



Feminist Legal  
Clinic Incorporated  
Annual Report *2017—2018*

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

### **Our mission**

*Feminist Legal Clinic's mission is to advance the cause of feminism and champion the human rights of women and girls by providing legal support to feminist organisations, groups and services and the women who access them.*

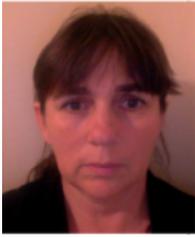
### **Our vision**

*Our vision is a world where women and their children are liberated from discrimination, exploitation, abuse and violence and the empowerment of women and girls is prioritised and achieved in every sphere of their lives. Core to this vision is ensuring that all women and girls are free to enjoy the status, independence and power necessary to participate equally in private and public decision-making, and control and share equitably in all economic, social, cultural and political resources and capital.*

### **Our Objectives**

*Our work is directed toward recognising women's agency and giving voice to the lived experiences of all women and girls in order to drive systemic and cultural change that promotes and improves women's individual and collective access to quality legal support and services, and the universal fulfillment of women's human rights, their legal entitlements and delivery to women of just outcomes. We seek to progress feminist projects and activities on behalf of clients and our partners, and to pro-actively campaign and drive a feminist agenda for connecting policy and practice, and educating the community and profession. We are committed to developing and building strong collaborative networks and partnerships, including with universities and students, practitioners, the legal profession and other community justice services, to pursue our mission and vision in advancing the feminist cause. We intend to work towards this through undertaking a mix of targeted casework, law and policy reform, strategic research and advocacy projects, and promoting community and professional engagement, training and education.*

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Anna Kerr—Principal Solicitor & Public Officer.

Anna has been a practising solicitor for over 25 years and has worked in a wide range of community legal services. She is currently a member of Legal Aid’s Domestic Violence Practitioner Scheme and has recently been appointed to the Steering Committee of the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA).



Dr Rita Shackel—Co-convenor.

Rita is an Associate Professor at Sydney University Law School, an Associate Dean in Education, Co-Director of the Sydney Institute of Criminology and Chair of the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. Rita is also a past Co-Chair of the Women and Girls' Rights Subcommittee of the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) and is now Chair of their Children’s Rights Subcommittee.



Darelle Duncan —Co-convenor.

Darelle is a veteran in the field of feminist activism and has also had a successful career in education, rising to School Principal. She is a member of Origins NSW and long-term adoption law reform campaigner and also led the recent “End 12” campaign on NSW abortion law reform. She established the Australian Women’s Party in NSW in 1996 and has published widely on gender issues.



Leonie Crowe—Treasurer.

Leonie was previously a social worker at Auburn Hospital but inspired by her involvement with Feminist Legal Clinic Inc she has now taken a position with the North Queensland Women’s Legal Service.



Irene Baghoomians—Irene is a Senior Law Lecturer at Sydney University Law School in International Human Rights Law and Coordinator of the Clinical Legal Education Program. Irene has worked at the Australian Law Reform Commission, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and was a legal policy advisor at the Race Discrimination Unit of HREOC (1998-2000).



Lyndal Gowland—Lyndal is Principal Solicitor at Gowland Legal and has over 20 years of experience in family law matters, including property settlements, parenting issues, international child abduction as well as all types of agreements. Lyndal was awarded a Masters of Allied Law in 2014. She has sat on many influential committees seeking major law changes in relation to domestic violence, including the AVLIC Committee.



Dr Jan Breckenridge—Jan is an Associate Professor at UNSW School of Social Sciences and Co-Convener for the UNSW Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN).

## REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

Here is a quick run-down of some of our activities during the first 18 months of operation.

### March 2017

Feminist Legal Clinic incorporated on 31 March 2017. Our founding members were Dr Rita Shackel, Darelle Duncan, Dr Jan Breckenridge, Leonie Crowe, Marion Brown, Lyndall Gowland and Anna Kerr. With their support and also that of local resident and feminist activist, Eva Cox, we submitted an application to the City of Sydney Council for an accommodation grant for an office in Benledi House, Glebe.

### April 2017

While awaiting the outcome of our accommodation grant we continued our work using The Women's Library (TWL) as a base. In collaboration with Spider Redgold from Feminine Byte and a small grant from The Writers' Centre, Anna established the Women Write Wiki group and trained a small group of volunteers to write entries with a view to correcting the under-representation of Australian women in Wikipedia. This group continues to meet every fortnight and work on entries.



*Women Write Wiki meeting*



During the month we also made a [submission](#) to the Federal Government’s Inquiry into the Status of the Human Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief. We focused on the right to be *free* of sexist and oppressive religion, including in schools and in the delivery of welfare services.

