

HEAD OFFICE

Chatsworth House
Suite 1-4, 431 Nepean Hwy
Frankston Vic 3199

Tel: 03 9783 3600
Fax: 03 9770 5200
Free Call: 1800 064 784
DX 19953 Frankston
Email: pclc@pclc.org.au
www.pclc.org.au
Hours Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm
Mon evenings from 5.45pm

BENTLEIGH BRANCH

82 Brady Road
Bentleigh Vic 3165

Tel: 03 9570 8455
Fax: 03 9570 8466
Hours Mon, Wed
& Thurs 9am – 3pm
Mon & Thurs evenings
from 6.30pm

CRANBOURNE BRANCH

Bella Centre
Suite 12
33-39 High Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977

Tel: 03 5995 3722
Fax: 03 5995 3799
Hours Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm
Tues evenings from 6.30pm

PINES BRANCH

2a Candlebark Crescent
Frankston North Vic 3200

Tel: 03 9786 6980
Fax: 03 9785 3582
Wed evenings from 7.00pm

ROSEBUD

1375 Point Nepean Road,
Rosebud Victoria 3939

Tel: 03 5981 2422
Fax: 03 5981 2488
Mon & Thurs 9.00am to 5.00pm
Tues evenings from 6.30pm

PENINSULA COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

ANNUAL REPORT 08>09

FUNDING

Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc.
is funded by the following sources:



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc.
gratefully acknowledges financial support
from the following sources:



We are grateful for the generous donations from the Rotary Club of Rosebud, James Dowsley & Associates and client and community members who made donations throughout the year.

their own guidelines to target the assistance they provide, and may offer extra services such as basic Wills for low income clients. Both organisations offer advice, casework and legal education.

SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES LEGAL SERVICE

In May 1998, Peninsula Community Legal Centre expanded its catchment to include the area formerly serviced by Southern Communities Legal Service (SCLS) when the two centres amalgamated. Due to lack of funding, SCLS was no longer able to adequately maintain a service to its community.

CHILD SUPPORT

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department funds the centre to employ child support solicitors. These workers assist carer and liable parents with child support or maintenance queries. Child support telephone, appointment and drop-in advice services are offered.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ADVOCACY PROGRAM

The Advocacy Program is funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged tenants and consumers with advocacy services, including Tribunal support and representation in the Civil Claims and Residential Tenancies Lists of VCAT.

FAMILY LAW PROGRAM

The Family Law Program commenced in August 2005. It offers a duty lawyer service in conjunction with Victoria Legal Aid at the Dandenong Registry of the Family and Federal Magistrates' Courts, as well as providing clients with advice and casework services.

OUTER SOUTH EAST EXPANSION

The centre has provided outreach services to Cranbourne since 1990. In 2005 the centre received additional funding from the State Government to establish a branch office in Cranbourne and extend its services to Melbourne's outer south east (Casey and Cardinia municipalities).

ROSEBUD AND SOUTHERN PENINSULA EXPANSION

PCLC has a long history with the Rosebud and Southern Peninsula communities, having provided outreach services there for almost 20 years. With the support of the Victorian Government, Department of Justice, Victoria Legal Aid and Mornington Peninsula Shire, the Centre was able to provide increased outreach services in 2007-8, and opened a two-day, one-evening per week branch office in Rosebud on 1 December 2008. Further expansion in opening hours and services is due to occur by 2010-11.

PHILOSOPHY

Community legal centres are about providing free legal advice to those who need it. CLCs aim to address not just the legal problem of the client but to eliminate the structural and systemic barriers to justice. The culture of volunteerism in CLCs is historical and allows us to provide services well beyond our funding. It enhances our social change agenda by bringing lawyers and law students who are generally from privileged backgrounds into contact with our communities.

VOLUNTEERS

“The test of any civilised society is the acceptance of those with skills to provide those skills, pro-bono, to the disadvantaged. You find you get back as much as you give.”

Terry Weerappah, Lawyer Volunteer

LAWYERS

Avril Bartlett	Rudi Meier
Andrew Bayliss	Celestine Moon
Adam Birch	Philip Moon
Vincent Booth	Michael Morehead
Bill Boucher	Sean Morrison
Paul Bradley	Victor Moss
Kirsty Brealey	Uyen Nguyen
Andrew Closey	Michael O'Brien
Jason Coppard	Helen O'Connell
Briony Cullin	Lola Peeters
Meg Dalling	Natalie Plumstead
Michael Denison	Yana Podolskaya
Phillip Dowd	Hayley Pope
Drago Dragojlovic	Alfred Preece
George Erlichster	Mariolina Reale
Rachel Fletcher	Tim Rintoul
Christopher Galagher	Mary Roubos
David Galloway	Greg Russo
David Gibbs	Patricia Samson
James Gorman	Rhonda Sandardos
Amanda Graham	Robert Shand
Heather Guthrie	Patrick Smith
Lance Guymmer	Jeffrey Stanley
Katrina Haller	Will Stidston
Daniel Haworth	Roderick Tan
Chris Hill	Petar Trifkovic
Ian Hone	Stephen Tuck
Amanda Humphreys	David Ulbrick
Sascha Karner	Richard Warren
Sara Kowal	Terry Weerappah
Susan Landy	Scott Whitechurch
Peter LeSouef	Lorna Williamson
Justin Lewis	
Jennifer Maher	
Michael Manuel	
Vivien Mavropoulos	
Paul McCarthy	

PARALEGALS

Oscar Alarcon	Cara Litterick
Brylee Alexander	Jarrold McPherson
Jack Anstey	Julie Newdick
Trudy Ararat	Catherine Oluich
John Batho	Barbara Osafo-Kwaako
Nina Bigu	Kirsty Osborne
Stephanie Bonnici	Barbara Padfield
Matthew Bowler	Elise Paynter
Cara Bredebusch	Olga Pecherski
Catherine Britt	Heather Perry
Amy Burton	Elaine Pierson
Rod Callaghan	Carla Purcell
Pamela Casagrande	Kate Purvis
Oliver Christensen	Stephanie Richardson
James Daly	Mimosa Rizzo
Sandra Dargie	Rhonda Sandardos
James Davaris	Chris Schultink
Sally Denham	Geeta Shyam
Ekta Doshi	Jonathan Sise
Andrew Doyle	Anthony Staunton
Jing Fang	Laura Stevenson
Olivia Fisher	Andrew Stone
Kimberley Fitt	Louise Turner
Rebekah French	Daniel Vissenjoux
Rebecca Fritsch	Zoe Watson
Ashley Galvin	Amy Weiner
Mat Giaquinta	Shaun Whittaker
Mira Guirguis	Alex Wilson
Dhanya Gunasekera	Brett Woods
Zeng He	Sally Zetter
Kate Hennessy	
Vicki Holmes	
Claire Hunting	
Alexandra Ilic	
Naomi Kohn	
Chuol Char Kong	
Michael Labiris	

ADMINISTRATION

Jasminka Kumbaric

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 08/09

Chris Gallagher
President

Victoria Campbell
Vice President

Jen Kelly
Treasurer

Heather Perry
Secretary

Elaine Pierson
Public Officer

Paul Bradley
General Committee

George Erlichster
General Committee

Lesley Dillon
General Committee

STAFF MEMBERS 08/09

Helen Constan
Chief Executive Officer

PROGRAM MANAGERS

Andrea Florance
Manager - Volunteer & Education
Programs

Jackie Galloway
Deputy CEO, Senior Advocate

Victoria Mullings
Principal Lawyer

Brendan Stackpole
Managing Lawyer - Family Law Program

Sue Vincent
Manager - Administration Program

Gillian Wilks
Manager - Projects & Development

STAFF

Hellen Argiriou
Assistant Manager - Administration
Program

Ian Brent
Administrative Worker

Cathie Currie
Community Worker - Young Renters
Program

Jack Greenwell
Finance Officer

Chris Gunasekera
Community Lawyer

Katrina Haller
Community Lawyer - Child Support
Program

Vicki Holmes
Administrative Worker - Head Office
& Rosebud Branch

Quinn McCormack
Community Lawyer

Celestine Moon
Community Lawyer - Child Support
Program

Philip Moon
Community Lawyer

Lesley Occhipinti
Executive Assistant to the CEO

Kristie Quinlan
Administrative Worker

Kate Ross
Community Lawyer (Maternity Leave -
May 2008)

Rhonda Sandardos
Community Lawyer

Valmai Scully
Administrative Worker

Carla Weelen-Young
Administrative Worker

Mark Westley
Community Worker - Caravan Park &
Rooming House Project

Saskia Weerheim
Community Worker - Volunteer &
Education Programs

The following staff worked/left
during this period. We wish them
well.

Philip Dowd
Community Lawyer

Jasminka Kumbaric
Administrative Worker (temporary)

Natalie Mikkelsen
Locum Community Lawyer

Fulvio Pasquini
Community Worker - Child Support
Program

Ros Quick
Community Lawyer - Family Law Program

Stephanie Richardson
Administrative Worker (temporary)



Chris Gallagher
President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At a recent meeting of the Management Committee of PCLC we discussed the concept of "social justice". Is it just a bit of jargon from the left wing of politics or is it a basic human right? It was a fascinating discussion over pizza and drinks (soft-drink of course) and I am sure you all wish you had been there to take part in the debate rather than sitting comfortably at home on a cold winter's night.

As a result of the discussion one of our Management Committee members (ironically, the person who the night before had argued that maybe social justice is just a political catchphrase) sourced a definition from Murdoch University in Western Australia which can be loosely summarised as follows:

"Social justice seeks to provide fair outcomes to marginalised groups in society. It recognises that years of disadvantage and discrimination for people in these groups can result in situations where applying the same rules to them as to people without the same disadvantages may produce an entirely different result."

In the context of the legal system, this means that people in disadvantaged groups – the aged, the disabled, single parents, the unemployed, members of non-English speaking families – must battle to gain the same rights and privileges that many others in society can take for granted.

Social justice is not just a catchphrase or a political football. It is important. It is fundamental. It does not happen automatically. It needs to be cared for and nurtured and, at times, it needs to be bulldozed through.

And that's where we fit in. The Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc. is dedicated to empowering and supporting disadvantaged community members of the South East and Westernport Regions to use the law and legal system to protect and advance their rights, and broaden their awareness of their responsibilities. In fact, that's our Mission Statement (check the web-site and see).

I genuinely believe that each of the staff and volunteers at PCLC share this view, one way or the other, regardless of their politics. That is why we are involved. That is why the employees accept jobs in this organisation when they could probably earn more in the private sector and that is why people who may work in the private sector or have other family or personal commitments nonetheless give up their spare time to volunteer for the organisation.

This last year has been no different. Our enthusiastic staff of PCLC are, as always, worthy of our praise and thanks for their efforts and dedication to the Centre and what it stands for. They are ably led by the Program Managers, Jackie Galloway, Victoria Mullings, Brendan Stackpole, Andrea Florance, Gillian Wilks and Sue Vincent of whom show outstanding devotion and commitment to the Centre.

Our CEO, Helen Constatas, has led mightily from the front and produced outcomes for the Centre, and therefore for the people it serves, which regularly exceed what could and should be expected. Helen is a dynamo who achieves results. We are incredibly fortunate to have her.

The Management Committee has continued to safely navigate the good ship PCLC through hazardous waters. We were sorry to lose from the Committee our friend Jack Damschke and I take this opportunity to thank him again for his years of service to the Centre. I also take the opportunity to welcome Lesley Dillon who has brought her expertise and experience in the sector to enhance the skill set of the Management Committee. I am proud to be a member of this Committee which works productively and cooperatively to provide effective governance of PCLC ...and, of course, to solve the problems of the world.

