

## THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

**NAME OF COLLECTION:** WORKING WOMEN'S CENTRE

**ACCESSION NO:** 102/20

**CATEGORY:** Labour, organisations  
**ACTIVITY:** Lobby Groups; Women's Rights Activists

**DATE RANGE:** 1975 – 1993 [mainly 1975-1983]

**SIZE OF COLLECTION:** 0.5 m (4 units)

**DATE OF TRANSFER:** 2002

**ACCESS CONDITIONS:** Open

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Begun c 1975, the Working Women's Centre (WWC) operated as an independent lobby and research group concentrating on women's issues in employment. The WWC initiated campaigns on industrial health and safety and other relevant areas of women's employment. It was absorbed into the ACTU in 1979. Its last magazine was published on 1 February 1993. A major campaign involving the WWC was the Working Women's Charter. The campaign was initiated by the Working Women's Group (campaigning under the name WOOF) in 1976 and was then carried on by the Working Women's Charter Campaign, leading to a national conference on women in the workplace in 1977. The ACTU became directly involved in the campaign calling a Working Women's Charter Conference in 1978.

**DESCRIPTION:** Working papers, correspondence, reprints of talks, theses, audio recordings, 35 mm slides.

**FORM:** Includes audiotapes, audiocassettes, slides.

**NOTE ON COLLECTION:** This collection was received labelled "ACTU Working Women's Centre prior to 1984 miscellaneous files".  
Two files containing ACTU documents (D Number sequence) 1984 – 1990 were weeded from collection, as all ACTU Documents are held in the ACTU collection at Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU, Canberra

**NOTE ON LISTING:**

There was no discernible original order to these files and they have been listed by the title on the original file cover and an item number imposed. Two incoming folders were originally titled the “Working Women’s Charter” and the “Working Women’s Charter - ACTU” However, the documents in these two folders were very mixed. They have been ordered in five folders. These reflect the stages of the campaign conducted at first by the Working Women’s Centre and associated women’s groups in other states and then by the ACTU. The correspondence relating to the Charter has been ordered in separate folders. Audio recordings have been listed individually in appendix.

**NOTE ON ARRANGEMENT**

The collection has been arranged as described above.

**CONSERVATION NOTE**

The quality of the audio recordings is noted; some are poor quality.

**RELATED COLLECTIONS:**

There are six previous Working Women’s Centre accessions. They require listing or finalisation of lists.

**LISTED BY:  
DATE:**

Les Dalton and Sarah Brown  
14 August 2003

Box No.	Series Number	Description	Date
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<b>1</b>	<b>1</b> 1/1 [A]	<b>Working Women's Centre publications, 1975-1993</b> <i>Women at Work</i> [original file number IM/4] broadsheet (3 early issues undated): Issues: No 12 (Oct-Nov 1978); No 17-23 (Aug/Sept 1979 - Aug/Sept 1980); Vol 2 No 1-Vol 4 No 1 (Oct 1980 – Mar-May 1985) (incomplete)	c1975-1985
	1/1 [B]	<i>Women at Work</i> broadsheet: Vol 5 No 2 – Vol 8 No 2 (June/Aug 1985-Sept/Nov 1988) <i>Work - Action Program for Women Workers, Australian Council of Trade Unions</i> (Magazine format) Vol 9 No 1 (1 Feb 1989) - Vol 13 (1 Feb 1993)	1985-1993
	1/2	<i>Discussion papers</i> (incomplete): No 1 (Sept 1975) - No 42 (Dec 1979/Jan 1980) [original file number IM/5]	1975-1980
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 2/1	<b>Resource files, 1974-1985</b> <b>History – Australian women</b> Assorted articles and papers including: <i>The articulation of class and sex in contemporary Australia</i> , by Louise Johnson, 1981. <i>Women's Archives Newsletter</i> May 1984 (single issue)	1974-1985
	2/2	<b>Women's history in trade unions</b> Assorted articles & papers including: "The women we ignore - Muriel Heagney: A Brief Obituary" by Elizabeth Reid. Reprint from <i>Refractory Girl</i> , Autumn 1974, pp. 9-12. <i>Employer and Union Attitudes Towards the Reversal of Male and Female Work Roles</i> by Mary Owen. Presented to 1982 Congress of the Australian and New Zealand for the Advancement of Science.	1974-1983
<b>1</b>	<b>3</b> 3/1  3/2	<b>Working Women's Centre [history], 1977-1984</b> "The Working Women's Centre" by Mary Owen. Reprint from <i>Radical Education Dossier</i> Autumn 1981; correspondence Papers including: <i>Working Women's Centre: its first five years</i> ", by Anna Pha (MA Thesis, University of Melbourne, October 1982). <i>Technical School Students' Attitudes to Trade Unions: A Preliminary Report</i> , by L G Cupper, Research Paper No 57, University of Melbourne, August 1977.	1977-1984

