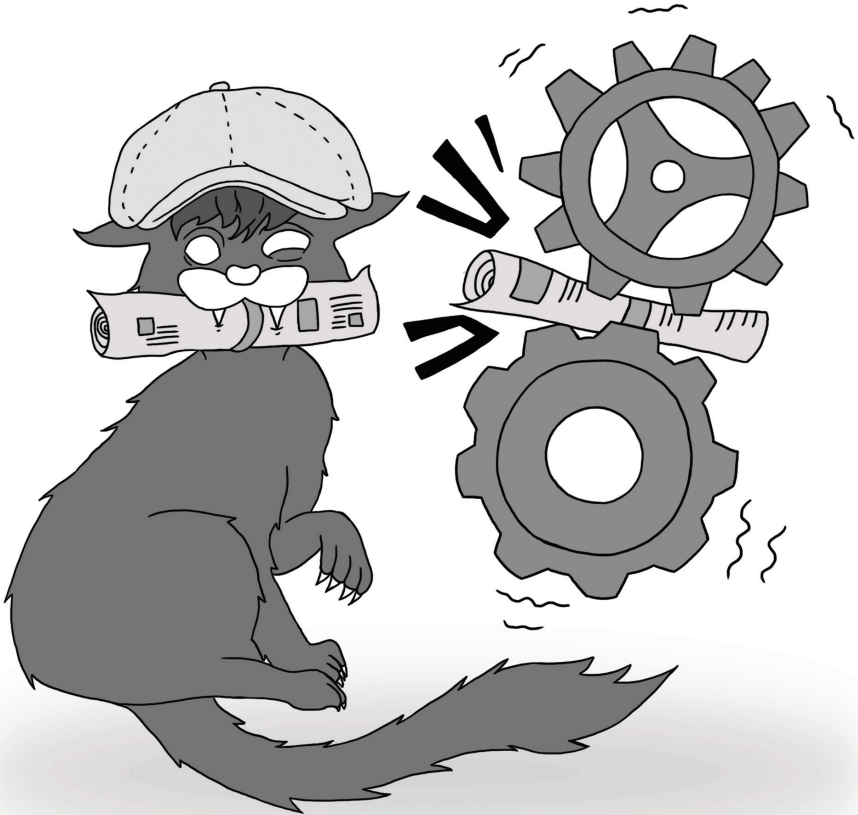


DIRECT ACTION!

A Newsletter of the General Membership of
the IWW (Australasia) #1



April 2022 Bulletin #1

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A Renewed Call for Direct Action!

-Vilian Chat

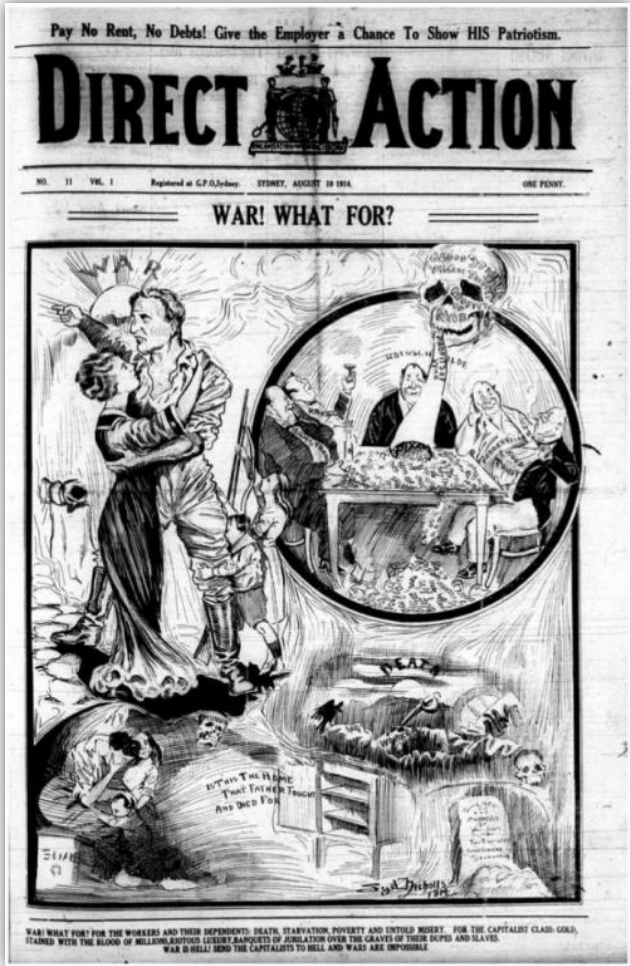
Direct Action was a monthly magazine first published by the Industrial Workers of the World in Sydney in January 1914. With lent money from a member, a simple printing press was purchased so that the revolutionary principles of the union would be maintained and unbridled by a less radical 3rd party.

