

Spring 2013



Auckland  
**Women's  
Centre**

Auckland Women's Centre

**Gossip**

Contact us:  
Ph 376 3227

[info@womenz.org.nz](mailto:info@womenz.org.nz)

PO Box 78 271, Grey Lynn

[www.awc.org.nz](http://www.awc.org.nz)

Hours: M-F, 9am-4pm

Library Hours

M-F, 9am - 1pm

Sat 11am - 1.30pm

on the first Sat of the month

**Services offered:**

Women's support services  
Community education classes  
SKIP single Mums Positive  
Parenting Project  
Free Info, Referral & Advice  
Early Childhood Education  
support in Ranui  
Personal Counselling  
Lesbian support  
Opportunities to discuss and  
support feminism  
Low cost massage  
Flower Essences consultation  
JP service

## Women's Talk presents "everyday feminisms"

Whether it was talking about the bad (and good!) of porn, or the importance of questioning everyday sexist language, the latest Women Talk event resulted in a lively, inspiring and informative discussion.

A panel of four women of various ages and experience from the Auckland community were invited to share their personal experiences of feminism in everyday life.

The panel included the artist and co-curator of the Porn Project: **Amelia Hitchcock**; **Dr Helene Connor**, a Maori, feminist academic; **Rebecca Kamm** gender blogger for [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz); and **Tania Pouwhare**, Principal Strategy Analyst, Auckland Strategy and Research, Auckland Council (ex NZ Women's Refuge and the London Women's Resource Centre).

The aim of the event was to examine how being a feminist impacts our everyday life and how we as feminists can act in accordance with our beliefs. Amelia spoke about her discussions with flatmates who poked fun at her feminism, while Rebecca discussed how she hoped her blogging would influence non-feminists (such as a farmer from Taranaki) to think about feminism.

Helene Connor talked about her mother's feminist influence and wanting to honour the stories of women who have been invisible in history. Tania described herself as a grateful feminist (grateful to the work already done by her mother's and grandmother's generations) who hoped "solidarity will make a comeback."

### **Simple feminisms to ponder in everyday life:**

- 1) Observe the division of labour in the home and how it impacts women.
- 2) Question and challenge the sexism that appears in conversations and every day language.
- 3) Make spaces to have conversations about feminism and question ideas.
- 4) Experience the power of solidarity and getting alongside other women.
- 5) Talk to our children about relationships between the sexes.

The panel discussed the portrayal of women in the media as well as the abundance of porn and how it affects male and female relationships, to which the audience offered some lively and thought-provoking input.

One audience member questioned the viewpoint "porn objectifies women and promotes sexual violence" by comparing porn to food. "There's the food that's cheap and easy to find but makes you feel queasy afterwards....and then there's the harder to find but delicious food." That is, the porn that focuses on consent, safe sex and teaching women that their bodies are sexy.

Other messages from the panel included encouraging people to "instigate conversations on feminism" and not to universalise feminism - "It is a diverse community of women". But perhaps the best, take home message of the night came from one panelist - "Every time we enjoy who we are, we win!"

**By Nicola Brebner**

**PS: Don't miss the FAB fundraising movie we are screening - a doco of Billy Jean King's historic tennis match against Bobby Riggs - please see inside.**

## New staff members



Donna Jaser, our former Funding Administrator, left the Centre to spend more time with her family. Thank you Donna for your hard work and your delightful personality. We are thrilled to welcome **Sophie Richmond** to Donna's former position and to our newly created position of Fundraising Coordinator. Sophie brings five years experience coordinating fundraising campaigns in the not-for-profit sector. She is passionate about people power and grassroots campaigning to affect change. Sophie is excited to be part of a strong feminist organisation fighting for justice.



We are also fortunate to have **Ella Cartwright** volunteering with us on Fridays. Ella, who recently moved to Auckland from Wellington with her family, describes herself as a passionate young feminist and mother (for choice), with a keen interest in poetry and women's writing. She hopes to return to study in the not-too-distant future and pursue a career contributing to the well-being and liberation of New Zealand women.