<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Series Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>4</b> 4/1  4/2  4/3  4/4  4/5	<b>Working Women's Charter, 1976-1978</b> Working Women's Group (WOOF): Working Womens' Charter Campaign and 1977 conference. Assorted correspondence on Working Women's Charter. ACTU Special Union Conference on Working Women's Charter. ACTU Women's Committee proceedings and other documents on Charter. "Comments on ACTU Charter for Working Women" by Mary Owen 21/9/1977. Discussion leading up to and following ACTU Working Women's Charter Conference.	1976-1978
<b>2</b>	<b>5</b> 5/1	<b>Maternity leave, c. 1978-1980</b> Assorted campaign and discussion documents including ACTU Documents: <i>Speakers Notes on Maternity Leave Case, 1978</i> <i>Maternity Leave: The Award Provision Explained, 1979</i> <i>Maternity Leave Funding – ACTU Submission to Minister for Social Security, 1980.</i>	c.1978-1980
<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Slides:</b> One set of slides: Series A 1-11 (A 6 missing) and B1-11. Slides (no captions) appear to have been used to illustrate talks on the Working Women's Centre and the Working Women's Charter	nd
<b>1</b>	<b>7</b> 7/1	<b>Audio recordings, 1979-1980</b> <b>Reel to reel audiotapes</b> (see appendix for description) Three reels of 3CR Women at Work programme [1979-1980], One reel recording Japanese women's delegation on nuclear weapons. One reel discussing the Working Women's Centre [poor quality].	1979-80
<b>3, 4</b>	7/2	<b>Audiocassettes</b> (see appendix for description) 3CR Women at Work programme Tapes Nos 1 - 47 [1978 – 1983] 3CR Women at Work programme Tapes Nos 48 - 49 [1978 – 1983].	1978-83 1978-83

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**APPENDIX**  
**Audio Recordings**

<b>Box</b>	<b>TAPE # / MINUTES/ CONDITION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Reel to Reel:</b> 1/BT 123/22 min/ 2/BT 129/32 min/ 3/BT 97/31 min/  4/  5/	Past & Present Radio Group. Women and Work. Programme 1: Women in the postal industry today Programme 2: Part 1 Outworkers Programme 2: Part 2 Outworkers continued. New Japan Women's Association. Banning nuclear weapons; caring for the survivors. Discussion of the Working Women's Centre. <i>Note:</i> Background noises makes listening difficult. Much the same information is available on the audiocassettes in the collection.	1979-1980    nd  nd
<b>3, 4</b>	<b>Audiocassettes</b>		
<b>3</b>	1/60/good	1. Linda Rubenstein interviews Pauline Papworth: Workers compensation. 2. Anne Rorty speaks on women in academia.	nd
<b>3</b>	2/60/good	A. Lip Service: announces coming women's events  B. Trudy Solomon talks on working conditions for women in the German Democratic Republic.	17 Jan 1979 13 Dec 1978
<b>3</b>	3/90/good	A. Fay Carter talks on Aboriginal Advancement League.	
<b>3</b>	4/60/good	1. Jan Marsh talks on maternity leave.  2. Deidry [?] Fitzgerald talks on discrimination in the workplace	9 April 1980 12 Dec 1979
<b>3</b>	5/60/good	A. Mary Owen talks on workers' compensation B. Yvonne Carnahan, Women's Electoral Lobby, talks about the Queensland Women's Action Committee's activity on abortion; Cass Pybus, Vocation Orientation Centre, talks on part time work; Pat Brewer talks on unemployment in Wollongong.	nd
<b>3</b>	6/90/good	A. Renata Singer talks to 'old girls' from Swinburne Community School and Mary Owen, Working Women's Centre, on Girls & Unemployment B. Renata Singer talks to Winsome McCaughey, Yvonne Adami and Anne Sgro about Work-based Childcare.	3 Feb 1983  10 Feb 1983
<b>3</b>	7/60/good	A. Ruth Berman & Lorraine talk with Anne Polis, training officer at TUTA.  B. Barbara Jennings talks to Anna Pattas about women's apprenticeship program.	20 May 1981  6 May 1981
<b>3</b>	8/60/good	A. Ruth Berman talks Clare O'Brien on Sisters Publishing, a group publishing women's writings.	24 Mar 1983

