

3. In the wider struggle: The union, gender, race and environment

The new ways to organise the union that the Builders Labourers developed to meet the new conditions they faced on the job were not the only thing they experimented with. One of the big changes the union made was to look *outwards*. The Builders Labourers' Federation began to see itself not just as a more powerful union in the building industry, but as a force in the society that was changing all around them in the 1970s. Unionists like Joe Owens, Bob Pringle and Jack Munday believed the union had a responsibility to express their members' views about the environments that the building industry changed, but as well about the issues that affected all unions and citizens, like the work and conditions of women and the questions of war and peace, like the Vietnam conflict. The BLs argued that the struggle against the bosses was not isolated from the politics of the society they lived in – at work and at home.

One of the first things that the New South Wales BLF were able to introduce within the union which had an impact outside was that from mid 1971, the union actively opened up for women to join it and work on job sites in the suburbs and the city. This was often something that the previously all-male workers on some of the sites did not find easy, and the union was involved in the job site meetings where union members thrashed the issue out. Women often took part in militant struggles for better conditions and safety along with their fellow workers. Some of these women unionists were Aboriginal, like Wendy Stringer and her twin sister Robyn Williams, and they became close friends with Kevin. Wendy was involved in a bitter 18 week strike at Hoxton Park over demands that the poor conditions at the site warranted a site allowance. The company eventually settled the claim but demanded a new set of workers, although they were to be union members, including a woman.

As *Robyn Williams* remembers it: So, Crow Industries said, in the court, that they would have a replacement with another woman. So, guess what? Out I went. Guess what? They knew! They knew they'd been screwed, but not quite sure how. So, there I stayed. They had to accept me on that job! I stayed there until that job closed down. Then I went into the city and worked on a big one, Rawson Place. And later on there was a big strike on. It was just a very bloody fun time! We worked hard. We all drank hard!