This publication had set itself within a statement of principles as being: "For the first time in the history of the working class movement in Australia, a paper which stands for straight-out direct-actionist principles, unhampered by the plausible theories of the parliamentarians, whether revolutionary or otherwise [...] Every contributor, every supporter, is a member of the wage-earning class, who is conscious of his slave status in modern society, who is imbued, therefore, with motives stronger than mere sympathy or sentiment in voicing the aspirations of his fellows."

As the paper picked up success, the publication moved from a monthly to a fortnightly release, reporting on workers' struggle and spreading revolutionary propaganda amongst the working class. At a penny a print and with an impressive weekly circulation of 8,000 copies a month, the paper gained popularity and renown. In 1915, Direct Action did not conceal the union's well-known opposition to the first World War, suggesting that it should be the owning class on the front lines and that otherwise the answer to the call for war should be a general strike, which led to its editor's arrest. As is well known, this eventually led the IWW to be outlawed in 1916. The spirit of Direct Action is difficult to snuff and

her title has been continued under different publications by a variety of organisations from the Socialist Worker Party to the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation as recently as 1990.

With this publication, the One Big Union takes up again the voice of the revolutionary worker's call to abolish the wage system, that the toiler should have the say at the machines of labour, that it is Direct Action that will get those goods!





Interview with Jenny Stryker; New South Wales Nurses and Midwife's Association (NSWNMA) Delegate.

-Chuck Molotov, Jenny Stryker

Chuck Molotov: Tell us a bit about yourself.

Jenny Stryker: So yeah, I'm Jenny Stryker. I'm a union branch delegate for the NSWNMA in one of the large city hospital branches, one that has voted for a 24-hour strike coming up soon on Tuesday (February 15th).

Chuck Molotov: So how did we get here? Why are the NSWNMA striking?

Jenny Stryker: Why are we striking? Well, in short, because the government sucks. (Laughs) But in long, we've been campaigning for a couple of decades now for legally mandated ratios, which would replace the current system used to calculate how many nurses we can have per ward, each shift.

And we've also been constantly negotiating pay rises. Over the last decade I've seen those pay negotiations come back from the government becoming less and less, up until the point of 2020, where our wages were frozen. This was during the fucking global pandemic, as well as the international year of the nurses and midwives, which is just so insulting. And last year in 2021, between March and June, there was a bunch of branches who were voting for and taking strike action, including my branch. And my branch took strike action, literally hours before Sydney went into lockdown for the Delta wave and we weren't able to continue fighting our award negotiations at that time, purely,

purely, because we were all stuck back in the hospitals, dealing with all the bullshit.

So yeah, we were all furious back then and everyone was like, can we just do a statewide strike? And the last couple of committees of delegates for the state union have been more and more fiery and then we've been going through the Omicron wave since the end of last year.

We were already just so wiped out and exhausted and there were no lockdowns, the government was just like, let's just let it fucking rip. Who cares? And basically trying to praise us as heroes. And so we're just fucking mad. Not only are we one of the main workforces responding to the pandemic but we also live in these communities. We see how all of this has affected our communities and we feel that. It's a responsibility, a professional responsibility for us to stand up for ourselves and our communities and the people around us because we're literally standing up for people's well-being and their lives.

