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Making Ends Meet: Brisbane Women and Unemployment in the Great Depression

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Reflecting on the process of writing history, Tom Griffiths argues that it is 'the product of a fascinating struggle between imagination and evidence'. He adds that 'it is our job to release reality, enable it to be seen, enable voices and silences to be heard'.¹ Many Australian historians have expended considerable effort in seeking to understand the reality of the Great Depression of the 1930s, analysing its political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. There are still, however, 'voices and silences to be heard', including those of Brisbane women who suffered financial hardships in this period and who actively responded to those hardships by accessing government relief, generating income and reducing their and their families' expenditure. Attempting to retrieve and evaluate those responses suggests that the 'voices' are inevitably accompanied by 'silences' — that the pictorial, documentary and oral sources which offer valuable insights into Brisbane women's lives also prompt questions that cannot be answered from those sources. In addition to providing an overview of how Brisbane women 'made ends meet' during the Depression, this article emphasises the limits of historical knowledge. Those limits are especially apparent in my attempt to reconstruct — or imagine — the experiences of one of the hundreds of unemployed women who visited the Female Labour Exchange during the 1930s.

An Unemployed Woman in Brisbane, 1930

On Tuesday, 2 December 1930, she stood outside the Female Labour Exchange in Margaret Street, Brisbane. She wore a short-sleeved, pale-coloured dress that fell to below her knees, and a broad-brimmed hat that protected her face from the harsh summer sun. The odds are that she was one of the 676 new registrations that month, and one of the 835 women described in Queensland Director of Labour Frank Walsh's annual report as 'excess supply' for December. According to Walsh, there were three reasons for individuals to register at the state labour exchanges:

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'(a) To become entitled to sustenance rights; (b) to obtain relief rations; (c) to become eligible for relief work'.²

In December 1930, the recently introduced relief work scheme catered only for men. Unemployed women applied to the Exchange to access benefits and — although this is absent from Walsh's account — with the hope of gaining employment. The Female Labour Exchange had functioned as a point of contact between potential employers and employees since 1916, and early reports on its operations emphasised the scarcity of female labour, the reluctance of some women to accept work as domestic servants, and the difficulties of meeting employer demand. By the late 1920s, however, the supply of labour had outstripped demand. In December 1930, the Exchange met 98 per cent of employers' requests, an achievement which translated into jobs for just over one-third of applicants. In the following years, the Exchange consistently met 100 per cent of employers' requests, but it was far less successful in dealing with the increasing number of unemployed women. In the worst months of the Depression in 1932, only one in every seven applicants gained employment through the Female Labour Exchange.³



Women at the Female Labour Exchange, Brisbane, *Daily Standard*, 3 December 1930 (John Oxley Library)

Perhaps the woman who visited the Exchange on 2 December was in fact one of the fortunate 246 individuals who secured positions through the Exchange that month. A photographer captured her image along with the other unemployed women who waited, patiently or impatiently, to register their details. The *Daily Standard* published the photograph (see illustration) the next day as part of its campaign against the conservative Country Progressive National Party led by Premier Moore, which had won government in 1929. The captions of the photograph read: 'This never occurred under Labor' and 'Scene at the Female Labour Exchange yesterday while female workers were seeking sustenance as the result of the depression policy that has been forced on the State by the Moore Government'.⁴ On 1 December, the government had reduced the basic wage for the second time in four months.

The photograph functions not only as a reminder of the enthusiasm with which the *Daily Standard* campaigned against the Moore government, but also as an example of the complexities of examining how women in Brisbane made ends meet in this period. Its value for this study lies in the visual proof it offers of Brisbane women reacting to the economic difficulties of the 1930s and seeking their rights to government support. It stands in direct contrast to the majority of images that we have of the Depression. As Judy Mackinolty commented more than 20 years ago, 'photographs of the hardest hit in the 1930s by and large feature men — at political rallies and demonstrations or in dole queues'.⁵ The information that can be extracted from the photograph is, however, frustratingly limited. All I can state with confidence about the particular woman in whom I am interested is that, on 2 December 1930, she was at the Female Labour Exchange.

