

Using the Women's Activist Kit

These are a few suggestions for how AEU Branches and Associated Bodies can utilize the Women's Activist Kit and these can be considered by Executives/Councils/Sub-Branches, Women's Committees, Workplace Forums etc.

Recruiting:

- identify obstacles for women workers joining the union and assess if any of the suggested organising methods could be useful in targeting a particular section of the workforce
- find out where women in your workplace might already be locally involved and introduce other organisations to the union's activities they may have an interest in
- consider a mentoring/'buddy-up' strategy to familiarise potential members with the unions' work through a colleague

Involving:

- use appropriate milestones (campaign, historic or otherwise) to promote women's involvement and celebrate their contributions
- identifying the specific needs of the women around you and organise a union forum on the issue for all to discuss and learn
- other sources of campaign assistance : Use sample letters, press releases, and promotional material the union provides with this Kit to find out what issues are getting interest amongst members and invest time and energy in heavily promoting only one event/activity or campaign and make that the priority. If it is a professional issue, seek the union's advice about what training, or other things might be available to give members access to union resources.
- propose or promote online/email issues-based discussion groups

Empowering/Activating:

- evaluate and workshop possible structural changes (including what the consultative process for that change should be)
- ensure the women's network, or women's officers' recommendations have significant and responsive reporting avenues so that advice is taken up and circulated through the organisation
- if you think you have few gender issues, ask the membership. Research and survey and talk to members and ask them to look beyond 'landmark' rule changes that may now be 20 years old. If the same faces turn up to events, ask who isn't there and why.
- Don't be afraid to 'lose control' over some activities – community and cross union actions just might tap into more members than a members' only activity.