The past year has seen many highlights for PCLC including:

- Visits from both the Commonwealth and State Attorneys-General
- Renewed funding from Consumer Affairs Victoria for Tenancy and Consumer Advocacy Services and a Caravan Park and Rooming House Project
- Renewed funding for our Family Law program which was effectively saved from an untimely end by the direct involvement and support of the Commonwealth Attorney General, Robert McClelland
- The official opening of our Rosebud Branch office and the enhanced presence that gives us on the Southern Peninsula
- A lead role in the legal response to the problems encountered at the Brookland Greens estate in Cranbourne

“Social justice seeks to provide fair outcomes to marginalised groups in society. It recognises that years of disadvantage and discrimination for people in these groups can result in situations where applying the same rules to them as to people without the same disadvantages may produce an entirely different result.”

And through it all, in addition to the many other programs carried out in the community by PCLC, there are about 34 free advice sessions per week held almost every week of the year in 11 different locations, when over 120 volunteers honour the commitment of PCLC to empower and support the disadvantaged members of our community. I cannot express highly enough the Centre's appreciation for the contribution of these volunteers who help to make PCLC the great organisation it is.

I will not be nominating for President of the Management Committee for the coming year although I hope to remain involved as a member of the Management Committee and as a volunteer lawyer. It has been a great honour serving in the role of President during a significant period in the history of PCLC. I wish the incoming President well and I trust his or her term will be as personally rewarding as it has been for me.



Victoria Campbell
Vice President



Jen Kelly
Treasurer



Heather Perry
Secretary



Elaine Pierson
Public Officer



Lesley Dillon
General Committee



Paul Bradley
General Committee



George Erlichster
General Committee



Helen Constas
Chief Executive Officer

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

One can best help others from a position of strength' was a maxim that echoed through our work this year. Thanks to the structure and capacity of Peninsula CLC, we were able to respond to challenging community needs at a level and in a volume that was hitherto impossible for a humble CLC!

A particularly urgent need arose in September 2008, when residents of the Brookland Greens Estate (near Cranbourne) were alerted to potentially explosive levels of methane gas in and around their homes, some of which were evacuated. The resulting media attention, economic, legal and social issues, not to mention the health and safety concerns, plunged much of the community into crisis. We were pleased to respond to the need for information by holding a public forum, attended by over 500 people (see page 18). Special thanks to all of our expert panellists and to Slater & Gordon Lawyers for their pro bono support of the forum.

We were also able to lend our support to another community in crisis, through providing a lawyer to assist Eastern CLC in advising clients in the immediate aftermath of the devastating February bushfires.

In fact, PCLC prides itself on its support of and collaboration within the CLC sector, a role in which we were encouraged by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert McClelland, who invited PCLC to support two pilot duty lawyer services being operated by Caxton and Hunter Community Legal Centres. The pilots were funded as part of the \$4m 'one-off' funding allocation to help address the immediate pressures on the CLC sector.

This one-off funding allocation also enabled PCLC to continue to operate its much-needed Family Law Program, which assists hundreds of clients each year with family law advice, often in urgent and harrowing circumstances. The lack of funding certainty was a cause of considerable angst for the organisation, pending the announcement of one-off funds in May 2009 (for 2009-10). We thank the Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert McClelland for visiting our Centre and its Family Law Program in March 2009, and for his strong support for the Program to continue to operate. We also thank our local members who added their support to our efforts to secure funding for the program. We hope that the upcoming Review of Family Law Programs will reveal the extraordinary value and importance of our Program, and lead to greater funding certainty in the future.

Access to justice was a key theme of the Inaugural Family Law System Conference, attended by Brendan Stackpole and myself in February 2009. Whilst most attendees represented family relationship services, Liz O'Brien Convener, NACLC and other stalwarts of the CLC sector were also present to ensure that the all-important, but alarmingly often-overlooked, access to legal advice and assistance was put firmly on the agenda. We welcomed the Attorney's announcement on 30 June that \$3.6m will be provided for pilot programs to build better partnerships and greater collaboration between Family Relationship Centres and CLCs. PCLC already works closely with Frankston and Berwick FRCs, and I look forward to advising you of the outcome of our pilot submissions in the coming year.

PCLC's ability to assist the Rosebud and Southern Peninsula communities was greatly strengthened with the opening of the Centre's Rosebud Branch office on 1 December 2008 (see page 11). Since the doors of the Rosebud Branch opened, we have already had a significant increase in the number of clients now accessing free legal help. Clients are overwhelmingly in receipt of low income (less than \$26,000 per annum) and often come to us at a time of personal crisis, with a cluster of interrelated legal, relationship, health and financial issues. The official opening of the Branch by the Hon. Rob Hulls on 12 May provided us with the opportunity to express our thanks to the Victorian Government, Department of Justice, Victoria Legal Aid and Mornington Peninsula Shire for funding the much-needed expansion of services. We were also pleased to receive support from the local community, with the Rotary Club of Rosebud sponsoring a Community Sausage Sizzle to celebrate the opening in February 2009 and donating \$500 to PCLC.

After five long months of negotiations, spilling well into the new funding period, an Agreement was signed with Consumer Affairs Victoria in September 2008 for PCLC to provide Tenant & Consumer Advocacy Services in Melbourne's South-Eastern regions from 2008-11. During this process, we took a strong stance in support of another CLC, the Tenants Union of Victoria, and refused to accept funds that were threatened to be removed from their organisation for its core work. We were grateful for the pro bono assistance of Robert Jamieson, Partner, Blake Dawson Lawyers, during the negotiation process. We were also assisted by the Ethics Committee of the Law Institute

of Victoria, who provided us with helpful advice that supported our stance on avoiding conflicts of interest and appropriately managing our legal practice. We were also able to successfully negotiate a two-year Caravan Park and Rooming House Outreach Project.

Being able to offer our community specialist services in Tenancy and Consumer Matters, as well as Family Law, Family Violence and Child Support, enhances and strengthens the work of our generalist program. In our Generalist and Specialist programs, PCLC works to Strategic Plans, and I am pleased to report on the Centre's excellence performance against indicators, with almost all targets met or exceeded. Our compliance with Strategic Plans and other accountability measures is overseen by Victoria Legal Aid, with whom we also work closely on a local level and in the provision of duty lawyer services.

Special thanks also to White Cleland Lawyers, Consultants & Notaries for pro bono assistance in relation to leases.

One of the challenges PCLC faces is delivering accessible services across a large catchment area that encompasses six local government areas and around 800,000 people. Support of local government helps enormously in this regard, and we thank the Cities of Glen Eira, Kingston, Frankston and Casey and the Mornington Peninsula Shire for their financial contributions.

We were appreciative of the interest taken in our Bentleigh Branch by various Councillors from the City of Glen Eira, many of whom attended our community consultation on 3 September 2008. At the consultation, we reviewed services

offered from our Bentleigh Branch, having regard to budgetary constraints and the needs of the local community. The meeting was attended by various Councillors, as well as representatives from community organisations, management, staff and volunteers of PCLC. Throughout the meeting, there was lively discussion about a range of issues, including the Centre's name, appropriateness of current premises and location and promotion strategies. The meeting resolved that there was no desire to decrease present services, but if anything a desire to increase them, as the need is there. PCLC will continue to have discussions with Glen Eira Council to review funding arrangements, and explore options for supporting PCLC in its provision of free legal services to the Glen Eira community.

Another opportunity for PCLC to explore in the coming year arose at the National Conference of CLCs, held in Darwin in August 2008. Geraldton Resource Centre (in WA) presented a session about their innovative paralegal program. As we understand it, trained and appropriately supervised paralegal staff provide advice and casework services in remote communities. Initial discussions with Geraldton Resource Centre suggest that their model (which they have willingly shared with us) could be transported to PCLC. We look forward to visiting Geraldton Resource Centre in 2009/10 to see their program in operation, and consider its viability for expanding the services of PCLC.

Many people ask us, and our colleagues in CLCs, how we can do the work we do – work with people in crisis, hear their stories of violence and suffering, see families living in cars (or worse) and witness the level of

suffering and exclusion that many of our clients experience. They are somewhat surprised when we answer that working with clients is the easy part. The hardest part is having to say “no” – telling a client who is in need of our help that we cannot assist them because our resources are too stretched.

Perhaps, therefore, you can appreciate our excitement when, for example, we were setting up our Rosebud Branch office and had passers-by peering through the cracks in the newspaper-adorned windows asking if it was true there was a free legal service coming. Saying “yes” was satisfying beyond measure!

Likewise, when a client comes to the Family Court on a Friday afternoon, panicked because she has returned home to find her children, their belongings and passports missing, we are delighted to say “yes, we can help”, then provide advice, draft on-the-spot Court documents, and represent her in an urgent application for an Airport Watch Order.

Our volunteers also enabled us to say “yes” to clients, providing free legal advice to 1,605 people throughout the year. I take this opportunity to thank all of our 141 volunteers for their tremendous commitment and assistance. I also wish to thank the volunteers who form our Management Committee, for their passionate support of PCLC and their communities, and invaluable guidance. In particular, I thank our outgoing President, Chris Gallagher, who has had a pivotal role in ‘steering the ship’ for the past 7 years, and been unfailingly generous in his support of the organisation, and to me in my role as CEO. I also say a fond farewell to Jack Damschke, who retired from the Management Committee this year, and welcome our new recruit, Lesley Dillon.



Jack Greenwell
Finance Officer



Lesley Occhipinti
Executive Assistant to the CEO

In speaking of volunteers, I am very pleased to advise that PCLC has been awarded a grant from the Victoria Law Foundation for Stage 3 of its Valuing Volunteers Project, a dynamic project that will produce materials that can be used by all community legal centres in the design and delivery of quality volunteer programs. We are very proud of this successful project, which has run in various stages since 2005, and we thank the Victoria Law Foundation for their crucial support.

I congratulate and thank all staff members, especially all the Program Manager's and Assistant Program Manager's, for their dedication to helping our clients with their legal issues and, through casework and education, empowering them to identify and better understand legal issues, so they can participate in their resolution, make informed decisions and avoid repetition or escalation of problems in the future. I would also like to welcome Lesley Occhipinti as my new Executive Assistant. Lesley comes with a wealth of experience and I look forward to working with her in the coming years.

I have no doubt the year ahead will be full of challenges and opportunities. I hope that it will also bring a greater recognition and understanding of the vital work of community legal centres in addressing legal need and improving not only access to justice, but empowerment and inclusion in social and civic life across the community.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

KATH NEILSEN MEMORIAL AWARD

Volunteer lawyer, Trish Samson, was presented with PCLC's highest honour – the 2008 Kath Neilsen Memorial Award, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Centre.

The award was created by the Centre in 2002 in honour of the late Kath Neilsen, a founder and strong supporter of the Centre.

Since commencing volunteering in 2003, Trish has single-handedly provided advice to more than 500 clients. Trish is a sole practitioner, operating a legal practice in Tyabb, but that hasn't stopped her from volunteering on a weekly basis, sometimes staying for a whole afternoon to help clients who need free legal advice. She has assisted clients on matters ranging from family law to motor vehicle accidents to neighbour disputes, and much more.

Trish has a strong commitment to helping marginalised community members achieve access to justice. We congratulate her on this award and the exceptional commitment she has made to Peninsula CLC and her community.

VOLUNTEER ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS

Warm congratulations to the winners of the 2008 Volunteer Encouragement Awards: Nina Bigu (Pines), Jonathan Sise (Cranbourne), Carla Purcell (Bentleigh) and Claire Hunting (Bentleigh).