<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Series Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
		B. Ruth Berman talks to Helen Mayer newly elected MHR for Chisholm, on her election campaign and her future activities on behalf of community and women.	31 Mar 1983
3	9/60/good	A. Robin Gregory talks to Terri Soumilas on the Victorian Women's Refuge Group, the support given to women, their experiences and choices.  B. Ruth Berman talks to Bebe Hof, Legal Projects Officer at the Fitzroy Legal Service, about the administration and functions of the service.	17 Mar 1983  10 Mar 1983
3	10/60/good	A. Renata Singer talks to Heather O'Connor on women in politics.	24 Feb 1983
		B. Robin Gregory talks to Jenny Myers, a member of the DO-BE-DO women's rock band.	17 Feb 1983
3	11/60/poor	A. 2 Evaluation: Anna Stewart Project 1985.	nd
		B. 1. Evaluation: Anna Stewart Project 1985.	
3	12/60/poor	A. 3. Evaluation: Anna Stewart Project 1985.	nd
		B. 4. Evaluation: Anna Stewart Project 1985.	
3	13/60/poor	1. Ruth Berman talks to Kath Mills on women mail officers (cuts out after a short time).	nd
		2. Interview with Fay Marles, Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, about sexual harassment.	16 Jan 1981
3	14/60/good	1. Margaret talks to two women at the Working Women's Conference held at University of Melbourne. Pat Brewer, Women and Action Committee, talks about the Working Women's Charter and Jobs, Joan Bielski, Women's Unit ,NSW Ministry of Education, discusses women working in education. 2. Ruth Berman talks to Annamalia Chempton (?), Health and Safety Officer, Clothing Trades Union.	13 Feb 1983  nd
3	15/60/good	1. Ruth Berman and Margaret talk to Clarissa Ballenden , teacher at Avila Girls College about non-traditional subjects for girls, such as electronics, which open up new career opportunities. 2. Molly Dyer, Aboriginal Legal Service discusses the work of the service	4 Mar 1981  13 May 1981
3	16/60/good	A. Jeanette Copely, Coordinator, ACTU Childcare Centre, talks about the Centre. Opening addresses by ACTU President, Cliff Dolan, and Lewis Kent, MHR for Hotham.	27 May 1981
		B. Margaret talks to Christine Gillespie and Ruth Berman about the community group, Action for Family Planning, which visits factories to talk to ethnic women in their own language.	nd
3	17/60/good	A. Ruth Berman and Ingrid talk to Louise Park	nd
3	18/60/fair	A. Ruth Berman interviews Pat O'Shane. Includes a time-line on anti-war actions and in background an interview at a wharf demonstration. B. Extraneous recording	22 Nov 1981
3	19/60/good	1. Ruth Berman & Lyn Hovey talk about Ailsa O'Connor as an artist and friend. 2. Ruth Berman interviews Philomena Horsley on her study of the involvement of women in the Victorian unions.	13 March 1980 20 Feb 1980
3	20/60/fair	1 & 2. Various speakers in seminar on Women, Work, Home and Leisure in which work in the home is considered as an occupation.	9 March 1980

