

newsletter

Our physical office in Glebe and our Women's Court Support Service have both been closed this quarter due to COVID-19, but we have continued to carry on with our work for clients and meeting with our volunteers online.

This quarter we have been very involved in a couple of cases involving significant family law and human rights questions. Unfortunately, due to non-publication orders, we are unable to share news of these proceedings at this stage.

However, although we can't report on these matters, we thought we would share some anonymized examples of previous legal casework to give an insight into the range of work we undertake at Feminist Legal Clinic Inc.

Case Study 1 – Catalina

Catalina* was a non-English speaking woman recently arrived in Australia on a student visa. Her English was inadequate to explain events to police following a violent altercation with her boyfriend in which he sustained a cut hand. Police acted on his version of events and charged her as the perpetrator of violence. Catalina was arrested and kept all night at the police station with no access to medical attention or legal advice. At hearing we were able to establish that Catalina had acted in self-defence, with the result that the assault charge and AVO against her was dropped and instead orders were instituted against him for our client's protection.



Case Study 2 – Janie

Janie*, a woman in her 70s, was sold a motor vehicle which was unsuitable for the short inner city driving for which she needed it and required constant maintenance and repair. We assisted Janie by sending a letter of demand asserting her consumer rights. We also helped her make a complaint to Fair Trading and prepare to bring proceedings in NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This resulted in her claim being settled, with Janie obtaining a replacement vehicle from the dealership.



Case Study 3 – Pamela

Pamela* is a mother of two young children and has migrated on a spousal visa from overseas. She has very limited English and literacy and knows no one in Australia who speaks her language. Her marriage is characterised by significant controlling and coercive behaviour by her husband. We have supported Pamela by helping her access specialist advice about immigration, social security, housing and family law entitlements. We have also helped her with essential practical tasks like setting up a bank account and renewing her passport. Two years on she has completed a course in English and a TAFE certificate and has secured employment. Sadly, our legal and welfare systems fail women in Pamela's predicament, but she is slowly saving and planning her escape.



Case Study 4 – Willow

Willow* is a young woman of Polynesian background who has a tragic history as a victim of domestic violence, neglect and sexual abuse. Although she and her large family have lived in Australia since she was three, due to their residency status they cannot access Centrelink benefits. She and her siblings were removed from their home and placed in separate foster homes when she was just 12 and she has been in trouble with the law since and has developed a problem with substance abuse. Her latest offences of stealing while on parole have landed her back in goal and facing the prospect of a lengthy term of imprisonment followed by deportation. We assisted Willow by organising a place in a residential drug & alcohol rehabilitation program to provide an alternative at sentencing.

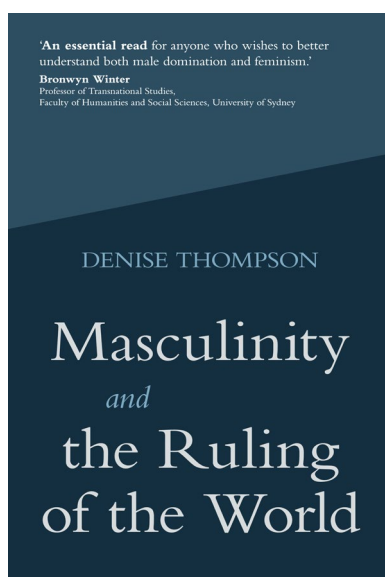
Case Study 5 – Shirley

Shirley* is an aged pensioner living in public housing with impeded mobility and hearing. She could find no one to help her deal with a violent male neighbour who had previously been convicted for assaulting her and had recently threatened and spat on her. Unfortunately, the police, Legal Aid and her local community legal centre said they could only assist with domestic violence matters and she would need to bring a private AVO application herself. Finally, in desperation she saw her local MP who referred her to our office. We represented Shirley at court and subpoenaed the necessary evidence held by the police and were able to quickly obtain final orders for her protection and peace of mind.

*names have been changed

Upcoming Event

Denise Thompson has published a new book entitled *Masculinity and the Ruling of the World* which is available from major book distribution sites. We will be celebrating its launch in collaboration with The Women's Library at a zoom event scheduled for Friday 7 August 2020. We will keep members posted of further details as they become available.



Flixa

The women behind the Radical Womyn Film Festival have just launched Flixa, an online streaming platform screening films exclusively directed by women. You can access the website here: www.flixa-tv.com.



Other Activities

With the coordination of our management committee member Ann Reynolds, our **Women Write Wiki** meetings are now taking place online. We have had several members join during the lockdown including one from New Zealand.

We have also had students on placement at FLC during the lockdown with whom we meet using video conferencing. One of them, Alicia from UTS, has completed a project which involved writing Wikipedia entries to document some of the history of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement.

Meanwhile Andrea who is completing her Practical Legal Training (PLT) with us assisted with research for an article on [How NSW Roads and Maritime Services \(RMS\) facilitates financial abuse](#), (Opinion, Australian Lawyers Alliance, 4 June 2020).

We have also been working on an article for Precedent magazine on access to justice for indigenous women involving an interview with domestic violence frontline worker Charmaine Weldon. This should be published shortly and will be available through our website.

Our work for the Women's Human Rights Campaign continues and we have recently sent a [Submission to the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights on behalf of the Women's Human Rights Campaign for Australia's 3rd Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#), 6 June 2020.

Membership Renewals

It is time to renew your membership for 2020/2021 and we need your support more than ever. If you have not already paid or renewed your annual membership in the past month, please go to the link [here](#) as soon as possible. Donations would also be deeply appreciated. If you're unsure about your membership status, check by emailing membership@feministlegal.org.

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