### **May 2017**

FLC Inc.’s inaugural meeting was held on Friday 26 May 2017, when we formally ratified the adoption of our constitution and the appointment of our office bearers. Anna was interviewed for an [article](#) and [podcast](#) by Lawyers Weekly in relation to the failed campaign to decriminalise abortion in NSW. She also spoke at a [community forum](#) in Taree organised by the “Restore our Refuges” campaign and at an event at University of Sydney introducing Dr Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.



*Leonie Crowe, Anna Kerr, Dr Simar Samar and Nathan Kennedy of ALHR*

### **June 2017**

Anna’s blog post about [“Carly’s Law”](#) was published on Collective Shout’s website. “Carly’s Law” is the new legislation passed to stop on-line predators. Anna also assisted Collective Shout with a submission on the civil penalty regime for non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Family lawyer Susan Frankham was nominated by Anna for a [NSW Women Lawyer’s Achievement Awards](#) for her support as a mentor.

## July 2017

Anna was profiled in the [Law Society Journal's "Career 101"](#) and was also quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald in relation to difficulties experienced by women without permanent resident visas seeking refuge accommodation. The Feminist Legal Clinic received endorsement for charity tax concessions from the Australian Tax Office.

## August 2017

We contributed to a submission on the use of cross-examination in family law proceedings. Darelle nominated Mehreen Faruqi for an Edna Ryan Award for her [End 12](#) campaign to decriminalise abortion in NSW. We submitted the first of several grant applications for our Maternal Legal Education project.



*Mahreen Faruqi receiving her "Grand Stirrer" Edna Ryan award*



*Recipients of Edna Ryan Awards 2017.*

## September 2017

Our research was used in questioning the NSW Minister of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault during Budget Estimates. We contributed to a submission for the Inquiry into Indigenous Incarceration with material on the over imprisonment of Aboriginal women. Joan Garvan and Anna also submitted a nomination for Marie Porter, Founder of [AMIRCI](#) to receive an Australian Honour. We signed the lease on a shared office in Benledi House!



## October 2017

The Feminist Legal Clinic finally moved into our new office in Benledi House, Glebe. After advertising and conducting interviews we recruited a group of new volunteers. We also submitted an Expression of Interest for funding as part of the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund for our Maternal Legal Education Project.

## November 2017

We made a short video to support Unions NSW campaign for Domestic Violence leave. Feminist Legal Clinic began hosting meetings of the Edna Ryan Awards Committee using the shared meeting room at Benledi House. Anna spoke at the [LETS mini conference event in the Forest of Tranquility](#). She also attended the Feminist@Law Symposium at UTS and the [Gowland Awards](#) which called out domestic violence deniers and recognised front line workers.

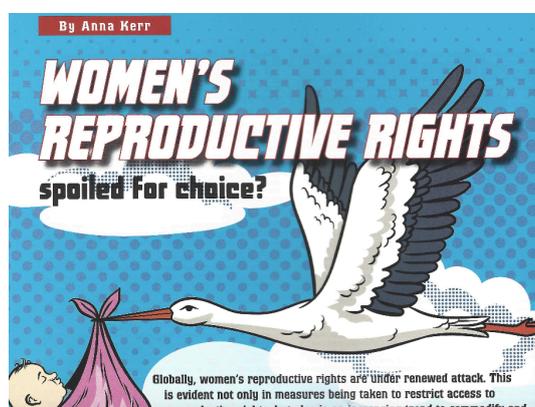


## December 2017

Anna attended the Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Law & History Society in Christchurch, New Zealand and presented on the History of Reproductive Rights. Leonie Crowe and Catherine Rothery attended the first Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund workshop.

## January 2018

Our article on [“Women’s Reproductive Rights – Spoiled for Choice?”](#) was published by the Australian Lawyer’s Alliance in Precedent magazine. Rita and Catherine attended the second Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund Workshop.



## February 2018

Anna attended another community meeting in Taree organised by the “Restore our Refuges” campaign. Having made it to Stage 2, we submitted the final application to the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund in relation to the Maternal Legal Education Project (ultimately unsuccessful). Anna also supported [The Women’s Library](#) at their Mardi Gras stall.