## New service - JP available at the Centre

We are very pleased to be able to offer a Justice of the Peace (JP) service with Dr Kim Jewel Elliott. The service will operate on a drop in basis (no appointment needed) from 12 - 2pm on the last Wednesday of every month, starting 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

## Do Women Matter?

Fourteen women's organisations, including the Centre and the Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children, hosted a Council candidate forum with Living Wage Aotearoa NZ last month. In front of 100 people it was "yes" from all candidates to a Living Wage, an investigation into pay equity for Council staff, and Council prioritising the safety of women and children in its collaborative work with the community to prevent family, whānau and sexual violence.

The Women's Centre's patron, Dr Judy McGregor, was the expert speaker. She told the meeting that women have the most to gain from a Living Wage as almost half of all women earn less than \$18.40 an hour! Since this meeting the current Auckland Council has voted to introduce a Living Wage, not only for its directly employed staff but its contracted staff as well.

Forum attendees said they enjoyed a feminist meeting that addressed both women's low wages and violence against women. Due to the large number of candidates for the 21 Local Boards this meeting was restricted to Council candidates and candidates for the Waitemata, Albert-Eden-Roskill, Maungaiekie Wards and Waitemata Local Boards. The following candidates pledged to support all three feminist demands: Mike Lee, Penny Hulse, Cathy Casey, Richard Northey, Rob Thomas, John Minto, Charlotte Fisher, Tricia Reade, Russell Hoban, Deborah Yates, Christopher Dempsey, Shale Chambers, Vernon Tava, Pippa Coom, Gerry Hill, Peter Haynes, Grace Hayden, Glenda Fryer, Margie Watson, Julie Fairey, Shail Kaushal, Lisa Loveday, Garth Hultham, Phil Chase, Sheelah Chalklen, Lisa Er and Philip Nannestad.





# Love and sex in an age of pornography

*"Imagination is quite a hard thing to use, especially once you've started looking at porn."*

So says [Sexual Politics Now](#) the University of Auckland project challenging the socially acceptable status of pornography today. The project is getting chins wagging all over the country as it uses exhibitions, research and public discourse to examine the role porn plays in our lives.

Filmmakers Maree Crabbe and David Corlett also examine porn and its social implications. The pair, as guests of [Sexual Politics Now](#), recently screened their documentary *Love and Sex in an Age of Pornography* in Auckland. Featuring interviews with young Australians, *Love and Sex* focused a magnifying glass on their sex lives and related them back to the nature of today's widely accessible, mainstream pornography - with predictable and disturbing results.

Each youth freely admitted to porn consumption. They attested to its prevalence, even in schools; and all had accounts of how the sex in porn had affected the way they wanted, or were expected, to have sex. The pattern was easily recognizable – the young women felt pressured to engage in practices directly borrowed from pornography, and the men didn't question their right to attempt them. The sex acts in question were explicitly described, perhaps earning the documentary's R18 rating in New Zealand. But why are we censoring the discussion of porn, when porn itself is freely available? Surely when many young women feel powerless in their sexual relationships we must examine what porn is teaching our young people (often before they have real-life experience) about the power politics of sex.

A recent study showed that 88% of pornographic scenes depicted physical aggression, with 94% of these acts carried out against women. But why does porn depict sex in this way? Spoiler alert: misogynists in power. Hailed as revolutionary by the industry, prolific porn producer, John Stagliano, says that the boundaries of the female performers are deliberately broken on set for 'authenticity'. "You can't fake that," he says. "It's interesting, real ... as human beings, we want to see that."

He goes on to reference a sex scene in *Deep Throat*, which was later exposed to be rape. And if we know that consent is enthusiastically, freely given, doesn't that mean that Stagliano's scenes lack consent? And isn't the lack of consent rape?

Well, apparently not. As far as porn culture is concerned, sexual 'kinks' like violence are the healthy and sacred expression of our liberated sexual selves. As porn entrepreneur Larry Flynt puts it, "Moses freed the Jews, Lincoln freed the slaves, and I freed the neurotic."

It will be impossible to dismantle the social scaffolding of patriarchy if we ignore sexuality that fetishize abuse, eroticizes inequality, and celebrates submission in women. That's why projects like [Sexual Politics Now](#) are not just important, but necessary. Our young people are turning to porn in droves for their sexual education, with tangibly problematic results. In a society that takes the normalcy of porn for granted, we have to ask ourselves – at which point does the fantasy become reality?