After this initial declaration, my story falters. It becomes a tale of guesswork and omissions. Perhaps this unemployed woman was from the working-class suburb of Fortitude Valley, which in 1933 — the year of the Commonwealth Census — suffered unemployment rates of 20 per cent for women and 31 per cent for men. Or perhaps she was from a wealthier area, such as Hamilton: its 1933 rate of 12 per cent female unemployment was the lowest in Brisbane.⁶ She was almost certainly non-Indigenous, given the Chief Protector of Aboriginals' policy of restricting the number of Indigenous women in urban centres.⁷ I don't know her name; I don't know what became of her; I don't know her previous employment history, her aspirations or her disappointments. I don't even know what she looked like, beyond a bare description of her clothes, because she and the other women at the Exchange on that December day stood with their backs to the photographer. Unfortunately, her anonymity and my ignorance about her life constitute an appropriate metaphor for an exploration of Brisbane women's encounters with unemployment during the Great Depression.

Both at the time and in the subsequent historiography, women's experiences of unemployment have attracted only limited attention. In 1930, Frank Walsh commented on the operation of the Female Labour Exchange, noting that 'the registration of female workers does not carry much significance'.⁸ Historians today are unlikely to agree with such sentiments, yet Queensland labour historiography has remained masculinist in outlook. Moreover, exploring women's experiences of the Depression is an enterprise that rests on a sometimes fragmentary resource

base. Few memoirs and letters of Queensland women survive from this period, which is now almost beyond the reach of oral history. Women's magazines offer a wealth of prescriptive literature, but less material on the reality — as opposed to the ideal — of women's lives. State government policies to alleviate the impact of the Depression provide some important information on women's experiences, but they also encouraged women to withdraw into their homes, where they are largely concealed from the historian's gaze.

This article begins to unravel Brisbane women's encounters with unemployment during the Depression by considering some of the options available to women who were themselves unemployed or who suffered financial difficulties when a male breadwinner lost his job. It draws, in particular, on a combination of published records generated by the Queensland and Commonwealth governments, articles and advertisements in newspapers and magazines, and the records of the Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane (COS). The government sources provide statistical and descriptive material; they reveal the approximate extent of employment and unemployment, detail the official assistance available to the unemployed; and they provide some information on the success and failure of relief schemes. Whereas these sources tend to treat unemployed women as a group, newspapers, magazines and the COS records offer glimpses into the lives of individuals and their families. The analysis in this article also relies on making connections between material that is not specifically about unemployment, ranging from Census data on housing to newspaper advertisements for pawnbrokers, and women's strategies for surviving the Depression.

Government Relief for Unemployed Women

Unemployment in Queensland peaked in 1932, although the true rate is difficult to determine. Several historians have questioned the accuracy of statistics for the 1930s, and Brian Costar suggests that 'the actual level of unemployment amongst women in Queensland can only be guessed'.⁹ The Commonwealth Census found that there was still considerable unemployment in the state in 1933, with more than 57 000 Queenslanders describing themselves as unemployed on 30 June. One in five unemployed workers was female. Rates of female employment and unemployment were higher in Brisbane than in the rest of Queensland, and women constituted one-quarter of the state capital's nearly 22 000 jobless at the time of the Census. Brisbane then had a population of approximately 300 000.¹⁰

The women who registered at the Female Labour Exchange had various options for financial survival. Although the government focused its policies on unemployed men, there was some acknowledgment of the plight of unemployed women. A female worker who had been subject to an award or industrial agreement, was over the age of eighteen and had contributed to the state's Unemployment Insurance Fund for at least six months could apply for relief under the *Unemployed Workers Insurance Act*. The Act was hedged with restrictions, and during the Depression the maximum period of entitlement was thirteen weeks. Benefits for women were

less than one-half of the female basic wage. As the 1933 annual report on the Act commented, however, it was — albeit by default — ‘of considerable assistance to female workers’ who were excluded from most of the provisions of other relief programs.¹¹

