

Fifty years of CLEW/IRC

September 2020 marks 50 years since CLEW was established, originally as the Industrial Relations Centre (IRC). To commemorate our 50th anniversary, we will hold seminars on key topics that have been the focus of the Centre's research throughout the last five decades.

As noted in *Centre of Change – 40 years of Industrial Relations in Review*,¹ the publication that marked the Centre's 40th anniversary,

Forty [now 50] years ago, there was no Employment Court or voluntary procedures for settling disagreements – and no right of appeal against Arbitration Court decisions. Eighty percent of the wage and salary workforce were union members. The entire public service worked to the same conditions of employment and salary steps, administered by the State Services Commission. Individual employment contracts were virtually unheard of – and the “good employer” and “good faith bargaining” had not yet been conceived.

Today, when by far the majority of workers are on individual contract, and only [now less than] a fifth of the wage and salary workforce belong to a union, the scale of the change that has taken place is evident.

As was the intention of its founders, the Industrial Relations Centre has recorded and analysed the fundamental change in New Zealand's industrial relations landscape since 1970. It has provided a forum for bipartisan discussion of issues and a training ground for generations of industrial relations and human resources practitioners. The original certificate and diploma courses in Industrial Relations have been replaced by the range of Human Resources Management study options including the Postgraduate (experience) Diploma in Human Resource Management but the Industrial Relations Centre no longer has an involvement in the formal teaching programmes.

Research centred around employment relations remains at the core of that which CLEW and its associates produce. Importantly, the Centre remains the only central source of collective contracts and agreements going back to the introduction of Employment Contracts Act in 1991. Moreover, CLEW's Employment Agreements Database continues to be the only source of information on employee provisions agreed through collective bargaining. CLEW associates also continue to undertake research on a range of work and employment issues, including gender

¹ Blumenfeld, S., Donnelly, N. and Ryall, S. *Centre of Change – 40 years of Industrial Relations in Review* (2010), Industrial Relations Centre, Victoria University of Wellington.

equity, job quality, workplace training, union membership and organisation, workplace dynamics, employee voice and the regulatory environment for work and employment.

The 50th anniversary seminar programme is currently in the planning stage, but if you would like to be kept in touch outside of our CLEW'd IN newsletters. please email us at clew-events@vuw.ac.nz.

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