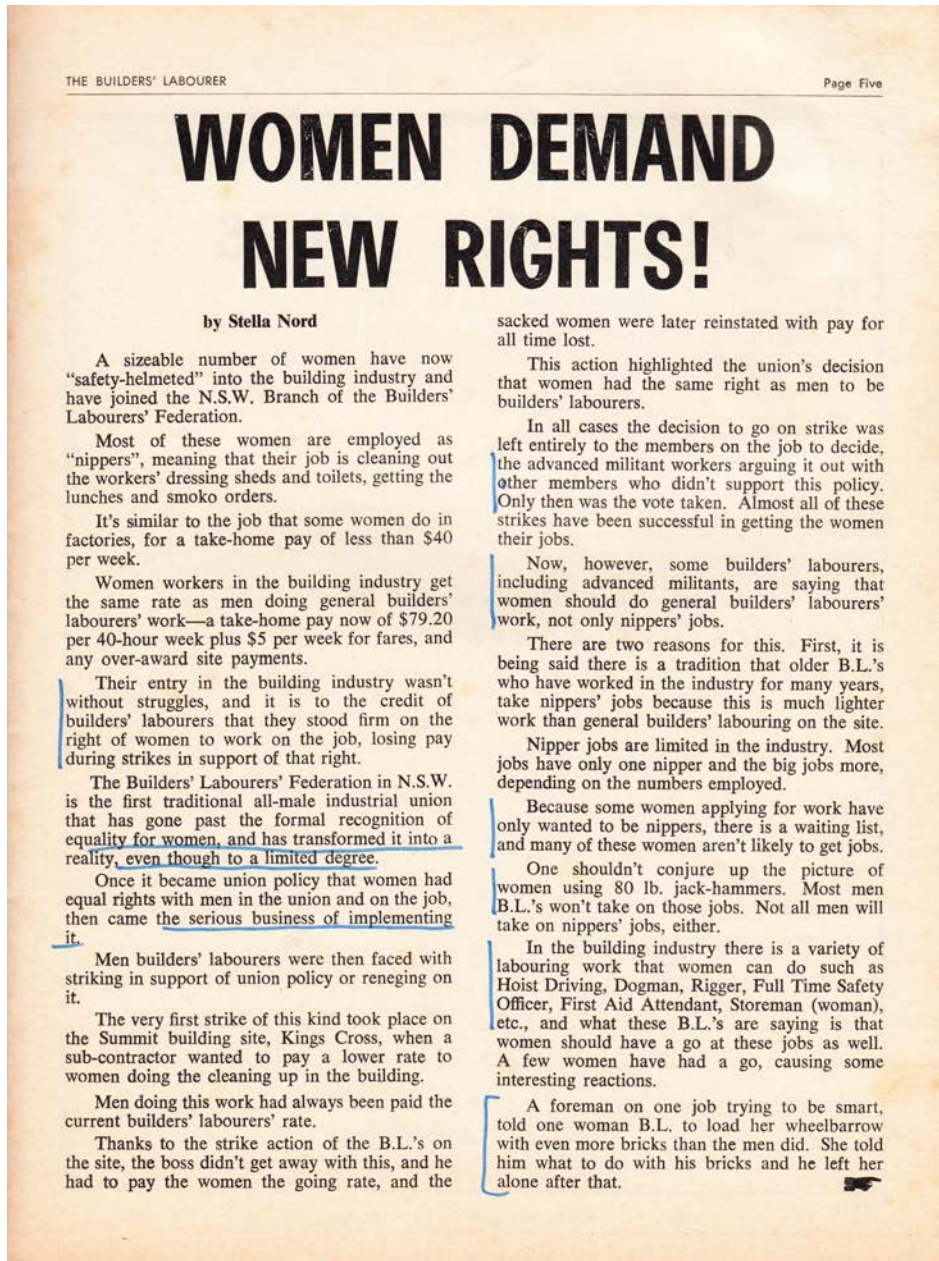


Figure 3.1: BLF Newsletter 1973 – 'Women demand new rights'.

Courtesy Dr Meredith Burgmann.



Figure 3.2: Sekai Holland in anti-apartheid demonstration, copy of an ASIO surveillance photograph, hence the annotations.

Courtesy Dr Meredith Burgmann.

Another of the women who joined up to be a builders labourer was Sekai Holland, a Zimbabwean who was studying journalism in Sydney, where she had married an Australian, Jim Holland. Sekai became a key advocate in the anti-Apartheid struggles of 1971, addressing Builders Labourers' meetings on the demands by South African activists that Australia break off sporting ties with South Africa.

The Builders Labourers' Union became actively involved in the campaigns against the Springbok sporting tours.

Kevin learnt a great deal from Sekai and from meeting members of the South African exiles community in Sydney who were part of the protests against the sporting contacts. Union members took part in the demonstrations to disrupt the Rugby games and Bob Pringle was arrested and fined for trying to saw down the Sydney Cricket Ground's aluminium goal posts.



Figure 3.3: The South African government had stated that the Springbok jersey, symbol of the Apartheid nation, would never be worn by a non-European. Some Springbok jerseys were, however, smuggled to the opponents of the all-white South African football team's visit. This photo shows a defiant group of Aboriginal activists – Gary Foley (left), Billy Craigie and his sister, Lyn Thompson (pregnant with her daughter Yeena) – dressed in these smuggled Springbok jerseys at Lyn and Peter Thompson's home at Eberly Street Randwick, close to the Sydney Cricket Ground where the football games were held.

Courtesy Peter Thompson collection.

Kevin had come to know well many of the other members of the protests. Meredith Burgmann, a fellow member of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) with Kevin and one of the supporters of the BLF, played a high profile role as well in the games disruption.

Kevin also spent time with the group of young Aboriginal activists in Bondi and Redfern who had come to know Sekai well and who were prominent in the demands that racist sporting teams be rejected by the Australian public. Gary Foley, Gary Williams, Lyn Thompson and her husband Peter were to become people with whom Kevin was to build long term friendships as well as sharing many political campaigns over the coming years

Kevin's interest in the campaign against white South African Apartheid was framed by the continuing opposition to the Vietnam War. This opposition was shared among both BLF members and Aboriginal activists. The Vietnamese people's struggle to free themselves from the remains of French colonial control and then the newly imposed American imperialism struck a particular resonance for Aboriginal people, who saw themselves still suffering from their colonisation by the British and later by the Australian state. So national liberation struggles around the world held great interest for Aboriginal activists and this included the large newly-decolonised nations like China. The Australian Government had refused to recognise the People's Republic of China after its liberation in 1949 and this denial continued into the early 1970s.

