



nawl National Association
of Women and the Law

anfd Association nationale
Femmes et Droit



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Kerri Froc

In my first message as Chair, I thought I would engage in some “real talk” – the phrase I use with friends when we are through with conversational niceties, and I want to get to the heart of things with plain, sincere communication. I am a relative latecomer to NAWL. I had admired its work from afar as a law student and young lawyer, but I did not join until after my doctoral research on the history of women’s rights under the *Charter*, which is when I started “fan-girling” NAWL in earnest. NAWL was a young organization in 1981, but the energy and commitment of its women lawyers and law students meant that it was instrumental in making key changes in the Constitution to ensure that women’s rights were protected. This includes insisting on section 28 of the *Charter*, Canada’s equal rights amendment. NAWL was its first advocate and played a key role in its drafting.

I am extremely proud to see NAWL come out of a period of government de-funding more vital than ever. We have a new executive director in Tiffany Butler (who never ceases to amaze me with her passion and “hustle”), and the staff has expanded to include a new Head of Communications and a Head of Feminist Law Reform. This group is dedicated, energetic and hungry for women’s equality. NAWL and the NAWL Charitable Trust for Research and Education have both secured more stable funding, with new grants from the federal government and a generous donation of over \$1 million dollars, respectively. As the Annual Report outlines, these new resources have allowed both entities to engage in more and deeper law reform efforts, guided by a new strategic plan. Personally, I was proud to be a spokesperson for NAWL in relation to its efforts to reform *Criminal Code* section 33.1, concerning the “extreme intoxication” defence, after the existing provision was struck down by the Supreme Court in *R v Brown*. We will be there again when the Parliamentary hearings on the amendments begin in the spring of 2023.

At a time when it seems like feminists are increasingly fragmented in their positions and interests, NAWL has taken a leadership role in joining feminist organizations together. For instance, together with Luke’s Place, it has launched a new national coalition, The Chanterelle Alliance for Feminist Law Reform. “Real talk” – the women of Canada need more NAWL. More “real talk” – NAWL needs more feminists and feminists from more varied and diverse backgrounds to help inform and lead our work. Will you join us?

ABOUT NAWL

The National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), founded in 1974, is a not-for-profit feminist organization that works to achieve substantive equality and the realization of human rights for all women in Canada through legal education, research, strategic intervention, coalition work and feminist law reform advocacy, particularly at the federal level.

NAWL has a 48-year history of working on its own and in collaboration with other women's equality-seeking organizations to impact law and public policy on a wide range of issues, achieving several notable feminist law reform victories in Canada, including:

- ♀ Adoption of sections 15 and 28 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- ♀ Amendments to the Criminal Code regarding sexual assault laws, rape shield legislation and criminal harassment legislation
- ♀ Positive changes to family law and the Divorce Act
- ♀ Advancement of equality rights for lesbians
- ♀ Successful intervention in the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act (GGPPA)* appeal at the Supreme Court of Canada

See also [NAWL's Big Impacts video](#) highlighting some of its achievements since 1974.

NAWL's goals are as follows:

Goal 1: NAWL helps change laws that negatively impact women's lives. It works to advance women's human rights and substantive equality in the 3 priority areas of violence against women, reproductive rights, and women's rights and the climate crisis.

Goal 2: NAWL is collaborative. It understands its own unique privilege and power. Working collectively, it is a skilled convener, relied on for both its specific expertise and its capacity to bring together the diverse voices required to effect intersectional feminist law reform.

Goal 3: NAWL is thriving. It is a healthy, growing, and sustainable organization regardless of political climate.

Goal 4: NAWL is a voice at the table. It effectively responds to legislative proposals, tabled legislation, significant legal cases and other national issues that could advance or hinder the realization of substantive equality.

NAWL's work is rooted in intersectional feminism and human rights, informed by the following values:

Anti-Oppression: We address and challenge all forms of oppression that affect women in intersecting, compounding and distinct ways. These systems of oppression take many forms, including patriarchy, gender norms, white supremacy, xenophobia, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, and colonialism.

Reconciliation: We recognize that colonialism, both historical and ongoing, continues to subject Indigenous women and girls to violence, harm, and socio-economic disadvantage. We are committed to advancing decolonization in all aspects of our work and to working in solidarity with Indigenous women's organizations and communities.

Gender-Inclusion: We use the term women inclusively. Further, we recognize that patriarchy and gender-based discrimination impact the rights, dignity, and well-being of not only cisgender women but also of transgender, Two-Spirit, gender non-binary and gender-non-conforming individuals. We seek to act in solidarity with organizations advancing substantive equality and gender justice broadly defined.