From January 1931, a small number of Brisbane women could access relief work through a sewing project operated by the government and the Queensland Social Service League. Single unemployed women who did not live at home and widows and deserted women who were destitute could apply for one day’s employment of six hours per week for which they were paid 7 shillings and sixpence. The scheme began with just 50 women; at the height of its success, it offered aid to 250 women per week. In today’s vernacular, the initiative, despite its limitations, would probably be described as a ‘win-win’ situation because the women produced clothing that was then distributed to needy families. The Under-Secretary for the Department of Labour and Industry, W.H. Austin, declared that ‘such a work has undoubtedly much to commend it, as its benefits are at least threefold’. He explained:

- 1 It provides employment to women who sorely need it.
- 2 It gives these women tuition in the making up of garments from new material and the utilisation to advantage of suitable used garments which otherwise would be discarded.
- 3 The women themselves are contributing something towards the alleviation of distress amongst others.¹²

The sewing scheme, however, catered for only a minority of unemployed women in Brisbane, as did the government’s other initiative for women seeking employment, the Housecraft Training School. Established in Brisbane in November 1931, the school offered free instruction to women aged between 15 and 30 years in ‘cookery, dressmaking and other household crafts’, with the object of ‘equipping unemployed girls and women for fresh avenues of employment’.¹³ Students could attend one day per week for six months or enrol in the ‘concentrated course’, which required full-time attendance for six weeks. By June 1936, a total of 1183 women had attended courses at the school; of these, just 233 had ‘definitely obtained employment’.¹⁴ While the rate of employment for graduates was not impressive, the school offered the incentive to potential students of a free ‘good two-course dinner daily’.¹⁵

The main source of government relief for women consisted of ration orders. Unemployed women were entitled to 6 shillings worth of rations per week. The value of these rations was less than one-sixth of the female basic wage in the early 1930s. Women could also apply for additional ‘Christmas Cheer’ and ‘Winter Relief’ distributions, although single women received less than single men, and faced more stringent eligibility requirements. There is some evidence that women who applied for relief were subject to especially searching interviews, with officials believing that a woman should be dependent on a male breadwinner, even if he was unemployed, rather than presenting herself as an unemployed worker. State government policies endorsed this belief. By 1931, the government had decided

that 'all unemployed females, irrespective of age, may be included in the relief family of any intermittent worker, and his weekly amount of work increased in proportion to such added claims of his family on the State'.¹⁶ The government also provided single unemployed women with free transportation to enable them to return to their parental home, where they could be included as part of the 'relief family'.

Generating Income and Reducing Expenditure

The paucity of government aid for unemployed women, and the limited — although more generous — assistance available to unemployed men and their families caused some women to turn to other methods of income generation. A 1931 article in the *Daily Standard* referred to 'a new and interesting feature in the present unemployment crisis', namely that men and women 'have been making big efforts to carry on their trades in their own homes, and in some cases they have met with conspicuous success'. According to the article, 'a Brisbane shopkeeper found that the cakes made by an unemployed worker's wife sold in preference to the factory cakes she had previously stocked; jams, jellies, and all kinds of preserves are, when home-made, finding a ready market'.¹⁷ Some women ran businesses fully or partly from their homes, thereby avoiding the expense of renting or buying commercial premises. One woman, for example, bought or sometimes was given fat from cafes and restaurants, rendered it into soap in a shed in her backyard, and sold it to local stores.¹⁸

Thus withdrawal into the home by unemployed women did not necessarily mean withdrawal from economic activity. Moreover, wives who could earn money for themselves and their families while remaining at home largely avoided the opprobrium reserved for married women who were visibly participating as employees in the formal economy. The replacement of a male by a female breadwinner was regarded as highly undesirable and, during the Depression, hostility against married women in employment was especially pronounced, with claims that these workers were 'having the time of their lives while others were starving'.¹⁹ Moreover, if the wife of an unemployed man secured paid work, the man could lose his entitlement to relief work and rations. It seems likely that, for some women, the appeal of home-based work derived not only from its advantages of typically requiring minimal start-up capital and drawing on existing skills, but also from the fact that it was largely invisible.

