Federal Labor pre-selections saw the number of women pre-selected in safe and winnable seats decline. Furthermore, the 1996 election saw the election of 16 new Conservative women to Federal Parliament. It was obvious something more had to be done for, and by, Labor women.

Labor women clearly needed a political and personal support network to assist their campaigns. The question was: what type of network would work best to support women to win elections?

EMILY's List was formed in the USA and functions outside the Democratic Party to assist pro-choice Democratic women to be elected to Congress, the Senate and Governorships around the country. EMILY is an acronym for Early Money Is Like Yeast – it helps to raise the dough for campaigns. EMILY's List USA is a mass-membership-based national network of women. By 2000, it had become the second largest membership based contributor to elections (the biggest contributor, the National Rifleman's Association, donates to the Republican Party).

Janet Giles ... her time in the union movement

At our August meeting Janet Giles, out-going Secretary of SA Unions gave a most entertaining talk on her history in the union movement, beginning with her life at Teachers' College where her world view began to form in relation to feminism, and the causes of inequality and poverty.

Her love of unions developed early in her life as a teacher, 'Its democratic way of operating, the way it empowered people and how we felt so strong standing together.' At the age of 23 she won the position of Field Officer (organiser) working with members on a range of issues including the Accord; she met many unionists and activists, she was part of the group that was going to change the world! During these formative years she learned a lot about how unions operate, the reform that was needed and making sure that women's voices were being heard. She was elected Vic President of SAIT in 1991 with Clare McCarty as President.

After the State Bank disaster and the wipe-out of the Labor Government it was a tough time for unions and workers with changes to the Industrial Relations system – many rallies followed, including the very big WorkCover rally. She was elected President of SAIT in 1996. There was urgent need for a pay rise and Education Minister Rob Lucas sent individual agreements to every person in the education system – these were symbolically ripped up on the steps of Parliament house. It took 12 months, 5 days of strikes and a rally of 8,000 members as the government tried to break the union; Olsen took over as Premier. They won a 17% pay rise, increased staffing and improved conditions. There were many other highlights in her career at SAIT, including taking SAIT into the national union as a branch of the AEU.

The 1998 attack on the MUA by the Howard Government galvanised the union movement and they were forced to campaign in different ways to get the community on side. All unions unified against this attack.

Where to next? She finished her term at the AEU at the end of 2002. At **UTLC** she was Vice President - Chris White was Secretary. It was agreed that there was a need for change as there was a threat that the Council could collapse both financially and politically. She stood for the position of Secretary and was elected unopposed. She gradually introduced changes and the Council began to reform. As a member of the ACTU Executive she became part of the national decision making team and it was there that the Rights at Work campaign began, which she described as 'the best-est campaign ever' where workers were mobilised at all levels in a three year campaign. Do you remember the 30,000 union members gathered in Elder Park? It was a unifying campaign that was well-funded, well organised and making good use of the internet and community campaigning. In 2007 they had their biggest year ever with major rallies, getting volunteers into every electorate and working very hard in marginal seats, with the result that John Howard was swept out of office and lost his own seat.

In conclusion Janet said 'Unions provide opportunities for people to learn, to understand and get power for themselves, to share and take from the strength of others, to belong and be part of something bigger than themselves.'

In her new role as campaign director for the ACTU we wish Janet many successes and know that this will be another major step forward for Australian workers.

Jessie Street—Australia's forgotten feminist

Jessie Street (1889-1970) packed more into her crowded life than most. She was a Suffragette, feminist, Labor Party candidate, socialist, international peace activist and campaigner for Aboriginal rights – for more than 50 years she was a serious player on the international stage.



Being also a World Peace Council colleague of Paul Robeson and Pablo Picasso and a feminist contemporary of Nancy Astor and Eleanor Roosevelt; she was the only woman on the Australian delegation to found the United Nations in 1945. She was involved in the wording of the UN Charter was the vice-chairwoman of the first two sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of women and retained this position for two sessions until the Chifley Labor government, fearful of her alleged far left connections, withdrew its support. She remains the only woman to initiate a change to the Australian Constitution with the successful 1967 referendum on the status of Aborigines.