Allyship and Accountable Collaboration: As a legal organization, we are committed to partnering with other feminist, Indigenous, and social justice organizations in a manner that recognizes our own privilege and power. We aspire to be good allies: to listen, to foster mutual respect and to amplify the voices of those in our movements and communities that have been historically silenced or disadvantaged. This requires us to be generous with our own expertise and to value the distinct expertise and experiences of allies working alongside and with us to advance substantive equality in Canada

NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (NSC)

About the NSC

- ♀ Kerri Froc (Chair)
- ♀ Martha Jackman (Past-chair)
- ♀ Danica Jorgenson
- ♀ Alisa Lombard
- ♀ Cheryl Milne
- ♀ Alison Southern
- ♀ Zahra Taseer
- ♀ Naomi Telfort (Treasurer)
- ♀ Julia Tetrault-Provencher
- ♀ Amanda Therrien
- ♀ Maureen McTeer

NAWL STAFF, CONSULTANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

- ♀ **Executive Director:** Tiffany Butler
- ♀ **Consultants and Senior Advisors:** Sandeep Prasad, Julie Shugarman
- ♀ **Senior Administrator:** Karen Cartier
- ♀ **Accountants:** Julie Jenkins/Merry Sun
- ♀ **Administrative Assistant:** Crystal Young
- ♀ **Head of Communications:** Deirdre Rosaeg
- ♀ **Translation:** Sero, Valérie Leclercq
- ♀ **Research and Volunteers:** Maryna Rusakova, Amanda Therrien, Sarah-Claude L'Ecuyer, Véronique Bureau Mortimer, Fregine Sheehy, Julia Tétrault-Provencher, Nazia Shaikh
- ♀ **Website Support:** Nomadic Labs, Leah Snyder

GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

NAWL is an incorporated non-profit organization that is governed by a National Steering Committee (NSC) made up of a maximum of 12 volunteers. Since its founding in 1974, NAWL has used its unique research and educational strategies to raise public awareness about legal issues affecting women.

NAWL has a nationwide membership of lawyers, law students, academics and other individuals who share a commitment to gender equality.

NAWL briefs and papers have traditionally been developed by working groups, with membership open to all.

In June 2019, NAWL received four-year funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to implement the project: *Sustaining Feminist Law Reform in Canada: Building NAWL's Capacities to Strengthen its Fundraising and Diversify its Funding Base*. In the third year of this project NAWL launched its strategic planning process in May 2021. **NAWL's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan** was generated with input from more than 50 stakeholders gathered through surveys and interviews. The output of this co-creative and collaborative effort is a plan detailing NAWL's mission, vision, values, goals and our three feminist law reform priority areas: ending violence against women, reproductive rights and women's rights and the climate crisis. In the final year of this project, we will continue to develop a governance manual, fundraising plan and communications strategy.

NAWL would like to extend our appreciation to WAGE for support of this work through the Capacity-Building Fund.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

2021-2022 ACTIVITIES IN REVIEW

In 2021-2022, NAWL continued to lead and support feminist law reform, strengthen feminist capacities, expand and diversify the network of feminist and equality seeking organizations, lawyers, academics, students and activists working together to advance the equality rights of all women in Canada.

On March 15th, 2021, the NSC welcomed NAWL's new Executive Director, Tiffany Butler.

In March 2021, NAWL successfully convened a virtual meeting of nine (9) representatives of women's rights groups from across the country with Minister Lametti and Department of Justice staff, to discuss the impacts of Bill C-78 - the first legislative update to the Divorce Act in more than 20 years, and to present recommendations about key implementation issues.

In June 2021, NAWL sent a letter to the Senate to voice our support for Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), as it proceeded to the Senate for consideration. We encouraged the Senate to listen to the voices of 2SLGBTQ+ survivors of conversion therapy, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals who continue to be impacted by discrimination in Canada, by voting in favour of Bill C-6; [**NAWL sent a letter to the Senate in support of Bill C-6.**](#)

In October 2021, for the first time in several years due to COVID-19 restrictions and chronic underfunding, the National Steering Committee came together in the Ottawa region for its first ever strategic planning retreat in October. The retreat built on input from over 50 stakeholders, which was gathered during the initial phases of the planning. From it, *Sprint to 50* was initiated, and perfected over the following months with the support of the NSC's strategic planning committee and over the course of two NSC Townhall's to finalize the plan in February 2022.