Unfortunately for researchers, that last dimension of home-based work means that its extent is unknowable. It fits into the categories of women's economic activity identified by Jill Julius Matthews, 'all of which were outside the restrictions, protections and surveillance of mainstream contractual work'. Those categories were the private sale of skills; the private sale of home produce/commodities; provision of lodgings, board, bed and breakfast; operation of a small business from within or near the home; and outwork.²⁰ Despite the social prohibitions, there were also instances of wives who accepted jobs in an effort to compensate for the

unemployment of male breadwinners. In 1938, the Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane investigated a family in which the husband had been unemployed for four years, there was one child, and the wife 'takes work when and where she can get it'.²¹

An obvious alternative to unemployment — particularly for single women whose presence in the workforce was usually tolerated — was to gain a paid position. In addition to registering at the state labour exchange, women could apply to private employment agencies. It is difficult to gauge the popularity and success of these private agencies, and some apparently charged a registration fee, thus reducing their appeal.

Several charitable and church groups also attempted to find jobs for the unemployed during the Depression, but were largely unsuccessful. The Catholic Daughters of Australia, which focused its efforts on single women and families, secured employment for just eight women in 1931.²² Fragmentary evidence suggests that younger female workers were more likely to get jobs than their older counterparts, because they were cheaper to employ. In October 1931 the *Young Worker* reported that a Brisbane shirt factory was replacing older female workers with girls of 14 and 15 years of age at lower wages.²³ Grace Bennett, who worked as a clerk-typist for General Motors in Brisbane, was sacked when she turned 17 during the Depression and replaced by a 15-year-old.²⁴ When employment prospects in the local labour market improved from the mid-1930s, younger rather than older women benefited.

At the 1933 Census, almost 25,000 Brisbane woman were in full-time or part-time work; the majority were employed as factory workers, domestic servants and clerical staff. Nearly 500 girls held apprenticeships, and more than 3,000 women described themselves as employers or self-employed. Just 191 women listed their occupation as 'helper not receiving salary'.²⁵ Scattered evidence indicates that at least some female employees were prepared to accept below-award wages and conditions in order to keep their jobs. The Secretary of the Amalgamated Foodstuffs Union presented evidence to the Industrial Court of female workers in Brisbane cafes being underpaid and fearing dismissal if they complained.²⁶ Other employees accepted work rationing, a phenomenon which a number of historians have attempted to explore with only limited success. As Charlie Fox has commented, 'there is little hard evidence about the extent of work rationing in the 1930s'.²⁷ There are occasional references to short time among female factory employees. In 1930, for example, a contributor to *Working Woman* wrote that the workers at a boot factory in South Brisbane — approximately half of whom were female — were employed for only one week out of two in each two- to three-week period.²⁸

Less reputable sources of income included prostitution, fortune-telling, theft and various unlicensed operations, the histories of which present researchers with considerable difficulties. The dimensions of prostitution in Brisbane in the interwar period have not yet been explored, and the impact of the Depression on prostitution is difficult to assess; financial difficulties had the potential to increase the number of women engaging in prostitution while reducing their clientele. Queensland's Commissioner for Public Health expressed concern for 'women forced

by economic pressure on to the streets' and suggested that the Depression had triggered an increase in streetwalkers and 'the clandestine' sex worker.²⁹ Fortune-telling has generated patchy records; it attracted sporadic attention from the police and the media. Occasional accounts of fortune-telling in local newspapers in the mid-1930s, for example, suggest that practitioners in Brisbane charged between 3 shillings and sixpence and a guinea for a 'reading'.³⁰ We know more about unsuccessful than successful thieves. A 19-year-old woman who had lost her job as a waitress because it was cheaper to employ a younger person was found guilty of stealing a watch, a ring and clothing; the court accepted her explanation that she had stolen the goods in order to buy food, described her as a 'victim of circumstances' and imposed a lenient sentence.³¹ In 1934, the Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane reported on a woman caught shoplifting. Her husband was on relief work, they had seven children aged between two months and 13 years and, the Society noted, 'the poverty of the family was extreme'.³² Women (and men) who engaged in illicit activities had to balance the potential for income against the costs of detection and prosecution. In 1933, a magistrate fined 'an enterprising housewife' the sum of £2 after she was arrested in the ladies' parlour of Brisbane's Globe Hotel where she had been accepting wagers. According to the police officer, she had been surrounded by about 30 women placing bets and her notebook contained the details of 42 wagers.³³

