

Worklife General Meeting – February

First meeting for 2008. 6 Feb 2008.

Present: Ross G, Adrian P, John McC, David M, Maggie M, Cheri T, Sharon O’N, Paul G, Laura V

1. General Discussion about possible future (s) for Worklife (WL)

Points Raised:

During struggle against Workchoices, there was a clear focus for WL – not now

Still a lot to do around the goal of trade unionism and democracy

Can we sustain the group under new conditions?

We can not stop working at least until the laws are actually repealed.

Happy to be involved in other projects.

Can carry out a more educative function

Should be carrying out a watching brief

There is a lack of clarity in the ACTU as to how to proceed, so WL is not alone!

Sense from the ACTU of the need for more community campaigning – This fits with WL approach

The traditional left has played a more conservative role than some of the “right” parts of the union movement – we should be open to building allies wherever we can

Reservations about the ALP - it is not at all certain that the ALP will carry out their promises – so WL should continue to pressure for our aims

Unions and rights at work are only just on people’s radar, inspite of the election result.

No clear strategy is being articulated currently by ACTU

It will be a lost opportunity if we lose our momentum now.

We shouldn’t hand over from the people to the ALP – need to keep pressure up

Also should not let the ACTU run community campaigning 0- should be kept under local control

The social component of unionism is in danger of being lost, as unions contain a shrinking (and privileged) section of the working class

The ALP is not focussing at all on Welfare to Work – we should continue campaigning around that.

The private sector is not heavily unionised – we can work to encourage organisation amongst these workers

As a communit group, we need to keep a focus on the work – life balance issues

Networking, and producing a newsletter, are important for us to continue with.

We should continue so that we can organise around issues which may arise that need community attention.

WE should also be addressing some of the issues around the nature of work, casualition of labour etc and building education around these.

In the current historical moment, there is an enhanced awareness of class as a defining issue in our society, and WL can play a part in developing this analysis and activity further.

2. The general consensus was that WL should

a) Continue to organise

b) Start off with some forums to carry out an educative role

c) Consider producing at least some short articles which could be provided to union journals and community group newsletters.

3. Further discussion on forums:

Run one every two – three months

Investigate the Paddo Club as a venue

One forum possible co-ordinated with ACTU organising conference in Brisbane in March.

Ideas for forums:

- Discussion about call centres
- Women at Work
- Young Workers
- Discussion about economics
- IR laws – Dave Peetz
- Traineeship issues, and Voc Ed.
- Workers Compensation is now effectively dead
- Casuals are people too
- Ecology and the union movement
- Campaign for a 40 hour work week and the nature of work

4. First forum suggestion:

Economics and political economy - what is to be done. Possible speakers John Quiggin, Howard Guille, Peter Arndt

5. Delegations to politicians –

Idea of a small group of people who are happy to be part of delegation to politicians to remind them about the issues that WL is organising around.

This was generally supported .

6. **To Do:**

Maggie: Investigate some possible politician visits

Ross: circulate a draft topic for first forum (on economics)

Barb: Investigate Paddo Club as a forum venue (aligned with the ACTU Organising conference).

Further discussion: Carried out via the email group.