In December 2021, NAWL received a Feminist Response and Recovery Fund grant from Women and Gender Equality Canada to implement a twenty-eight-month project: *Adapting and Accelerating Intersectional Feminist Law Reform for a Post-COVID-19 Future ("AIF")*. This 28-month project will support a feminist response and recovery from the current impacts of COVID-19, through systemic change. NAWL will achieve this by expanding its law reform tools, increasing NAWL's online and social media influence, building a multi-disciplinary network of feminist legal experts and undertaking proactive and reactive feminist law reform activities.

In January 2022, recruitment began for the Head of Communications position and the position was filled in March. During the same timeframe, NAWL and Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre for Women and Children (Luke's Place) launched their partnership to begin planning on building and resourcing a national law reform coalition, which ultimately took the form in Phase I as **The Chanterelle Alliance for Feminist Law Reform**.

Throughout 2021-2022, NAWL's Past-Chair, Professor Martha Jackman continued to teach a Feminist Law Reform course to upper year common law students at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law, utilizing NAWL's free online **Feminist Law Reform 101 course** materials. The following three op-eds written by 3 different FLR students are examples of law reform efforts resulting from the course:

- ♀ December 3, 2021, Ottawa Citizen Op-ed by Yasmin Khaliq: **"The Canada Health Act is failing people with mental illness"**
- ♀ January 7 2022, Ottawa Citizen Op-ed by FLR/RDF student Sumaya Sherif: **"Federal law banning conversion therapy is the first step toward dismantling heteronormative views"**
- ♀ January 6, 2022, Toronto Star Op-ed by FLR/RDF law student Carolina Maass: **"Forced evacuation of pregnant Indigenous women must stop"**

An extensive update of the **Feminist Law Reform 101** online course materials and website is underway, and the new online materials will be piloted in Professor Jackman's course in the Winter 2023 Semester. Further, three new Feminist Law Reform 101 "mini-course" offerings developed throughout 2021-2022 (Provincial & Territorial Governments, Municipal Governments, and Women's Rights & the Climate Crisis) are expected to be finalized in 2022, thanks to the research and writing of law student researchers Amanda Therrien and Rose Ghaedi.

During a 6-month period the Feminist Law Reform 101 course served as the reading and discussion materials for a 'book-club', organized by the Executive Director of the Yukon Status of Women Council, and was attended by dozens of women in leadership from across Canada.

The demands for NAWL's expertise and requests for engagement with decision-makers, feminist activists, service providers, and others was steady in 2021-2022. Some examples of the many requests NAWL responded to include:

- ♀ NAWL consulted on Bill C-5, as well as with government officials on [**reforms to gun control legislation**](#).
- ♀ NAWL remains a member of the Feminist Influencing Group, an informal network of women’s rights organizations doing advocacy at the federal level. In 2020, NAWL, along with the CLC, the CWF, Oxfam, WSC, YWCA was part of the core committee that convened the meeting; “Defining a Feminist Influencing Agenda” held on January 16th and 17th, 2020, which was attended by forty-one (41) participants from forty (40) organizations from across the country. In May 2021, NAWL joined over twenty-five (25) feminist organizations at the virtual Feminist Influencing Group Summit held over two days to strategize ways of supporting each other to advance feminist priorities leading up to the 2021 federal election.
- ♀ Throughout 2021, NAWL Executive Director, Tiffany Butler, and Senior Advisor, Sandeep Prasad, continued to support the work of the Beijing+25 grassroots network of over 70 feminist and equality-seeking organizations working domestically on women’s rights and gender equality issues in Canada. By participating in monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in Canada, NAWL sat on a several Action Coalition working groups between March-October: Feminist Movements and Leadership; Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Gender-based violence; Feminist Action for Climate Justice Working Group, Gender-based violence working group. Reports produced by the working groups can be [**read here**](#).
- ♀ In June 2021, [**NAWL became a signatory to an open letter**](#) by national, regional and local gender justice and human rights organizations, to the Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Indigenous Services, standing in solidarity with the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and to honour the memory of the 215 children whose remains were found at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.
- ♀ In May 2021, [**NAWL became a signatory to an open letter**](#) urging the Ministers of Health, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to decriminalize simple drug possession immediately.
- ♀ In November, 2021 [**NAWL joined over 100 other social justice organizations in urging Parliamentarians**](#) to take immediate action to prohibit all forms of conversion “therapy” practices and sexual

orientation, gender identity, and gender expression change efforts (collectively “conversion practices”).