So yeah, that's kind of how we've gotten here. And yeah, we're all really excited about the strike.

Chuck Molotov: Speaking of people's lives, how does the NSWNMA go about strike action, without endangering more people that rely on your support?

Jenny Stryker: So a lot of people have asked me this and it's been really interesting that people think that we're just gonna be like, no, no one's gonna work in the hospital and everyone's just gonna put up picket lines.

Yeah, so there's a number of things that can be done. The majority of it is basically each ward or each unit negotiates amongst themselves which is, you know, boots on the ground organising to determine who will strike and who will remain on the ward as skeleton staffing to ensure that if there are emergencies or time-sensitive care that does need to be delivered for that person's well-being

and that patient's benefit. Then we're going to do that because no one wants to disadvantage someone who genuinely needs care but we also do a lot of things to cause service disruption.

For example, theatres will cancel entire lists of patients that are due for operations that day and other units won't do tasks (labour) that generate income or KPIs for the hospital that mean nothing to the patients. And the rest of us will just not be there for the shift or go rally in the city and yell at the government outside parliament. That's what it looks like in a nutshell.

Chuck Molotov: What's the difference between union organising in the public sector versus the private sector? You can't really attack your boss's profits because they aren't directly motivated by profit.

Jenny Stryker: Well, I mean, fundamentally that makes sense, right? In the public system, we're clearly employed by a government entity. Our bosses are the government. And right now Perrottet (NSW Premier) and Hazzard (NSW Minister of Health) have made it really fucking clear that they care more about the economy and the profits of their donors, than they do about the human lives. So at the end of the day, whether it's the public health system, or in the private system, like Healthscope (major private hospital company) or others like that, you would be rallying against the boss' profits very directly in the private system.

But we've also - like in the history of my branch - We have also taken action directly against our executive bosses, to hold them to account for things they are responsible for. For example, over staffing disputes. And when the negotiations weren't providing a suitable outcome, we voted to take strike action. Then we got slapped with an IRC gag order. And we decided collectively that **"no, we're still fucking striking"**.

And in the eleventh hour the bosses scrambled to deliver us the agreement that we were demanding. And that literally was us just being like, “we care enough about this issue to take industrial action.” So it doesn’t always need to be over direct profit but at the end of the day, we’re living in a capitalist system. So it’s always about someone profiting whether you are in the public or private system.

Chuck Molotov: There’s both a state and federal election happening soon. Do you think just voting this sociopathic government out of office is going to solve the union’s issues?

Jenny Stryker: No, no, anybody who thinks that is an idiot. We can already see by the way that the NSW Labor Party and the Federal Labor Party have been taking a very centrist or right of centre approach to things lately, even though they might come up with sympathetic sentiments.

For example, Chris Minns recently was posting tweets carrying a sentiment of support for the NSWMA and we’re like, what’s the Labor stance on our strike on the 15th? Are you going to make a campaign commitment to our demands and support our log of claims in the coming award negotiations? But there haven’t been any commitments made by the ALP regarding our current grievances over ratios and the pay rise that were owed. So it’s just literally showing you that they’re still politicians, they still pander to their denominators and I would not promote voting for them, but at the moment when we live in this current system, you’ve got to decide who you’re going to vote in. And the ALP still have plenty of time to come out in public support of our claims as a campaign commitment. So, we’ll see what happens.

Because I don’t see anybody going and revolting and tearing down the system anytime in the nearest future, as much as we’d all like that to occur. We also need to be realistic about the world that we currently live in.

But I think voting for anybody who's actually pushing some kind of agenda that's actually going to attempt to address some of these issues is going to be better than the current LNP government.

Chuck Molotov: What can workers outside of the union and the healthcare industry do to support your struggle?