During the Cold War she was known as 'Red Jessie' for her pro-Soviet stance and she had to leave Australia for six years. Her husband Kenneth was made Chief Justice of NSW in 1950 – the year that she left Australia under suspicion of being a communist – *she moved to London and the Menzies Government withdrew her passport. Her leftist sympathies and notoriety in the McCarthyist 1950s have overshadowed her legacy.* She was under ASIO surveillance for decades but there was never any evidence that she was a member of the Communist Party and she always denied it. She was mesmerised by the Soviet-style socialism. Her excitement at seeing a woman driving a train in 1938 was seen as evidence that the Soviet Union had the secret of equality of women. One of the driving forces of her life was the inequality of women being second-class citizens in every way.

Among her long list of achievements are founding member of the Sydney University women's sports association, worked for the New York Protection and Probation Association, co-founder of the NSW Racial Hygiene Association (later re-named Family Planning Association), secretary of the National Council of Women in NSW, member of the Women's College Council, President UAW (1931-42), on NSW committee for International Peace Campaign in 1930s and 40s, founded and launched Australian Women's Digest, initiator of a conference that led to Australian Women's Charter in 1943, guest of the WIDF conference in Paris and helped to organise the World Peace Conference in 1950. She was the daughter-in-law, wife and mother of three Chief Justices of NSW. Her son, Laurence Street, the former Chief Justice of NSW said that his mother was 'somewhat of a contradiction'. He said, 'She was a very whole figure in the sense of her personal and family relationships and with her friends and those who supported her, and particularly her children. She had a very warm affectionate personality. But at the same time integrated into her was her political instinct. It was really the search for social justice which was the main driving force in her life.'

Source; The Australian 9 March 2004;
National Foundation for Australian Women

Emily's List (cont)



In Australia, Labor women decided to adapt the US model to assist progressive Labor women in their campaigns. Initially, the idea was presented to the Labor National Executive, who insisted that, if the organisation was to exist within the ALP, the Executive would nominate the board and control the distribution of funds to candidates.

This was unacceptable to the Founders of EMILY's List who valued the feminist and community organising principle that women should control their own finances and their organisations.

EMILY'S LIST Australia was launched at Parliament House in Canberra on 11 November 1996, 21 years after the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor Government. In those early days, EMILY's List Australia acted as a watchdog over the ALP's implementation of the Affirmative Action Rule, ensuring that the Party was reaching its target of 35% women by 2002. In 1997-1998, EMILY's List Australia supported its first candidates in the NT, SA and WA elections. Eight women were supported and all of them were elected. Buoyed on by this success, the organisation raised \$63,000 over the next two years leading to the opening of its National Office. By 2004, EMILY's List Australia had raised over \$500,000 and helped elect 123 of 148 Labor women to Parliaments across the country.

For the first nine years of EMILY's List Australia's operation, Joan Kirner and Cheryl Davenport were the National Co-Convenors, with Joan acting as CEO on a pro bono basis. They retired in 2004 and 2005, passing the baton onto a new generation of progressive women.

EMILY's List members, candidates and MPs have worked tirelessly alongside women in the YWCA, WEL, ACTU and Trades and Labour Councils to raise awareness on specific issues important to women, including Abortion Law Reform, IVF for single and lesbian women, women's health policies, abolition of Workchoices, family violence protection strategies, Paid Maternity Leave and Pay Equity.

From the outset, it was important to the founders of EMILY's List that the organisation remain non-factional and open to any woman who shared the values of equity, diversity, pro-choice, equal pay and childcare. This has meant that EMILY's List Australia is not involved in ALP pre-selections and instead offers support to women only once they have been formally endorsed by the Party. This hasn't stopped supporters and critics alike marvelling at the influence of the organisation with Opposition Leader Tony Abbott saying in 2008 "EMILY's List is arguably the ALP's biggest faction".

Current members include Julia Gillard, Jenny Macklin, Steph Key, Frances Bedford, Gail Gago, Jane Lomax-Smith, Anne McEwen and Penny Wong. For further information go to www.emilyslist.org.au.

I was an active member of EMILY's list for many years.

Allison Murchie
Source: Emily's list website; Wikipedia

Women's Electoral Lobby



For over 40 years WEL has developed policies and lobbied governments for changes to improve the lives of women and girls.

