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Visiting Services to:

Chelsea
Hastings

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

Donations over \$2.00
are tax deductible

Service to the Community
since 1977



We Join the No More Deaths Campaign

On 25 August 2014 Peninsula CLC attended the launch on the steps of Parliament of a cross-sector State election campaign calling for no more family violence deaths. Since then, we have been raising awareness of the campaign, which calls on the state's political parties to commit to wide-ranging policies across housing, justice, police, health, education and other portfolios to keep women and children safe from family violence in Victoria. Family violence was the second most common legal issue affecting our clients in 2013-14 and we are acutely aware of the need for far-reaching and systemic change in how family violence is addressed.

The *No More Deaths* campaign called for family violence to be at the top of the 2014 state election agenda. The campaign was supported by the Federation of Community Legal Centres, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Domestic Violence Victoria, Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Women's Legal Service Victoria, No to Violence and Women with Disabilities Victoria. Together, they represented most state wide and local organisations working with women and children, community legal services and men's behaviour change programs across Victoria.



No More Deaths called on politicians to support 25 key asks, across the following areas:

- Keep women and children safe and housed;
- Make the justice system safe and supportive;
- Hold violent perpetrators to account;
- Break down the system silos that endanger women and children;
- Preventing violence against women and children.

We provide a duty lawyer service for Family Violence Intervention Orders at the Frankston Magistrates' Court three days per week. We also participate in a range of community legal education activities about family violence and intervention orders, including training for community workers, speaking to Men's Behaviour Change Groups and providing ladies' information sessions.

For more information about *No More Deaths*, visit www.dvrc.org.au.

Rosie Batty and Dr Chris Atmore Speak at our AGM

Rosie Batty, Director of the Luke Batty Foundation, and Dr Chris Atmore, Senior Policy Adviser at the Federation of Community Legal Centres, spoke to a packed room of staff, volunteers and supporters at our Centre's Annual General Meeting on 11 November. Both women acknowledged the role of Peninsula CLC and other centres like ours in the campaign against family violence and spoke passionately about the need for improved support of victims and accountability of perpetrators.



Pictured (from left): Dr Chris Atmore and Rosie Batty

CONTENTS

New Pines Branch Open	2
Our Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission Quoted in the Herald Sun	2
Mayor's Family Picnic	2
Family Violence in Our Community	3
"You have gone beyond the call of duty"	3
Young people, the law and sexting	4
Benefits of Volunteers and Pro Bono Partnerships Highlighted	4
Another Successful Partnership	4

New Pines Branch Open

Peninsula CLC is pleased to be back in the Pines, offering appointments one day a week at the newly-created Mahogany Integrated Services Hub (pictured). Since the service re-opened in October, clients have come along for free legal advice on unfair dismissals, fencing disputes, family law issues, family violence orders, wills, probate and personal injury matters. Volunteer lawyer, Ash Galvin, is enjoying getting to know the local community on his weekly visits to Frankston North, and is pleased to see many locals seeking free legal help when they need it. We are grateful for the support of Frankston City Council in hosting our service at this venue.

Pictured: Mahogany Integrated Services Hub



Our Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission Quoted in the Herald Sun

Our Centre recently participated in a community law reform project conducted by the Victorian Law Reform Commission which reviewed the rights of tenants, landlords and real estate agents in regard to photographing and filming of tenants' possessions for advertising purposes.

Tenancy issues were in the top 10 problem types addressed by our Centre in the last financial year and we welcomed the Commission's approach to consult with the community on the important issues highlighted in the review. Consumer Affairs Victoria provides us with funding to deliver our Tenant Advice and Advocacy Program and this enables our advocates to provide advice, casework, negotiation and representation at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

The scope of the review was to investigate tenants' concerns relating to privacy, risk of theft and risk of personal harm and to establish whether there are any other concerns tenants might have in relation to advertising photographs or videos in which their possessions can be seen.

In our submission, we highlighted what we perceive to be gaps in the current practice, which falls short of protecting the privacy and potentially the safety of tenants when their possessions are filmed for advertising purposes. An example of this is where photos of children hanging on the walls of the room being filmed were put on the internet, of particular concern in cases involving family violence. It was our submission to the Committee that certain parts of *The Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic) (the Act), which sets out the circumstances in which a landlord or agent may enter a rental property in Victoria, needs to include reference to filming tenants' possessions for advertising purposes and detailed clarification as to how this right will be



exercised. We recommended that the Act be amended to include new provisions which will ensure the tenant's rights are entrenched in legislation should it become necessary to film or take photos of the property.

We also recommended to the Committee that reform is required to strike a balance between the landlord's right to show the property to a prospective tenant or buyer and tenant's right to quiet enjoyment and privacy.

We were pleased to see that sections of our submission were quoted in the Herald Sun on 6 October 2014 (image pictured).