**By Ella Cartwright**



Brilliant, eye-opening and moving...  
a sporting event that helped change the world

BILLIE JEAN KING vs BOBBY RIGGS  
THE INSIDE STORY OF  
HOW A CHAMPION BATTLED  
TO CHANGE THE WORLD

THE  
**BATTLE  
OF THE  
SEXES**

FEATURING INTERVIEWS WITH  
BILLIE JEAN KING, CHRIS EVERT, MARIA SHARAPOVA,  
VENUS WILLIAMS, SERENA WILLIAMS,  
CAROLINE WOZNIACKI, VIRGINIA WADE

Brought to New Zealand by The Auckland Women's Centre.  
A captivating documentary on Billie Jean King's eponymous  
historic game to fight for sexual equality.

**SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER 2013, 7.30pm**  
Doors open 7.00pm for ticket collection  
Capitol Cinema, 610 Dominion Road, Balmoral, Auckland

TICKETS FROM: AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE - 376 3227 EXTN 201 OR EMAIL [INFO@WOMENZ.ORG.NZ](mailto:INFO@WOMENZ.ORG.NZ)  
AND THE WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE - 105 PONSONBY RD 376 4399

\$20 per ticket or \$25 per ticket including an ice cream or glass of wine.

# Police and judiciary trivialise violence against women

The last month has seen an extraordinary amount of women-blaming or otherwise inadequate response by our police and judiciary to violence against women and girls:

1. Last month [High Court Judge, John Priestly, told the court](#) he believes a man was acquitted of indecently assaulting two German tourists in Albert Park because "... a combination of the foolishness of your two victims, venturing out alone at night in a park in a strange city, dressed as they were, ... led to the jury collectively entertaining a reasonable doubt on the two indecent assault charges." Priestley's remarks have been defended by people saying these were not his views but what he believed the Jury reasoned. Nevertheless Priestly did not deny these rape myths, instead he gave them publicity.
2. A Hamilton mother is furious that [a man accused of repeatedly assaulting her pregnant daughter has been granted bail](#).
3. An employment investigation has been launched after [a senior police officer wrote to the wife of the convicted rapist describing the 10-year-old rape victim as a "willing" participant in her sexual abuse](#). Robin Abraham had begun sexually grooming the girl in 2008 when she was 10, progressing to rape after a year.
4. A mother who rang the Police about her daughter being raped [was told by the attending police officer that her daughter probably "regretted sex"](#).

## The Pro - choice highway:

is a one-off information, book and listening tour, supported by the Abortion Law Reform Association of New Zealand ([ALRANZ](#)), the Women's National Abortion Action Campaign (WONAAC), [Mothers for Choice](#) and numerous generous individuals.

The Highway began on 15 September 2013 touring Aotearoa-New Zealand with a books, information and activities stall, setting up in towns and cities near and far. They have a goal of 50 stops, to be extended if time, resources and person-power allow. They want to raise awareness and listen: to get feedback on how reproductive justice issues impact people living in Aotearoa-New Zealand. The Highway will be multimedia blogged, and, you can also follow the highway by [signing up for email updates here](#), via [@alranztweets](#) and on ALRANZ's [Facebook page](#). (ALRANZ is the best place to go if you want to keep up with reproductive rights news, including the [blog](#) and [Web site](#).)

If you would like to join in, or help out, or have good intel for places to set up the stall; contact info is here: [Support the Highway](#).



## Pay Equity Victory

Last month the Service and Food Workers Union together with aged care worker, Kristine Bartlett won their case before the Employment Court alleging her \$14.32 pay rate is a breach of the Equal Pay Act 1972. Caregivers, other low-paid women workers, unions and women's groups celebrated this finding: it shows that for far too long "women's work" has been under-valued and underpaid.

However the Minister of Labour is considering intervening in the historic pay equity victory for Kristine Bartlett and thousands of other low paid women workers. Helen Kelly, CTU President says "It is unthinkable that the Government would intervene against the Court decision." She demanded they "intervene positively and rectify the underfunding that caregivers have been paid for over decades". For more info see: <https://www.facebook.com/Allthewayforequalpay> or [Pay Equity Challenge Coalition](#).