Aboriginal activists (supported by unionists) took a leading role in breaking that barrier when they formed the first ever Australian delegation to the People's Republic of China in 1972. They were interested in the Chinese government position as an opponent of imperialism but also in the conditions and demands of the many national minorities within China, whose conditions of encapsulation as minorities within a powerful state could also be compared to those of Aboriginal people. Terry Widders, an Anewan man from Armidale and a student at Sydney University in linguistics and Chinese language, took part in the group and in later travel to Japan to learn more about indigenous minorities there.

The currents of emerging Aboriginal and union politics continued to intersect in Kevin's life. This was nowhere more evident than in the Builders Labourers' Federation involvement with the booming building developments planned for Redfern. This was the suburb in inner city Sydney where Aboriginal people had been settling in large numbers from the 1950s as they left rural areas to escape racism and to look for better work and education opportunities in the city. The target of the developers was an area covering two streets of derelict houses, known as 'The Block', near Redfern Railway Station. These shells of houses sheltered many homeless Aboriginal people, particularly *goomies*, the term used in Aboriginal English for people addicted to methylated spirits. The building boom which was bringing so many builders labourers together in the city was also displacing working class people, low income families and the Aboriginal residents of suburbs like Redfern. The pressure to make Aboriginal people move out of the inner city, to make way for development, was felt both in the streets and in the rising numbers of demolitions of old houses. This is where the BLF had a direct stake because they were the labourers who were being called on to knock down Aboriginal people's houses.



Figure 3.4: Another development was the emergence of the shopfront Aboriginal Legal Service, in which Gary Williams and Lyn Thompson participated.

Courtesy Gary Foley Collection.

The sale of the Block to developers for offices or apartments would not only take the shelter of homeless people but it would remove the potential for decent, low cost housing to be built and offered to Aboriginal residents. The BLF members banned any demolition or construction work on the site which effectively ended the plans to purchase it for development. In response, in a landmark decision, the incoming ALP federal government funded the purchase of the Block by an Aboriginal-controlled corporation, the Aboriginal Housing Company.

Joe: The BLs said they wouldn't demolish the Block cause Aborigines were living on it. Then when the (federal) money went into Redfern – that really boomed up some Aboriginal things about blacks. That Housing Company – they wanted to do all that building!

BL's back Aborigine housing scheme



Bob Pringle

*This story on an Aboriginal Community Housing Scheme is taken from the Communist Party weekly, the Tribune.
The story was written by Denis Freney.*

Sydney branch president, Bob Pringle, commenting on the project said that in the past builders' labourers had often been accused of blocking progress when they placed black bans on certain jobs.

"Developers and their champion, Premier Askin, have been vitriolic in their attacks on us.

"We are waiting to hear what they have to say about our building programme for the Aborigines," he said.

The Redfern (Sydney) Aboriginal Community Housing Scheme may well become a hallmark not only for the Black community (especially in towns and cities), but for urban planning as a whole.

The scheme will cover 65 houses in the block bounded by Louis, Caroline, Eveleigh and Vine Streets, Redfern.

The back fences of most of the houses will be pulled down and the laneway torn up to create a lawn-covered recreation area. There are two factories in the block. One will be converted into a hall-workshop-gym and cultural centre, while the other will house a pre-school which will be run by Aboriginal mothers in the community with trained help, and a medical centre linked with the Aboriginal Medical Service, with fulltime nursing staff and a detoxication unit, to help alcoholics overcome their addiction.

The corner store will become a co-operative shop, selling food at cheap prices.

The whole project will be managed by an elected co-operative committee. Low rental will be charged on the accommodation provided, to repay the promised Federal Government loan (not grant).

One of the major difficulties the community will face will be the chronic unemployment and job discrimination suffered by Aborigines. Already, however, 10 young Blacks are working as builders' labourers on the reconstruction work. It is hoped to employ many other young Blacks on the work (at present only seven houses are being renovated), and that they will get steady jobs in the industry, and also learn skills, both on job, and also in a job and crafts training centre to be established in the block.

Good housing; steady, well-paid employment; a growing pride in the community and in Aboriginal culture and traditions; a well-fed and

medically cared-for community: those are the goals of the Redfern Aboriginal Community.

