

newsletter

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The final quarter of 2020 has been busy with challenging casework.

Domestic Violence Casework

We are currently conducting private applications for Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) on behalf of clients who have been unable to obtain the assistance of police. In one of these cases the police originally misidentified our client (who speaks very little English) as the perpetrator. Fortunately, following our representations the police have withdrawn the application against her.

We continue to be concerned by the increasing trend for police to misidentify women as perpetrators, with some lists now being dominated by cases where the person allegedly in need of protection is male. The hurdles placed in the way of private applications by women who are not represented by the police is also of great concern. In some courts there is open skepticism towards these applications, particularly where there are children of the relationship. It is often falsely assumed that women bring these applications to obtain a benefit in the context of family law proceedings.

However, in practice, raising allegations of domestic violence (or child abuse) places a mother at risk of being regarded as a hostile parent who engages in parental alienation. This can increase the chance that she will have her children removed from her care and put into the hands of the alleged perpetrator. We have been working with the National Child Protection Alliance (NCPA) on this issue and have conducted a survey of members impacted by family law. We have recently written to the Chief Justice of the Family Court with the results and have requested a meeting.

Proposed Coercive Control legislation

We have been involved in regular meetings to discuss the proposed introduction of laws to criminalise coercive and controlling behaviour. We have met with MPs, representatives of domestic violence services and women's organisations and have provided our feedback on the two Bills already introduced to the NSW Parliament by the Greens and Labor Party.

We have also circulated a draft submission within the sector to the NSW Government's Inquiry on [coercive control reform](#), where we have recommended that the provisions should be framed to specifically protect women from violence by male partners and ex-partners. So far there has been knee jerk resistance to the suggestion of sex-based language in the legislation, despite broad acknowledgement that this is a sex-based problem. We urge others to make submissions to the Inquiry.

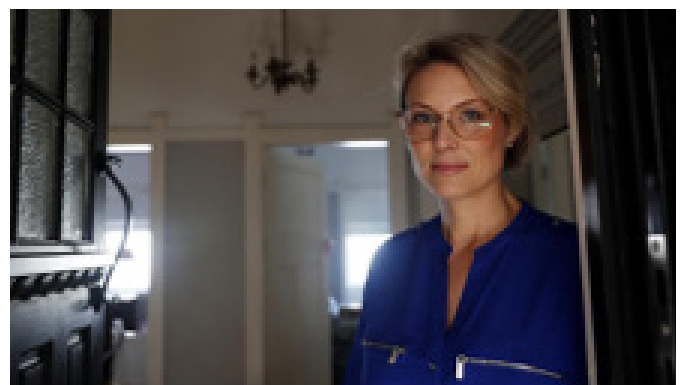
Clinch v Rep

Our application to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) to have our appeal removed to the ACT Supreme Court was unsuccessful, so we are busy with preparations for our appeal to the Tribunal itself in the new year. We have taken heart from the successful UK High Court appeal decision just handed down in [Scottow v CPS](#) which has found firmly in favour of free speech, even when it offends feelings.

Media Mentions

Feminist Legal Clinic Inc made the following media releases during the quarter:

[Women sidelined by peak sporting organisations](#)



FLC Volunteer Kath Deves & spokesperson for Save Women's Sport Australasia as featured in The Australian newspaper on 12 October 2020

[UK High Court case of Bell v Tavistock welcomed by concerned parents and feminists](#)

FLC received some media mentions:

["Pause button": rules reset on children's gender transition](#), The Sun Herald, 6 December 2020.

[UK court bans use of puberty blockers for children under 16](#), Top Most Popular, 6 December 2020

Presentations

Dr Jocelynne Scutt invited Anna to present at her live webinar series “Brilliant & Bold” – a series of conversations with Ordinary & Extraordinary Women on women’s rights, challenges, perspectives, hopes and empowerment. The topic was “Challenging Tomorrow - The Political is Always Personal” and was aired live on 11 October 2020.

Feminist Classics Book Club

In collaboration with The Women’s Library (TWL) we have launched a Feminist Classics Book Club which meets on-line on the last Thursday of the month. To join up visit the TWL website [here](#). We are also involved in the fortnightly Women’s Film Club which meets every second Sunday evening. Details are available [here](#).

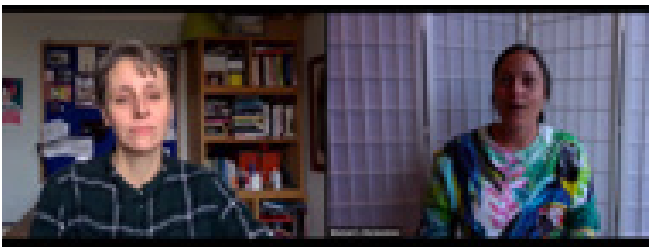
Women’s Human Rights Campaign

We have hosted the first 3 webinars for the Women’s Human Rights Campaign. Videos are available at the links below:

[Women Human Rights Campaign \(Aus/NZ\) Webinar – Launch of Susan Hawthorne’s book Vortex: The Crisis of Patriarchy](#) – Susan Hawthorne, Helen Pringle and Anna Kerr in conversation, 29 November 2020



[Women Human Rights Campaign \(Aus/NZ\) Webinar –](#) Dr Holly Lawford-Smith in conversation with Dr Kathleen Stock, 31 October 2020.

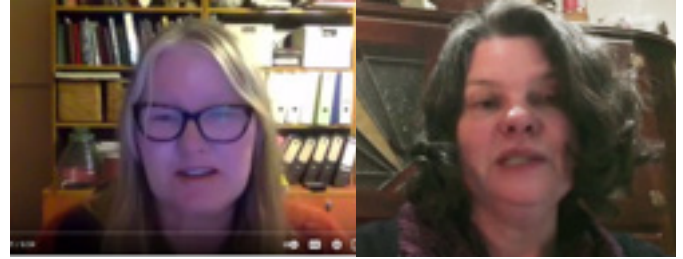


Philosophers Dr Holly Lawford Smith and Dr Kathleen Stock in conversation during WHRC Webinar



FLC Convenor Bronwyn Williams strutting her stuff at WHRC Webinar

Women’s Human Rights Campaign (Aus/NZ) Webinar – Dr. Holly Lawford-Smith, Senior Lecturer in Political Philosophy in conversation with Mia Campione, Janet Fraser ([here](#) and [here](#)), [Beth Johnson](#) and [Bronwyn Williams](#), 30 September 2020. Further videos available [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).



FLC Committee Members Beth Johnson (left) and Janet Fraser (right) speaking at a WHRC Webinar.

Submissions

We have also made the following submissions during the quarter:

[NGO Shadow Follow Up Report to CEDAW](#), 4 November 2020

[Submission regarding Conversion Practices : Law Reform Options for Tasmania](#), Tasmanian Law Reform Institute, 22 December 2020

Women Write Wiki

Our meetings have continued online but we are hoping that we will be able to meet in person in the New Year, possibly alternating with online get-togethers.

In the last three months, group members have created more than 25 bios of Australian women and a number of bios of New Zealand women, including academics.

In 2021 Women In Red is launching a year-long project on Women’s rights https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women_in_Red/Meetup/188 and in January there’s Women in climate and environment https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women_in_Red/Meetup/188. These should inspire many contributions from our group.

Please Join as an FLC Member!

If you support the work we are doing and have not already joined or renewed, the link to do so is [here](#). If you’re unsure about your membership status, please check by emailing membership@feministlegal.org

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