Jenny Stryker: There's a lot of solidarity between the NSWNMA and other public sector industries, like the teachers for example, or the ambos and the RBTU (Rail Bus and Tram Union) and they've all been striking recently and it's literally because we all have suffered, we've all had our wages frozen, we've all been treated like absolute shit.

So other industries could come and support our strike and to also help breed some solidarity so when they strike, there's a stronger response from our union, or rather the bureaucratic head of the association in supporting other campaigns. We saw already, with the protest today against the religious discrimination bills in Sydney, that was endorsed by the NSWNMA. It took a bit of consistent hounding on our part to get them to finally commit to it. But I feel like politically things were in the right place for the association to make that move. So as long as you keep putting that pressure on them, they'll eventually bend.

But I think, really breeding more solidarity amongst each other is what other workers can do. For example: A lot of the doctors are covering for the nurses while we're on strike. They're not filling our roles for us, but they're ensuring that critical stuff that requires an advanced skill set is covered so that we can go out and strike and not have that concern that we're actually leaving somebody's life at risk. So that's nice. But also, just show the fuck up to the rally. Come and join in with us. I've seen many comrades from different unions, from different industries, posting their solidarity and promoting us. Every little act adds to it, right? It adds to the encouragement,

it adds to the empowerment, it adds to people feeling like they're actually doing something good here because that's the only way that we're gonna continue that momentum.

So, yeah, at the end of the day, show up to the rally. Show solidarity, talk to other people about how poorly treated other industries are as well, not just your own. So if you're a teacher, talk about your industry but talk about the other industries that are suffering the same way and it helps people see that it's a bigger picture than just 'oh, the nurses reckon they're not getting paid enough.'

Chuck Molotov: I also heard there was some drama with your hospital and some bosses trying to fuck you over?

Jenny Stryker: Right, so if you want to get into some detail: In January we had our most recent committee of delegates and it was super fiery. And following that the association put out a general member survey to find out what our appetite was for striking. And the results were quite clear that everybody wanted to and were willing to commit to it.

So they put out a call to action to say that we're gonna go to do a statewide strike and each branch got to have a meeting and complete their motion, for how long that branch wanted to strike and if they were interested in participating in a statewide strike. So a couple of comrades in the branch including myself argued quite staunchly for 24 hours, and our branch being like, quite a notable branch, we went fuck it, let's do it. Because, even if we might feel like we're a bit better off at our hospital, but if we're feeling this way, what about our comrades at the other hospitals. So, we were like, you know what? Fuck it, like, let's go with the big guns.

So the vote went out and the result was 97.7% Yes for a strike. However, the text message that went out to all of the members didn't include that they were voting for 24 hours and when exec found out that our branch had voted for 24 hours, and we were the only branch that had closed at 24 hours at that point and they were getting a bit concerned. They even spoke with the Ministry.

So the exec said, this makes us look bad if my branch is the only one doing 24 hours and we responded, but that's what the membership voted for and they repeated, but it makes us look bad, could you maybe talk to them again and see if they're willing to like, you know, make it 4-8 hours?

Because if you make it 4-8 hours, we won't take you to the IRC claiming that it wasn't a legitimate vote and the ministry backed that stance. So they were saying that because it wasn't clear that the members were voting for a 24-hour strike that they were trying to make a claim of illegitimacy in their threat for the IRC.

Now none of us give a fuck about being taken to the IRC, what we care about is making sure that we don't have more of a headache in that legal battle. So, we had an emergency branch delegate meeting where we discussed this and then we planned an emergency branch meeting for the next day. But in the following few hours six other branches across the state closed their votes at 24 hours. And so we thought, that's gonna change the vibe of tomorrow's conversation, isn't it? And so we had our emergency meeting the following day, in the middle of the day, it was super short notice and we still had over 70 people show up to that emergency branch meeting and they were like, yeah, exec was asking if we wanted to change hours, but also a bunch of other branches just voted for 24 hours.

So, we had a little bit of a conversation about it and then grilled one of the association reps about whether this was going to set a precedent for other branches that have voted for 24 hours if we revoted. And he was like, no, no it's not a revote. We're asking for members to confirm 24 hours.

