

ANNA STEWART MEMORIAL PROJECT

MONDAY 15 – FRIDAY 26 OCTOBER 2018

Project Background and Description

Anna Stewart was a Victorian union official active in the union movement between 1974 and 1983. Anna was passionately dedicated to raising awareness of and addressing the issues confronting working women. Anna believed that in order to achieve this, it is vital for women to become active in their unions, to take on leadership roles and to work together to achieve common goals.

Tragically, Anna passed away in 1983, aged 35. However, the influence of Anna's life and work remains immeasurable. She brought hope and support to women throughout the trade union movement, providing them with the strength and confidence to continue the fight.

After Anna's death a number of trade union friends and colleagues met to discuss how best to remember her life and work. The Anna Stewart Memorial project was thus born. The project was conceived as an annual two week on the job training program for women unionists, giving participants access to union organisations and the opportunity to develop their awareness of the ways in which unions can work to redress the issues faced by women.

Project Scope

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project was established in 1984 as a way of promoting women's leadership within the union movement, and empowering women to gain access to and influence over decision making structures.

The ever-changing face of the industrial relations system and the political climate in which it exists has given cause for the scope and design of the VTHC's ASMP program to change too. The brief of the 2018 ASMP is empowering women to mobilise within their union's structure, to learn campaigning skills, and to think about how they can flex their campaigning muscles in order to create change. They will train as activists and be named as such.

Feedback sought from recent past participants revealed the high level of value they placed on pilot sessions that were trialed during the program, specifically the Talking Rights and Taking Action on Rights sessions. These two sessions were designed to educate the program participants on current industrial struggles facing women workers, and how to combine and apply union strength with campaigning knowledge to combat them.

Intended outcomes

- Educate activists on the history, structure, and context of the union movement, its purpose, and current challenges facing women workers.
- Equip activists with the foundation skills to go forth and organise, both in their workplaces and their communities.
- Train activists in basic campaign skills that can be built upon and utilized through continuing workshops at Trades Hall and campaign actions within the trade union movement.
- Provide activists with the opportunity to devise and execute part of a campaign strategy that focuses on improving the rights of women in their workplaces and unions.

Actions in your union

It is expected that while on placement with their host union, participants will be given a range of experiences that add to the depth and breadth of their knowledge the trade union movement, its operations, and what it means to be a union official.

A comprehensive program should be planned for activists to ensure that their time is well utilised and their learning is maximised. Below is an example of an actual schedule designed for activists spending a week at an external host union:



Tuesday	9.00	Meet with officials in the training unit
	9.30	Briefing and tour of the training Unit
	11.00	Site visits with organiser
Wednesday	9.00	Organisers meeting
	10.30	Meet Assistant Secretary
	11.30	Hearing at the Commission
Thursday	7.30	Site visits with organiser
	11.30	Bargaining meeting

Other opportunities might include:

1. Involving your activist as much as possible in any current workplace campaigns;
2. Training your activist in your union’s method of organising conversations;
3. Allowing your activist to spend time with your digital and communications team, learning how your union promotes and recruits online;
4. If your union has a women’s officer, provide your activist with the opportunity to spend time with them and learn from their role.

Please note: *It is expected that any activist participating in ASMP who holds a paid position with their host union be exempted from their regular duties during their placement time. The participant should be treated as any other ASMP activist coming from another union or off the shop floor would be. The purpose of the program is to train activists in new skills and give them exposure to new experiences within the trade union movement; if you have any queries or require assistance with planning a schedule for your activists that provides for this, please contact the We Are Union Women team at Trades Hall.*

Dates

It is expected that activists will attend training at Camp Eureka in Yarra Junction on the Monday and Tuesday of the initial week, and three days of the following week. Transport to and from camp Eureka will be supplied by Victorian Trades Hall Council. We feel that this will foster a greater sense of context and preparedness for their time with affiliates.

It is also expected that the activists will be available for and attend all sessions held at Trades Hall during this time.

Group Project

While undertaking their training, the ASMP activists will be required to complete a group project. This project is intended to complement the skills and learning the activists are undertaking, and provide a focal point for their new knowledge and further foster connections with their fellow participants. It is also intended to provide the activists with extra-curricular work to complete at times when affiliate mentors have administrative or other, non-campaign and organising, tasks to complete. An outline of assignment options will be given to the activists and they will be provided with time to collaborate and finalise their assignment on their final day. We encourage mentors to assist their activists with queries in regard to the project, and to allot a small pocket of time for activists to work on the project if there is not expected to be other quiet periods during the placement.



**For queries please call 9659 3538
or email women@vthc.org.au**