Each of these volunteers have, at various stages, assisted as both paralegal volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators. They are part of a strong team of volunteers, but are particularly impressive for their willingness to "go the extra mile" – helping out at extra sessions, taking on additional responsibility and helping their fellow volunteers.

Special thanks to Slater & Gordon Lawyers who sponsored the Awards. Winners received a framed certificate and \$75 book voucher.



Andrea Florance, Trish Sampson and Victoria Mullings



Carla Purcell, Chris Galagher, Jonathan Sise

ROSEBUD BRANCH

Peninsula Community Legal Centre's Rosebud Branch opened its doors to the community on 1 December 2009.

PCLC has a long history with the Rosebud and Southern Peninsula communities, having provided outreach services there for almost 20 years. Acutely aware of the disadvantage affecting members of the community, which is often compounded by remoteness from mainstream services, the Centre has worked in partnership with its supporters for the past 8 years to expand its provision of free legal services in the region and ensure that locals are able to access the help they need, when they need it.

In the first stage of expansion, the Centre provided increased outreach services in Rosebud during 2007-8. The opening of the Rosebud Branch office (two days and one evening per week) is the all-important second stage of the expansion, and has already seen a significant jump in the number of clients now accessing free legal help.

“The official opening of PCLC's Rosebud Office today is the realisation of a goal that has been held for many years by the Mornington Peninsula Shire, Members of Parliament, community workers - and of course the Centre itself.”

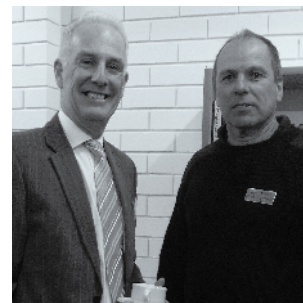
(Chris Galagher, President of PCLC, 12 May 2009)

A community sausage sizzle was held on 16 February 2009 to promote the new service, with the generous support of the Rotary Club of Rosebud.

The Rosebud Branch was officially opened by the Hon. Rob Hulls, Deputy Premier, Attorney-General and Minister for Racing, on 12 May 2009.

PCLC gratefully acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government, Department of Justice, Victoria Legal Aid and Mornington Peninsula Shire in turning its vision of a Rosebud Branch Office into a reality.

PCLC looks forward to reporting on the final stage of expansion, including increased opening hours and services, over the next two years.





Victoria Mullings
Principal Lawyer

PRINCIPAL LAWYER'S REPORT

The legal practice has continued to expand and consolidate over the past year, with the opening (finally!) of our Rosebud office as one of our centre's major achievement this year. PCLC has long had a presence at Rosebud, but the great new office, in a highly visible and accessible location, has seen clients utilize our services in ever-increasing numbers. We have been aware for many years of the need, and are now able to provide increased services to the southern peninsula.

Our core work continues to be family-related issues, including those arising from relationship breakdown, and matters involving family violence, although the general program also handles increasing numbers of debt, motor vehicle and minor crime files, as well as a regular trickle of civil, administrative law and assorted other enquiries.

PCLC also operates a Will and Power of Attorney making service, which is so popular as to create waiting lists for appointments, but provides those who may otherwise not have their affairs in order, with the opportunity to do so, at no cost.

We continue to provide a valuable Family Violence duty lawyer service at the Frankston Magistrates' Court three times per week, seeing both applicants or representations, and providing representation, as well as advice and negotiation.

The Legal Centre, of course, covers a huge catchment area, and we provide a variety of legal advice options to try to ensure

availability, regardless of age, disability or location. We operate over five offices, four outreach locations, and provide a mix of appointment, drop-in and telephone advice services, both during the day and after hours, and even do occasional home or hospital visits.

Some Case Studies are highlighted as follows:

CASE STUDY 1

Because domestic violence is, and has been for a number of years, our priority area, PCLC is very conscious of client safety in all our procedures. We also utilize the various programs to try to provide the best outcomes for our clients, in the following case with the Family Law Program providing representation at the Federal Magistrate's Court.

“Our core work continues to be family-related issues, including those arising from relationship breakdown, and matters involving family violence, although the general program also handles increasing numbers of debt, motor vehicle and minor crime files, as well as a regular trickle of civil, administrative law and assorted other enquiries.”

Ms X attended one of our branch offices. She had been separated from her violent husband for almost 20 years and was seeking a divorce. After a period where Mr X had slept with an axe beside the bed,

she left, and had spent the first 10 years of separation on the run, hiding herself and her children. She was understandably reluctant to try to find him again for the purpose of serving him with divorce papers, and was in any event unsure where he was living. We prepared an affidavit to dispense with service, and all documentation was sent out from one of our offices distant from Ms X's present address.

Our duty service was able to persuade the court of the need to dispense with service and the divorce was granted.

CASE STUDY 2

A male client attended one of our branches. He was separated from his domestic partner for approximately two years. During their relationship, the client and his partner wished to have a child. Unfortunately natural conception was not a possibility so the client

and his domestic partner agreed to use an In Vitro Fertilization procedure and create embryos using the client's sperm and his partner's eggs.

“Through our evening Drop-in sessions run by our Volunteer Program we can work together with the other programs provided by the Legal Centre to provide the best service to our clients.”

The embryos were created and never used. Their relationship subsequently ended.

Recently, the ex-domestic partner contacted the client requesting his permission for an embryo to be implanted and carried by a surrogate mother. The embryos created years earlier were her only way of ever having a child.

The client obtained legal advice regarding his obligations to pay Child Support if he gave permission to his ex-partner to use one of the embryos, and regarding the child's right to spend time with him.

Through our evening Drop-in sessions run by our Volunteer Program we can work together with the other programs provided by the Legal Centre to provide the best service to our clients.

This year has seen new lawyers Rhonda Sandardos and Philip Moon join the team. Our regular contingent is of course Quinn McCormack, Chris Gunasekera with Kate Ross currently on maternity leave! Welcome Ewan.

Thanks must go, as always to our Chief Executive Officer, ever-cheerful administrative team, and the workers in other programs. Together we make a great team and provide a much-needed service to our community.

We look forward to the next year advising you of our new recruits in 2009!



Quinn McCormack
Community Lawyer
Cranbourne Branch



Kate Ross
Community Lawyer



Philip Dowd
Community Lawyer



Philip Moon
Community Lawyer



Rhonda Sandardos
Community Lawyer



Natalie Mikkelsen
Community Lawyer



Brendan Stackpole
Managing Lawyer – Family
Law Program

FAMILY LAW PROGRAM

The Family Law Program received a 'one off' grant of funding from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department for the 2008/2009 financial year which has enabled the Program to continue its operations for this period.

Specifically, the Family Law Program continued to provide a family law duty lawyer service at the Federal Magistrates' Court at Dandenong. This service has experienced increasing demand since its inception in August 2005 due to reductions in VLA funding, private lawyers opting out of the VLA system, and difficult financial times making private representation unaffordable for many litigants. These factors alone underscore the need for this kind of service within the family law system. As well as greatly assisting clients, the duty lawyer service continues to enhance the profile of PCLC within the family law system and has strengthened our relationship with the Court and Victoria Legal Aid.

The Family Law Program also continued to provide family law casework services at our Frankston, Bentleigh and Cranbourne offices, and Child Support services at our Frankston office. The demand for these services has increased with mandatory Family Dispute Resolution, requests to provide complementary services such as the drafting of Consent Orders (and the drafting of documentation when FDR fails), and legislative changes to the Child support system. Additionally, in both family law and child support, the Program has conducted a diverse range of community legal education activities, including a grandparents and family law workshop at our newly opened Rosebud office.

In all, it has been an extraordinarily engaging year. On a systemic level, the PCLC Family Law Program continues to witness the maturation of a family law system which experienced significant legislative and cultural change on 1 July 2006 with the introduction of compulsory family dispute resolution, the 'shared care' amendments, and an entire revamping of the assessment and administration of child support. We eagerly await the release in late 2009 of the Australian Institute of Family Studies' report concerning the effect of these amendments on families, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Additionally, there has been a welcome focus by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department on what is needed to improve collaboration between key players in the family law system for the early resolution family disputes and the improved management of family law cases. This new approach was abundantly evident at the Family Law National Blueprint Conference which was convened by the Attorney General's Department in February 2009 in Canberra, and which was attended by Helen Conostas, CEO and Brendan Stackpole, Managing Lawyer of the Family Law Program. It is anticipated that greater emphasis on collaboration will enhance the vibrant relationships that already exist between PCLC and the Family Relationship Centres at Frankston and Berwick, and the Family Mediation Centre at Frankston. We look forward to working even more closely with those organisations in future.

It is also significant for the Family Law Program that the Attorney General, the Honourable Robert McClelland visited PCLC and sought our views about how collaboration could be enhanced. Additionally, the Attorney utilized the opportunity to observe first hand the operation of the PCLC Family Law Program duty lawyer service, and remarked at the calibre and high demand for the service. We thank the Attorney General's Department for their ongoing funding and interest in the PCLC Family Law Program.

CHILD SUPPORT

Our dedicated Child Support lawyers continued to obtain excellent results for both carer and liable parents.

The law regarding child support has seen significant change since 2006, and our child support lawyers have been utilizing those changes for the benefit of PCLC clients. For example, the Child Support Program has been successfully using the new amendments concerning enforcement proceedings to assist carer parents to enforce arrears of child support against the liable parent.

Additionally, the Child Support Program recently obtained orders to split and transfer superannuation from the liable parent's fund to the carer parent. This was in relation to an adult maintenance application where the adult child had a disability. Our Child Support Program was able to assist the client in proving the financial hardship of the carer.

“As well as greatly assisting clients, the duty lawyer service continues to enhance the profile of PCLC within the family law system and has strengthened our relationship with the Court and Victoria Legal Aid.”

In 2007, the Social Security Appeals Tribunal was given jurisdiction to determine child support matters. Since this time, court applications for Departure Orders from Child Support Agency decisions have been reduced. However, whilst the quality of Social Security Appeals Tribunal decision making is high, the progress of cases through the Tribunal is often delayed because it does not have the power to compel production of documents. Consequently, the Tribunal can only rely on documents voluntarily produced by the parties, if and when that occurs. Additionally, the objection and Social Security Appeals Tribunal appeal process can result in delays of several months which invariably affects our client's receipt of child support, and hence the quality of life of those children with parents already on marginal incomes.

Paternity disputes are still running at a high level with most results returned positive. This is a very satisfying area of work. Once paternity is proved, the Child Support Program then provides assistance to the client in having the child's biological parents registered on the birth certificate. It is the Program's practice to register the party's name with the Births Deaths and Marriages Registry at this stage rather than later, because this benefits the child if the liable parent dies and a dispute in relation to inheritance arises. The resolution of paternity disputes is also the first step in enabling the parties to work toward a

resolution of the time each of the parents each spend with the children, and hence an important aspect of the Family Law Program's work.

The Child Support Program has also been active with Community Legal Education and maintaining community networks. Our child support lawyer, Katrina Haller, is the National Convener of the National Association of Community Legal Centres' Child Support Network which convenes quarterly. These meetings are crucial in maintaining our professional networks and keeping update with legislative change and the policies and procedures of the Child Support Agency.

Our Child Support Lawyers also attend the Child Support Working Group of the Federation of Community Legal Centres. This working group is seeking the legislative change necessary to have the Child Support Agency accept applications for Child Support based on a positive DNA test rather than the carer parent having to apply to the Court and obtain a declaration of paternity after receipt of the test.