The Redfern Aboriginal Housing Project developed out of the struggle and dedication of some Black militants and their White supporters.

It is difficult to know where to begin the story.

Perhaps it is best to start in 1971, when the Aboriginal Legal Service was getting off the ground, largely as a response to the police harassment of Aborigines in Redfern and other inner-city suburbs.

The rural depression had resulted in something of a mass exodus of Aborigines to Sydney — and particularly to Redfern.

Some Redfern police had been notorious for their random discrimination in arresting Aborigines just before and just after 10 p.m., particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. Many believe this was done simply to build up the police tally — in an easy collection.

Figure 3.5: BLF newsletter 1973 – 'BLs back Aborigine housing scheme'.

Courtesy Dr Meredith Burgmann.

Kevin: Bob Bellear was involved in all that. I went down to see Jim Cavanagh ... he was the new Labor minister once Whitlam got in, in '72. Cavanagh was a South Australian senator and he'd been a BWIU¹ union official. We went down there and he was the one who bought the Block, he was the one who give them the money to buy the Block, and Pringle played a very good role in that! But also Jack Munday and you, Joe, because you were principals in the union. Without your say-so, he couldn't do anything...

Joe: But Bob Pringle was the frontline bloke in those Aboriginal issues... oh we might have been part of it but I'll tell you what mate ...I knew Pringle for all up 30 years... 'cause I knew him when we were rank and filers ...If you tried to buck Pringle, she was a hard fight that one! He brawled! The other thing too was there was a lot of tension in Bobby too towards the end because he'd had a terrible accident in the '60s up in Moree. He was working on a steel job and he fell. ... He came back after all that injury and a lot of that come back was because of that willpower he had! That was part of Bobby's politics, he was such a stubborn fella, if he got the idea in his head, you wouldn't shift him! You had to accommodate it in some way!

Kevin: But he was good when he was working with the Aboriginal groups too, because he'd never put up anything. He'd always listen to what they were saying, and he'd back 'em up. And he'd come back to the union, and he'd say 'This is what they want!' You know he didn't say, 'This is what I want' or 'This is what I told them' or anything like that. He was good like that... and he said to me, 'Now you're here, *you* look after them!' But you know, I always sat down and talked to him all the time. He was an inspiration wasn't he?

Joe: He was! And he was the only white who was on the Black Caucus for the Tent Embassy. 'Cause we went down there and some of us were moving in when there was a lot of wrestling going on. And he said, 'Keep out. Keep out of it! Let them do it. They've gotta do it!' And he just told us to keep out of it, they've gotta fight for themselves. You know I'll tell you one thing about Pringle... *he* was the first bloke who brought the green bans on. It was over Kelly's Bush, but when it came up to the Executive, I thought what the fuck's he on about? This is about blue rinse fucking middle class sheilas who are out at Kelly's Bush? What's that got to do with us? 'Cause I went out to see it, and there was a bloke called Bobby Lavender from the FEDFA² who was there with Bob Pringle, and I'm lookin around and I'm thinking, 'It's a nice fuckin' place ... but what am I doing here?' I could understand the Rocks, but I couldn't understand Kelly's Bush! And Jack went along with it, and Jack became the figurehead for it and

1 Building Workers' Industrial Union.

2 The Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association.

justifiably so, because Jack articulated it so well, but Pringle was the bloke who brought it into the union. And that's the thing that's not known much, and he never ever said it afterwards!

Kevin: Everyone in the union knew it!

The Builders Labourers' Federation had been involved in supporting Aboriginal campaigns by displaying flags and signs in highly visible places on city building sites and by attending demonstrations. Kevin's friend Roy Bishop was one who was in a series of conflicts with his bosses because he kept putting up a huge Aboriginal flag (then only newly designed) on a crane on a tall city site in 1971, to advertise the coming demonstrations in support of Aboriginal land rights. The march was called Ningla-Ana which was said to mean 'Hungry for our Land' in the Pitjantjara language from Central Australia.

