

Gender Equality Bargaining: A key to union revitalisation and modernisation

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Unions and Women: What's the problem?

- › Male breadwinner model of work/unionism
- › ‘...masculinist nature of Australian unions...created significant negative legacies for working women...which partly explain(s) Australia’s laggardly work and family regime’ (Pocock and Brown, 2009, 160).
- › Bargaining agendas reflect male needs
- › Trading off gender equality items in collective bargaining

- › Potential for gender equality bargaining for union renewal and modernisation

- › Colling and Dickens (1998) – multi-pronged concept of equality bargaining:
 - ‘...encompasses the collective negotiation of provisions that are of particular interest or benefit to women and/or are likely to facilitate gender equality (**‘special measures’**); equality awareness on the part of negotiators in handling commonplace bargaining agenda items such as pay and pay opportunities (**‘gender-proofing’**), and the injection of an equality dimension (specifically, addressing gender disadvantage) to the **negotiation of change**, for example reforming a grading structure’ (1998, 390).

 - › Research questions: Did a form of equality bargaining occur in the case study negotiations? If so, what were the facilitating factors?
 - Can equality bargaining be used for union revitalisation?
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- › Interviews undertaken from March 2008-September 2010
 - › 3 case studies (from 6)
 - › 65 interviews, plus observations
 - Mostly with union negotiators
 - As the negotiations progressed – little used data collection method
 - › Also document analysis

 - › And a brief word about the Australian context
 - Development of a PPL scheme 2008-09
 - IR environment - importance of collective bargaining
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NSW Nurses Ass & HospitalOrg (Private hospital)

- Private hospitals with multiple workplaces.
- High level member engagement – had modernised in response to hostile union environment
- Union pressure tactics during negotiations
- Main claim: increased quantum of ppl.

Outcomes: PPL included in agreement

- : Discussions to reopen during life of agreement
 - : Status quo of membership numbers and engagement, however may assist in fulfilling aim of attracting younger members and graduates
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LHMU/SecurityInc (Detention centre)

- › Several worksites across Australia, male dominated, some responsibility.
- › Privately owned, provided detention services to the Australian government.
- › Moderate level member engagement
- › High trust bargaining relationship
- › Ppl main family provision claim
- › Delegates resistant to gender equality bargaining

Outcomes: 6 weeks paid maternity leave

: No increases to union membership or engagement, but increased level of education about gender equality bargaining

CPSU/PublicOrg (Public service)

- › Large female dominated APS agency.
- › Low-trust relationship.
- › High level member engagement – had modernised to increase relevance to members
- › Collective action undertaken to support claim
- › Wide range of claims: increased ppl, broader carer' s leave, pay parity

Outcomes: Wages reclassified

: Increased PPL

: Wider use of carer' s leave

: Increased member involvement, increased membership numbers

National Level

- › Development of ppl scheme

Industry Level (ie union wide)

- › union leadership
- › campaigning
- › increased member involvement
- › core claim; gender mainstreaming of claim; given high priority
- › industry benchmarks
- › business case

Organisational Level

- › convergence of interests
 - › pragmatic or good relationship
 - › leadership between the negotiators
 - › experienced negotiators
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- › Back to Colling and Dicken's definition:
 - 1. Negotiating special measures
 - All unions negotiated for a gender equality provision, did increase union member involvement
 - 2. Gender proofing
 - Limited evidence – CPSU negotiated additional gender equality provisions, limited impact however
 - 3. Negotiating change
 - Limited evidence – CPSU negotiated for pay parity – potential to attract new members

Conclusions

- › Gender equality bargaining has potential to revitalise and modernise unions, however, has yet to be fully utilised.
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