CONCLUSION

Thanks must go to all Family Law Program lawyers and support staff for their persistence and dedication in what has been a difficult year.

As always, the CEO, Helen Constan has continued to ensure the ongoing delivery of family law services at PCLC, and she is to be thanked for her hard work in securing funding for the Program for another year, not to mention her ongoing advice and guidance on a whole range of Program issues.

Special mention too must be made of the assistance provided by our Andrea Florance, Manager Volunteer and Education Programs. Andrea always made time to assist the Program with the drafting of funding submissions, to accompany the writer to family law system consultations, and to provide advice and guidance on a vast range of Family Law Program issues. Your work has been greatly appreciated.

Thanks and best wishes also should be conveyed to Rosalind Quick and Fulvio Pasquini for their dedication and good work. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

Last of all, I would like to convey my gratitude and admiration to our hardworking and ever reliable Management Committee, some of whom also volunteer their time to provide legal advice and other support to PCLC in addition to their managerial responsibilities. You are all remarkable for your dedication and commitment to this legal centre, and hence to the community it serves. Thank you.



Ros Quick
Community Lawyer
Family Law Program



Chris Gunasekera
Community Lawyer
Family Law Program



Katrina Haller
Community Lawyer
Child Support Program



Celestine Moon
Community Lawyer
Child Support Program





BROOKLAND GREENS

In September 2008 many residents of the Brookland Greens housing estate in the City of Casey were advised to leave their homes due to the risk of an explosion caused by large concentrations of methane gas, emitted from the Stephensons Road Landfill site, occurring in the spaces under and around nearby homes. Following the declaration of an emergency situation, the media spotlight fell on the estate capitalising on the distraught residents.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre within one week organised and chaired a community forum hosting a panel of speakers from PCLC; Victoria Legal Aid; Slater and Gordon; Environment Defenders Office; and Consumer Affairs Victoria, to provide residents of the Brookland Greens estate with a broad range of advice and direction. The forum was attended by over 500 residents. PCLC worked in partnership with these organizations to ensure that residents were able to obtain appropriate assistance given their particular circumstances.

Apart from the immeasurable stress and concern caused by the risk of a gas explosion, the primary loss residents were concerned with was the possible reduction in the value of their homes following the negative national media coverage of their estate. Those homes placed on the market would now achieve a considerably lower sale price than otherwise would have been obtained due to disclosure obligations of the gas leak that would be required of the vendor in their section 32 statement.

Additional advice sessions were implemented at the Cranbourne branch to ensure that residents were able to obtain legal advice when required. These sessions were well attended and advice was provided on a range of matters, including: whom or who liability may reside with; potential for claims of compensation for diminished property values; breaking a lease within the estate; potential for claims pertaining to adverse health effects; and possibility of mortgagees seeking further security for loans which now exceed the value of the property. Many of those seeking legal advice were concerned as to the meaning of 'class action' and how such an action works.

An overwhelming complaint received from the affected residents was the lack of information being provided by the City of Casey as works were being undertaken to address the gas leak. Residents reported contractors entering properties often without

the knowledge of the resident. PCLC was able to raise such matters with the City of Casey, resulting in the regular circulation of community bulletins and reminders being issued to contractors about the importance of seeking permission from residents before entering properties.

PCLC has continued to take part in the recovery process attending regular meetings held by the City of Casey with all relevant local community organizations.

Thank you to all of those at PCLC who assisted with the arranging and formulation of the community forum and in particular to CEO Helen Constan who chaired and championed the community forum on behalf of the residents of the Brookland Greens estate.

Quinn McCormack
Community Lawyer, Cranbourne Branch

“We certainly haven’t seen something like this before. I think people are very stressed about the situation. Initially, in that they’re probably unaware of what their rights were and, so by coming to the Legal Centre to get initial advice, we steer them on the right track.”

Helen Constan, CEO, Peninsula Community Legal Centre. Stateline, ABC Victoria, 19/09/2008

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

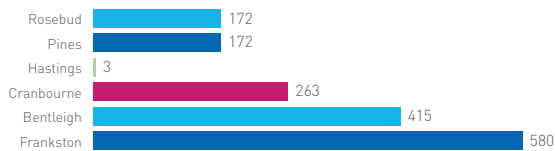


Andrea Florance
Manager – Volunteer and
Education Programs

The PCLC Volunteering Program bridges the gap between access to Law and the Community.”

(Adam Birch, Lawyer Volunteer)

CLIENTS ADVISED BY VOLUNTEERS 2008-09



Throughout the year, PCLC's Volunteer Program bridged many gaps. Volunteers kept the doors of the Centre open four nights a week, offering services from each of the Centre's five branches, and providing free legal advice to 1,605 clients.

Our team of 141 local lawyers, paralegals and administrative volunteers were able to help members of their own communities to access the justice system and link in with relevant supports and services. Our Management Committee volunteers further ensure that our Centre is directly accountable to, and managed by, the community that it serves.

For students, volunteering helps bridge the gap from legal theory to practice, and they are able to observe and reflect on the impact of legal issues on people who are experiencing disadvantage, often on many levels.

Additionally, the Program helps many volunteers make the transition from paralegal to lawyer, with mentoring and ongoing support offered by experienced practitioners.

The number of clients assisted by volunteers rose around 14% from 2007-8, most notably at Frankston (an increase of 20%), Cranbourne (an increase of 25.8%) and Rosebud. The opening of the Centre's Rosebud Branch, change of evening and excellent venue have reinvigorated our Rosebud Volunteer Evening Advice Sessions, with a client increase of 196.5% from 2007-8. We were delighted at the support we received from local lawyers on the opening of our Rosebud branch, many of whom joined our volunteer team.

Unfortunately, our Hastings Volunteer Advice Service was underutilised, despite extensive promotion, with clients preferring to attend existing day-time outreach sessions. Accordingly, it was decided to suspend, and ultimately cancel, this service. We take this opportunity to thank our Hastings volunteers, and hope they will continue to volunteer at other sessions.

“Volunteering gives you a really practical understanding of the law and the chance to learn to communicate with people.”

(Kirsty Osborne, Paralegal Volunteer)

Whilst PCLC has a very good record of volunteer recruitment, it is our ability to retain volunteers for which we take greatest pride. To ensure that volunteers feel valued and supported, we have a range of measures in place, including orientation training, induction, buddy and mentor systems, regular newsletters, staff supervision and support and open communication channels to facilitate feedback. This year we held the first of our (now regular) Volunteer Co-ordinator Catch-up Dinners to enable us to meet with each of the 15 wonderful co-ordinators who facilitate the smooth operation of our after-hours sessions. This initiative has already enabled the exchange of useful feedback to help us ensure consistency across branches, identify resources needed and discuss risk management issues and initiatives.

Saskia Weerheim would be the first person to sing the praises of our volunteers, but I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Saskia for her valuable work with our Volunteer Program, and for accepting increased responsibility for its operation. I would also

like to thank our Chief Executive Officer, Helen Constas, who prizes our volunteers and is quick to initiate or embrace any measures that will enhance our volunteers' experiences with PCLC. Special thanks also to our Administration Team, Program Managers and Management Committee for the many ways in which they have supported the Volunteer Program throughout the year.

We were pleased to recognise the contribution of our volunteers at our End of Year Celebration in November 2008, which was attended by staff, volunteers and supporters of the centre. We were also helped along by Baker's Delight (Frankston, Bentleigh East, Centro Cranbourne, Hastings and Rosebud Plaza) who literally gave our volunteers some "dough" – vouchers for all of our volunteers to receive free bread. Special thanks also to Slater & Gordon Lawyers for their sponsorship of our 2008 Volunteer Encouragement Awards.

Most of all, we take this opportunity to again thank our volunteers for their exceptional generosity and commitment to helping others.

In the top five languages of clients assisted by volunteers:

Thank you!

Спасибо / Spasibo (Russian)

谢谢 / Xie xie (Mandarin)

ευχαριστώ / Efcharisto (Greek)

Gracias (Spanish)



COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Through our community legal education (CLE) and community development activities, we empower community members to identify and address legal issues and access help if needed.

Strategies to improve local knowledge of the law and services available include:

- Participating in public events to raise awareness of free legal services and distribute free information;
- Organising and participating in public forums;
- Researching and delivering workshops on a variety of legal topics;
- Media releases and interviews; and
- Participating in local networks and relevant meetings.

One of the most notable examples in the past year was the Brookland Greens Residents' Forum, attended by over 500 people (see page 18 of this Report).

Another is PCLC's ongoing involvement in the Community Car Connections Program, in partnership with New Hope Migrant & Refugee Centre, Frankston City Council, Victoria Police, Department of Justice, Vicroads, Frankston Magistrates' Court, RACV, Consumer Affairs Victoria and Sheriff's Office. In its second year, a nine week program (of weekly 2½ hour sessions) was delivered to participants from Sudan and Sierra Leone to help them gain a better understanding of driving in Australia and form connections with local agencies. This is important in improving not only their ultimate road safety, but helping them settle and participate fully in Australian life.

The consortium supported a successful application for a TAC Community Road Safety Grant for the program to be documented and made publicly available, which we understand will occur in the next year. With the theory aspects well-addressed, it is

Three workshops were held, in Rosebud, Mornington and Hastings respectively, and we received overwhelmingly positive feedback - as well as a number of requests for additional workshops. Taking into account recent Victorian legislative reforms, and the

“To learn about law, in a new country, is very important for all of us, who moved to Australia. It is helpful to have general information about places and people, where we can find help or advice... Your visit and speech gave me a safe feeling and peace. I am very happy to have organisations like Legal Centre and people like you to protect our rights.”

(Survey response, May 2009)

hoped that the consortium will be able to secure funding for the essential on-road component of the program in the near future.

During Law Week (May 2009), the Centre offered Grandparents Make a Difference: Free Family Law Workshops from its Rosebud branch, to provide information about the family law system and support available for grandparents, particularly those who are caring for grandchildren or have lost contact with grandchildren following family breakdown.

Another highlight of our 2008-09 CLE program was the successful completion of a project funded by the Mornington Peninsula Shire and aimed at encouraging participation in, and responsible management of, community groups on the Mornington Peninsula, with a particular focus on incorporation issues.

national reforms on the horizon, the need for training of this nature is likely to further increase in the near future, and we will seek financial support to hold further workshops over the next year.

Perhaps an unsurprising flow-on from the workshops was the increase in requests for assistance with incorporation issues from community groups on the Peninsula, who attended training sessions and identified issues which they require assistance to resolve.

PCLC is regarded as a key community organisation and maintains strong connections within each of the six municipalities in its catchment area. During 2008-09, the Centre was a member of the following Steering Groups and Committees (excluding those regularly attended as part of Projects, reported elsewhere):

- Bentons Square Management Committee (Mornington)
- Casey Healthy Families Taskforce
- Community Car Connections: Frankston New Arrival Driving Program Steering Committee
- Frankston & Mornington Peninsula Family Violence Network
- Frankston Family Relationship Centre Steering Committee
- Frankston North Community Renewal Steering Committee
- Frankston Police, Mission Australia & Community Youth Assist Program
- Glen Eira Youth Network
- Middle South Welfare Network (Kingston / Glen Eira)
- Mornington Peninsula Joint Service Providers Network.

Thank you to all staff and volunteers who participated in CLE activities throughout the year, and special thanks to the PCLC CLE Sub-committee: Helen Conostas, Victoria Mullings, Saskia Weerheim and Andrea Florance.

