

## **Archive No. 14**

### **Australian Union of Students (AUS) Women's Department**

The AUS Women's Department was established in January 1975 to provide information, support and advocacy for women students on tertiary campuses. The idea for a separate women's organization within AUS was first mooted at the Women in Tertiary Education Seminar in May 1974 and ratified at a national meeting in Canberra in November of that same year. The women students decided to request enough AUS funding to set up a Women's Department as well as a salary for a full-time organiser plus campaign money.

The AUS Women's Department was a radical feminist organization which not only took on the role of supporting and improving the situation of women students but expanded this to include the oppression and liberation of women generally with the intention of raising the issues of Women's Liberation.

. The Women's News Service was published by the Women's Department to facilitate communication and to provide a forum for discussion and dissemination of information and ideas, not only the issues that affected women as students but also as they affected women in the community. The first few copies of the WNS included articles based on papers delivered at the AUS National Women's Conference, a bibliography of women's films, a list of publications available from the AUS Women's Department and several short stories. Issue 6, 1976, was devoted to Women in the Third World so that Australian feminists might be encouraged to understand the issues and offer support.

The AUS Women's Department, headed by prominent radical feminists, was an effective and radical organization which organised conferences, such as the Weapons for Women's Liberation in 1981, printed stickers and designed posters, amongst other things, and was a very significant and pro-active part of the WLM during the 1970s in particular.