

Press Release
Alarm at Rise in Family Violence



Peninsula Community
Legal Centre Inc

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is concerned at the high levels of family violence reported in Frankston, Casey and the Mornington Peninsula.

Principal lawyer, Victoria Mullings, says:

“Although a great deal of attention has been paid to anti-social behaviour in Frankston recently, particularly ‘hoon driving’ and graffiti, police statistics show that these behaviours are actually reducing – while family violence is on the rise.

Family violence is a crime and a fundamental violation of human rights. It is unacceptable in any form and it is an increasing problem in our community. According to recent Victoria Police statistics¹:

- Frankston remains in the top 3 local government areas within Victoria for family violence incidences in raw data and, when population data is factored in, Frankston has the highest family violence incident rate per capita of all metropolitan local government areas (and the 3rd highest in the whole of Victoria);
- Casey has the highest rate of family violence incidences in Victoria in raw data, and when population data is factored in, it has the 11th highest rate;
- Mornington Peninsula has the 10th highest rate in raw data, and when population data is factored in, it has the 27th highest rate of family violence incidences.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre can testify to these figures, having experienced an alarming rise of around 230% in demand for its family violence duty lawyer service at the Frankston Magistrates’ Court over the past five years. The most significant rise was from 2006 to 2007 when the Court commenced its Specialist Family Violence Service and the Centre increased its duty lawyer services from one to three days per week. However, demand has continued to grow since that time, including a further increase of 14% from 2009 to 2010.

According to Victoria Police data, there has been an increase across Victoria in family violence related assaults, in the 12 months to 31 December 2010, of 13.4%. Victoria Police noted a significant drop in crime in Frankston otherwise (more than 5%) for the same period.²

It is difficult to conclusively interpret the reasons for the rise in family violence incidences. The statistics may mean that family violence is now less hidden, but it may also be that the incidence of family violence has actually worsened. Either way, the figures are demanding us as a community to ensure a better response to family violence.

In addition to the impacts of violence within the family, long term research has shown that both adult and child victims of family violence are more likely to perpetrate assaults and other aggression outside the family than non-victims. The continued growth in incidences of family violence has implications for the wellbeing of the Frankston community, as the impact of family violence may express itself through displays of anti-social behaviour.”

¹ Victoria Police Online News Centre, http://www.vicpolice.com.au/index.php?option=com_statistics&task=search, 16 May 2011.

² Ibid.

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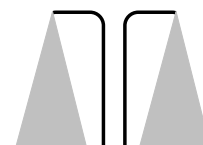
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- Victoria Legal Aid
- City of Casey
- City of Glen Eira
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- Frankston City Council
- Mornington Peninsula Shire

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since 1977*





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Peninsula Community Legal Centre provides a duty lawyer service at Frankston Magistrates' Court specifically for family violence matters. The Centre also participates in efforts to improve family violence laws and in community education about family violence.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre has been providing free legal services to the community for over 30 years. 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.

END.

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