For punters, gambling offered the lure of an end to financial worry. In 1932, the first prize in the Golden Casket Art Union was 6000 pounds, approximately 58 times the state annual basic wage for women in Brisbane in that year. Thousands of female breadwinners in Brisbane earned well below the basic wage during the Depression.³⁴ The effect of the depressed economic conditions on Queenslanders' level of gambling is difficult to assess. Wendy Selby points out that there was a 'dramatic drop' in the sale of tickets in Queensland's Golden Casket in the early 1930s, which she ascribes to the impact of the Depression, claims in *Smith's Weekly* that the Casket was a swindle, and competition from Tattersalls and the Irish Hospital Sweeps.³⁵ Changes to the Golden Casket's format from 1932, including the official authorisation of 1 shilling share tickets — a far more affordable option than the 5 shillings and sixpence cost of a full ticket — rejuvenated the Art Union. On a more modest level, cash incentives in women's magazines for contributions from readers offered a possible source of occasional income. The *Australian Women's Weekly* stated in its first issue in 1933: 'In times like the present, the opportunity to earn money in this easy manner is too good to be missed.' It announced several prizes, including 5 pounds for the 'best letter telling what you like best in the *Australian Women's Weekly*'.³⁶

For those women whose finances were insufficient to meet their needs, one other option for income generation remained. Moneylenders and pawnbrokers regularly advertised in the *Daily Standard* and the *Brisbane Courier*, assuring potential customers of 'strictest privacy', 'no publicity', 'low interest' and 'easy repayments'. Cash was advanced on furniture, pianos, sewing machines, jewellery and general merchandise.³⁷ Like many of their other options for increasing income, the extent to which women used the services of moneylenders and pawnbrokers is unknown, but the frequency of advertisements for those services combined with occasional references to the disappearance of furniture from homes suggests that

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some individuals and families relied to a greater or lesser extent on short-term loans and pawning goods for their financial survival.³⁸

Individuals and families also sought to minimise their expenditure. This was not, of course, a strategy peculiar to the Depression, but the levels of male and female unemployment in the late 1920s and early 1930s doubtless boosted its significance. Some wives and mothers reduced the need to purchase basic household requirements by, for example, growing vegetables, raising chickens and sewing. Estelle Imhoff of Brisbane recalls that, during the 1930s, her mother 'always had a Veggie Garden, chooks and ducks and sewed all our clothes'.³⁹ Food and housing costs declined in Brisbane during the Depression, but so did wages. The lower prices were probably small comfort for those individuals who could not find employment.

Housing expenses could be reduced by moving to cheaper accommodation, and there is fragmentary evidence which indicates that some families were able to negotiate discounted rents or extended periods of payment with their landlords. For others, the 'midnight flit' presented a means of avoiding expenditure. Moving in with better-off relatives or accepting a boarder were other options, but they are almost impossible to track through the available documentary sources. The 1933 Census lists more than 20 000 Brisbane residents sleeping on verandahs or 'sleep-outs' that were not permanently enclosed, but there is no data on how many of those individuals were unemployed relatives or friends.⁴⁰ A more drastic accommodation solution was to move to one of the unemployed camps that sprang up in Brisbane. Although they were usually associated with single unemployed men, some of the camps included families. The Charity Organisation Society also reported that 'families were rescued from the parks and gardens' of Brisbane, suggesting that some families chose to fend for themselves, rather than join one of the unemployed camps, which were managed by committees drawn from those who lived at the sites.⁴¹