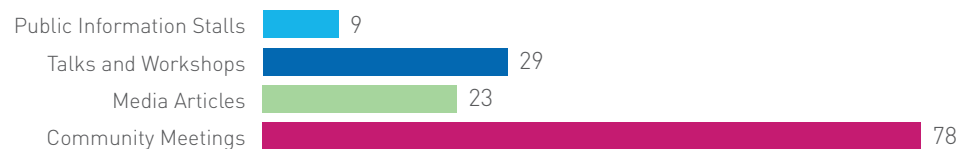


Human Rights Workshop



Saskia Weerheim
Community Worker –
Volunteer and Education
Programs

CLE ACTIVITIES 2008/09 (excluding projects)



LAW REFORM & POLICY

“There is not enough of a police presence to enforce move on powers. People are already being moved on, but it doesn't change anything; they just come back.”

FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION

Peninsula CLC supported the proposal of Job Watch Inc, as part of its submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Fair Work Australia Bill, that community legal centre lawyers should be exempted from the requirement to seek leave to appear in matters heard by Fair Work Australia.

FRANKSTON 'MOVE ON' BY-LAW

In February 2009, Peninsula CLC made a joint submission with Youthlaw and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria to Frankston City Council regarding its proposed introduction of General (Amendment) Local Law 2008 No.15. In the submission, we expressed serious concerns about the proposed local law, which would effectively create 'move on' powers across public spaces in the City of Frankston. We highlighted five key areas that we urged Council to consider before making its decision.

1. What Frankston's young people had to say. We provided feedback from our consultations with young people (focus groups and online survey) which revealed that young people themselves often feel unsafe in public spaces; that they want to see anti-social behaviours addressed, but do not believe 'move on' powers would be effective, with comments like "There is not enough of a police presence to enforce move on powers." And "People are already being moved on, but it doesn't change anything; they just come back."
2. The experience of other jurisdictions with similar powers, for which research suggests that the powers are open to

misuse and unfair targeting of vulnerable and marginalised people who frequent public areas, such as homeless and young people. We were not aware of any research suggesting that move-on powers have actually reduced anti-social behaviour.

3. The need to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic). We expressed concern that, based on the experience of other states, the proposed law might infringe a number of rights protected by the Victorian Charter, in particular:

- Right to participate in public affairs
- Freedom from discrimination
- Right to freedom of movement
- Right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

4. The need to find solutions that address the underlying causes of offending and serious anti-social behaviour, such as child neglect and physical abuse.
5. Considering alternatives that build on the successes of current Frankston initiatives, such as the Frankston Police, Mission Australia and Community Youth Assist Program, Frankston Youth Referral and Independent Person Program and the City of Frankston's Ambassador Program, which recognise the necessity of a holistic approach to youth issues and the importance of multi-agency involvement so that a wide range of skills, knowledge and resources can be drawn upon in addressing complex problems.

We understand that Frankston City Council has deferred its decision on this issue until further information is available about proposed State laws to increase police powers.

Concern over 'move on' law

A PROPOSED "move on" law that would give police and council officers the power to evict people from public places in Frankston could discriminate against young people.

Youthlaw, a community legal service for people aged under 25, and Peninsula Community Legal Centre have raised concerns about the proposed law and urged young people to have their say before it is adopted by

Frankston Council.

Tiffany Overall of Youthlaw said: "Although the law will apply to everyone, it is considered likely it will largely be used to move on young people, for the simple reason that young people hang out together in public places more than other groups."

The proposed amendment would allow police and "authorised offi-

cers" from the council to "move on" anyone they believed to be behaving in an offensive or disruptive way. The person could be directed to leave any public place and not return for up to 24 hours, copping a fine of \$227 if they refused or returned to the area within the 24 hours.

The council advertised the proposed amendment last month after it

received unanimous approval at a council meeting in November.

Written submissions will be accepted until next Tuesday, Mr Overall said.

Youthlaw and Peninsula Community Legal Centre are conducting an online survey on the proposed law and other issues on www.youthlaw.asn.au or from the legal centre on 9783 3600.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONSULTATION

The National Human Rights Consultation was launched on 10 December 2008 by the Federal Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert McClelland, to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Consultation was established to consider:

- Which human rights and responsibilities should be protected and promoted?
- Are human rights sufficiently protected and promoted?
- How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

Peninsula CLC endorsed the submission of the National Association of Community Legal Centres on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Australia to the National Human Rights Consultation.

In its submission, NACLC called for a national system for the protection of human rights, which should include those rights and freedoms that Australia has agreed to protect in International Conventions, including (but not limited to) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention of the Rights of the Child. The submission also noted a need for urgent public education about human rights.

PCLC also held a workshop with PILCH on 21 May 2009 to provide information to volunteers and community workers about taking part in the National Consultation on Human Rights.

WORKING GROUPS

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is an active member of the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) and regularly participates in its Working Groups. These groups use the collective expertise of members to address and develop strategic responses to sector, policy, law reform, justice and legal system issues. In 2008-2009, PCLC participated in the following:

- Access to Interpreters Working Group
- [Intervention Order] Applicant Lawyers Group
- Child Support Working Group
- Community Development & Community Legal Education Working Group
- Management Committee of the Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Sector Development Working Group
- Victoria Legal Aid Community Consultative Committee (nominee of the Federation)
- Violence Against Women and Children Working Group.

Peninsula CLC actively participates in Court and Tribunal User Groups to provide feedback about administrative procedures and operations which impact on our clients, as well as ensuring that all Court users are aware of the services offered by the Centre. During this period, Peninsula CLC participated in the following:

- Federal Magistrates' Court of Australia - Dandenong Liaison Meeting
- Frankston Magistrates' Court Users Group
- VCAT Civil Claims Users Group
- VCAT Residential Tenancies List Users Group.



Jackie Galloway
Deputy CEO, Senior Advocate

CONSUMER & TENANCY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Securing a safe place has increasingly become more difficult over this past year for many in our community with issues such as no security of tenure, unregulated rooming houses, low vacancy rates in the private rental market, a lack of affordable housing and the absence of minimum housing standards all compounding the difficulties for those trying to secure a place to call home.

The Advocacy Program is funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers and tenants with advice/information assistance, advocacy and Tribunal support and representation across the Eastern and Southern Regions of Metropolitan Melbourne.

In the past year the Advocacy Program assisted a total of 591 clients – 488 tenants and 103 consumers. A total of 479 cases were conducted including 135 Tribunal appearances and 112 clients were with advice and/or assistance with forms etc. Tribunal appearances were conducted in the Civil Claims List and the Residential Tenancies List in Dandenong, Dromana, Frankston, Korumburra, Melbourne, Moorabbin and Ringwood.

During the year we welcomed the addition of Danny Haworth to the Advocacy Program.

Congratulations and warmest thanks to Danny for his commitment and enthusiasm to the Program. We also extend our thanks to Catherine Currie and Saskia Weerheim for their work and valuable assistance with the program particularly during the period of my long service leave.

This past year we have experienced consistently low vacancy rates in the private rental market, in particular affordable private rental accommodation with only 17% of all new lettings across the state affordable to low income households.¹ Median Rents for the region, for instance the South Eastern Melbourne region rose from \$275 pw in the December 2008 quarter to \$280 in the March 2009 quarter. Median Rents on the Mornington Peninsula also had an annual change of 10.7% rising to \$260 per week.²

During the period the program conducted four cases on behalf of tenants in the Residential Tenancies List seeking compensation where the landlord failed to comply with the Notice to Vacate served on the tenants. For instance in two of the cases the landlord was to move into the premises, however it was established that this did not occur and the premises were offered for relet in contravention of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. Orders for compensation were obtained to cover relocation and associated costs including inconvenience. In the other two cases the tenants were asked to leave

the rental premises as the premises were being renovated, however it was established that the renovations were not conducted and that the premises were relet. The Tribunal determined that the tenants were entitled to compensation to cover their relocation costs.

Consumer cases conducted during the year were with range of issues including computer software programs, trade services such as concreting and plumbing, household goods, motor vehicle purchase and repairs, real estate non-tenancy, building and general consumer contracts. The program assisted with the drafting of letters, negotiation, and assistance with the preparation of documents including the application to the Civil Claims List of the Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) along with representation in the Tribunal. The program was able to negotiate many good outcomes for consumers.

One example relates to a telephone sale of a computer software program. The consumer consulted our service after trying unsuccessfully to obtain a refund for the software program worth several thousand dollars. The consumer purchased the product after reassurances from the salesperson that the product would be easy to use despite our client's disabilities. This clearly was not the case, with our client not able to get past the first step of the program. An application was lodged in the Tribunal and representation provided with the Tribunal determining that a full refund was due to our client.

¹ Rental Report March 2009, Department of Human Services

² Rental Report December 2008, Department of Human Services

“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.”

Maya Angelou American Poet

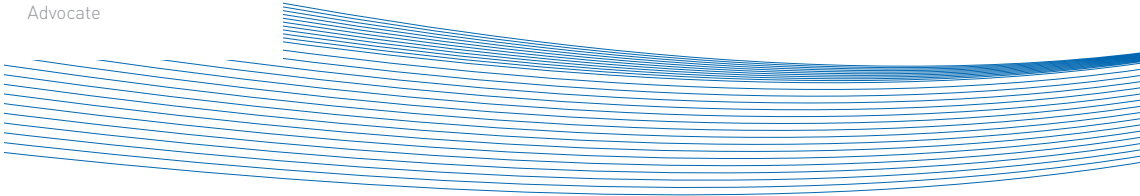
The program assisted an elderly couple, who had paid a substantial deposit on a household item, which they had initially thought would alleviate some of the discomfort of a terminal illness. During the transaction the couple felt pressured to purchase the item. After cancelling the purchase within 24 hours, the trader not only refused to refund the deposit but was demanding full payment. The program conducted extensive negotiations and finally lodged application in the Civil Claims List of VCAT after negotiations failed. The Tribunal determined that the contract was cancelled and therefore the applicants were entitled to a full refund.

The program also addressed the broader casework practice issues with ongoing discussion with Consumer Affairs Victoria and participation in VCAT’s Civil Claims List and the Residential Tenancies List Users Groups.

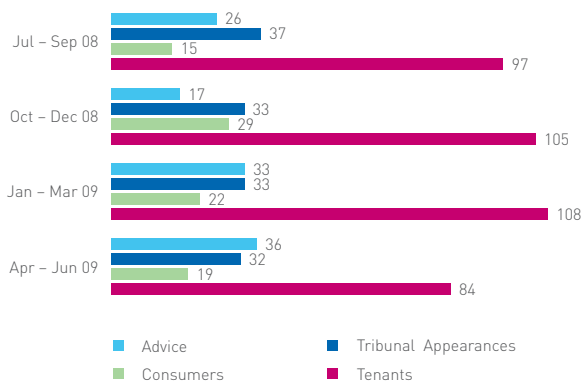
Thank you to all the management committee, staff and my fellow program managers for your ongoing support and assistance. Special thanks to Helen Constas, Chief Executive Officer, whose vision and drive is a constant source of inspiration to us all.



Danny Haworth
Advocate



ADVOCACY PROGRAM STATISTICS 2008-09





Gillian Wilks
Manager – Projects and
Development

PROJECTS

YOUNG RENTERS PROGRAM

Victoria is experiencing the worst rental crisis in more than 20 years with a severe shortage of appropriate and affordable rental accommodation. For a variety of reasons this often leaves young people 'on the bottom rung of the ladder' when landlords are considering prospective tenants for their properties. The Young Renters Program aims to provide information and resources to enhance young people's knowledge, skills and confidence in applying for, securing and maintaining rental accommodation.