So it's basically this thing that nurses do where if someone wants to contest whether something is true or not, we return back by documenting the fuck out of it.

So in our branch meeting, no one, even despite our genuine encouragement for anyone to openly speak against 24 hours, no one did. It was unanimous. And so, we put it back to a confirmation vote, which closed again at the exact same numbers of 97.7% Yes. It was fucking glorious. So, yeah, nurses are pretty fierce, and there's a lot of activists in my branch. So yeah. We're quite chuffed.

Chuck Molotov: They sound pretty desperate. Trying to screw you over a 97% vote.

Jenny Stryker: Yeah, You can tell they're worried. We're making them sweat. We're getting their attention. I know that Hazzard has invited a bunch of reps from each union branch to go and meet with him to have a chat. So he can tick a political box and be like, well, I met with the nurses.

Chuck Molotov: Are they going to meet with him?

Jenny Stryker: Pretty sure they will, but I'm pretty sure it's not going to be a very productive conversation.

Chuck Molotov: Final question, what would you like the future of your job to look like?

Jenny Stryker: The future of my job? Instead of being praised as heroes and being given pizza parties which is just further feeding capitalism? Maybe what could be done is that you just fucking pay us more and give us more nurses to patients because we care about people, we want to make sure that the people being looked after in hospital are getting the right kind of care that they all deserve because we all need hospital at some point.

Yeah. In our capitalist society, we're all labouring for a wage. We nurses should be fucking paid better. I don't think there's anybody who would disagree.

Ideally, I'd like to go to work because I'm doing what I do best and want to serve everyone instead of fighting in a system that benefits a minority rather than the majority.

Post-Interview Notes:

On February 15th approximately 5000 nurses and midwives marched on NSW parliament, and thousands more participated in the statewide strike. They intend to strike again on the 31st of March and will continue to fight until safe nurse-patient ratios are implemented on every shift across the public health system. Direct Action will keep our readers updated as the struggle continues.





Russia's Invasion: Another Project of the Owing Class

-Vilian Chat

On Thursday, the 24th of February, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine under the pretense of protecting Russian speaking minorities in the nation's south and east. Since then, the military occupation and bombardments have not stopped, targeting civilian targets such as schools, hospitals, and residential blocks. This situation, however, has been an ongoing conflict since 2014. During the 8 years since, the declaration of Donetsk and Luhansk independence and the annexation of Crimea. Since then, the most despicable characters of ethnonationalist stock and fascist ilk have been armed by larger imperialist ambition to spill the blood of the worker.

Understanding two key factors betrays, however, that the division of ethnic tensions is but a guise for the ambitions of the capitalist class' competing interests which have little thought for the lives of the toilers and their children.

The first are the mutually beneficial imperialist powers who take advantage of NATO - which, while superficially, is but a voluntary defensive alliance has been utilised by its more despotic members to assert its influence. This can be seen with the French in Mali, Turkey in Syria, or the United States from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf.

The advantage of being onside with such militaristic behemoths is not lost on nations east of Germany who had new found independence after the fall of the Soviet Union. With the Western backed "Revolution of Dignity" leading Ukraine to European Union interests, Russia only had Belarus on the European Plain as a buffer within its sphere of influence.

The second is that Russian oil and gas supplies 30% of the European Union's fossil fuel consumption. With the Nord Stream Pipeline to be established between Germany and the Vyborg, this reliance would have been absolute.

This was threatened by discoveries of the world's 3rd largest shale gas reserves and Europe's largest oil fields in Ukraine as well as off her coast. Ukrainian claims in the Black Sea were largely secured by the annexation of Crimea, the eastern oil fields by Russian recognised Donetsk and Luhansk while much of the eastern oil fields are near Russian leaning Transnistria.

Laying these factors down, it is easy to see that territorial and economic factors weigh against the despotic oligarchy of the Federation, whose owning class is known to jail political opponents, murder journalists, marginalise ethnic minorities, and purge sexual and gender diverse peoples.