*The Women's Library Mardi Gras Stall*

## March 2018

Australian Lawyers Alliance published our [opinion piece documenting how The Hague Convention fails women and children](#) escaping domestic violence. Anna also gave an interview to Matthew Tukaki on 2UE “Talking Lifestyle” about the disadvantage experienced by women over 50 in the workforce. We also sent a submission to the Western Australian Review of the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991 and the Surrogacy Act 2008. Catherine and Anna attended Child Protection training with the City of Sydney Council, a Wikipedia Editathon at University of Sydney and a talk by human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson. Rita and Anna were quoted again in [Lawyers Weekly](#) in relation to reproductive rights.

## April 2018

Darelle and Anna attended the CEDAW consultation meeting held by the Office for Women at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Anna also volunteered at the [Women of the World \(WOW\) Festival](#) in Brisbane and attended Cultural Intelligence training with the City of Sydney.



## May 2018

Following our media release “No Happy Mother’s Day for mothers whose children have been removed”, Darelle was interviewed on Radio 2SM where she raised awareness of the damage caused by adoption. Darelle and Anna also attended the [Equality Rights Alliances](#)’ (ERA) Annual Member’s Meeting in Canberra and gave a presentation on the need to recognise maternal rights. We also sent [a submission to the Inquiry into Local Adoption](#) by the Commonwealth House of Representatives. During the month we inducted five new volunteers and Anna spoke at The Women’s Library 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and attended a symposium on Domestic Violence hosted by the University of Sydney.

## June 2018

Following weeks of work campaigning to save the Women's Family Law Court Support Service, we received the news from the NSW Attorney General's office that funding would be extended for at least another 12 months.



*Anna with Attorney General Mark Speakman and Sruti Sinha of WFLCSS*

We also sent a [submission to the Review into the Family Law System](#) by the Australian Law Reform Commission and another to the [NSW Law Reform Commission's Review into Sexual Consent Laws](#).

## July 2018

We sent a [submission to CEDAW](#) in advance of Australia's attendance at its 70<sup>th</sup> session and Anna subsequently travelled to Geneva where she received training and participated in the NGO delegation meetings with CEDAW at the United Nations. Anna briefed CEDAW members with material that was then used directly in questioning of the Australian Government delegation, particularly in relation to the exposure of women and children to violence as a result of the failings of the Family Law system and dismantling of women's support services. Some of these concerns were referenced in CEDAW's Concluding Observations.



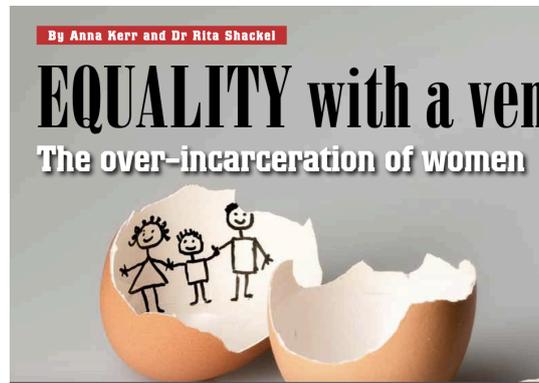
*Anna speaking at CEDAW at United Nations*

Darelle and Anna had an Opinion piece published by the Australian Lawyers Alliance on why [Maternal rights must be recognised for the sake of children](#).

A submission was also sent to the Senate in relation to the proposal to replace the parliamentary prayer. Anna also attended a talk by internationally renowned feminist campaigner, Julie Bindel, about her new book on prostitution hosted by The Women’s Library. Darelle and Anna attended a talk by Bri Lee, author of “Egg Shell Skull” an expose of the sexist nature of Queensland law and sexual assault.

### **August 2018**

We submitted a nomination for [Human Rights Awards](#) for Terese Edwards, CEO of the [National Council of Single Mothers and their Children](#) for her work facilitating Australia’s first communication to CEDAW in relation to changes to parenting payments. We also nominated feminist historian, [Professor Lyndall Ryan](#) for her work mapping Aboriginal massacre sites. We sent several nominations to the [Ernie Awards](#). Anna also gave a talk to the Lane Cove [Women’s Action & Information Group](#) (WAIG) about domestic violence and pay inequity. An article written by Rita and Anna “[Equality with a Vengeance, the over-incarceration of women](#)” was published by the Australian Lawyers Alliance in their Precedent magazine.



## PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Guided by our feminist vision and mission, in our first year of operation we have provided support to groups, services and campaigns that work to advance the human rights of women and girls. Pro bono and legally aided casework that I currently undertake in my private capacity as a sole practitioner has informed our law reform and community legal education work. Our areas of priority during the year have been:

- prevention of violence against women,
- protection of women's reproductive rights,
- achieving pay equity, and
- acknowledgement and documentation of women's accomplishments.

