

## **Archive No. 18**

### **Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives Inc**

The VWL&LF Archives began in 1982 as a reading group. When the members realised that some of the papers, publications and memorabilia of the Women's Liberation Movement were already either hard to come by or had been lost or destroyed the group reformed as the Women's Liberation Archives with the aim of preserving as much of the material of the WLM in Victoria as possible in order to make it accessible for research and other purposes. The WL Archives had its first meeting on 1 March 1983 and met regularly for the next ten years. During that time the WLA group, in conjunction with Sybylla Press, published three calendars in 1984 (covering the years 1969 – 1972), 1985 (1974 – 1975) and 1987 (1976 – 1977); moved the by-then substantial amount of material into the WL Building at 295 Victoria Street, West Melbourne, in 1986 and to 28 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, in 1988; amalgamated the Women's Liberation Halfway House archives into the general collection in 1987; successfully applied for funding from the Victorian Women's Trust in 1987; and generally continued the work of archiving and preserving this invaluable collection and making it accessible to students as well as other women interested in our WLM herstory.

The WLM Calendar Material 1984 / 1985 was researched by members of the Women's Liberation Archives group for the calendars they produced in 1985 in conjunction with Sybylla Press for publicity and fundraising purposes in order to make the archival material of the WLM more widely accessible to the general public. The material covers the years 1974 and 1975 and includes the issues that were relevant during those years including equal pay, International Women's Year, rape crisis, The Coup, child-care, refuges, film, Union of Australian Women, Women's Electoral Lobby and abortion.

When the WL Building at 28 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, closed down in 1992 all of the material moved temporarily to a house in East Brunswick and the collection was renamed the Women's Liberation and Lesbian Archives. It wasn't till the beginning of 2000 that a new collective was formed to decide where the collection might be housed. During the next few months the group incorporated as the Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives Inc; a

submission to the Community Heritage Grants Scheme in Canberra for a grant paid for an overall assessment of the collection and after looking at the options the decision was made to move the Archives collection to the University of Melbourne Archives towards the end of that same year.

Since then the Archives has successfully applied for two more CHT grants, one to buy a map drawer to store the hundreds of posters (2001) and the other to buy acid-free boxes and other material to store the badges, photos, banners, tee-shirts, posters, videos and other memorabilia (2003).

In 2001 the Archives received a grant from Lesbians Inc (LINC) in Sydney to add to the list of all the collections. In 2003 the Archives received a grant from the National Foundation of Australian Women to begin listing the bios of the individual donors as well as the defunct collectives included in the Archives.

In 2004 the Archives received a grant from the ALSO Foundation in conjunction with AUSSIE to bind three sets of lesbian publications: Lesbian Newsletter (1976 – 1983), Lesbian News (1983 – 1990) and Labrys (1990 – 1992). Many of the other publications were also bound: Melbourne Women's Liberation Newsletter (1972 – 1984), Victorian Women's Liberation Newsletter (1986 – 1994) Vashti's Voice / Vashti (1972 – 1981), Scarlet Woman (1975 – 1992) and Lesbiana (1992 – 2004).

And in 2007 the Archives received a further grant from Lesbians Inc (LInc) in Sydney to set up a Website that can be accessed at [www.vwllfa.org.au/index.html](http://www.vwllfa.org.au/index.html)

The VWL&LF Archives Inc collective continued to meet on a regular basis to oversee the collection, to apply for funding as needed, to work on the material and in conjunction with the UMA endeavoured to ensure the collection was preserved for posterity. The VWL&LF Archives can be accessed through the Baillieu Library at Melbourne Uni for research and other purposes.