In 1972 Beatrice Faust, a Melbourne academic and abortion law reform advocate, addressed a meeting in Sydney about forming a women's lobby group for the purpose of interviewing all candidates for the 1972 federal election about their attitudes to issues being expounded by the Women's Liberation Movement. Co-convenors were selected and the first public meeting was held on 17th June 1972 with 40 women in attendance. Within six

months there were branches in every state. The membership was diverse and included white collar workers as well as academics and activists in education and trade unions. They quickly developed political skills and the ability to make submissions on policy issues, organise meetings and conferences, write media material, address public meetings and speak on radio and TV.

For the first time there was a feeling of excitement of working with other women for their own betterment. Neither side of politics welcomed WEL. It was constantly criticised as anti-family, middle-class and reformist. They were definitely reformist and, to a degree, were middle class.

Some of the key achievements include:

Equal Pay

In 1972 equal pay legislation was passed which ensured that women were awarded the male rate of pay. However in 2012 there was still a full-time work pay gap of 17.2% between men and women.

Policy development and legislative reform

Areas included equal opportunity, sexual harassment, domestic violence, anti-discrimination and rape law reform. This was accompanied by a large program of community education.

Child Care

Government spending for children's services is now around \$5,300,000,000 compared with \$50 million in 1972.

Violence against Women

There are now strong laws in place and well funded programs to stop violence against women. However 48% of women still report experiencing at least one incident of physical violence and 34% at least one incident of sexual violence over their lifetimes. We need to address the root causes of violence – gender inequality and deeply entrenched cultural attitudes.

Source: www.wel.org.au, www.anu.edu.au

Anna Stewart Memorial Program (cont.)

and Arbitration Commission. When it finally went before the Commission for the official stamp of approval, all the parties were in total agreement. An incredible achievement – the first blue-collar union to achieve maternity leave provisions for its female members.

When her youngest child was born he accompanied Anna on the job, out into the field gathering evidence and into the Commission to finally put submissions. She accommodated the needs of her young son either by breast-feeding in the Commission or by seeking an adjournment of proceedings. Anna set a precedent for many women who gained strength and confidence from her example of combining motherhood with a career. The Arbitration Commission, the union and employers all were sensitised directly to the needs of working mothers, particularly in relation to child-care.

In 1975 Anna took up the position of Federal Research Officer with the Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation of Australia (VBEF). In this position she continued her role as an advocate and her efforts to improve 'the lot' faced by women workers. At the VBEF, Anna fought with tenacity for the provision of childcare facilities in car plants, securing a consensus decision from union delegates to this effect.

Whilst at the VBEF she also worked and assisted on the ACTU Maternity Leave case. The case was presented to the public, especially to women workers, so successfully that the following twelve months witnessed a remarkable increase in the female membership of the unions. Anna headed the Media Liaison Committee and ensured that her former press colleagues gave good coverage of what was being achieved.

At its Congress in 1977, the ACTU adopted the Working Women's Charter and set up the first Women's Committee of the ACTU. Anna was one of the founding members of that Committee – one of the four women chosen to be its nucleus, and remained an active force in that committee working for the implementation of the Charter.

In 1980, after five years with the VBEF, Anna became a Senior Federal Industrial Officer with the Municipal Officers' Association (MOA). At the MOA Anna initiated the establishment of Women's Committees in most state branches. She developed a strong sexual harassment policy and laid the ground work for the development in industrial agreements and award conditions relating to sexual harassment.

Anna secured remarkable gains, particularly for working women, directly for the members for whom she worked, and indirectly for all women, by setting precedents in a number of areas and by her own personal example. The influence of Anna's life and work remains immeasurable. She brought hope and support to women throughout the trade union movement, providing them with the strength and confidence to continue the fight.

I was a participant in this program and on the steering committee for many years.

Allison Murchie

Anna Stewart Memorial Program

Anna Stewart was a former journalist and active Victorian union official, who died tragically in 1983, aged 35. Her involvement with the union movement began at a time when women workers comprised one-third of the paid workforce but were poorly paid, lacked job security and skills recognition.

