

International Women's Day
Comment for Leader Newspapers



Peninsula Community
Legal Centre Inc

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

"Peninsula Community Legal Centre has a proud tradition of encouraging and supporting women – both workers and clients. As an equal opportunity employer, with family-friendly policies, the Centre boasts around 70% female staff. Last year alone, the Centre assisted 3,121 women with legal issues.

Women's legal rights are better protected now than in the past, with advances in anti-discrimination law, strengthening of family violence laws and recognition of the need to accommodate family responsibilities in the workplace.

However, while these legal initiatives are real cause to celebrate, there is much to be done on a practical level to achieve real equality between men and women.

Women who contact us for help are usually struggling to survive on low incomes – often while raising children and trying to resolve housing and family law issues, with family violence prevalent in an alarming number of cases. Many of these are the same younger women who, having little memory of the struggles to achieve equality, believed that their day-to-day lives would be lived on an equal footing, only to find that they face many of the same issues as their mothers.

Fortunately the legal system now offers some practical solutions encountered on family breakdown, as well as discrimination and harassment in the workplace, but we should not let complacency creep in – there is still much to be done.

Changing attitudes towards women to achieve gender equality is essential. It is essential for building a healthy, educated, more peaceful and prosperous society. When women are fully empowered and engaged, all of society benefits. Only in this way can we successfully take on the enormous challenges confronting all of us.

Staff will be proudly wearing green, violet and white in celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March 2010."

For more information about free legal services, please contact Peninsula Community Legal Centre on 9783 3600.

END.

23 February 2010

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We gratefully acknowledge
the financial assistance of:

- Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department
- Department of Justice (Vic)
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Victoria Legal Aid
- City of Casey
- City of Glen Eira
- City of Kingston
- Frankston City Council
- Mornington Peninsula Shire

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