Kevin: The Aboriginal Housing Company got started in Redfern when the coppers come down and tried to evict people in these old places on Eveleigh Street. They were squatters, some of them were *goomies* and homeless people who had nowhere else to go. The coppers were trying to get them out cause the developers wanted to have them vacant so they could pull the whole block down. Bob Bellear had been a seaman, but he was studying law by then, and he got involved in it. Then so did Paul Coe, another Aboriginal law student at the time and they brought the new Legal Service... They were younger Koories who wanted better legal rights for people in Redfern. So they stopped the coppers from evicting the tenants, and then they got the unions involved to stop the demolitions. Then they got a group of people to go down to talk to the federal minister, Cavanagh, in the new Whitlam Government and he said yeah, he'd buy it!

Kevin – as the only Aboriginal organiser – was automatically given the 'Aboriginal Portfolio', so he worked with Pringle and the Redfern activists like Bob Bellear and others to support their call for funds from the federal government. More directly, he then worked with the community to set up the Housing Company under local Aboriginal control and employing many black workers. And as a Builders Labourer, Kevin ensured that the Housing Company from the very start offered decent conditions and wages, which was what the union had been fighting for. So Kevin was invited onto the Board of the Housing Company. He had the job of liaising between the Aboriginal Housing Company and the BLF and with other unions in the building industry, like the BWIU and the FEDFA.³

3 Bob Bellear's account of this important process is in his book: Robert W Bellear (ed) 1976, *Black Housing Book*, Amber Press, Sydney. Extracts from it can be found at the Redfern Oral History site, <<http://redfernoralhistory.org/OralHistory/BobBellear/tabid/150/Default.aspx>> as can Kaye Bellear's account of the establishment of the Housing Company and the broader Redfern politics of the day, <<http://redfernoralhistory.org/OralHistory/KayeBellear/tabid/165/Default.aspx>> accessed 10 January 2013.



Figure 3.6: Aboriginal BLs on Redfern Aboriginal Housing Company site.

Courtesy Oral History of Redfern website.

Joe: The Left in the federal Labor Party in those days had much more influence that it ever has now. You had Jim Cairns and Tom Uren... Cavanaugh was a bit of a slow boat to China but he was *there* when it all came about! And there was a young bloke from South Australia, Peter Duncan, helping him.

Paul: I was around Redfern a lot in the early '70s. I was a medical student then and I was volunteering for the new Aboriginal Medical Service. I'd used to go round the area on Thursday nights with Lyn Thompson who was a field officer then. The Empress pub was such a focus for everyone... it seemed to be where the police versus the community battles all got fought out. Every night at ten o'clock the coppers'd come down and just pick people up in the streets. I've got a vivid memory of young blokes outside the pub at ten o'clock, you know 15 or 16, and they would have all been sparring to get ready and then they'd take the coppers on! They'd been dancing around in the streets, practicing their shots... you know they'd all get busted, but they'd have taken the coppers on... and you know they'd all be busted but they'd all have five minutes of taking the coppers on! And then everyone would go up to that Redfern police station ... Kaye Bellar was there and Bob, and they used to have these students... and like

even Abschol, like Eric Wilson, you know I'd see him there when I was there on a Thursday night, and that group of Christians, like Carla Cranny, who hung around with Ted Kennedy and Dick Buchhorn and those people and they'd be there... There was a lot of activity... And I remember Pringle was there a lot along with those young black activists like Billy Craigie and Bob Belleair.

Kevin: Yeah, that was happening at the same time as the housing company... We'd go to a meeting in Redfern, on something like South Africa, and they often asked people to go back to the Empress. It was on a Friday night... And as you walked out of there, if you were black the coppers'd just throw you in the van whether you were drunk or not ... See they had to get a quota! And they got their quota alright!

Bobby: It's interesting you say that because my recollection of that period of issues around the apartheid stuff, but particularly Eveleigh Street and the Housing Company, is that in fact, most of the work was the back room stuff. To his credit, Pringle was very careful, about putting in a lot of yakka but not getting up at a meeting and instructing what the strategy will be. And like you say, Kevin, about the BLs when we did the tents and things for the Tent Embassy that was that as far as we were concerned. Kevin came in – or anybody else came in – and asked us, we'd supply, but we wouldn't direct. It wasn't our business, it wasn't whitefellas' business. It was blacks' business. So if they wanted a hand we'd give them a hand, but we didn't tell anybody what to do.