- ♀ In February 2022, NAWL joined twenty-five (25) equality-seeking organizations and their allies in [endorsing a written submission prepared by LEAF to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in advance of Federal Budget 2022.](#)
- ♀ In March 2022, NAWL partnered with the Women’s History Project and the Canadian Centre for the Advancement of Women to organize: [Women and the Law: Celebrating the Charter of Rights and Freedoms at 40!](#) NSC Chair, Kerri Froc, was a guest speaker.
- ♀ In March 2022, alongside other feminist organizations, NAWL attended a Roundtable meeting with Minister Ien to discuss the National Action Plan to end Gender-based violence, the need for core funding to enable decent work for the women’s sector, the need for meaningful collaboration, and income support reforms.
- ♀ In March 2022, Luke’s Place and NAWL submitted [a brief](#) to the Status of Women Committee, making eleven (11) recommendations, as it conducted its study on intimate partner and domestic violence in Canada.

IN THE MEDIA

NAWL responded to media requests on a range of issues and in throughout 2020 and 2021. NAWL's NSC Chair, Kerri Froc, was featured prominently in local and national media speaking out on the fight for abortion care in New Brunswick. And in 2022, in her capacity as NAWL's NSC Chair, Froc spoke on the issue of the constitutionality of the extreme intoxication defence while NSC member Anne Levesque spoke about the implications of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Case*.

Violence against women:

- ♀ January 4th, 2022, Globe and Mail, ["Supreme Court must keep women's rights at the forefront when it rules on 'extreme intoxication' defence"](#)
- ♀ July 19th, 2021, CTV Kitchener News, ["It's been 30 years since Gwen Jacob went topless in Guelph and launched a fight for women's rights"](#)
- ♀ March 22nd, 2022, Policy Options, ["Notwithstanding extreme intoxication"](#)
- ♀ February 3rd, 2022, CBA National, ["Revisiting the bedrock of moral fault"](#)

Reproductive Rights:

- ♀ August 3rd, 2021, The Walrus, ["One Doctor's Fight to Provide Abortion Care in New Brunswick"](#)
- ♀ September 1st, 2021, CBC, ["Liberal platform takes aim at N.B. with promise of new regulations to bolster abortion access"](#)
- ♀ August 4th, 2021, Global News, ["Canadian government could fund N.B. abortion clinic directly, says constitutional lawyer"](#)

Women's Rights and the Climate Crisis:

- ♀ March 21, 2021, NAWL Press Release, ["Supreme Court of Canada Rules Carbon Pricing Law Constitutional: Intervenors for rights of women and girls welcome the decision"](#)
- ♀ March 26, 2021, CBA National, ["A missed opportunity?"](#)
- ♀ May 3, 2021, CBA National, ["A glimmer of hope"](#)

THE CHARITABLE TRUST FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

The NAWL Charitable Trust for Research and Education was established in 1983 with the purpose of promoting and understanding the status and role of women in Canadian society among the general public. The Trust prepares and disseminates research and education regarding legal issues in all aspects of the social, economic and political life of Canadian women. It assists in the protection of women's civil rights and liberties by charitable means, as well as in the relief of poverty. Unlike NAWL, the Trust is a registered charity, and all donations are tax creditable.

The Charitable Trust is composed of five (5) members appointed by NAWL's National Steering Committee. The Trustees are responsible for decisions regarding the allocation of funds.

The Current **Trustees of the NAWL Trust** are:

- Kristen H. Douglas
- Michelle Flaherty
- Lorena Fontaine
- Martha Jackman
- Cheryl Milne

In September 2021, the NAWL Trust began working on securing a major gift. Efforts continued through to the new year at which time the NAWL Trust received a \$1M gift from feminist philanthropist and founding NAWL mother, Shirley Greenberg.

Throughout 2021-2022, the Trust funded the ongoing work of updating: *A Women's Guide to Money, Relationships and the Law*.

The NAWL Trust also gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the University of Ottawa's Programme de common law en français (PCLF), the Loran Scholars Foundation, and Raven Law for their respective support of NAWL Trust internships in 2021-2022.

THE YEAR AHEAD

We are feeling energized and determined for this upcoming year. NAWL hopes to expand its staff members, onboard new Steering Committee members, strengthen governance structures, and focus on implementing its new strategic plan: *Sprint to 50!* In 2022-2023 NAWL will launch its 2022-23 Feminist Law Reform Workshop Series, including a soft launch of its: *Campaign Creation Workshop: Feminist Climate Action Now!* NAWL also looks forward to advocating in its three priority areas of feminist law reform: ending violence against women, reproductive rights, women's rights and the climate crisis, and will be keeping its finger on the pulse of any legislative movements and reform impacting women in those 3 priority areas in particular. In doing its law reform work, and through the Chanterelle Alliance, NAWL looks forward to working with partners and allies in 2022-2023.

**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING
INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS
FOR THEIR INVALUABLE SUPPORT:**

Shirley Greenberg

NAWL members and donors

and



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