Operating in the Cities of Frankston and Casey since 2005 and expanding into the Mornington Peninsula in 2007/08, the Program successfully moved into the City of Greater Dandenong during 2008/09. A total of 46 workshops were conducted during the year with 263 young people in attendance. Feedback indicated many participants proceeded to secure rental accommodation reporting their 'chances' had increased by completing the workshops. Comments by participants who had secured private rental accommodation included:

"I actually just moved into my new rental about 3 weeks ago. I think if I didn't do the course my chances would have been much worse".

"am renting and have been for about....four months I think? We got a place about two weeks after doing your program. It really helped, thank you"

Reference Groups continue to actively support the Program with members attending meetings, providing referrals and assisting in general promotional activities.

Groups primarily consist of local real estate agents, youth/housing agencies, local government departments and young people.

During the year three pilot workshops were conducted to the Sudanese communities in the Cities of Frankston and Greater Dandenong. These workshops were not specifically targeting young people but available to all members of the community. With the support of local service providers working with the communities and assisted by experienced interpreters, the workshops were well attended and feedback indicated the information was very well received.

PCLC wishes to thank all who have supported the Program during the past year including local real estate agents, workers/agencies and particularly the Program Reference Group members whose time and input is invaluable. Congratulations and thanks to Catherine Currie for her work with the Young Renters Program.

CARAVAN PARK & ROOMING HOUSE OUTREACH PROJECT

During the year PCLC received funding from Consumer Affairs Victoria for a new Caravan Park and Rooming House Outreach Project. The Project is designed to inform, assist and empower caravan park, rooming house and student rooming house residents in negotiating with landlords and managers about their tenancy rights, and also to inform Consumer Affairs Victoria on its residential accommodation policy. The Project operates across fourteen local government areas in southern and eastern metropolitan Melbourne.

Since commencing employment with PCLC in January, the Outreach Project Worker, Marc Westley, has attended orientation activities at the fourteen tertiary campuses falling in the project catchment area, and distributed relevant general and project materials. Visits have been made to the fifty-nine caravan parks and one hundred and forty seven rooming houses identified across the project area. Information about the Project, residents rights and responsibilities and sources of further assistance is distributed to residents.

Visits have also been made to over one hundred community organisations and agencies to inform them of the Project. Liaison with agencies has also be directed to exploring reciprocal servicing options for caravan park and rooming house residents and attempting to develop a comprehensive picture of the social policy and regulatory issues arising from these accommodation options.

PCLC representatives have participated in the Consumer Affairs Victoria Outreach Overview Group meetings. As part of the exploration of better models for rooming house regulation, the Project convenes a regular Frankston Working Party on Rooming Houses. Among other activities, the Working Party has sought to develop a co-ordinated response by relevant agencies and authorities to the growing issue of unregistered rooming houses in the Frankston region and to push for improved compliance with basic health and safety requirements.

PCLC welcomes Marc Westley to his role with the Project. The Centre is committed to continuing its work directed at enhancing and protecting the rights of both caravan park and rooming house residents.

CONSUMER & TENANT WORKSHOPS PROJECT

The aim of this Project is to assist consumers and tenants who are self-representing at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to use application and hearing processes more effectively. One hundred and eighty people attended workshops offered by PCLC during the year.

Workshops were offered to the general public on a regular basis in central Melbourne and suburban locations. In 2008-09 nine consumer workshops and nine tenant workshops were run in Melbourne. Workshops were also held in Footscray, Moorabbin, Frankston and Box Hill,

Specialised workshops were delivered to community and housing workers and to Consumer Affairs Victoria staff during the year. A highlight was a workshop organised in partnership with the Albury-Wodonga Community Legal Centre and delivered in Wodonga to workers from across the Hume region.

PCLC continued to distribute the Civil Claims Workbook, developed during an earlier stage of the Project. Consumer Affairs Victoria made the Workbook available to the public via its website.

Project staff undertook some consultation to assess the feasibility of the similar workshops being delivered by other agencies in rural and regional areas. Staff also explored the perceived needs for workshops/ other forms of relevant information to be provided to traders who were seeking to resolve disputes with other traders through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Gillian Wilks and Jackie Galloway continued to work on the Consumer & Tenant Workshops Project during 2008-09. PCLC would like to acknowledge the support provided to the Project by Consumer Affairs Victoria during the year, including by providing a workshop venue, promoting the workshops and assisting with printing of workshop materials. Thanks also to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for promoting the workshops on its website.

The success of projects is dependent upon the organisational base upon which they are built and the structures that support them. Project staff wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by all at PCLC, particularly the administrative staff and management team.

The Young Renters Program, Caravan Park & Rooming House Outreach Project and the Consumer & Tenant Workshops Project are funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria on approval of the Minister for Consumer Affairs.



Catherine Currie
Community Worker
Young Renters Program



Mark Westly
Community Worker –
Caravan Park & Rooming
House Project



Sue Vincent
Manager
Administration Program

ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM REPORT

Over the past year the centre received a total of 24,512 telephone enquiries. Calls to the centre have increased by more than 23% from last year. Of the enquiries legal advice continues to be the main request. Many clients present with a range of complex issues and receive not only legal advice but also support and referrals to local agencies and resources. During this period reception staff provided 13,268 information and referrals (this is an increase of 68% from last period).

The need for assistance continues to grow with a total of 6,698 advice activities recorded. Approximately 5,660 clients received face to face legal advice and 1,038 clients received legal advice over the phone. These statistics demonstrate the vital services we provide and highlight just how many vulnerable clients would otherwise fall between the gaps.

Meeting our clients' needs is important to us. The feedback from clients gathered from surveys indicates a 98% satisfaction rate.

HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Upgrade workstations and blinds at our Head Office.
- Photocopier upgrade
- Desktop messaging
- Online resource booking and electronic meetings diary

INTERPRETING SERVICES

PCLC seeks to ensure that its services are accessible to all clients of culturally diverse and non-English speaking backgrounds. The Commonwealth Attorney-General's

Department meets the cost of telephone interpreting services provided to our centre. The centre also has access to a small pool of funds to provide onsite language and sign interpreters.

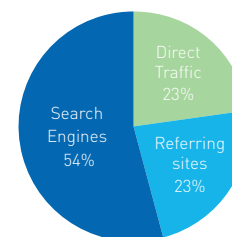
COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES INFORMATION SYSTEM

As part of our funding requirements under the Community Legal Services Program, PCLC participates in the Community Legal Services Information System. Information is collected to meet accountability requirements but also enables the centre to run a variety of reports with detailed demographic and social data. These reports are a valuable source of information for future planning, community legal education, law reform and community development activities.

WEBSITE

The legal centre's website is located at www.pclc.org.au. It was redesigned and launched in April 2009. The website is the public face for PCLC and it includes information about our centre, services and activities. To date the site has received a total of 1,651 visits.

WEBSITE TRAFFIC SOURCES



ROSEBUD BRANCH

Opening of our Rosebud Branch has proved to be very popular. Night service and day appointments have been well utilised with client activities increasing by 240%!! Establishing a new branch is always a challenge with many people contributing to its success. Sincere thanks to everyone whose combined effort made it achievable.

FOCUS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The most challenging and time consuming priorities will be developing a network based intranet and a client booking system which we hope to implement them in the year ahead.

THANK YOU

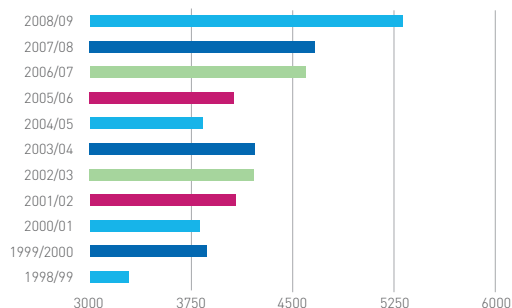
Special thanks to Hellen Argiriou for her work in the Administration Program whilst Sue Vincent was on long service leave. Her effort and contribution has been exceptional.

Special thanks to Finrea Computers who continue to provide the centre with technical support.

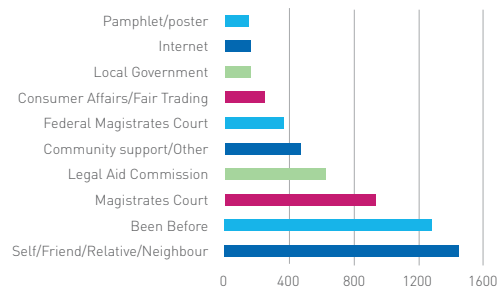
The expansion of another branch over the past year is a testament to the quality of work done on a day to day basis. Services such as ours cannot be delivered without the vision, professionalism and hard work of all our staff and volunteers.

On behalf of the Administration team I would like to thank our dedicated staff, management committee and volunteers for their support throughout the year. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of our CEO, Helen Constas whose continual support and leadership is much appreciated.

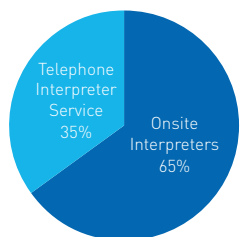
CLIENTS ASSISTED OVER 10 YEAR PERIOD



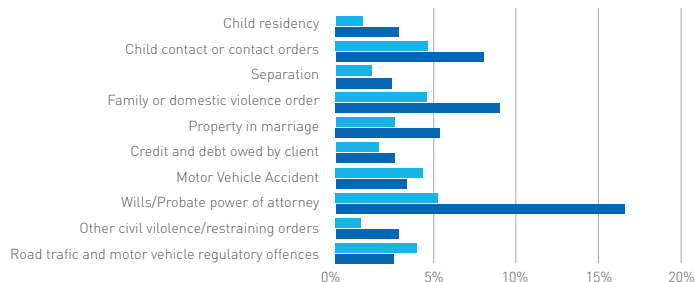
TOP 10 REFERRALS TO PCLC



INTERPRETER USAGE



PROBLEM TYPES AGAINST STATE AVERAGE FOR GENERALIST CENTRES 2008/2009



Hellen Argirou
Assistant Manager
Administration Program



Vicki Holmes
Administrative Worker Head
Office and Rosebud Branch



Carla Weelen-Young
Administrative Worker



Beth Weerheim
Administrative Worker



Kristie Quinlan
Administrative Worker



Valmai Sculy
Administrative Worker
Bentleigh Branch



Stephanie Richardson
Administrative Worker
(temporary)



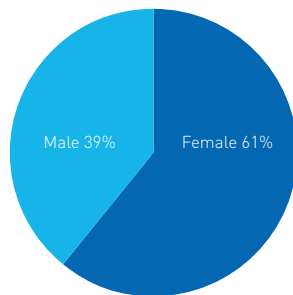
Ian Brent
Administrative Worker
Cranbourne Branch



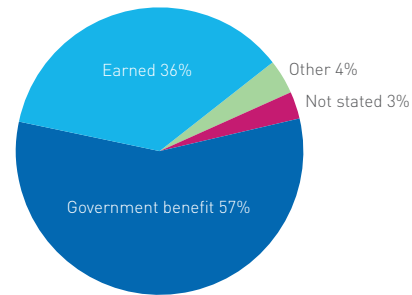
Jasminka Kumbaric
Administrative Worker
(temporary)