The Housing Company allowed real spaces not just for the people who were down and out and squatting and needed low cost housing. It also made real spaces for people to take part in the cultural revival that was going on among the Aboriginal community in the early 1970s and for black and white activists to share experiences and build networks.

Kevin: When the Block was first set up it was for itinerant people, to save their money, then go out and get mainstream accommodation and that did happen a bit. But then, you know, people love living in that area so they started to stay.

Meredith: I was thinking about the building though. I was just realising how much influence the BLs must have had on the way the actual building process got set up, the renovation process.

Kevin: No, no, I didn't have that at all, it happened within the Aboriginal community, yeah. That was one of the things that Pringle was really good on, allowing that process to happen. He always used to say people have got to have the right to be wrong, that was one of his sayings. Really, he probably was the best person to be involved from the union. 'Cause he was less sort of bossy than Jack and Joe.



Figure 3.7: Tent Embassy erected, Canberra.

Courtesy Peter Thompson Collection.

And Pringle knew all the people there too, that was the other thing, he knew Bob Bellar and he knew most of the others, you know, Coe and all of that, through other things. So he was very good. I was there three months as an organiser with him and then I took over the Aboriginal portfolio from Bob. But you know I used to always sit there and talk to him about it because he knew the place a lot better than I did. Then I've got mixed up with Black Theatre, and that was with Betty Fisher, that was really good.

Black Theatre was another arena in which Kevin's union involvement intersected with his growing involvement with activist Aboriginal politics. He was drawn into the newly developing theatre group – in which Aboriginal people challenged white Australian cultural dominance in a series of innovative and adventurous plays and street theatre performances. Cookie got involved partly because his friends among the BLF, like Tom Hogan, had a close friendship with the Aboriginal jazz singer, Betty Fisher, and she became Black Theatre's director. Then the theatre company needed space, and so once more the BLF defence of Aboriginal people's right to space in Redfern was an important support as the new group fought to find a place in Redfern to rehearse and perform. But in this group Kevin met new people again – like the established actors Bob Maza, Justine Saunders and Zac Martin, and the committed activist Lester Bostock, from the North Coast of NSW, who had been first studying and then teaching

at Tranby Co-operative College in Glebe. Black Theatre produced and circulated many memorable plays, television and filmic productions in the early 1970s. Yet, although it was less publicised, a critically important role played by Black Theatre was as a meeting place, in which actors, political activists, unionists and filmmakers could meet, socialise and plan projects. This was a time when there were few meeting places in Redfern other than pubs so having an alcohol-free and relaxed space to meet in was rare and, for many people, it was very welcome.⁴

Meredith: I can remember going to so many things at Black Theatre, it was really vibrant. Cookie, you used to get me down there. Although mind you, Betty Fisher terrified me: she didn't take too well to white fellas! But there were some great plays on there. Like the one with Bryan Brown in it, *Here Comes the Nigger* – written by Gerry Bostok – where Bryan Brown played the shit – he was the red-necked brother. It was the first time I'd ever seen Bryan Brown act and it was one of the most gripping performances I've ever seen.

Kevin: I thought the best actor there – the best non-Aboriginal actor – was Max Cullen. He was incredible, he was a copper in one, you know they had about seven or eight different parts, but he was a copper in one act. And I come in late or I'd gone out and come back, and there he was backstage, he and his mate were slapping each other across the face you know and psyching themselves up for the part.

Meredith: That's what Bryan Brown was doing too in the play and then what shocked me was at the end, when it was all over, all the Koories came down and just had a beer with him and a chat! I said, 'How can you do that when he was so horrible?' It was real method acting the whole play, well it was early '70s, that's when it was all really happening...

Kevin: With that Max Cullen, too, you could see the hate in him and next minute he'd go out and come back in and he'd have another part and everybody liked him. But I reckon he was a fantastic actor.

Meredith: And I saw *The Cake Man* too, 'cause you used to make certain I was dragged along to everything. But the other important thing about Black Theatre was it was a really important social meeting place at the time. I reckon, I think a lot of informal political activity went on there, and because of the sort of welcoming way in which Cookie ran it and you know once you got past Betty Fisher, there was this sort of relaxed atmosphere.