<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Series Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
3	21/60/good	A. Helen S Skopelles and Lachlan Richie [?] discuss maternity leave project. B. Lyn McKenzie of the Collingwood Community Health Centre discusses workers' compensation.	7 May 1980 25 June 1980
3	22/60/good	1 & 2. Recording of the introduction of the 1980-81 budget to parliament.	nd
3	23/60/good	Addresses on women's political struggles at the Working Women's Conference: 1. Stella Nord on equal pay. 2. Joyce Stevens discusses the life and work of her mother.	May 1978
3	24/60/good	1. Coalition for Women's Rights. 2. Ruth Berman & Beeby interview Jessie Thomas, Gill Martin & Jenny Davidson on work at the Western Region Community Health Centre.	28 Nov 1979
4	25/60/good	Women's Liberation Programme: 1. Sisters Publishing – For Women, By Women. 2. Lindsay Last discusses her work as a refrigeration engineer.	1 Aug 1979
4	26/60/good	1 & 2. Councillor Mary Houson of Maffra discusses how women in the country are looking ahead.	17-19 Aug 1979
4	27/60/good	1&2 Judith Crabtree writer and illustrator of non-sexist children's book discusses her writing.	11 Oct 1979
4	28/60/good	1. Rhonda Galbally discusses the Working Women's Charter 2. Carmel Shute discusses the initiatives and projects that came out of the first Working Women's Conference	7 Nov 1979
4	29/60/good	1. Ruth Berman and Eve interview Ann Calvert on her book <i>Girls and Apprenticeship</i> . 2. Linda Vears discusses her experiences in the railways as a station officer.	15 Dec 1979.
4	30/90/good	A. Seminar of evaluation of training course for women activists facilitated by Anna Stewart. B. Discussion continued.	nd
4	31/90/good	A. Continuation of discussion on Tape 30. B. Blank	nd
4	32/90/good	A. Continuation of discussion on Tape 30. B. Blank	nd
4	33/90/good	A. Discussion of the functions of the Working Women's Centre. B. Music	nd
4	34/60/good	A. Interview with Marion Harper, Australian Insurance Employees Union, on the conditions in the workplace. B. Interview with Penny Carter, Research Officer of the Victorian Teachers Union, on women in the union.	nd nd
4	35/60/good	A. Extraneous content B. Interview with Jan Marsh on the decision of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission on maternity leave.	nd
4	36/60/good	A. Interview with Jan Marsh on the National Women's Advisory Council B. Interview with Karina Veal on the Queensland abortion legislation.	nd nd
4	37/60/good	A. Patricia Devanny talks about the life of Jean Devanny. Jocelyn Scutt discusses women and the law and the Judith Mitchell case. B. Continuation of discussion on women and the law.	nd nd
4	38/60/good	1. Blank. 2. Interview with Cathie on the Working Women's Centre.	nd
4	39/60/good	1. Discussion on Women, Work and the Home. 2. Discussion about the Women Behind Bars Action Group and its support for women in prison.	nd nd

<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Series Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
4	40/60/good	Women's Liberation programs. 1. Eve Stocker, Kathie Johns & Eileen MacIntyre talk with Tarn (?) Blackstock about her work experiences on a construction site.	nd
		2. Interview with Joan Benjamin, educator in the Quality Education Research Centre, at the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence.	nd
4	41/60/good	A. An interview with a woman camera operator on her experiences of becoming apprenticed and working in the trade.	nd
		B. An interview with a woman working as an engineer on a visiting U.S. ship.	nd
4	42/60/good	A. Jane Stewart talks about the Equal Opportunity Resource Centre and how it services schools and community groups.	nd
		B. Abbie Heathcote talks about building a house in the bush at Kangaroo Grounds and the bush lifestyle of herself and painter Neil Douglas.	nd
4	43/60/good	A. Christie Ramos talks about the Export Processing Zones set up by the Philippines Government.	nd
		B. Helen Casey of the Flemington Community Health Centre talks on worker's compensation and the difficulties facing migrant women applying for it.	nd
4	44/60/good	A. Interview with Anne Sgro, Federation of Migrant Women, about a child care project.	nd
		B. Interview with Judy Willis about a survey on women in part time.	nd
4	45/60/good	Interviews at Women and Labour Conference: A. Susan Ryan on 'Permanent' Part Time Work.	nd
		B. Joan Bielski, Officer in Charge Human Development Unit, NSW Education Department, on discrimination in education and a program on apprenticeships for girls.	nd
4	46/60/good	A. Interview with Judy Siddons, on her experience as a fitter and turner apprentice in a large engineering workshop.	nd
		B. Blank	
4	47/90/good	A. Ruth Berman interviews the shop steward and other women workers on strike at a cafeteria at Northlands over the need for air conditioning.	nd
		B. Interview with Annamelia Chempton (?) on piece work in the clothing industry.	nd
4	48/60/fair	A. Interview with Anna Robinson, Mayor of Port Melbourne on her experiences in local government. (Over-recorded with interview on Action Family Planning.)	nd
		B. Ruth Berman interviews women in the Australian Railways Union on their experiences in the railways.	nd
4	49/?/poor	1. Discussion on the effects of the 1979 budget on health.	nd
		2. Interview of Rhonda Galbally by Karen Down on housing women who leave refuges.	nd
		<b>LIST ENDS</b>	