Now with the most recent of the Russian Federation's disgusting actions, we see that the bloodthirsty oligarchy that thinks nothing of throwing young lives into the meat grinder to spill innocent blood in Ukraine - the Russian peoples have nothing in common with their rulers.

Indeed, this theatre only demonstrates the IWW's assertion that the owning class and working class have nothing in common. Toilers all over should condemn wholly and without reservation the needless and callous invasion and occupation of the Ukraine. It is the owning class that declare war and make peace, it is the working class that kill and are slain.

Those who have turned arms against each other are better served turning them on their masters not for another's imperialist ambitions but for their own liberation and industrial freedom.





Out of the Closets and into the Streets: A Wobbly report from the 2022 “Take Over OxfordStreet” Protest.

-Wild Cat

At 1p.m, on the 5th of March 2022, Queer activist groups in Sydney: Pride in Protest (PiP) and Community Action for Rainbow Rights (CARR) organised and held their fabulous and fierce “Take Over Oxford Street” demonstration and march for the second year in a row.

Fellow Workers of the Warrang/Sydney branch attended, marched and spoke at the demonstration to show their pride, solidarity and passion for the liberation of all Queer people within so-called Australia and abroad.

The primary demands of the demonstration were and are as follows: Stop, scrap and kill the Religious Discrimination Bill from parliament.

Full decriminalisation of sex work.

Resistance to discrimination of sex workers, refugees, people of colour, indigenous people, queer people and other marginalised communities.

To fund and give resources to alternative services, rather than to the police.

To support and call for the release of all detained refugees and immigrants, with a particular focus on Queer refugees.

To call for legal and workplace provisions to provide transition leave for people undergoing medical transition.

As the rally was about to get underway, hateful bigots, using their apparent "faith" as a shield, came to verbally accost the attendees. In an awesome show of strength, bravery and unity, their hate was shouted down and they were eventually forced to retreat under the watchful eye of the police. They didn't show up again.

Soon, the various speakers took to the microphone. As they spoke, they recounted countless stories all too familiar to Aboriginal People, Refugees, People of Colour, Sex Workers and the Queer community. Stories of Genocide, Neglect, Discrimination, Hatred and Violence were shared, and their pain was felt. Despite this, the crowd was undeterred and un-wavered by their words, the atmosphere was electric and full of hope; people were excited to march the busy streets!

From Taylor Square to Hyde Park, we marched and shouted in open opposition and defiance of the corporate and commercial parade being held at the Sydney Cricket Ground just a mere two kilometres away.

We took to the streets, banners began to unfurl carrying charged slogans such as; "No Pride in Police!", "No Climate Justice Without Social Justice" and "1978: The First Mardi Gras, Still Out and Proud".



TAKE OVER OXFORD STREET!

MARDI GRAS RALLY

DAYTIME PROTEST TAYLOR SQUARE 5TH MARCH 1 PM



PRIDE IN PROTEST

CA22
community action to end covid 2022

DEMANDS: STOP THE BIGOTS BILL!

DECRIMINALISE SEX WORK | FUND SERVICES NOT POLICE

NO PRIDE IN DETENTION | TRANSITION LEAVE NOW

Colourful costumes, passionate voices, pink smoke and massive flags made their appearance, the true spirit of Mardi Gras; the spirit of protest, radical and direct action, pioneered by the brave 78'ers who made that first march those forty-four years ago was felt. It was here, and it was a statement of social and political will. And it was being directed and led by the participants on the ground, not by figureheads, politicians or parties.

Of course, as Wobblies, we brought along our own brand of resistance — a resistance that was expressly unionist, anti-capitalist, working-class, anti-authoritarian and very — very passionate. Vocal resistance to police presence - particularly the deployment of the New South Wales Mounted Police Unit as well as the Public order and Riot Squad was employed. In short, we gave them a very Wobbly welcome.

