



Edna Ryan Awards

2021

Emily Mayo

For Making a Feminist Difference in Media/Communication

Emily Mayo came to the union movement from the community sector. She mentors young women unionists and has been involved in the founding of ground-breaking campaigns and movements like 'Destroy the Joint'.

During the NSW abortion decriminalisation proposal, public debate was skewed to the vocal but well-funded anti-autonomy minority. Emily organised a community and media intervention in the form of #ArrestUs which reset the public debate and set the stage for the reform.

In the early 1970s, eighty women declared themselves to be criminals in a national newspaper, taking out an advertisement as a provocation in the campaign to decriminalise abortion. Emily undertook the #ArrestUs work in an ethical and feminist fashion, seeking individual and informed consent from each person involved, co-ordinating over 50 women to come together and again make public statements to speak out one last time against the criminalisation of abortion.

#ArrestUs was instrumental in the successful passing of the NSW legislation.