Unemployed women could apply for help from charitable organisations, which provided food, clothing and furniture, and sometimes met medical expenses. Assistance from charities, however, was often linked to their policies on personal morality and their commitment to a standard family structure. Each year the COS, which continued the nineteenth century practice of distinguishing between the deserving and undeserving poor, provided details on the number of appeals for help that it had rejected as well as those it had supported. In 1928, the year in which the Society recognised an 'abnormal amount of unemployment', it emphasised the importance of the 'weeding out of applications which are unsatisfactory or altogether hopeless', and rejected any individuals deemed 'unhelpable' on the basis of alcohol consumption, laziness, fictitious addresses and participation in 'professional begging'.⁴² The Case Particulars Sheets of the COS reveal an even broader definition of 'unhelpable', based on the organisation's judgments about the morality of each applicant; while deserted wives who were deemed to be respectable could secure assistance, the application of one deserted wife was rejected, apparently because she had two children born out of wedlock.⁴³ Moreover, the extent of unemployment and poverty during the Depression stretched the resources of voluntary associations; increasing demands for assistance were accompanied

by a reduction in donations. As the COS noted in its 1933 report, 'families are sometimes overlooked; adequate support cannot always be given because the wherewithal to do so has failed'.⁴⁴

Finally, although this is difficult to explore through available sources, some women sought to prevent a future increase in expenditure. In Australia, rates of marriage and childbirth decreased during the Depression. Alongside the announcements of moneylenders and pawnbrokers, readers of the Brisbane newspapers could also find regular advertisements headed 'A Friend to All'. The 'Friend' imported 'Continental herbs' and birth control devices and offered 'free advice on all matters'.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Those Brisbane women who experienced financial difficulties as unemployed workers or as dependants of unemployed breadwinners during the Great Depression responded to their situation by claiming the government benefits to which they were entitled, seeking other sources of income and reducing their and their families' expenditure. While it is possible to offer an overview of such strategies, the specifics of individual women's experiences are far more difficult to discern. I wonder whether and when the woman who stood outside the Female Labour Exchange in December 1930 gained employment, whether she joined the state government's sewing scheme the following month, and whether she could draw on the support of family and friends. In the end, however, we are left to ponder the limits of historical knowledge and the risks and rewards of seeking to overcome those limits through imagination and empathy.

Notes

- ¹ T. Griffiths, 'The Poetics and Practicalities of Writing', in Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath (eds), *Writing Histories: Imagination and Narration* (Melbourne: Monash Publications in History, 2000), 6–7.
- ² Reports of the Director of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the years ended 30 June 1930 and 1931, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers (QPP)*, 1930, Vols 2, 3, and 1931, Vol. 2, 18.
- ³ Reports of the Director of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the years ended 30 June 1931–34, *QPP*.
- ⁴ *Daily Standard*, 3 December 1930, p. 11.
- ⁵ J. Mackinolty, 'Woman's Place ...', in Judy Mackinolty (ed.), *The Wasted Years? Australia's Great Depression* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 110.
- ⁶ *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933*, Vol. 1, pp. 320, 323. Note that the divisions used by the Statistician for Brisbane were those of the state electorates.
- ⁷ The number of Indigenous women in Brisbane in this period is unknown. The 1933 Census included only those Indigenous women it categorised as 'half-caste', and it claimed that there were 136 women in this category. *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933*, Vol. 1, 309.