CENTRE ACTIVITY STATISTICS

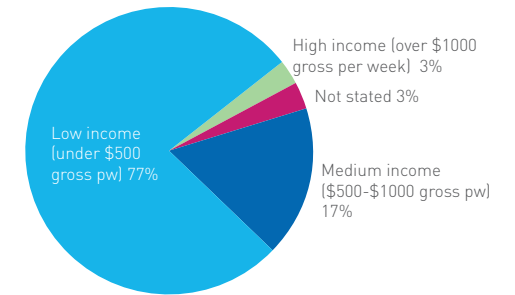
CLIENT SEEN BY GENDER



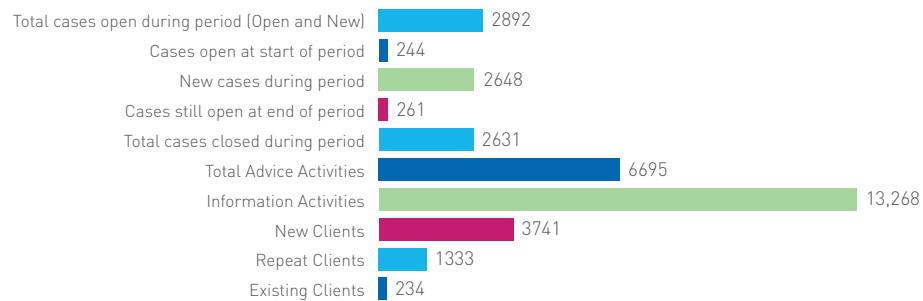
INCOME SOURCE



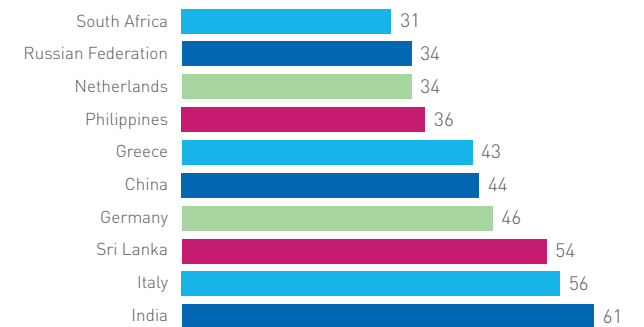
INCOME SCALE



CENTRE ACTIVITY SUMMARY

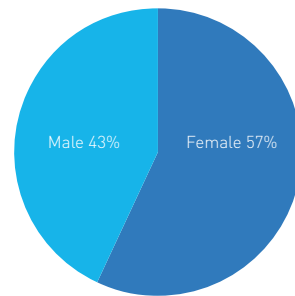


TOP TEN CALD CLIENTS BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH

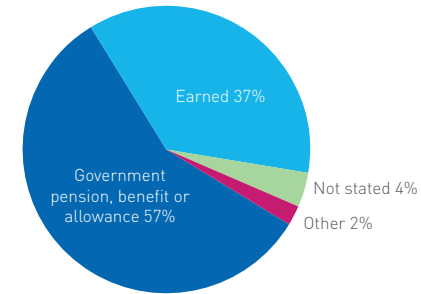


OUTREACH STATISTICS

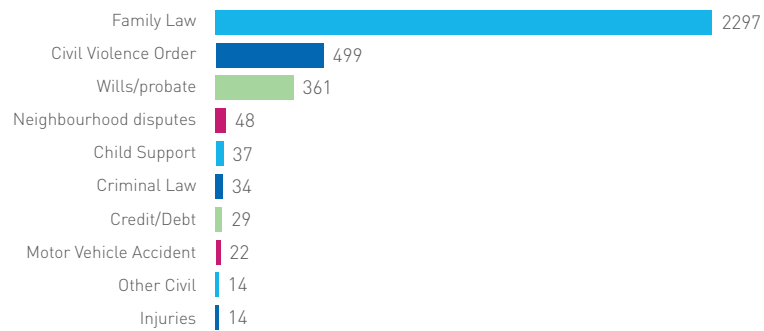
CLIENT ACTIVITIES BY GENDER
AT OUTREACH VENUES



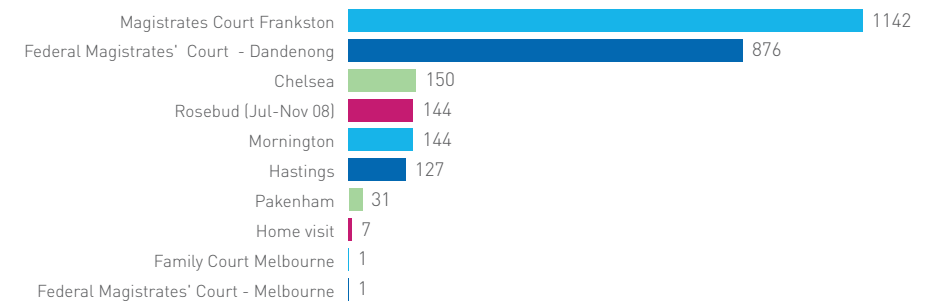
OUTREACH CLIENTS BY INCOME



OUTREACH CLIENT ACTIVITIES BY TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPE

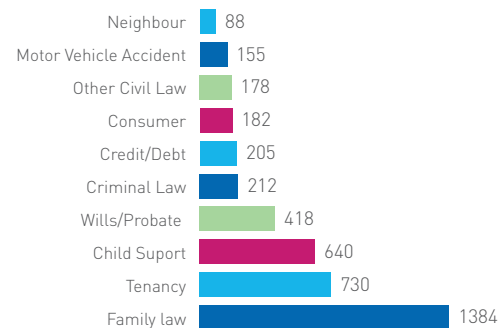


CLIENT ACTIVITIES AT OUTREACH VENUES

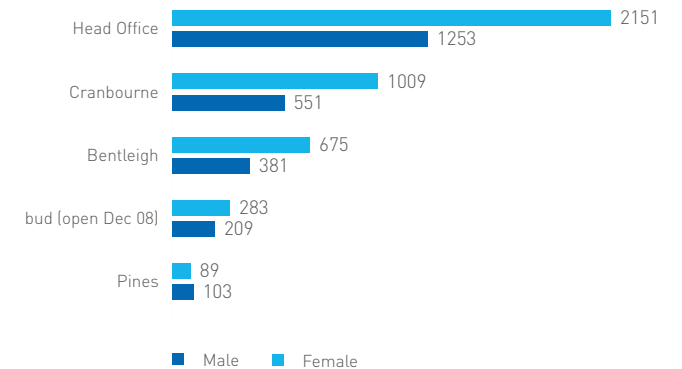


BRANCH STATISTICS

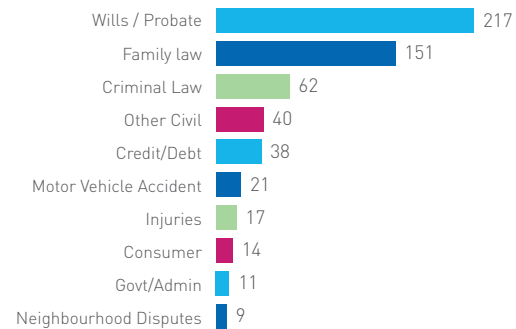
HEAD OFFICE CLIENT ACTIVITIES
BY TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPES



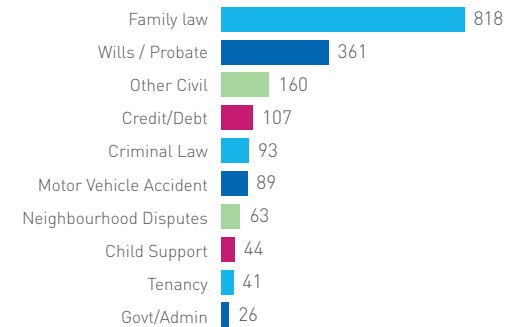
CLIENT ACTIVITIES AT BRANCHES BY GENDER



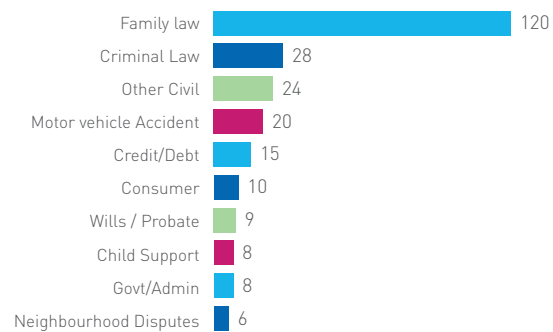
ROSEBUD BRANCH (opened Dec 2008)
CLIENT ACTIVITIES BY TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPES



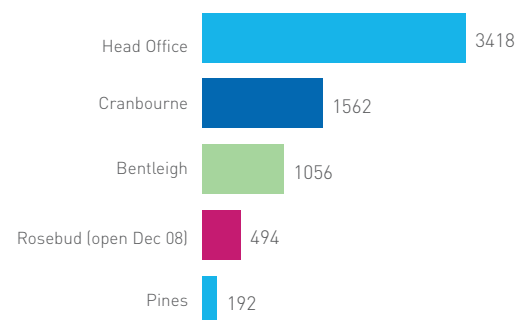
CRANBOURNE BRANCH CLIENT ACTIVITIES
BY TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPES



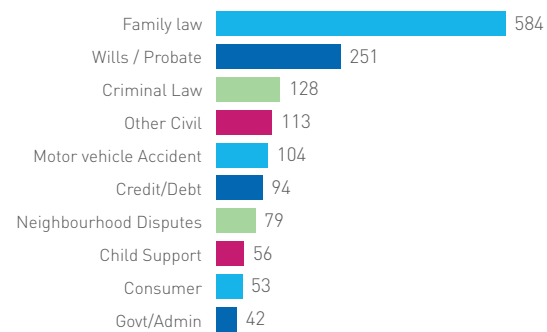
PINES BRANCH CLIENT ACTIVITIES
BY TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPES



CLIENT ACTIVITY BY BRANCHES



BENTLEIGH BRANCH CLIENT ACTIVITIES
BY TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPES



INCOME STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2009

INCOME	2009	2008
Commonwealth – Attorney General	-	50,000
Federal Attorney General	272,731	-
VLA Commonwealth	323,516	317,172
VLA State	614,020	803,240
Consumer Affairs Victoria	370,087	136,580
City of Casey	29,180	25,000
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	43,927	40,000
City of Kingston	27,810	27,000
City of Frankston	36,484	35,000
City of Glen Eira	14,456	13,686
Tenants Union of Victoria	-	61,904
Law Foundation	-	25,300
30th Anniversary	-	7,567
Disbursements Reimbursed	1,092	1,982
Fundraising/Donations	27,820	4,609
Interest	34,135	29,266
Membership	75	79
Sundry	7,044	9,586
TOTAL INCOME	1,802,376	1,587,971

EXPENDITURE	2009	2008
Salaries - Permanent staff	1,188,341	920,954
Salaries - Casual staff	6,380	115,300
Superannuation - Permanent staff	104,296	57,752
Superannuation - Casual staff	570	10,216
Long Service Leave Paid Out	10,064	34,920
WorkCover	5,870	4,840
Travel	46,171	57,387
30th Anniversary Costs	-	7,594
Accounting	3,000	-
Advertising	1,994	5,818
Amenities	16,861	17,736
Audit	3,600	3,100
Bank charges	913	896
Minor Equipment & Maintenance	22,282	7,059
CLE Expenses	8,676	5,724
Cleaning	12,649	11,487