To roll up, the day was full of fun and fury, and while the demands of the protest weren't met, particularly killing the Religious Discrimination Bill — the fight must go on; as it has for the past four years.

At the end of the day, if these demands can be projected into the public consciousness and gain popular support amongst wider society — without compromising on them in order to gain the support of the state and capital, we may yet be able to ultimately win.

If we demand the impossible, even gaining 10% of that demand can be considered a small victory and a vital stepping stone away from the current state of things, to an emancipated world run by everyone — for everyone.

(Footnote: Pride in Protest are holding a "Trans Day of Visibility" demonstration at Sydney Town Hall on the 2nd of April @1pm)



Wobbly Walk!

-Chuck Molotov

On February 13th 2022, members of the Industrial Workers of the World Sydney branch participated in the first Wobbly Walk social event at Echo Point Lookout, Katoomba. For 3-4 hours we hiked across several of the tracks in the national park. Participants reported having a good time, enjoying the somewhat challenging hike, beautiful scenery and good company.

The bush walk is part of the IWW Sydney Branch's social events. The goal is to develop a sense of community and solidarity. The neoliberal ideology of individualism doesn't just create alienation and despair. It has destroyed a genuine sense of community and with it, the necessary foundations for organised resistance against the capitalist state. While a sense of solidarity is built out of shared struggle, it's easier to fix a plane's engine when it's still on the ground and away from enemy fire.

While the need to socially distance due to the pandemic has once again been necessary in recent months, we have taken multiple safety measures. All members had been double vaccinated and received a booster shot, many received rapid antigen testing in the days before and after the hike, and the outdoor setting reduced the risk of transmission.

The park is situated on the stolen, unceded land of the Dharug and Gundungurra peoples. Like the rest of Australia, it was seized and is continued to be held through the violence of settler colonialism. For at least tens of thousands of years,

Aboriginal Australians sustained a relatively egalitarian and peaceful society of abundance, making them the oldest living culture. Genocidal colonisers almost completely destroyed it in a couple of generations. The unsustainable profit motive of capitalism is causing global warming, plummeting biodiversity and widespread habitat loss. All of this is creating an ecological disaster not seen since the Little Ice Age. This collapse, along with other destabilising threats is creating a decades long decay of civilisation as we know it.

While the slow crumbling of the old world may be the worst tragedy of our lifetimes, it would be an enormous mistake to be swallowed in despair. After all, the aim of the IWW is to build a new world on the ashes of the old. If we can see that capitalism is setting itself and the rest of the world on fire, we should be prepared for that.

In the past prepping has been seen as the realm of right wing conspiracy theorists. The libertarian capitalist fantasy of surviving by yourself in a bunker with 200 firearms and buckets of food is laughable. However, leftist approaches to prepping have become increasingly popular, with podcasts such as; *It Could Happen Here* and *Live Like the World is Dying* advising people how they can help build stronger, horizontally organised communities when capitalism inevitably fails to provide for people in times of crisis.

While the individualistic right wing preppers focus on expensive survival gear, it is more important to have relevant skills and a strong community. To build these, simple group activities such as hiking can help improve basic physical fitness and give the group the opportunity to work as a team. Later on, members of the group can share skills with each other until they can go on to teach more people. Even something as simple as first aid can be life saving.

It is also important to note that despite our first event being a hike, and basic physical fitness is an important aspect of prepping, this should not be a judgement on people's worth.

We should be careful to avoid ableism in every aspect of our organising. Instead, we should focus on increasing the group's abilities so we can work together to build a world where everyone's needs are met.

Previous Wobbly social events have been picnics, which have given the Sydney IWW the opportunity to meet in larger groups and socialise. While these have been popular and will likely continue, we plan on diversifying the types of social events. In addition to skill sharing events we intend to attend pub trivia and host movie nights. We also intend to have future hikes in Sydney, making them easier for people to attend and bring friends. A variety of social events will allow people with different abilities and interests to participate, which will further strengthen our social ties.







**Sydney Wobblies
Facebook Page**