A copy of the submission and related press releases are available on the Centre's website, www.pclc.org.au.

Mayor's Family Picnic

Peninsula CLC was pleased to participate recently in the Frankston City Council's Mayor's Family Picnic held in Carrum Downs Recreational Reserve. We provided free legal information and answered queries on a range of topics including Wills, Family Law, Family Violence, Scams, Door to door sales and neighbour disputes.

Pictured (from left): Andrea Staunton with former Mayor, Cr Darrel Taylor

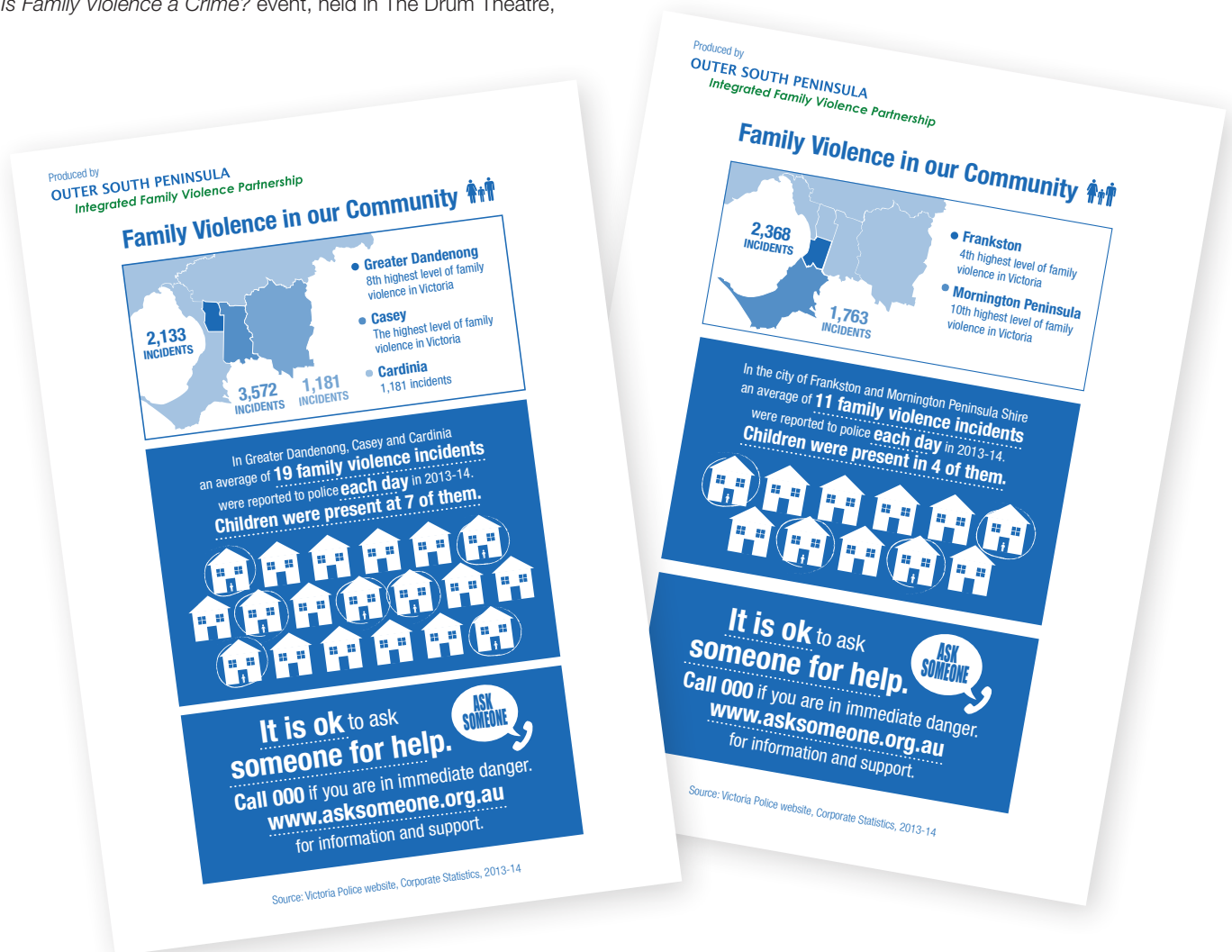


Family Violence in Our Community

Peninsula CLC is pleased to have collaborated with the Outer South Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership, of which it is a member, in developing posters to raise awareness of the prevalence of family violence in our local communities. More than 300 copies of the poster were distributed at *The Great Debate: Is Family Violence a Crime?* event, held in The Drum Theatre,

Dandenong, on 20 November 2014. The poster is also being displayed in the Centre's officers, and will be provided to a range of other organisations.

To download a copy of the posters, go to www.pclc.org.au.



