Women's Web – stories actions

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Submissions to Stronger Futures Enquiry

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At Women's Web – stories actions we wish to support the ANTaR submission re Centrelink payments. We also believe

> 'the existing topdown policy environment must be replaced by a community-centred approach if Aboriginal people are to develop the capabilities necessary to govern their own communities well.'*p66*

If you substitute 'women' for 'Aborinal people' you have a situation similar to that which existed in the 1980's when we were fighting for women to have greater control over their lives and a greater say over and involvement in the decisions that affect them.

We were concerned then about the effects of topdown welfare.

We submit these two examples of some of the problems we had then with topdown welfare – or social security as it was euphemistically called then:

> *Vashti Spring '81:* 'In the small print of the budget we find another attack on the lives of women. Women will be refused unemployment benefits if their spouses are involved in industrial action or when their spouses have been refused unemployment benefits, or had it cancelled or postponed. … Women must continue to fight back – and can, by becoming involved in women's mobilization.'
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> *State Library of Victoria taken from -*
> *Women Working Together suffrage and onwards*
> *http://home.vicnet.net.au/~women -*
> *Chapter 15 – The Broader Women's Movement*
> *Section 25..WOMEN AND WELFARE: Fight the Welfare Cuts*

And from one unemployed young woman at the time:

> To be unemployed means more than not having a job
> It means to be labelled useless, a leech on society
> It means to be a number, an inhuman number
> It means to be pushed around,
> going from place to place, office to office
> It means to justify to a computer that
> you have made attempts to find a job
> It often means isolation and loneliness
> It means to never have money to spare
> It means boredom, nothing to do and nowhere to go
> It means becoming apathetic to everyone and everything
> It is not a life one chooses to live.
>
> *Jenny Rimmer 1982 Women's Web – stories actions* www.womensweb.com.au *Dialogue page*

We believe little has changed since then, making it all the more urgent that this opportunity not be wasted.

Thank you,

Geraldine Robertson
Secretary
Women's Web – stories actions