EXPENDITURE (cont.)	2009	2008
Computer Software & Supplies	-	820
Conferences	1,300	6,666
Contractors	180	17,605
Disbursements	2,934	2,690
Donations	500	-
Electricity, gas and fuel	7,114	6,379
First Aid Certificates	2,538	2,538
Incorporation Fees	40	35
Insurance - Directors & Officers	-	1,091
Insurance (other than PI)	8,212	4,677
Interpreter & Translation Services	91	1,287
Language Allowance	1,000	-
Library	5,288	4,060
Memberships	12,000	9,578
Postage	5,935	6,824
Practising certificates	5,044	1,987
Printing, Photocopying & Publication Costs	27,278	23,549
Rates	1,940	280
Removals	1,260	840
Rent	83,233	68,262
Staff Recruitment	5,601	-
Stationery & Office Supplies	18,999	15,030
Security	6,371	2,048
Storage	1,645	2,792
Telephone	29,813	25,317
Training	2,956	2,225
SUB TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURE	1,662,937	1,467,364
TOTAL INCOME LESS DIRECT EXPENDITURE	139,439	120,608

INCREMENTS/(DECREMENTS) TO PROVISIONS & DEPRECIATION	2009	2008
Annual Leave	(22,664)	(9,859)
Long Service Leave	(9,065)	24,714
Depreciation	13,092	8,590
Sub Total Increments to Provisions & Depreciation	(18,637)	23,445
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,644,300	1,490,809
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	158,076	97,163

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH JUNE 2009

CURRENT ASSETS	2009	2008
Cash on Hand	250	250
National Australia Bank – Cheque A/c	12,442	4,999
National Australia Bank – Cash Management A/c	211,252	284,994
National Australia Bank – Short Term Deposit	249,999	-
National Australia Bank – Mastercard	-	2,167
Prepayments	661	5,200
Sundry Debtors	59,694	153,246
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	534,298	450,856
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2009	2008
Office Furniture & Fixtures at Cost	151,462	93,991
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(88,177)	(75,085)
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	63,285	18,906
TOTAL ASSETS	597,583	469,762
CURRENT LIABILITIES	2009	2008
Payables	72,206	70,732
Provision for Annual Leave	10,767	33,431
Provision for Long Service Leave	95,514	104,579
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	178,487	208,741
TOTAL LIABILITIES	178,487	208,741
NET ASSETS	419,097	261,021
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	2009	2008
Retained Surplus/(deficit) at Beginning of Year	261,021	163,858
Surplus/(deficit) for Year	158,076	97,163
RETAINED SURPLUS AT END OF YEAR	419,097	261,021

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2009

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	Note	2009	2008
Receipts from Grants		2,038,618	1,623,291
Other Receipts		-	16,256
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		(1,831,581)	(1,665,336)
Interest Received		34,135	29,266
NET CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2	241,172	3,477
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payment for property, plant & equipment		(57,471)	(9,132)
NET CASH PROVIDED (USED IN) INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(57,471)	(9,132)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES			
Net cash provided by (used in) Financing Activities		Nil	Nil
Net Increase in Cash Held		183,701	(5,655)
Cash at Beginning of Year		290,243	295,898
CASH AT END OF YEAR	1	473,943	290,243
NOTES TO STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS			
1. Reconciliation Of Cash			
Cash on Hand		250	250
National Australia Bank - Cheque A/c		12,442	4,999
National Australia Bank - Cash Management A/c		211,252	284,994
National Australia Bank - Short Term Deposit		249,999	-
		473,943	290,243
2. Reconciliation Of Cash Flow From Operations With Net Surplus/Deficit			
Operating Profit/ (Loss)		158,076	97,163
Depreciation		13,092	8,590
Changes to Provisions		(31,729)	14,855
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors		93,552	(62,687)
Increase/(Decrease) in Prepaid Income		-	(50,000)
(Increase)/Decrease in Prepayments		4,539	1,352
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade Creditors & Accruals		3,641	(5,796)
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATIONS		241,172	3,477

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2008

JULY

- Independent Person Training – RVA of the Peace Seminar
- Family Law Conference – Victoria Legal Aid x 6
- Practice Management – Mornington Peninsula Lawyers Association x2
- Legal Issues in Managing Volunteers – PILCH x 2

AUGUST

- DNA Testing – Genetic Technologies
- Child Support to Single Parents Group Seminar
- Online Research Workshop – Thomson Reuters
- Human Rights in Australia Conference – PIAC NSW
- National Association of Community Legal Centre's Conference (17-20 August) x 4
- Coroner's Court Seminar – PILCH
- Screening and Background Checking Volunteers – PILCH x 2
- Census Data Workshop – Australian Bureau of Statistics

SEPTEMBER

- Compensation, Human Rights, Public Interest Law Conference – Maurice Blackburn x2
- National Conference on Volunteering (3-5 September)

OCTOBER

- Criminal Law Conference – Victoria Legal Aid
- New Family Violence Act Seminar – Women's Legal Service

NOVEMBER

- Family Law Conference – Law Institute of Victoria x 3
- Risk Management Seminar – Legal Practice Liability Committee
- Tenancy – Brotherhood of St Laurence, Sudanese Community
- Leadership Workshop x 2

DECEMBER

- Dealing with Trauma Workshop – Women's Legal Service
- Family Violence Act and Family Law – Victoria Legal Aid
- Child Support Legal Liaison Meeting – Child Support Agency
- PILCH Connect Workshop

2009

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

- Ethics Workshop – Legal Services Board x 6
- Mornington Peninsula Division of REIV
- VCOSS Financial Literacy Training Board

MARCH

- Leading Through Change :Leadership Education Program – SED Consulting x2
- National Human Rights Consultation Workshop – PILCH
- National Consumer Congress, Adelaide (11-13 March)

APRIL

- Advocacy – Federal Magistrate Paul Cronin
- Child Support Legal Liaison Meeting – Child Support Agency

MAY

- VCAT Melbourne for beginners on VCAT tenancy matters

JUNE

- Community Development & Community Legal Education Mini Conference – CD & CLE Working Group of the Federation of Community Legal Centre's x 2
- Viewed Legal Update Material x 8

TRAINING, PLACEMENTS, WORK EXPERIENCE

COURSES/TRAINING

- Fire Warden Training x 2

WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENTS

- Dromana Secondary College
- Cranbourne Secondary College
- Carrum Downs Secondary College
- Frankston High School
- Parkdale Secondary College

PLACEMENT

Brenda McSorley

Diploma of Welfare and Community Development, Chisholm TAFE

TRAINING SESSIONS PROVIDED TO VOLUNTEERS

- Orientation Training for Paralegal Volunteers (31/1/09)
- Induction for Rosebud Lawyer Volunteers (22/1/09)
- National Human Rights Consultation Workshop (21/5/09)
- Additional, one-off inductions and ongoing support offered as a required, as various times throughout the year.

All smiles as Hulls opens legal centre

VICTORIAN Attorney-General Rob Hulls returned to his old stomping ground yesterday to open the Rosebud branch of Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

Mr Hulls spent some of his teenage years in the Mt Martha and Mornington areas and attended the Peninsula School in Mt Eliza for three years before heading off to the wide world of law. He was a councillor on Mt Isa City Council in Queensland and a federal MP in the region from 1990-93 before returning to Melbourne, where he worked for the Labor Opposition and was elected MP for Niddrie in 1996.

Mr Hulls did not endear himself to Mornington residents a few years ago following the release of the Government's Melbourne 2030 planning blueprint when he said the seaside town was "part of Melbourne".

Yesterday, it was all smiles as he cut the ribbon on the latest office of the legal service, which started as the Frankston North Legal Service in 1977. It now has offices in Bentleigh, Frankston, Cranbourne, Frankston North and Rosebud and serves an area of more than 800,000 residents.

"As the population of the Mornington Peninsula has expanded, and as particular forms of need have developed in the



Demanding justice: Rob Hulls and Peninsula Community Legal Centre chief executive Helen Constanas outside the centre's new Rosebud office.

Peninsula CLC has seen a demand for justice and responded to it," Mr Hulls said at the opening.

"It is vitally important that the most vulnerable members of our community, who are often the most in need of legal advice, are not excluded from the justice system and are provided with the same advice and benefits as anyone."

advice, court lawyer services, assistance with intervention orders, consumer and tenant advice and outreach services. Paid workers are supported by volunteer lawyers and paralegals, all of whom Mr Hulls extolled yesterday.

"Put simply, we're proud to have supported those passionate about assisting the disenfranchised, and

professional heights is about more than securing a Collins Street office or succumbing to the soporific of billable hours," he said.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is at 1375 Point Nepean Road, Rosebud, and is open to 5pm, Monday to Thursday, phone 5981 2422.

Mik

Youth take on violence

FRANKSTON'S youths have introduced a new local law giving their say on street violence and new local laws that will give police the

Statewide community service Youthlaw Peninsula Community Legal Centre have joined for

Residents gather for legal advice

MORE than 500 people filled the Balla Balla Centre on Wednesday night for a forum about residents' rights in the wake of the Brookland Greens gas leak crisis.

A panel of speakers from the Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC) hosted the forum and answered questions about issues ranging from health and tenancy concerns to compensation and class action.

Centre chief executive officer Helen Constanas said the issues facing Brookland Greens residents were complex and the PCLC would continue to help the



Chris Galaghen, Sue Vincent, Jan Kelly, Michael Denison and Vicki Holmes at the opening of Peninsula Community Legal Centre's Rosebud branch.

Legal help is flowing freely

ATTORNEY-GENERAL Rob Hulls has formally opened Peninsula Community Legal Centre's Rosebud branch.

Mr Hulls dropped in to do the honour of opening the branch, which has been operating since

Peninsula Community Legal Centre chief executive Helen Constanas said.

providing free legal services for more than 30 years. People can get advice on issues of family law, child

Confusion over child support

PENINSULA Community Legal Centre says it is receiving an increasing number of inquiries from parents concerned about impending changes to the child support system.

Principal solicitor Victoria Mullings said many people were unaware of changes to the legislation which came into effect today.

"Many parents are shocked to learn that the changes taking effect on July 1 may mean their child support payments will drop," Ms Mullings said.

"For example, where the parent with whom a child lives receives a parenting payment unpartnered and the other parent has average weekly earnings of \$875, child support will drop from \$104 to \$89 per week.

"That amount could drop even further, depending on individual circumstances."

"How these changes affect individual families will vary."

of time each parent spends with the child.

Ms Mullings said it was important to ensure that Centrelink and the Child Support Agency had current information about the child's living arrangements.

She said full-time parents who were already struggling to make ends meet might soon find themselves under even greater financial stress and children could suffer as a result.

"For many parents, a loss of \$15 per week is a lot of money. It could mean that a child can no longer go to swimming lessons or participate in other sports and activities."

"This could have a detrimental effect on community involvement for many families."

Peninsula Community Legal Centre

This compilation includes articles from Leader Community Newspapers and Fairfax Community Newspapers

Concern over 'move on' law

PROPOSED "move on" law that would give police and council officers the power to evict people from public places in Frankston could discriminate against young people.

Youthlaw, a community legal service for people aged under 25, and Peninsula Community Legal Centre have raised concerns about the proposed law and urged young people to

Frankston Council.

Tiffany Overall of Youthlaw said: "Although the law will apply to everyone, it is considered likely it will largely be used to move on young people, for the simple reason that young people hang out together in public places more than other groups."

The proposed amendment would allow police and "authorised offi-

cers" from the council to "move on" anyone they believed to be behaving in an offensive or disruptive way. The person could be directed to leave any public place and not return for up to 24 hours, copping a fine of \$227 if they refused or returned to the area within the 24 hours.

The council advertised the proposed amendment last month after it

received unanimous approval at council meeting in November.

Written submissions will be accepted until next Tuesday, Overall said.

Youthlaw and Peninsula Community Legal Centre are conducting an online survey on the proposed law and other issues on youthlaw.asn.au or from the centre on 9783 3600.