“You have gone beyond the call of duty”

These were the words spoken by a judge in a full court room to one of our duty lawyers after he successfully applied to the Court for an urgent order instructing the Australian Passports Office in Melbourne to issue a passport.

A desperate young mother was referred to our duty lawyer service by the Dandenong Federal Circuit Court staff. The mother, a refugee, had settled into Australian life three years ago with her young child, who was born in Australia, when she was coerced by her family elders to return to her birth country to reconcile with the violent father of the child.

On her return he attempted to murder her and took their child and his Australian passport from her. Fearing for her life, she fled back to Australia in the hope that she could obtain another passport for her child and bring him back. Despite receiving proof that her ex partner had first abandoned their child by leaving him at an orphanage, which refused to keep him, and

then receiving further reports of subsequent abuse he was receiving at the hands of his violent father when the child was returned to him, she was unable to successfully obtain assistance in Australia from the authorities and was refused another passport for her child.

The Hague Convention on International Child Abduction was no assistance to our client as her birth country is not a signatory to the Convention, nor is it a country known for its rule of law, respect for human rights and equal treatment of women. We are pleased we could help her and hope that she and her child will soon safely return to Australia.

Young People, the Law and Sexting

In August 2014, the Victorian Government announced reforms to the laws relating to 'sexting'. The timing of this announcement could not have been better as we have recently been requested to provide talks to VCAL students at various schools about their legal rights, including the use of social media, police powers, and dealing with fines. Students did not shy away from questions relating to bullying, sexting, stalking and online sexual harassment and the role the law has to play in setting the boundaries as to what conduct is acceptable and lawful and what conduct is not.

Over and above providing legal education to young people, we believe it is important to make sure young adults know where to go for legal help.

Our Centre was also pleased to be asked this year by Mount Eliza Secondary College to become involved in the school's Real Time Learning project, which includes assisting year 7 students to develop their own law drama project during the fourth school term. We pitched the project to approximately 40 students and since then have worked closely with 11 students helping them choose a topic, providing regular visits to resource them, assisting them with their research and checking the legal content of the material they produce. Popular topics have been cyber bullying, sexting, dealing with authorities and intervention orders. We look forward to seeing the completed projects in 2015, which will also be used to educate peers on legal issues.

For more information on the reforms, see <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/10731-government-to-reform-laws-relating-to-sexting.html>

Benefits of Volunteers and Pro Bono Partnerships Highlighted

Peninsula CLC values its good working relationships with its pro bono partner and volunteer lawyers. The Centre's volunteer program and ongoing pro bono partnership with Russell Kennedy were recently profiled in a national publication by the National Association of Community Legal Centres, *Working Collaboratively: Community Legal Centres and Pro Bono Partnerships*.

Mention is made of the value, both financial and non financial, of the support to the Centre and its clients given by Russell Kennedy during 2012-13. This included 241.8 hours of pro bono support, with in-kind and financial support totalling \$67,385.75. Other pro bono support included a client disbursement fund, CLC Staff Professional Development Day, a donation of gifts for the Centre's volunteers, the sharing of legal updates and client bulletins, mentoring and advice on client files, pro bono assistance for clients in certain complex matters, the design and/or printing of editions of the Centre's newsletter, colour promotional posters and brochures, volunteer manuals and other resource materials.

Our pro bono partners and volunteers are integral in our response to the high demand for legal services in Melbourne's outer South East and we would like to thank all of our volunteers and pro bono supporters for their commitment to our Centre and community.

See http://www.naccl.org.au/resources/NACLC_probono_WEB.pdf
http://www.naccl.org.au/resources/NACLC_VOLUNTEER2014_WEB.pdf

Another Successful Partnership

Peninsula CLC's partnership with the Family Life as the provider of Family Relationship Centre Frankston and Mornington Peninsula (FRC) and Victoria Legal Aid (Peninsula Regional Office) ensures that clients of the FRC (usually separated parents) have access to timely and appropriate legal information, advice and ongoing assistance.

In 2013-14, we delivered 20 workshops at the FRC offices to 269 participants on Legal Information for Separating Parents, which provides an introduction to the family law system, including an overview of the principles of family law and how to access legal advice and assistance. We also provided free legal advice and ongoing assistance to FRC clients.

We thank Family Life and Victoria Legal Aid (Peninsula Regional Office) for their vital and much appreciated goodwill and support. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership to support separated parents for years to come.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that has been providing free legal services to Melbourne's south-eastern communities since 1977.

The Centre helps people use the law to protect and advance their rights, offering free advice on most legal issues. Ongoing assistance is targeted to

assist clients who are experiencing disadvantage. In addition to its general services, the Centre operates Family Law, Child Support, Family Violence, Tenant and Consumer Advocacy and Rooming House Outreach Programs.

Community legal education, special projects and participation in law reform are also important aspects of the Centre's work.