

Press Release
Security at what Cost?



Peninsula Community
Legal Centre Inc

Peninsula Community Legal Centre views Frankston Council's decision to employ security guards in an attempt to reduce crime in the city as impotent.

"We are surprised that Frankston Council is considering employing private security guards to patrol Frankston. Security guards do not have the training of a police officer and do not have the legislative powers of a police officer", says Principal Lawyer, Victoria Mullings.

"We understand from police data (My Place Crime Statistics) that overall crime rates, on a per head of population basis, decreased 2% in the October 08 - September 09 year, including a 1.3% reduction in assaults. The 'Message from Chief Inspector Ron Cooke' accompanying the statistics says that "detected public order offences have decreased by 27%."

The plan proposes to employ security guards who will be localized to the Frankston central activities district and the foreshore. There is potential for the guards themselves to become the target of inappropriate behaviour.

"We cannot understand how hiring security guards could further reduce crime in Frankston. Guards would only have powers to enforce local laws; otherwise, they would have the same 'citizens arrest' powers as any other person in Frankston."

The council-employed security force will only have powers to enforce local laws, such as imposing fines for smoking within designated non-smoking areas.

"It is unlikely that hired guards will result in any improvement in crime within the city. Anti-social behaviour and violence are serious community issues, requiring an attitudinal shift particularly about drunken violence and tighter regulation of alcohol sales and licensing."

"Employing guards at the expense of Frankston rate payers is not the solution".

Peninsula Community Legal Centre has been providing free legal services in Frankston for over thirty years. For more information about free legal services, please call 9783 3600 or visit www.pclc.org.au.

END.

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