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An independent voice for the community

We are the only locally owned and operated community newspaper on the Mornington Peninsula. We are dedicated to the belief that a strong community newspaper is essential to a strong community. We exist to serve residents, community groups and businesses and ask for their support in return.

NEWS DESK

End of 'emergency' puts renters at risk

A DECISION by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal has tenant advocates worried more renters will become homeless now that the moratorium on evictions has ended.

At the height of the COVID-19 crisis last year, the state government introduced emergency measures to protect renters, including bans on evictions where renters were unable to pay their rent because of the pandemic.

These measures proved crucial not only in ensuring renters could keep a roof over their heads but in reducing the spread of the virus by limiting the movement of people.

However, the protections ended in late March leaving many renters, unable to return to work due to rolling lockdowns and at risk of homelessness.

"The protections may have gone away, but the virus has not," Peninsula Community Legal Centre CEO Jackie Galloway said. "This leaves families in our area vulnerable to eviction where rent has gone unpaid due to a drop in income. It also comes at a time when rental providers are increasing rents, especially on the peninsula, as people flee the city in the wake of COVID-19."

The legal centre runs a tenancy assistance and advocacy program where staff are seeing an increase in rent-related debts.

"In the past it was unusual to see rent arrears accrue beyond a couple of thousand dollars," Ms Galloway said. "Now we are increasingly seeing renters with arrears of over \$10,000. Many people have limited means to pay their rent and nowhere to go as rents are rising and housing is being snapped up by the sea-changers."

The legal centre has operated throughout the pandemic and says it has helped many renters negotiate reductions with their landlords. However, with the crisis still unfolding, renters needed ongoing protection.

"With every lockdown comes the very real fear of how to pay your rent,"

Ms Galloway said. "There is no longer a mechanism to get rents reduced, and the rental relief grant is no longer available."

"With VCAT now saying that renters can be evicted for rent arrears accrued during last year's lockdowns, renters are at a heightened risk of homelessness with little means to repay their debt."

Ms Galloway says renters cannot be evicted without an order from the tribunal. "If anyone receives a Notice to Vacate for rent arrears or any other reason they are urged to contact us for advice," she said.

Contact the centre on 9783 3600.

'No rough sleepers by 2023'

THE Frankston City Strategic Housing and Homelessness Alliance has launched a project to wipe out rough sleeping by 2023.

Frankston mayor Kris Bolam said that local rough sleeping homelessness has grown by 388 per cent since 2016, and that the initiative would help to fix this.

"Frankston Zero - based on international best practice models to end homelessness - has reoriented the local service system to deliver a coordinated response for people

sleeping rough," he said. "Frankston Zero defies traditional sector barriers by bringing together all services and sectors that have a role to play in supporting the pathway out of homelessness. These include health and mental health services, family violence and legal services, alcohol and other drug services, local government, and many more. Its aim is both simple and ambitious - to achieve functional zero homelessness for rough sleeping in Frankston City by 2023."



Share your opinion: Pets on the Peninsula

The new draft Domestic Animal Management Plan outlines our approach to animal management services, programs and strategies across the Peninsula over the next four years, including:

- Responsible pet ownership
Promoting compliance and enhancing education
Improving animal welfare
Supporting a consistent approach to leash free and dog prohibited areas
Increasing pet registration and opportunities for lost pets to be reunited with their owners
Decreasing dog waste in public places
Reducing dog attacks.

We want to hear from you. Whether you own a pet or not, we encourage you to provide your feedback on the draft Plan to help us understand what's important to you.

How to provide your feedback Online: mornpen.vic.gov.au/DAMP

Hard copy plans and feedback forms available on request.

Email: DAMP@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Write to us
Domestic Animal Management Plan
Mornington Peninsula Shire, Private Bag 1000, Rosebud, Victoria, 3939

Community consultation is open until Wednesday 22 September 2021.



DO YOU HAVE CCTV CAMERAS?

VICTORIA POLICE WOULD LIKE YOUR HELP.

If you have CCTV that covers driveways, front yards, streets, rear laneways and security doorbells that activate when pressed, then Mornington Police Station would like to add this to our secure database.

Contact Mornington Police Station via email MORNINGTON.UNI@police.vic.gov.au or call 5970 4900. All we need is a contact name, address, contact number, camera locations and how long the footage is stored - we will do the rest.

Your footage could help us solve a crime.



VICTORIA POLICE