

## Press Release

### New Personal Safety Laws



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The new *Personal Safety Intervention Orders Bill 2010* (Vic), which is due to commence by January 2012, will replace the current stalking legislation, and will focus strongly on the use of mediation for less serious matters. The Bill is aimed at personal disputes involving non-family members.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre's Principal Lawyer, Victoria Mullings, says:

"The proposed legislation looks not only at stalking, but addresses those behaviours that the old laws have been used for, but were not specifically designed to deal with, such as neighbourhood disputes, bullying and general harassment.

"We hope that, in practice, the legislation manages to strike the right balance between referring suitable matters for mediation, and providing protection for those who need it.

"The new laws also contain some promising initiatives, such as covering 'one-off' serious incidents, and provisions aimed at dealing appropriately with school bullying.

"Peninsula Community Legal Centre commonly advises clients on neighbour and other personal disputes. In our experience, where it is safe to do so, many clients are able to resolve disputes themselves – either directly, or through mediation. We encourage anyone who is involved in a personal dispute, but unsure of their rights, to seek legal advice."

Peninsula Community Legal Centre has been providing free legal services to the community for over 30 years and operates branches in Frankston, Cranbourne, Rosebud, Bentleigh and the Pines (Frankston North), as well as operating visiting 'outreach' services in a range of locations.

For more information about free legal services, please call Peninsula Community Legal Centre's Head Office on (03) 9783 3600 or visit [www.pclc.org.au](http://www.pclc.org.au).

END.

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