### Highlights

- Established the Women Write Wiki group in collaboration with Feminine Byte and The Women's Library.
- Worked on 10 law reform submissions on issues of concern to women including family law reform, the impact of religion on women's human rights, sexual assault laws and reproductive rights.
- Several articles published and a number of media mentions including being quoted within mainstream press, on-line publications, legal magazines and commercial radio.
- Won a 12-month reprieve for the Women's Family Law Court Support Service.
- Instrumental in nominating half a dozen women for a variety of awards.
- Supported the Coalition for Women's Refuges and the Restore our Refuges campaign.
- Attended the United Nations in Geneva and reported on Australia's failure to fully implement its obligations under CEDAW with particular reference to the need for maternal rights, reform of family law and the restoration and expansion women's support services.
- Provided preliminary advice, information and referral to dozens of feminist groups, organisations and women in need.
- Posted over 750 entries on the Feminist Legal Clinic website and Facebook page highlighting media coverage of feminist issues. We now have a combined total (for both blog and FB page) of 687 followers at time of writing this report.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**We would like to acknowledge the effort and support of our volunteers at Feminist Legal Clinic Incorporated:**

- Agustina Amiconi
- Bee Ong
- Mia Bridle
- Lina Chen
- Karen Chanakira
- Gracia Clifford
- Sophie Duffy
- Bronwyn Evans
- Chantel Frances
- Isabella Jarrett
- Marika Juntikka
- Lejla Kilic
- Bojana Medic
- Maria Nazir
- Margot Oliver
- Sarah Palmer
- Sea Rakaisau
- Ann Reynolds
- Lucy Roberts
- Catherine Rothery
- Lauren Sennett
- Xiaoran Shi



*Volunteers – Sophie Duffy, Bee Ong & Bronwyn Evans*

**We would like to thank the following collaborators and supporters:**

- Spider Redgold of Feminine Byte.
- Sruti Sinha from the Women’s Family Law Court Support Service.
- The team at The Women’s Library.
- The team at Gowland Legal.
- Denise Kaiti of CBD Legal.
- Susan Frankham of Frankham Family Lawyers.
- Julie Stewart and Christine Bird from the Coalition for Women’s Refuges.
- Marion Hosking and Leonie McGuire from Restore our Refuges Campaign.
- Eva Cox from the Good Society Policy Network.
- Dr Joan Garvan and Belinda Barnett from AMIRCI
- Bashi Hazard from Human Rights in Childbirth.
- Catherine Lynch from the Australian Adoptee Rights Action Group.
- Lily Arthur from Origins NSW.
- Associate Professor Bronwyn Winter from the School of Languages and Culture, University of Sydney.

**Special thanks to the City of Sydney Council for providing us with an accommodation grant and funding for our launch.**



*Benledi House, Glebe*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **Annual General Meeting of Feminist Legal Clinic Inc. for the Year ending 30 June 2018**

This report is given pursuant to the provisions of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* for the inaugural Annual General Meeting of Feminist Legal Clinic Inc.

For the financial year ending 30 June 2018 no income was received by Feminist Legal Clinic Incorporated. However, we are grateful to be recipients of an accommodation grant from the City of Sydney Council providing a 100% rental subsidy in relation to the shared office space at Benledi House. All other operating expenses were personally covered by the Principal Solicitor with support from Bok Consulting Pty Ltd.

These expenses have included the cost of insurance cover, the Principal Solicitor's practising certificate and mandatory legal training, telephone and internet costs, office furniture and equipment, stationery, printing and incidental expenses.

The Principal Solicitor has also covered the cost of a flight to Geneva to attend Australia's report to the 70<sup>th</sup> session of CEDAW at the United Nations. However, her accommodation, meal expenses and training while on this trip were paid for by IWRAW Asia Pacific.

A bank account with Bendigo Bank in Pymont has been established on 10 August 2018 and has a balance of \$719.30 which consists of the deposit of two cheques from the Law Society and Law Cover reimbursing the Principal Solicitor for amounts paid by her personally. No withdrawals have yet been made from this account.

There are no mortgages, charges or securities of any description affecting any part of the property of the Association as at 30 June 2018. There are no outstanding debts.

We have received recent notification that we have been successful securing a grant for \$5250 from the City of Sydney for the purpose of funding a launch and promotion of Feminist Legal Clinic Inc.'s service. We are expecting to receive payment of this amount into the new bank account shortly. It has also been resolved to begin charging membership fees in the 2018/2019 year pursuant to the constitution.

In accordance with the Act, the Treasurer will submit a receipt and expenditure accounts balance for the previous year that accords with this report.

Dated:

Leonie Crowe  
FLC Inc Treasurer