4 ADB Online: Anna Cole and Wendy Lewis 1996, 'Bettie Fisher (c.1939 - 1976)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol 14, MUP: 170-171. ABC Messagestick, 'Best Foot Forward' interview with Lester Bostock and Gerry Bostock, 30 May 2004, *Redfern Oral History*, <<http://redfernoralthistory.org/Enterprises/BlackTheatre>> accessed 10 January 2013.

Kevin: She was an incredible person. Betty was a great singer, and probably one of the best Aboriginal actors. And Justine Saunders and all of those people were there too. Then they formed the Redfern group. One or two people from each of the organisations met once a month to discuss what was happening, both in Redfern and outside. And that was a good political rallying place and we had a lot of support, from the people that visited Black Theatre. Like when we painted Black Theatre out completely ourselves. The people who came and helped us were all the builders labourers, architects, like Colin James and his students and all the people who worked with Black Theatre. They painted it out and then they got the Aboriginal Dance Group there too – they gave them space when they had no space. So there was a hive of activity there you know.

Meredith: Yeah, I know. That's what I mean, it was a totally social place. If you went there, there was always something going on. And then there was the great wedding of the year, remember when Tom Hogan married Betty Fisher and all the builders labourers were there. We had a bit of an argument about who had behaved the worst, the builders labourers or the Koories. The builders labourers won.

Kevin: That was a funny night, I've never laughed so much in all my life. I never had a drink that night.

Meredith: True? Why not?

Kevin: I just watched.

Meredith: You got drunk on atmosphere!

The NSW BLF was destroyed in 1975.

Employers like the Master Builders' Association (MBA) had been forced to make many concessions to the NSW BLF when it had demanded safety for workers and for environmentally responsible buildings. So the MBA struck a deal with the federal Builders Labourers, a body based in Melbourne, which had been deregistered because of financial and political difficulties. The federal Builders Labourers agreed to take over the NSW branch of the union in exchange for employer support from the MBA for the registration of the federal union. The NSW branch executive, lead by Bobby Pringle, decided to fight it out in the courts, but the court cases went against them. Despite widespread members' support for the NSW branch leadership within the union, the federal union took over, denied union tickets to the NSW leadership and this left all the key activists out of a job. Kevin's involvement with the Aboriginal community in Redfern as well as in his own area meant he had ways to use his union experience

and networks in a new way. But he found there were real differences in being a Tranby advocate who negotiated widely across the whole labour movement compared to his old role as a union organiser within one union.

Kevin: No, it couldn't go on forever, they wouldn't have allowed it... I was really lucky, because while I was working as a Builders Labourer, I was also involved in the Aboriginal issues. But there was a number of people in the Builders Labourers who lived day and night just for being in the Builders Labourers: outside of that, they didn't have anything. They'd watched it go from being a shit job to something you could be proud of. So it hurt them when Gallagher's mob took over and forced them out. You did feel a little bit of the oxygen went out of you. It was fantastic to belong to the Builders Labourers, especially as an organiser. I thought it was anyway, and I think a lot of other people did too: people who were on the executive, people who were the rank and filers, they felt great! It could kill people if that's all they had, they never recovered. But a lot of people went onto other things. They had to – because they had to work. You couldn't get a job in the building industry.

Bobby: They tore all our union tickets up and because there was a no ticket, no start, it suited the bosses. Obviously we weren't their favourite people anyway, so they didn't care. I was in a pub once and Gallagher offered me a ticket but I said, 'Stick it up your bum', and he said, 'Oh, morals, you can't eat morals'. Basically I suppose there were about 20 of us that they barred completely, wouldn't let us anywhere near a building site. And Kevin's right, he had somewhere to go, he had something to lock himself into. I went and started working on the maritime and finished up in the big shit fight with the AWU. Other people just sat down and put their hands in the air and didn't know what to do with themselves.

And of course, I used to spend a bit of time over at Tranby, annoying them!

As this last conversation between Kevin and Bobby Baker suggests, the end of the NSW Builders Labourers' Federation was a disaster for some people in which they were excluded from the work they knew and from the new form of the union, leaving them little in their lives. But many people tried to pick up the pieces and make new lives for themselves. For all of them, they brought with them many valuable experiences from the NSW Builders Labourers which never left them. And for Cookie, these experiences were to give him resources to build a new – and even wider – set of networks.