- ⁸ Report of the Director of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the year ended 30 June 1930, *QPP*, 1930, Vol. 2, 4.
- ⁹ B. Costar, *Labor, Politics and Unemployment: Queensland During the Great Depression*, PhD thesis (St Lucia: University of Queensland, 1981), 196.
- ¹⁰ *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933*, Vol. 1, 320, 323 and Vol. 3, Statistician's Report, 304.
- ¹¹ Tenth annual report on operations under the *Unemployed Workers Insurance Acts, 1922 to 1930*, *QPP*, 1933, Vol. 2, p. 3.
- ¹² Second annual report of the Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry, upon the operations and proceedings under 'The Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Acts of 1930-31' for the year ended 30 June 1932, *QPP*, Vol. 2, p. 27. The sewing program was available at Brisbane and Rockhampton.
- ¹³ Second annual report of the Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry, upon the operation and proceedings under 'The Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Acts of 1930-1931', for the year ended 30 June 1932, *QPP*, Vol. 2, pp. 27-28.
- ¹⁴ Sixth annual report of the Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry, upon the operation and proceedings under 'The Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Acts of 1930-1931', for the year ended 30 June 1936, *QPP*, Vol. 1, p. 62.
- ¹⁵ Second annual report of the Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry, upon the operation and proceedings under 'The Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Acts of 1930-1931', for the year ended 30 June 1932, *QPP*, Vol. 2, 1932, p. 28.
- ¹⁶ First annual report of the Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry, upon the operations and proceedings under 'The Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Acts of 1930-31' for the year ended 30 June 1931, *QPP*, Vol. 2, p. 11.
- ¹⁷ *Daily Standard*, 28 April 1931, p. 6.
- ¹⁸ *Australian Woman's Mirror*, 13 October 1931, p. 14.
- ¹⁹ *Worker*, 3 December 1930, p. 18.
- ²⁰ J. Julius Matthews, 'Deconstructing the Masculine Universe: The Case of Women's Work', in *All Her Labours: Working It Out*, Vol. 1 (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1984), 17-19.
- ²¹ Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane (COS), Case No. 5856, 22 July 1938, Case particulars sheets, John Oxley Library (JOL) OM70-42/11/2.
- ²² B. Costar, 'Christianity in Crisis: Queensland Churches during the Great Depression', *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, 13(6) (1988): 205.
- ²³ *Young Worker*, 1 October 1931, p. 3.
- ²⁴ Interview with Mrs Grace Bennett by Carole Ottway for Australia 1938 Oral History Project, 23 September 1982, National Library of Australia TRC 2404/4002.
- ²⁵ *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933*, Vol. 1, 323. In addition, 5812 women were listed as unemployed within the 'wage or salary earning group'.
- ²⁶ *Daily Standard*, 7 September 1932, p. 5.
- ²⁷ C. Fox, *Working Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), 128.
- ²⁸ *Working Woman*, 15 October 1930, p. 3.
- ²⁹ Annual report of the Commissioner of Public Health to 30th June 1932, *QPP*, 1932, Vol. 1, p. 12.
- ³⁰ *Daily Standard*, 14 March 1935, p. 5; 17 April 1935, p. 2.
- ³¹ *Daily Standard*, 24 July 1930, p. 7; the court's sympathy related to the woman having been deceived by a man who falsely claimed he was unmarried as well as her loss of employment.
- ³² COS, Case No.5383, 17 January 1934, Case particulars sheets, JOL OM70-42/11/1.
- ³³ *Worker*, 17 May 1933, p. 18.
- ³⁴ W. Selby, *The Golden Gamble: A History of the Golden Casket Art Union* (Brisbane: Golden

Casket Art Union Office, 1995), 58; *Queensland Year Book*, 1940, 270. According to the *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933* Vol. 1, p. 332, a total of 3774 female breadwinners in Brisbane earned no income and a further 22 036 women (apparently including some individuals classed as 'dependants') earned less than 52 pounds. The term 'breadwinner' in the 1933 Census included employers, self-employed workers, employees, the unemployed, helpers without wages, pensioners, retirees, individuals of independent means, and individuals in religious and benevolent institutions.

³⁵ Selby, *The Golden Gamble*, 54.

³⁶ *Australian Women's Weekly*, 10 June 1933, p. 6.

³⁷ See, for example, *Daily Standard*, 29 November 1930, p. 14 and *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1930, p. 1.

³⁸ *Daily Standard*, 6 November 1931, p. 8; COS, 34th Annual Report for the year ended 30 June, 1933, p. 5.

³⁹ Quoted in J. Scott and K. Saunders, 'Happy Days are Here Again? A Reply to David Potts', *Journal of Australian Studies* 36 (1993): 15.

⁴⁰ *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933*, Vol. 3, pp. 2064–65.

⁴¹ COS, 34th Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1933, p. 5.

⁴² COS, 29th Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1928, pp. 5, 7.

⁴³ COS, Case No.5610, 16 June 1937, Case particulars sheets, JOL OM70-42/11/1.

⁴⁴ COS, 34th Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1933, pp. 4–5.

⁴⁵ See for example *Daily Standard*, 29 November 1930, p. 15.