After Anna's death a group of trade union friends and colleagues met to discuss how best to remember her life and work. A project based around the Working Women's Charter demand for increased involvement in trade unions was both immediately relevant to Anna's memory and to the needs of women workers given statistics that, despite the large numbers of women joining trade unions, women were still under-represented in decision making structures. The Anna Stewart Memorial project was thus born and the inaugural program was coordinated by the Municipal Officers Association Victoria in 1984. The project was conceived as an annual two week on the job training program for women unionists, giving participants access to union organisations and developing their awareness of the ways in which unions can work to redress the issues affecting women. The program was adopted in several states and still continues.

Anna Stewart worked passionately and tirelessly to involve women directly in deciding on principles and priorities to put before unions and government in order to achieve real quality of status and opportunity for women. Her efforts achieved more in less than a decade working in the union movements than most of us will in a lifetime. Her commitment was expressed through the political and industrial wings of the labour movement.

Anna entered the industrial arena at a time when women workers made up a third of the paid workforce but the few industries in which they were employed were almost invariably at the unskilled and semi-skilled level. Women were poorly paid, lacked job security and job satisfaction and rarely had access to promotional opportunities.

In 1974, the Federated Furnishing Trades Society of Australasia was looking for an 'out of work journalist' to investigate and write a report on the effects of tariff charges on furniture imports. Anna, pregnant at the time, was employed by the union. When the report was completed, Anna secured a full-time position as research officer with the union. She immediately set about preparing a work value case for argument before the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. That too, was successful. In the midst of preparing for this case, she spared no time in commencing negotiations with employers for the inclusion of maternity leave conditions into awards. Anna herself was very obviously pregnant with her child at the time.

For many years, the issues of equal pay, maternity leave and childcare had been ignored. Anna's persuasiveness and commitment secured the employers' consent to maternity leave provisions becoming award conditions, thereby averting the necessity for full-scale argument and justification by the union before the Australian Conciliation



The Good Wife

Do you take care to remove all your make-up and the nicotine stains from your fingers before you go to bed? Are you a back-seat driver? In 1956 the *Australian Women's Weekly* published a quiz where eager readers had to simply answer a series of yes/no questions to find out 'how near to perfect' they were as wives. This is what made a 'good' wife in the mid-20th century.

Wife dressing. In 1959, *Wife Dressing: the art of being a well dressed wife* by fashion designer Anne Fogarty was published. In this style guide, Fogarty revealed the secrets of 'wife dressing' – the art of looking chic on all occasions, be it at a cocktail party, on the tennis court, when receiving guests or even when cleaning the house. She argued that a 'well dressed wife plays an important role in the advancement of her husband's career'. She instructed women to always dress to please their husbands because when his 'eyes light up as he comes in at night, you're in bad shape if it's only because he smells dinner cooking'.

How good a wife are you? In 1956, the *Australian Women's Weekly* challenged readers to find out how they measured up as wives. Quiz questions on 'your looks', 'your clothes', 'your husband' and 'serving food' indicate the expected duties and preoccupations of the 1950s wife. The National Archives holds a vast photographic collection documenting many aspects of the Australian lifestyle during the 1950s. These photographs were commissioned by the Australian Government for overseas publicity in the interests of commerce, finance, tourism and especially immigration. With many of these images depicting blissful scenes of 1950s domesticity, they illustrate perfectly the expectations of a 'good wife'. Can you always provide food for the unexpected guest? Do you always take the trouble to match your lipstick to the clothes you are wearing, and to your nail polish? Do you always warm the teapot before making tea? Do you look at yourself from behind when trying on clothes? Do you think your husband should always help with the housework? Do you take the trouble to get properly fitted for new bras and girdles? Do you show boredom when he tells you golfing stories, or what sort of day he has had at the office?

For those wives who dutifully completed the *Australian Women's Weekly's* quiz and scored highly in the 'Husbands' and 'Food' sections, the *Weekly* encouraged them to 'be a little more self indulgent, spend more time on yourself and let the chores go hang for once.' But readers were then sternly warned: 'But remember, when it comes to a new hairstyle and burnt potatoes, it's the potatoes your husband will notice first.'



Source: National Archives, Your Memento Issue 7 August 2012

Women—then and now.....



Clockwise from top left: Jessie Street, Beryl Miller and UAW members, Frances Bedford MP with Bob Gregory, UAW peace protesters, Anna Stewart, anti-Vietnam war protest, SA Branch members of WEL, various posters, UAW marchers, Allison Murchie with Janet Giles

